

Employment Track EXPRESS

Pilot Project Evaluation Report June 2008



Prepared for Pilot Partners and MTCU

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This Employment Ontario project is funded by the Ontario Government



Acknowledgements

The project partners gratefully acknowledge the Employment and Training Division, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities for funding this important project.

Special thanks go to Laura Hamilton and Sande Minke for shepherding this project to fruition and for sharing in the trials and tribulations that accompany innovation.

Thank you, too, to the project partners below who worked so hard to make this project a positive experience for participants.

Literacy London
Niagara Region Literacy Council
Lambton Kent District School Board
Unemployed Help Centre
Adult Learning Centres: Grey-Bruce-Georgian
Literacy Council of Brantford and District
Action Read Community Literacy Centre
The Literacy Group of Waterloo Region
College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading

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Employment Track Express Pilot Project Evaluation

Executive Summary

The Employment Track Express Pilot Project was developed to support laid-off workers involved with Labour Adjustment Committees in Ontario's Western Region. In today's labour market, job seekers are required to use basic computer skills to research labour market information, prepare cover letters and resumes, research job opportunities and, in some cases, apply to posted jobs. The premise of this pilot was to provide an opportunity for laid-off workers to gain familiarity with the use of computers in labour market research, job search and job application, using an approach that introduced and integrated Essential Skills.

The College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading (CSC) was engaged to create a computer curriculum which included labour market research and used an Essential Skills approach. Seven community-based literacy agencies and one school board were enlisted to deliver the 60-hour course (15 hours per week for four weeks) to workers referred by Labour Adjustment Committees in nine Western Region communities. The eight agencies included:

- Literacy London
- Niagara Region Literacy Council
- Lambton Kent District School Board
- Unemployed Help Centre
- Adult Learning Centres: Grey-Bruce-Georgian
- Literacy Council of Brantford and District
- Action Read Community Literacy Centre
- The Literacy Group of Waterloo Region

Objectives related to the curriculum development were to prepare curriculum and resources for the delivery of a four week, computer-based Essential Skills program for laid-off workers; evaluate the content of the training and the process related to the piloted delivery; and prepare a brief summary of the results of the evaluation.

Objectives related to the pilot program sites were to expand the capacity of these sites to serve laid-off workers; to acquire the equipment necessary to operate a mobile computer lab onsite at a local Labour Adjustment Action Centre; to deliver four weeks of computer-based Essential Skills training (15 hours each week to 15 participants); and to continue to deliver LBS using this equipment within their existing core operating funds for 2008/09.

Course objectives were to help participants

- gain computer skills
- understand Workplace Essential Skills
- recognize and apply transferable skills
- learn about the labour market
- identify occupational areas of interest
- assess skills gaps
- develop an action plan that identifies next steps

Fourth quarter funding was made available in early February 2008 by the Employment and Training Division, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, to develop and deliver this pilot by the end of the 2008 fiscal year. As a tentative model for future experiment, development and application, the pilot provided many lessons learned. As a result, subsequent offerings of Employment Track Express will benefit from modifications and revisions.

The pilot produced a number of highlights:

- Labour Adjustment Committee staff observed benefits to program participants generally (100%) and improvement in participants' self-confidence specifically (100%).
- Labour Adjustment Committee staff would recommend this course to laid-off workers for specific purposes (100%).
- Piloting programs felt that the course content provided a framework sufficient for the development and delivery of additional ES and LMI activities (100%).
- Surveyed participants would recommend this program to others (100%).
- Participants increased computer skills (98%).
- Participants who completed a program evaluation increased their understanding of Essential Skills (98%).

Further information regarding the pilot project outcomes, successes and challenges are provided in the full report.

Employment Track Express Pilot Project Evaluation

Project Overview

The Employment Track Express Pilot Project was developed to support laid-off workers involved with Labour Adjustment Committees in the Western Region of Ontario. Large numbers of lay-offs and plant closures connected primarily to the manufacturing sector are taking place, and projections are suggesting this trend will continue for the foreseeable future. Workers affected by this downsizing need to understand what their transferable skills are and how they can be applied to employment in other sectors.

Today's labour market requires job seekers to use basic computer skills to research labour market information, prepare cover letters and resumes, research job opportunities and, in some cases, make application to posted jobs. The premise of this pilot was to provide an opportunity for laid-off workers to gain familiarity with the use of computers in labour market research, job search and job application, using an approach that introduced and integrated Essential Skills. As one of nine Essential Skills, Computer Use would be transferable to other life contexts.

The College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading (CSC) was engaged to create a computer curriculum that included labour market research and used an Essential Skills approach. Objectives related to the curriculum development were to prepare curriculum and resources for the delivery of a four-week, computer-based Essential Skills program for laid-off workers; evaluate the content of the training and the process related to the piloted delivery; and prepare a brief summary of the results of the evaluation.

The curriculum was adapted from the Academic and Career Entrance (ACE) program to create the opportunity for advanced standing in the Computer Fundamentals course, should participants wish to complete the credit. Essential Skills were integrated through an initial introduction and then overlaid throughout the course. The Test of Workplace Essential Skills (TOWES) was to be administered to participants to identify skills matches with occupations of interest, or skills gaps that participants may wish to upgrade subsequent to the course. The curriculum was to be completed by February 29, 2008, for use by pilot programs beginning March 3, 2008. Evaluation surveys were also developed to collect feedback from pilot programs and participants. (Subsequent to a panel presentation at the Canadian Ministers of Education Council conference in early April, an evaluation survey of Labour Adjustment Committees involved in the pilots was also developed.)



Seven community-based literacy agencies and one school board were engaged to deliver a 60-hour program (15 hours per week for four weeks) to workers referred by Labour Adjustment Committees in nine Western Region communities.

The eight agencies included

- Literacy London
- Niagara Region Literacy Council
- Lambton Kent District School Board
- Unemployed Help Centre
- Adult Learning Centres: Grey-Bruce-Georgian
- Literacy Council of Brantford and District
- Action Read Community Literacy Centre
- The Literacy Group of Waterloo Region

Objectives related to the pilot program sites were to expand the capacity of these sites to serve laid-off workers; to acquire the equipment necessary to operate a mobile computer lab on-site at a local Action Centre; to deliver four weeks of computer-based Essential Skills training (15 hours each week to 15 participants); and to continue to deliver LBS using this equipment within their existing core operating funds for 2008/09.

Pilot programs were charged with purchasing laptop computers, software and associated peripherals (e.g., printers, data projector) to create mobile computer labs. Contact with the pilot Labour Adjustment Committee was made to determine the delivery location and the participant referral process.

Course objectives, based on implementation of the curriculum by the pilot programs, were to help participants

- gain computer skills
- understand Essential Skills
- recognize and apply transferable skills
- learn about the labour market
- identify occupational areas of interest
- assess skills gaps
- develop an action plan that identifies next steps

Process

Project partners were notified in early February that funding had been confirmed and project activities should begin. The pilot project concept had been developed very quickly in response to end of year funding availability. A project lead – individual or organization – had not been considered in the project plan due to the timelines required to pull the individual project components and partners together over a large geographic area (see Pilot Communities Map, Appendix B) and still meet funding deadlines. Each of the pilot project organizations – CSC and individual pilot programs – began work on individual project responsibilities by the second week of February.

The Executive Director, Adult Learning Centres: Grey-Bruce-Georgian created a Google discussion and invited partners and instructors known at that time to join. Initial discussion involved questions regarding computer and software specifications. Programs were advised to purchase the XP operating system and either Microsoft Works or Office. Curriculum was based on Word 2003 and the computer subject matter expert provided information on challenges instructors would face if they were using Word 2007.

