

# SVI-3018-4

## Managing Interactions in the Workplace

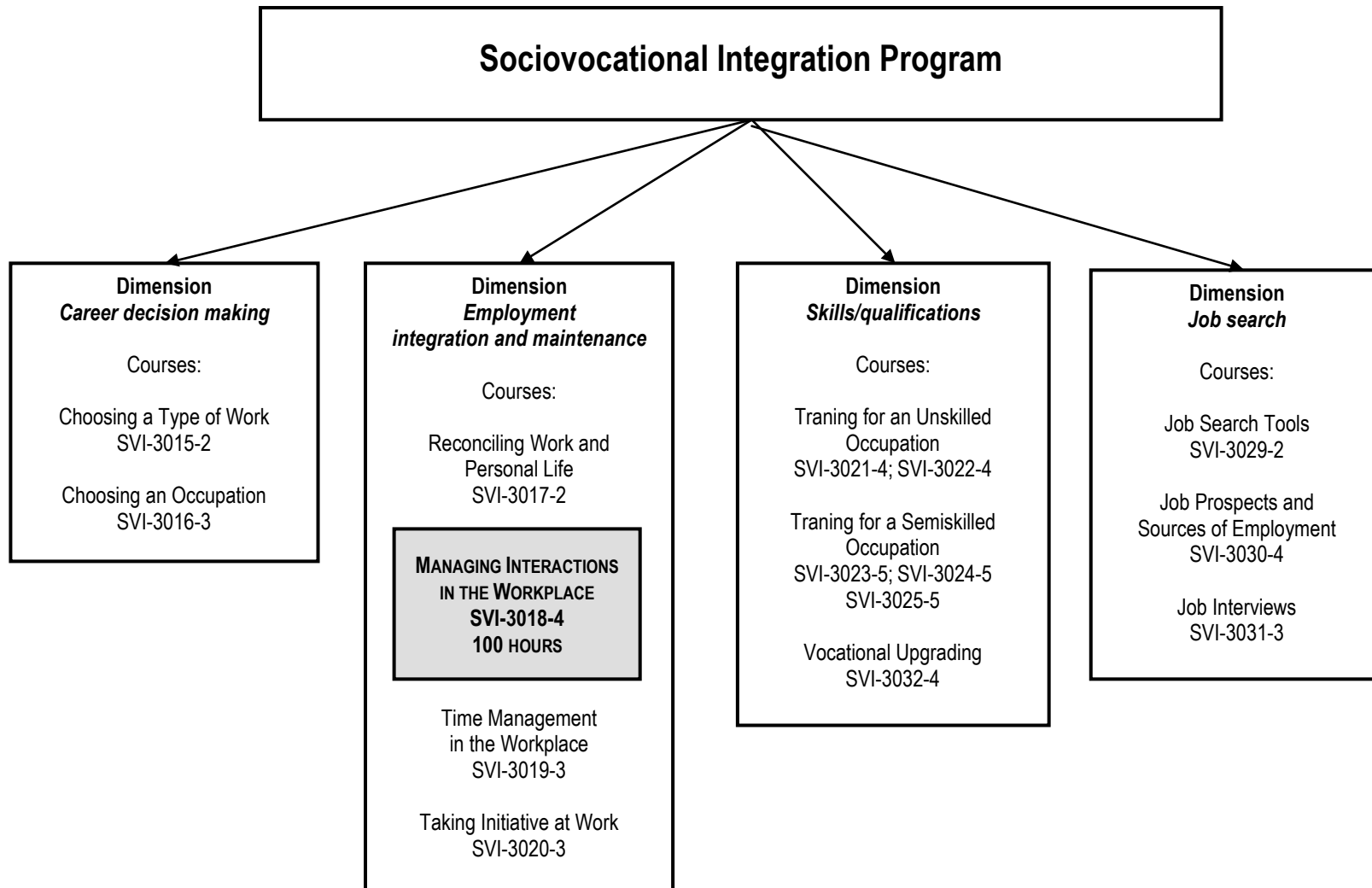
Secondary Cycle Two



Sociovocational Integration Program



## Situating the Course *Managing Interactions in the Workplace*



## **Introduction to the Course *Managing Interactions in the Workplace***

---

The objective of the course *Managing Interactions in the Workplace* is to enable adults to deal competently with real-life situations that involve communicating with superiors and colleagues.

By the end of this course, adults will be able to interact appropriately with superiors and colleagues and regulate their interactions at work.

## Dealing With Work-Related Situations

Dealing effectively with work-related situations is based on actions. These actions are grouped into categories and draw on a set of resources that include operational competencies and essential knowledge. During the learning process, adults are expected to construct knowledge related to these resources in order to be able to deal appropriately with their real-life situations.

The class of situations, categories of actions, operational competencies and essential knowledge constitute the compulsory elements of the course. Details on these elements may be found under the appropriate headings.



## Class of Situations

This course focuses on the class of situations *Managing interactions at work*.

The quality of adults' interactions in the workplace has a considerable influence on how satisfied they are at work and plays a key role in their ability to get and keep a job. Adults are required to interact with their superiors and colleagues in numerous work-related situations. Their ability to manage their interactions effectively contributes to a healthy working atmosphere and helps them carry out their duties.

The table below provides examples of work-related situations associated with this class of situations. These examples can be used to develop learning situations. Furthermore, since these situations are numerous and unpredictable, the teacher can refer to any pertinent real-life situation that is related to the class and adapted to adults' needs.

Class of Situations	Examples of Real-