February 29, 2008 Partners' Meeting

A meeting of all project partners was held in London on February 29, 2008. No feedback had been received on five suggested names for the course, so the CSC chose "Employment Track Express." Instructor and participant copies of the first four course modules and an Instructor's Guide were distributed. An additional copy of the modules was provided to each program so program staff could annotate input, feedback and corrections. Pilot programs were asked to forward the annotated modules to the CSC as each module was delivered. Discussion included partner roles; interactions with, and roles of, the Labour Adjustment Committee; participation in the Google discussion; the challenge of the very short timelines associated with the project; the requirement to assess participants using TOWES; how to approach the "pilot" nature of the course with participants; and an opportunity to identify whether information, advice or support in integrating Essential Skills with other content was required.

Not all programs had understood that TOWES was to be administered to participants. A proposed budget with inclusion of TOWES had been shared on the Google discussion, but not all partners had been added to the discussion at the time of the meeting. The use of TOWES continued to present issues and is discussed in the Content section.

Partner roles, as outlined in a Google discussion posting on February 12, 2008, were referenced throughout the meeting. The referral role of the LAC's may not have been clear, as recruiting participants was an issue for some pilot programs. One LAC was not able to participate due to a recall of workers, and the pilot program recruited Literacy and Basic Skills learners in order to pilot the materials.

Presenting the course as a "pilot" to participants was discussed. As with any "first," glitches and areas for improvement could be expected. The fact that ETE was a pilot was explained to participants, and their comments, input and feedback were encouraged. It appears the experimental nature of ETE was accepted positively by participants in at least one pilot: "We don't see ourselves as guinea pigs, but more as 'pioneers for Essential Skills.' We believe in the work we are doing for the pilot project."

Additional orientation to the application or integration of Essentials Skills was not required, and a NOC chart was distributed to each program to help with finding specific ES Profiles.

Issues and challenges were identified and discussed throughout the meeting. However, it was agreed that ETE was an unexpected and welcomed opportunity to increase capacity, demonstrate the value of literacy and Essential Skills as necessary foundations to employment and further learning, show other Employment Ontario (EO) partners the importance of adult literacy/upgrading in supporting their work and client success, and create materials that could be used in this type of program and evolved for other applications.

A brief questionnaire was completed by those attending the meeting. Although all partner questions had not been answered, specific questions had not yet been formulated. The results of the questionnaire are included as Appendix C.

Project Start-Up

Some of the pilots were to begin the following Monday, but others were experiencing difficulty receiving referrals to the course. With no coordinator or lead in place, several individual descriptions of the course were developed but they did not provide clear enough information for LAC staff or workers to understand what the course would provide to workers. Eventually, a one-page flyer with a question/answer format was developed and it helped LAC staff and participants understand what the course was about. (See Appendix D)

Participants referred by the Labour Adjustment Committees receive Employment Insurance (EI) and are subject to the policies and rules governing receipt of EI. This course, at 15 hours per week, exceeded the allowable “training” hours and required a ruling to ensure participants did not lose their EI benefits. A ruling was issued and shared with pilot programs. Involvement should not be reported as training at all; rather, it should be seen as part of job search activities. Unfortunately, this information was not made available to all programs in time to prevent a number of participants from withdrawing from the course.

Course Modules Five and Six were couriered to pilot programs by the end of the second week of March. Work then began to create a course certificate, evaluation survey tools, and a tracking sheet to document module completions for application for advanced standing in the ACE Computer Fundamentals course. These documents were distributed via the Google discussion group the last week of March. It should be noted that an evaluation survey to be completed by LAC chairs, coordinators and/or peer helpers was created to collect data from their various perspectives subsequent to a pilot project panel presentation at the Canadian Ministers of Education Council conference.

It became apparent later in the process that the Google discussion group was not working as well as expected. Not all list members received postings directly to their email inboxes. Accessing the discussion group was an exercise in frustration for some list members as it required yet one more process and password to remember. In reviewing postings as part of the evaluation process, it seemed that responses to original postings became buried underneath the original message. One instructor suggested creating a private AlphaCom discussion in the future as AlphaCom is familiar to LBS staff and provides a listing or “thread” connected to each original posting.



Recommendations

1. Adequate time to develop and deliver projects should be considered. Fiscal year requirements prevented it in this instance, but ways and means to move funding into the following year would support a more thoughtful, complete and ordered project rollout. As well, reporting and evaluation expectations could be developed and provided as part of project start-up. The recent Canada Ontario Labour Market Agreement includes carrying funding forward to the next fiscal year, and the extension of this approach to fourth quarter projects would be beneficial.
2. A coordination role in multi-partnered projects should be designated and responsibilities should be outlined. Responsibilities should include documenting information for reports, evaluations, program expectations or other reasons important to the success of the participants or programs. Information of this nature should be sent directly to each program contact person to ensure its receipt.
3. Information sharing among project partners using a discussion group is seen as positive and helpful. The discussion group used should be easily accessible and familiar to all (such as AlphaCom) or users should be directed to take available tutorials. The discussion group should not be used to forward operational requirements.

Content

Modules from the ACE program Computer Fundamentals course were modified for use in the Employment Track Express course. The CSC had been asked to “embed” Essential Skills into the course. Given the development time available before beginning the pilot, this was not possible. Advice was sought from two of Canada’s leading ES experts. Based on their advice, Essential Skills were introduced and defined at the beginning of the course and some tips and strategies for applying them were included. The Instructor Notes introduced answer steps (developed by Lynda Fownes) associated with Reading Text, Document Use, Writing and Numeracy. Without training specific to their use, it is not known how useful these answer steps were. An Essential Skills overlay was applied to all modules. This overlay included items that identified the primary ES being applied to specific text or tasks, tips and strategies reminders, features of the text that ES can be used to identify or support, and reflection questions or statements. Course content is at the Academic and Career Entrance (ACE) level. Both the Student Manual and Instructor Notes were intended as a framework, and required modification, adaptation and revision based on the reading level of the students.

Finding and using labour market information is included in the course. At the time of writing, all web links were operational but feedback from programs identified some links that were no longer functioning. There were problems with the search function on the ES profiles site, but HRSDC had fixed it prior to the printing of the modules. However, these kinds of issues will always be present where websites are accessed or web tools are used.

Computer skills, TOWES scores, Essential Skills levels from occupations of interest to participants, and labour market information were to be brought together in a hands-on application prior to completing an Action Plan. Not all pilots were able to cover the content to this point.

Pilot programs had difficulty understanding the use, application and value of TOWES scores. One instructor did not review the scores. Because of this, TOWES was seen as an “add on” as opposed to an integrated component. TOWES was developed as a tool to help individuals and employers assess the skills match or gap between the requirements of the job and the individual. In literacy programs, second language and low literacy level learners would be best served by upgrading skills before assessment. For individuals focused on job search and application, TOWES scores help to identify jobs for which they have the skills to safely, productively and consistently perform as well as identifying skill areas to be addressed – formally or informally. With training, appropriate preparation and interpretation of results can prevent feelings of devastation for test takers with no or low results and test takers can be helped to see the positive aspects of their results. However, in the Employment Track Express application, in the absence of practitioner training, an informal assessment such as Measure Up! or the Essential Skills Check Up Tool may be a better choice.

Overall comments indicate that the content was considered thorough, well laid out and very beneficial. Vocabulary presented a problem for second language and lower functioning first language learners. One pilot program suggested using Module Two after participants became more familiar with the computer and associated language. Another pilot program suggested removing this module altogether. The range of literacy and language levels in groups made delivering the content a challenge. See below for an overview of skill level and scores by pilot location. Average scores are presented based on TOWES results. The average prose (Reading Text) by Census Subdivision scores come from 2003 IALLS results.

Essential Skills Ranges and Means by Location

The Canadian average prose score is 272. The Ontario average prose score is 270.

London	Level Range	Score Range	Mean
Reading Text	1 – 2	193 – 270	221
Document Use	1 – 2	174 – 240	209
Numeracy	1 – 3	174 – 280	231

The average prose (Reading Text) score for this Census Subdivision (CSD) is 272.

Walkerton	Level Range	Score Range	Mean
Reading Text	2 – 3	243 – 316	295
Document Use	1 – 3	154 – 306	209
Numeracy	2 – 4	231 – 340	279

The average prose (Reading Text) score for this Census Subdivision (CSD) is 276.

Wallaceburg	Level Range	Score Range	Mean
Reading Text	1 – 3	209 – 311	243
Document Use	1 – 2	162 – 243	182
Numeracy	2 – 3	253 – 308	273

The average prose (Reading Text) score for this Census Subdivision (CSD) is 260.

Windsor	Level Range	Score Range	Mean
Reading Text	1 – 4	159 – 328	245
Document Use	1 – 3	138 – 305	214
Numeracy	1 – 4	177 – 354	269

The average prose (Reading Text) score for this Census Subdivision (CSD) is 262.

St. Catharines	Level Range	Score Range	Mean
Reading Text	2 – 4	231 – 339	293
Document Use	1 – 4	195 – 326	258
Numeracy	2 – 4	256 – 341	300

The average prose (Reading Text) score for this Census Subdivision (CSD) is 270.

Brantford	Level Range	Score Range	Mean
Reading Text	1 – 3	174 – 316	273
Document Use	1 – 3	209 – 268	242
Numeracy	1 – 4	204 – 340	273

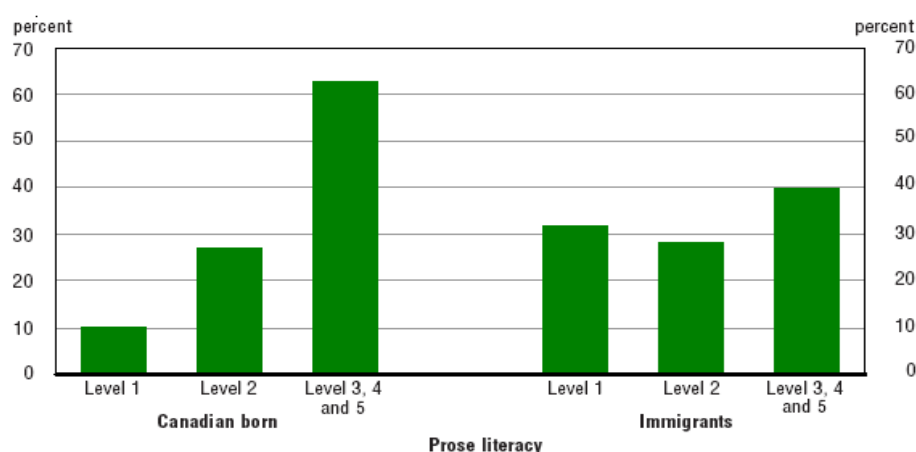
The average prose (Reading Text) score for this Census Subdivision (CSD) is 277.

Guelph	Level Range	Score Range	Mean
Reading Text	1 – 3	N/A – 299	204
Document Use	1 – 3	126 – 307	185
Numeracy	1 – 4	202 – 354	269

The average prose (Reading Text) score for this Census Subdivision (CSD) is 271.

The information on pages 11-12 illustrates the large range of Essential Skills levels in Reading Text, Document Use (and Numeracy) that pilot program instructors reported and needed to address in course delivery. Pilot programs also identified that a large number of program participants were immigrants and required additional support to complete the program.

The chart below, from *Learning Literacy in Canada: Evidence from the International Survey of Reading Skills* (S. Grenier, S. Jones, J. Strucker, T.S. Murray, G. Gervais and S. Brink) illustrates the Essential Skills learning needs of immigrants that need to be addressed if they are to fully participate in the Ontario labour market. A 60-hour course with a primary objective of computer skills acquisition for job search and application cannot address all these learning needs. However, this information is valuable for informing Employment Ontario programs and services regarding intake, assessment and referral needs of Ontario's immigrant population.



The Student Manual was not intended to be a self-directed learning tool. Rather, it was intended to be a reinforcement and a reference tool after content had been taught. This intention was confirmed by feedback from participants in pilot programs. One participant identified that he was very happy that the content was taught and demonstrated because he didn't feel confident he could learn from the manual. An instructor commented that one participant would take his manual home to work from in the evenings. Most instructors identified that they used additional materials, tools, resources and approaches to bring dry material to life. For example, two pilots used dismantled computers to help participants learn the parts of a computer. Two pilot programs identified that it would have been ideal to have had authentic applications of Computer Use in the workplace throughout the manual.

There was mixed reaction to the ES overlay throughout the manual. Some instructors found the overlay very helpful in reinforcing Essential Skills throughout the course while one instructor didn't like the approach.

The last two pilot programs to deliver the course requested tests without answers, for photocopying. These documents were forwarded and will be incorporated in the revised manual package.

There were some common themes regarding the content:

- Manual content was not appropriate for lower level literacy participants.
- Module Two content was especially difficult; perhaps not very useful (includes how a computer works, hardware and software and general maintenance).
- Various adjustments were required and learning topics needed to be inserted along the way, based on questions or areas of difficulty that resulted from different literacy levels among participants.
- Sixty hours is not enough time to include adequate email and Internet practice.
- More time was required to adequately complete the Essential Skills and LMI activity, and the Action Plan.
- Difficulties were experienced accessing and finding ES Profiles.
- Labour market information was out-of-date on both provincial and federal websites. Information on some sites is dated 2000 and 2001.

Content-specific feedback will be incorporated into the revised manual, where possible.

Recommendations

4. A version of this course for learners with lower reading levels should be created. The materials used for this project were based on ACE level material to facilitate those participants who qualified receiving advanced standing in the ACE Computer Fundamentals course. Existing computer resources and materials for lower level learners should be researched on the Internet. Several good publications exist and may be applicable or easily modified.
5. Consideration should be given to developing a version of this course using Word 2007 and Vista. Although neither program is yet considered the industry norm, they are becoming more and more popular.
6. The issue of inactive or broken web links is identified in feedback. This issue should be more clearly identified and explained to participants. All web links should be checked as part of the manual revision and ongoing delivery process.
7. Extending the 60 hours should be investigated to allow adequate coverage of the materials, especially for individuals with reading and language challenges.
8. Instructor Notes should state that the order of modules can be rearranged to meet the needs of each particular group of learners. It should also be made clear that teachers may choose not to include all portions of the computer content for participants who are not interested in advanced standing to allow for more time to be spent on the computer applications necessary for job search and application.
9. Piloting programs should discuss the use of TOWES versus an informal tool, in the absence of TOWES interpretation training. Essential Skills training, with a focus on interpreting and applying ES assessment results, should be made available to practitioners.

Evaluation

As part of their contribution to this pilot project, the CSC evaluated the content of the course, as well as processes related to the piloted delivery, and prepared a brief summary of the results of the evaluation. A number of tools were distributed for the collection of the evaluation data:

- An extra copy of the Student Manual, Instructor Notes and tests and assignments so practitioners could annotate input, feedback, suggested revisions and corrections for the curriculum developers.
- A questionnaire for practitioners to complete and submit at the end of the February 29, 2008 meeting.
- An evaluation survey to be completed by pilot program instructors.
- An evaluation survey to be completed by participants.
- An evaluation survey to be completed by Labour Adjustment Committee chairs, coordinators and/or peer helpers.

In addition, feedback that was offered and questions that were asked during the delivery of the pilots were also collected (and responded to where appropriate).

The questionnaire and evaluation survey tools, with aggregate responses, are included in the Appendix. TOWES results, referring agency, hours attended and completion of an action plan appears as a separate chart (Appendix E).

Four pilots provided details on participant Action Plans. (Action Plan included as Appendix F.) Ten individuals identified they would be locating or registering for training to increase Essential Skills or educational entry requirements for employment; 12 participants indicated they would be seeking help to prepare cover letters and resumes; 8 participants identified interview skills support would be sought; and 15 participants identified they were interested in help to identify job opportunities.

Labour Adjustment Committees

The purpose of the course was not necessarily well understood by the LAC staff who recruited participants. As a result, it was difficult for LAC staff to explain to potential participants what they would gain from the course. However, all respondents understood that the course was useful for job search and for improving computer skills. Two of eight Labour Adjustment Committees were not able to support all workers in maintaining EI benefits. Potential EI issues should be identified and resolved prior to programs being implemented. See Appendix G for full evaluation data.

Participants

All participants would recommend this program to others. Participants felt they had increased their understanding of Essential Skills (98%) and increased skills in following oral instructions (84%), following written instructions (86%), using computer skills (98%) and finding information on the Internet (94%). The course helped 62% of participants to identify an occupational goal and 76% felt the course had helped them identify the next steps they should take. Participant input regarding labour market websites is addressed earlier in this report. See Appendix H for full evaluation data.

Programs

Participants in two pilot programs were not able to complete the content within the course time frame. There does not seem to be a correlation between TOWES scores and completion of the ETE course. (Note the score range in this group is from 193 to 316 in Reading Text and no score to 306 in Document Use.) These score ranges may be attributable to participants with low scores impacting the progress of the group as a whole. Investigating the possibility of higher level participants accessing Computer Fundamentals online may be a solution. If viable, online delivery would allow participants to be involved in the Essential Skills and labour market information components and discussions with the group, and to progress at their own speed on the computer component.

All instructors were able to address participant questions regarding content and all participants saw value in the manual. Two programs saw value in the potential for advanced standing in an ACE course. A formal process to ensure effective referral of students wishing to complete the ACE course Computer Fundamentals should be documented and shared with colleges and ETE course deliverers. See Appendix H for full evaluation data.

Recommendations

10. Prepare clear, concise information describing the course content and outcomes.
11. Investigate the possibility of “blending” ETE and ACE On Line where appropriate.
12. A formal process to ensure effective referral of students wishing to complete the ACE course Computer Fundamentals should be documented and shared with colleges and ETE course deliverers.

Conclusion

The Employment Track Express pilot was very successful for both participants and programs. All participants identified increases in specific skill areas, commented positively about both their experience and the course, and said they would recommend ETE to others. All pilot programs have increased their capacity through acquiring a mobile computer lab, new materials and experience in delivering the program. Labour Adjustment Committees and MTCU Labour Adjustment Advisors have a new understanding and appreciation of the value and “fit” of LBS programs in the programs and services they offer.

The pilot project partners have been very successful in delivering this pilot. The course was a positive experience for participants and helped them move forward after a devastating blow. Additional offerings of this course have continued around the Western Region - attesting to the success of the pilots. Admittedly, time constraints impacted both process and product. Programs had to work with first-draft materials that required revisions, editing and desktopping; limited recruitment time meant, in some cases, smaller groups than desired and, in others, delayed starts and EI issues meant the withdrawal of some participants. The lessons learned create the opportunity for revisions and modifications to both content and process, in order to build on this success.

Learning and innovation go hand in hand. The arrogance of success is to think that what you did yesterday will be sufficient for tomorrow.

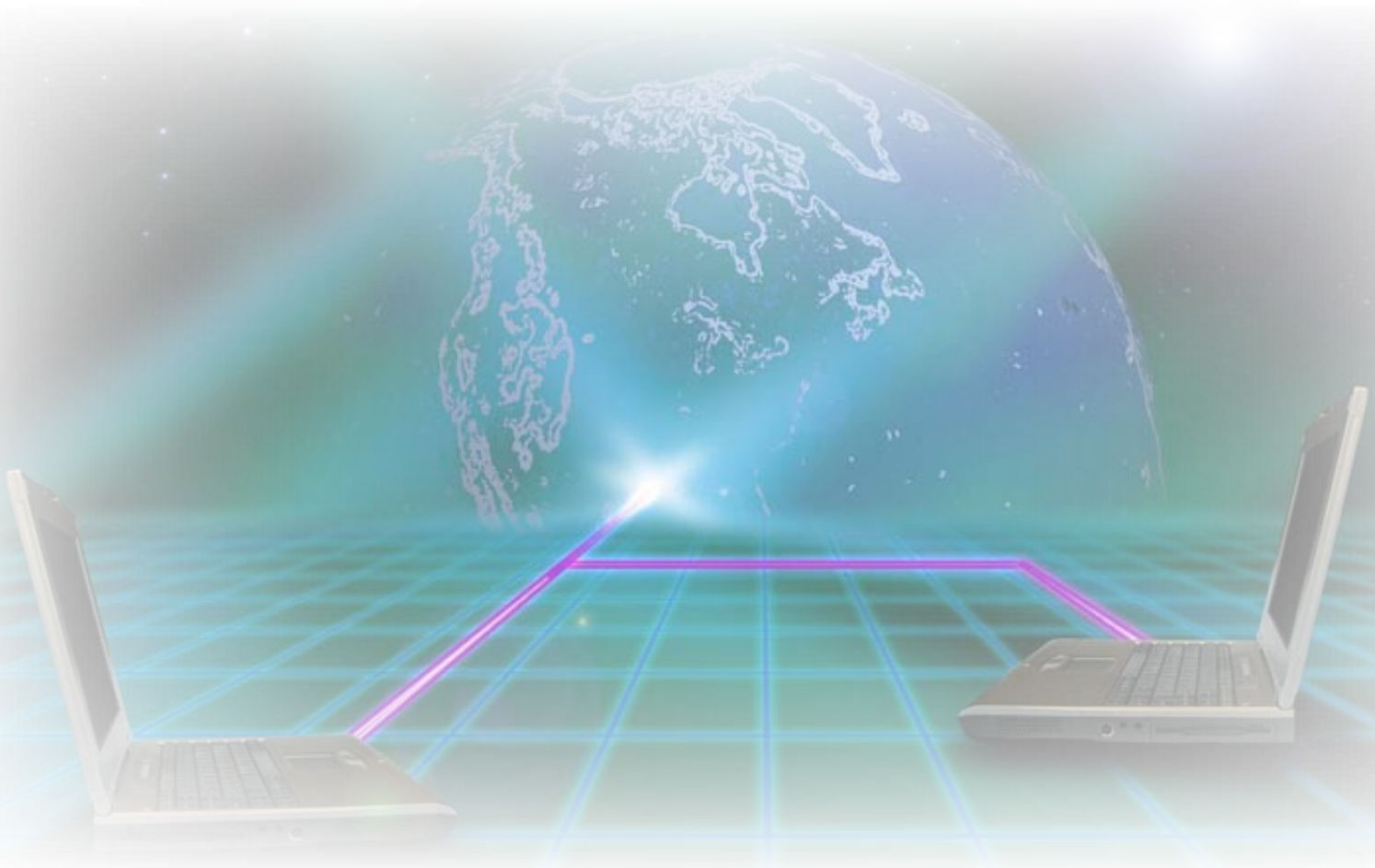
- William Pollard

Appendix A

Recommendations

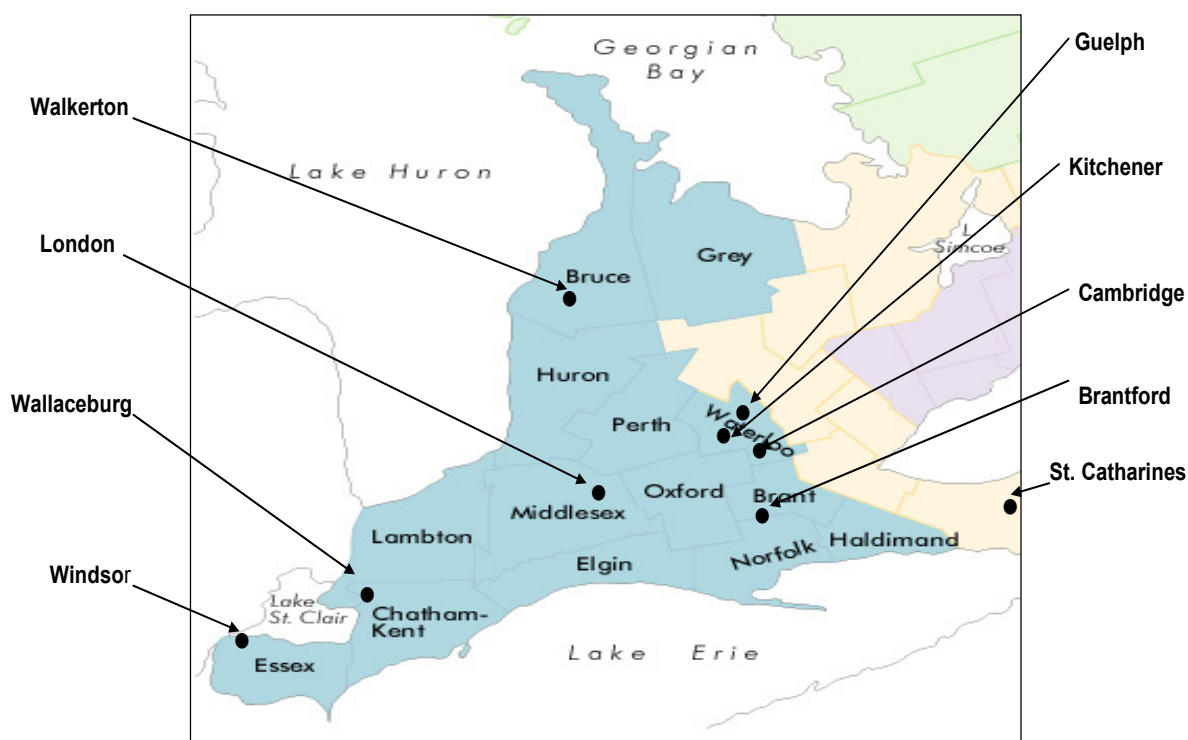
1. Develop ways to carry funding into the following year to support a more thoughtful, complete and ordered project rollout. This approach would support reporting and evaluation expectations development and provision as part of project start-up. The recent Canada Ontario Labour Market Agreement includes carrying funding forward to the next fiscal year, and the extension of this approach to fourth quarter projects would be beneficial.
2. A coordination role in multi-partnered projects should be designated and responsibilities should be outlined. Responsibilities should include documenting information for reports, evaluations, program expectations or other reasons important to the success of the participants or programs. Information of this nature should be sent directly to each program contact person to ensure its receipt.
3. Information sharing among project partners using a discussion group is seen as positive and helpful. The discussion group used should be accessible and familiar to all (such as AlphaCom) or users should be directed to take available tutorials. This discussion group should not be used to forward operational requirements.
4. A version of this course for lower level learners should be created. This version is based on ACE-level material for the purpose of advanced standing in the Computer Fundamentals course. Existing computer resources and materials for lower level learners should be researched on the Internet. Several good publications exist and may be applicable or easily modified.
5. Consideration should be given to developing a version of this course using Word 2007 and Vista. Although neither program is yet considered the industry norm, they are becoming more and more popular.
6. The issue of inactive or broken web links is identified in feedback. This issue should be more clearly identified and explained to participants. All web links should be checked as part of the manual revision process and ongoing delivery process.
7. Extending the 60 hours should be investigated to allow adequate coverage of the materials. Alternatively, literacy and computer skill levels required by the course should be identified as course prerequisites.

8. Instructor Notes should state that the order of modules can be rearranged to meet the needs of each particular group of learners. As well, instructors may choose not to include all portions of the computer content for participants who are not interested in advanced standing to allow for more time to be spent on the computer applications necessary for job search and application.
9. Piloting programs should discuss the use of TOWES versus an informal tool, in the absence of TOWES interpretation training. Essential Skills training, with a focus on interpreting and applying ES assessment results, should be made available to practitioners.
10. Prepare clear, concise information describing the course content and outcomes.
11. Investigate the possibility of “blending” ETE and ACE On Line, where appropriate.
12. A formal process to ensure effective referral of students wishing to complete the ACE course Computer Fundamentals should be documented and shared with colleges and ETE course deliverers.



Appendix B

Pilot Communities



Appendix C

Fast Track to Employment

February 29, 2008

1. Have all your questions about this Rapid Reemployment initiative been answered?

- Yes – 4
- Yes, so far
- Most questions today have been at least partially answered.
- Most – I’m sure I will have more.
- Most
- I think so! I’m thinking of stuff all the time. Because this is our very first intro to the course material I don’t feel I have enough information to ask relevant questions. A day or two with the material might have helped. Still many issues have been resolved. I’m excited!
- To the current point of where we are this information has been great. I may have more as things come up.
- Not yet.
- No - 2

2. If no, what additional clarification do you require?

- I’ll get back to you, too much info given out today to absorb.
- It would be nice to have an official guarantee for the participants re: EI status.
- More questions will be answered in the Google group.
- Not sure yet – will be looking at the Google group & the course material PRONTO!
- More questions will probably arise as we proceed.
- N/A

3. Have each of the partners roles been sufficiently clarified?

- Yes – 5
- It is more clear now.
- Yes. We know how to reach everyone.
- I think so.
- No, did we talk about this?
- Did we even talk about this?
- Fairly well. The contact peer people at action centres did seem to be a little unsure even though the information was clear.
- I think I’ve got a good “working knowledge” of these roles.
- What is the role of the pilot site facilitator?

4. What is your ongoing expectation of support as we move into the delivery phase?

- Possibly enough support but not early enough to be as useful as it should be.
- I would expect to give and get support from other organizations and from the Ministry as needed.
- Just knowing that we have a support group and that our ministry reps are available is support enough.
- Will be able to use Google and agency resources to get answers.
- Google site
- Yes, we know how to reach everyone. I really like the support we have seen and will continue to see via the Google group. It will help us all stay connected and share great ideas!
- In the future, bit more sharing of the conditions of the work, i.e. TOWES testing wasn't obvious so if there are any expectations (new) that become evident, please make sure these are clearly and deliberately communicated. Don't assume anything, including with the Adjustment Committee Chairs.
- I don't know what questions will arise but I would hope for fast response due to the need to deliver again the next day.
- For continued delivery we will need money to facilitate.
- This depends on what and how many issues occur.
- Resources

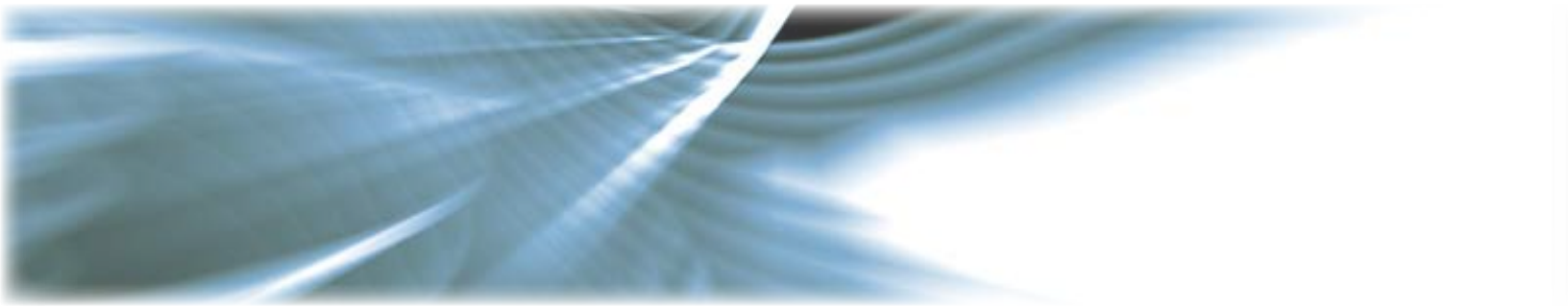
5. Do you require additional orientation to Essential Skills?

- No – 7
- I think I have a good understanding.
- They are fairly straight-forward.
- No, but thank you. I am excited to get started! Thanks for all of the hard work that has into the preparation for this pilot. Thank you!
- No, I think we're okay. Thank you for the day! P.S. Could we get a NOC chart?
- No, but I'm sure there will always be info that I would find informative.
- I will do some online research over the next period. I am very familiar with Essential Skills, but need to feel re-acquainted with the material to feel really comfortable with it all!

Appendix D

Fast Track to Employment

- Are you looking for work and not sure where to begin?
- Do you need the computer skills to apply for that job on line or by e-mail?
- Are you considering another type of work but don't know how your skills transfer?
- Do you want to know about the work, skills and wages needed in a new occupation?
- Do you know how to find information about employment in your community?



Employment Track Express is a four-week, 60-hour course that will help you:

- gain valuable computer skills
- recognize your transferable skills
- learn about the local labour market
- identify occupational areas of interest
- compare your Essential Skills to your job of choice
- plan your next steps in the path to employment

Course Start Date: Day, Month, Year
Mondays to Fridays, X:00 to X:00

To register, or for further information, contact:

Jane/John Doe
 519-000-0000

Insert program logo
 here

Click on text, insert
 logo, adjust size

Appendix E

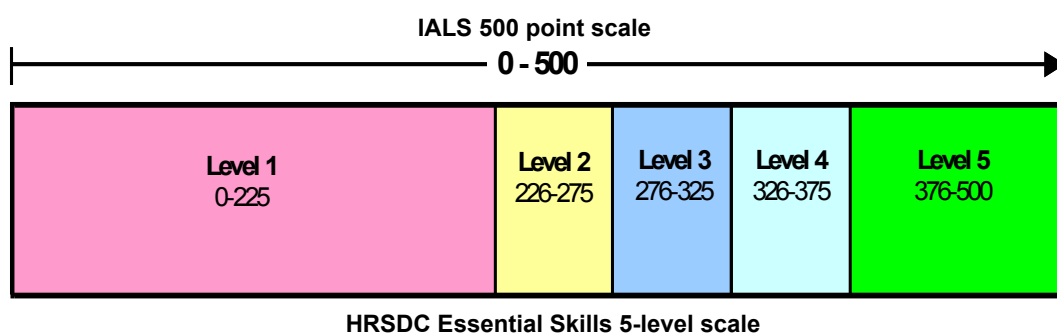
TOWES Results

A total of 74 participants were reported on Pilot Program evaluations. Of the 74 participants, 49 completed the program. Provided below is individual but anonymous participant information on levels and scores for Reading Text, Document Use and Numeracy as determined by TOWES; program involvement, i.e., Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program or Labour Adjustment Committee (LAC); number of hours attended; and Action Plan completed/not completed, for 56 participants. Eighteen participants were not TOWES tested. Scores highlighted in yellow indicate participants who have been assessed within 20 points of the Level 1/2 threshold. Scores highlighted in pink indicate participants who have been assessed within 20 points of the Level 2/3 threshold. Green highlight indicates participants registered in pilots that were not able to complete the content within the course time frame.

Participant	RT Level	Score	DU Level	Score	NU Level	Score	LAC LBS	Hours	Action Plan
20505	2	229	1	204	2	258	LBS	42	Yes
20506	1	195	1	174	1	174	LBS	21	No
20507	2	270	2	240	3	280	LBS	51	Yes
20508	1	217	1	219	1	212	LBS	33	Yes
20386	1	193	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	LBS	60	Yes
A20002	3	304	2	228	3	290	LAC	60	No
A20018	3	314	2	264	3	320	LAC	60	No
A20020	3	313	2	275	3	322	LAC	60	No
A20022	2	248	3	301	3	316	LAC	18	No
A20023	2	260	3	304	3	298	LAC	60	No
M20052	2	249	1	154	2	231	LAC	60	No
11888	2	243	1	196	2	235	LAC	60	No
11889	3	316	3	280	3	279	LAC	60	No
11890	3	316	2	250	4	340	LAC	60	No
11891	3	316	3	280	3	292	LAC	60	No
11892	3	316	3	306	3	290	LAC	60	No
11893	3	288	1	206	2	277	LAC	60	No
11894	2	264	2	266	3	278	LAC	60	No
11895	3	286	1	189	2	268	LAC	60	No
20840	1	209	1	202	2	253	LAC	23	
20841	1	255	2	239	2	260	LAC	60	Yes
20842	3	311	2	243	3	308	LAC	28	Yes
20122	3	290	1	224	2	272	LAC	50	Yes
20124	2	239	2	228	3	299	LAC	50	Yes
20852	2	243	1	162	3	292	LAC	60	Yes
20135	1	159	1	164	1	177	LAC	60	Yes
20136	3	307	2	265	3	283	LAC	60	Yes
20138	4	328	3	305	4	354	LAC	45	No
20139	2	227	1	197	2	251	LAC	22.5	No
20141	1	202	1	138	3	282	LAC	60	Yes
20368	2	241	1	195	2	262	LBS	60+	Yes
20185	2	250	1	225	3	283	LBS	60+	Yes

TOWES Results Continued

20367	4	339	2	266	2	274	LAC	60+	Yes
20328	2	231	1	207	3	303	LAC	60+	Yes
20183	3	288	2	275	3	301	LAC	18	No
20327	3	313	2	254	4	341	LAC	60+	Yes
20366	4	328	2	258	3	322	LAC	60+	Yes
20326	3	303	4	326	3	318	LAC	60+	Yes
20186	3	289	2	254	2	256	LAC	60+	Yes
10624	3	280	2	258	2	274	LAC	38.5	Yes
10625	3	280	1	209	2	274	LAC	60	Yes
10626	3	299	3	295	3	311	LAC	49.5	Yes
10627	3	316	2	268	4	340	LAC	60	Yes
10628	3	316	2	230	2	237	LAC	60	Yes
10629	2	263	1	207	2	251	LAC	60	Yes
10630	1	174	N/A	N/A	1	204	LAC	60	Yes
10631	2	258	2	227	3	292	LAC	60	Yes
10753	N/A	N/A	1	126	2	231	LAC	60	Yes
10564	1	183	1	140	2	270	LAC	60	Yes
10565	2	226	1	124	1	202	LAC	60	Yes
10567	1	157	1	163	1	202	LAC	60	Yes
10568	1	196	1	185	2	266	LAC	60	Yes
10761	3	299	3	307	4	354	LAC	60	Yes
10802	3	285	3	289	3	311	LAC	60	Yes
10566	2	229	2	252	3	292	LAC	20	No
10565	2	284	2	252	3	292	LAC	8	No
Mean	2	264	2	231	3	277			



Hours in excess of 60 are not recorded here. In some cases, 60+ hours were attended but actual hours were not recorded (as per the data collection form instructions). Therefore, average number of hours attended is not calculated.

Totals & Percentages by Skill and Level

Reading Text			Document Use		Numeracy	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
No Score	1	2.1	2	4.3	1	2.1
Level 1	11	23.4	23	48.9	6	12.8
Level 2	18	38.3	21	44.7	19	40.4
Level 3	23	48.5	9	19.1	25	53.2
Level 4	3	6.4	1	12.1	5	10.6

Appendix F

Action Plan

This form is designed to help you identify next steps and set target dates to achieve them. Check the appropriate boxes. In the space provided, write a brief statement describing what you will do and the date by which you will have accomplished it.

Occupational Title	NOC Code	Meet ES Levels	Meet Entry Requirements	Cover Letter &/ Resume Prepared	Have Interview Skills	Identified Job Opportunities

Place a √ in the appropriate box to indicate whether you meet the criteria.

1. Meet ES Levels

☐ No action required
 ☐ Locate ES training
 ☐ Register in ES training

2. Meet Entry Requirements

☐ No action required
 ☐ Locate appropriate training
 i.e., full-time, part-time, online,
 training upgrading, technical or
 vocational
 ☐ Register in training

3. Cover letter and resume prepared

- ☐ No action required ☐ Able to prepare without help or support ☐ Locate and register with support service
-
-
-

4. Have interview skills

- ☐ No action required ☐ Locate and register with support service
-
-
-

5. Identified job opportunities

- ☐ No action required ☐ Register with online job posting service ☐ Locate and register with support program or service (e.g., Job Finding Club)
-
-
-

Visit the Employment Ontario website at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca> to find programs and services to help you. Talk to your instructor about a referral.

Name

Signature

Date

Appendix G

Employment Track Express Evaluation Results

Your Labour Adjustment Committee participated in offering this pilot to interested workers. Your feedback is requested to help improve future offerings to support workers in their job search. Please read the statements below and place a check mark (✓) in the appropriate box.

I am a ☐ Chair (2) ☐ Coordinator (5) (1) Unknown

Choose whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
I clearly understood the purpose of the course.		2	3	3
I was able to explain what workers would gain from participating in the course.		2	5	1
I knew which workers were most likely to be interested in the course.		1	3	4
I was involved in determining the location of the course.	1		2	5
I was able to support workers in maintaining EI benefits.	1	1	3	3
I observed benefits to workers who participated in the course.			3	5
I was able to get the information and help needed to work out issues with the course.		1	1	6
I understood the course was very useful for job search.			7	1
I understood the course improved computer skills.			2	6
I observed improvement in participant self-confidence.			3	5
I communicated with other pilot Labour Adjustment Committees about the course.		1	4	3

I would recommend offering this course to laid-off workers who: (check all that apply)

(7) ☐ need basic computer skills (7) ☐ need to improve their computer skills

(8) ☐ need to learn about their transferable skills (8) ☐ need to start a job search

(6) ☐ need to learn about the local labour market

No comments submitted.

Please use the reverse for any suggestions for improvements or additional comments.

Appendix H

Employment Track Express

Participant Evaluation 50 participant evaluations received

Please read the statements below and place a check mark (✓) in the appropriate box.

Participation in this course has:	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
Increased my understanding of Essential Skills			1	23	26
Provided me with Essential Skills examples to use in my cover letters, resume and interviews	2 – N/A		3	28	17
Increased my skills in following oral instructions			8	29	13
Increased my skills in following written instructions		1	6	30	13
Increased my reading skills	1 – N/A		13	24	12
Increased my ability to use documents	1 – N/A	1	11	24	13
Increased my computer skills			1	11	38
Taught me how to find information using the Internet	2 – N/A		1	17	30
Helped me identify an occupational goal	5 – N/A	2	12	17	14
Helped me develop an Action Plan to identify my next steps.	4 – N/A		8	21	17

I would recommend this program to others. 50 Yes 0 No

Participant Comments:

Pilot 1

- I really enjoyed the program.
- Very well done
- Course was informal but kept me interested and looking forward to the next class. Our teacher was very helpful in whatever problem we brought to her.
- Excellent course and instructor! Very valuable information. 60 hours well spent.

Pilot 2

- ***** was a very good teacher. He has taught me a lot in this course.
- The instructor was very helpful.
- The course was very informable and very useful with helping me with a computer. Our instructor was very helpful and very good at helping out when we got stuck.
- I enjoyed the class. I wish it could have lasted longer.

Pilot 3

- I would like to do this program over to really get some more learning.
- I would definitely recommend it to someone with little or no computer skills. Most of the things I know but it was good to refresh my memory and get more familiarized with things.
- Before taking this course I did not know anything about all nine essential skills. I was not even aware of their different levels. I did not know much about the computer; now I can use the internet to find out anything I need to know. I glad I participated in this course, it makes my search easier for a \ better job, and I would recommend this program to others.

Pilot 4

- I am strongly to recommen this program to someone. (emphasize to the area of resume and cover letters)
- This course was neat, made you think. You get in ruts with certain jobs and you forget how many ways there are to do things, or to record information. I was excited about the test. It is a good way to find out where you are at. I was really pleased that I had scored so strongly in numeracy and that there were so many job options provided by the test. The course was made modified to meet my needs, and because of this, was quite challenging. Things are falling into place for me.
- It is nice, but it is short time. Some of it we started by we didn't finish yet. But all the teachers there are very nice and they have patient. Thanks for everything you did to us. Have nice and happy life.
- This course was really helpful. It really helped show your strengths and weaknesses. I am really into learning new things, so this was another step in that process. It was more intense than expected. Enjoyed the TOWES testing. The list of possible professions was very interesting. Some match up really well. Some of the questions were fun to answer, but some you had to really read carefully and think twice about your response. This job helped me transition to my new job.

Pilot 5

- I enjoyed the class. I learned a lot about the computer that I didn't know before. It helped me to decide to go on and learn more about computers.
- If still using computer components make it in a buying guide for 1st time users. More “play” time in the beginning for new-bes. Benchmarks not tests. For new users less letters, isp's, ram's etc. more explanations.
- From fighting the urge to run, I went on to looking forward to class. What I learned will come in handy in the future. ***** was the perfect choice to teach a group of traumatized older children.
- Teacher was great. Program needs some rearranging. (Tech skills later in course.) Binder needs editing. All in all great program.
- I learned alot some of it was a little quick but the information was really good. ***** did a good job for her first time and I think the next time through will be better.
- I have found the class very informative and useful. I would recommend it to anyone.
- Parts of the course could be in a better order ie. Module Two at end of course after you know or possibly want a computer to do and ISP information. It became overwhelming at the start to the point where I was going to quit, so as not to hold the course back but I more confident now.
- I learned more than I thought I could all due to the teacher. Thank you.
- I found the computer use component most useful and am now not so hesitant to explore. Thanks.
- It was very helpful to increased my Computer Skills and my Essential skills.

Pilot 6

- I enjoyed this class. Thank you so much for all your help.
- ***** - you did a wonderful job in explaining the lessons and giving of yourself to help everyone. I am sorry that because of my circumstances I could not finish my program. I enjoyed it very much and I would do it again.

Pilot 7

- I would recommend this program to all unemployed workers over the age of 40 to help for job searching and learning your own skills.
- Service Canada pages proved to be the weakest link in the course (ironically). Course highlighted weakness of Service Canada pages. Not intentional – expected far more these days. Proved to be the most ineffectual. Nothing of substance to land a job. Selling Essential Skills requires more work and better prep than provided in the program.
- I found the course very informative and easy to follow along. The inst. were extremely helpful and knowledgeable. Overall extremely useful.
- Course should maybe take more time to complete/maybe an extra wk.
- I enjoy the course very much and the instructors were very good.

Appendix I

Employment Track Express

Pilot Program

Course Evaluation (7 evaluations received)

# of participants registered	74					
# of participants completed	49					
TOWES Test Number & Scores	RT	DU	NU	LAC LBS	Hrs. Attended	Goal/ Action Plan
1. <i>See Appendix E</i>						
2. <i>for aggregate</i>						
3. <i>information</i>						

Action Plan Detail (included on 4 evaluations) Number of Responses

Action Item (data collection forms included in appendix)	1 (No action required)	2 (Locate training/service)	3 (Register in training/service)
Meet ES levels	22	8	2
Meet entry requirements	22	10	0
Cover letter and resume prepared	20	5	7
Have interview skills	24	8	
Identified job opportunities	15	11	4

Individual modules provided for input, corrections and comment returned to CSC for revisions to final product.	4 Yes	3 No
Participants were able to complete content within the course time frame.	5 Yes	2 No
Participant questions re: content were easily addressed.	7 Yes	0 No
Participants recognized manual as a useful tool for reference after course completion.	7 Yes	0 No

Overall Comments re: Content

Only comments submitted on the program evaluation form are included here.

Pilot 1

At the beginning of the course, we worked on resumes. Most people came out of the course with an up to date resume. The action planning part was among the most challenging part of the whole project. I did not feel we really got our teeth into this, although everyone worked on the chart in the module. Again, we were doing a lot of basic English explanation, which slowed down the process.

Pilot 2

Very thorough – a good solid foundation to ensure that students will succeed in future technology studies. Provided participants with a clear understanding of each of the Essential Skills. I like the reminders that appeared throughout the manual so that participants could connect them with the task they were doing. I requested copies of the test without the answers. Received immediately. Thank you. An additional 3 sessions (9 hrs.) were extended to cover the content. Some participant questions required that I learn it before covering it, as we are using Vista and Office 2007.

Pilot 3

The only module that presented difficulties was Module Two as it was more theoretical and had some challenging vocabulary.

Pilot 4

Comments not included on evaluation survey. See narrative sections.

Pilot 5

The individuals attending were all different. Some needed additional assistance with reading or comprehension while others needed assistance with the computer. Therefore, the times for each person differed. The content of the modules was great and very beneficial.

Pilot 6

Comments not included on evaluation survey. See narrative sections.

Pilot 7

Comments not included on evaluation survey. See narrative sections.

Advanced standing towards ACE computer credit is a value-added feature of this course.	2 Yes	4 No	1 N/A
Support re: ES, LMI, computer content was requested.	3 Yes	3 No	1 N/A
If “Yes” to above, response was adequate.	3 Yes	0 No	

Request immediately responded to. Thank you.

Course content provided sufficient framework to develop and deliver additional ES and LMI activities.	7 Yes	0 No
Recruiting participants was an issue for this pilot.	6 Yes	1 No

Comments

Only comments submitted on the program evaluation form are included here.

Pilot 1

The time frame for recruiting was far too short especially since we were told that we did not need to recruit, but that was being taken care of by the Action Centres. We began recruiting 4 days prior to program start.

Pilot 2

With more notice, it would not be difficult at all to recruit participants. It appears to me that it is the older (45+) worker who needs this course, as a lot of the material already known by most younger individuals, even those with low ES levels.

Pilot 3

Comments not included on evaluation survey. See narrative sections.

Pilot 4

Comments not included on evaluation survey. See narrative sections.

Pilot 5

Committee members took the course and are promoting it to people who are coming to the Action Centre. This is resulting in a waiting list! The second course ran in May, with enough people already signed up for a third.

Pilot 6

Had time allowed at the outset of the project (and considering the re-call by *****) it would have been rewarding to have more participants in the pilot. Those who did participate very much enjoyed the course and felt they came away with some valuable skills both in terms of technology and ES.

Recommendations Based on Pilot Delivery Experience

Only comments submitted on the program evaluation form are included here.

Pilot 1

One change that we would like to see would be changing Word 2003 to Word 2007.

Pilot 3

It was very good experience and I hope that similar programs will be offered in the future. It was somewhat difficult to conduct a class with such a range of computer knowledge in the group – some know nothing at all and others were already very proficient. Now that we know the curriculum, it should be easier to market to appropriate candidates.

Pilot 4

Comments not included on evaluation survey. See narrative sections.

Pilot 5

Overall this project was really interesting and a great opportunity for my agency. The module was interesting and well laid out. Because many of our participants had very low reading in English, I do not feel they got as much out of the curriculum as was intended. I was regularly asked the meaning of non-computer words such as ‘paragraph’ and ‘essential.’ This was a major challenge, but also added meaning and real urgency to our job! Perhaps clearer participant eligibility requirements would be helpful OR – better yet – a plain language version for the high functioning ESL folks we saw (who have tons of employment skills and ability to focus and learn). Referrals were made to several ESL, literacy and employment programs in the city of Guelph.

When I learned that there was no one ‘lead’ for the project, a lot of issues I had with the project were immediately explained. Definitely would recommend one lead person or agency in the future. Clear reporting expectations, with all reports and deadlines outlined at the onset would have reduced the stress and guess work. This should be sent out directly, not buried in emails and attachments on a discussion group (which I stopped being able to access several weeks ago).

I was unsure of the role of the discussion group: it sounded at first like a place to share ideas and practices, but in fact essential project information was shared in the group. I am pretty overwhelmed with sign in systems and passwords – I would have preferred a private AlphaCom discussion group as I am on this all the time and I wouldn’t have had to learn new passwords etc. (This may sound petty, but several times it was really frustrating). That said, having some way to communicate with people from other agencies and situations was very useful and I appreciate that someone had the initiative to set up this group as a good-will gesture to the group.

Pilot 6

Emphasize the rules re: attendance by building it into a contract at the outset of the course. Despite their personal concerns (primarily health) the participants were sincere in their efforts to get as much from the course as they could.

Pilot 7

Comments not provided on evaluation survey. See narrative sections.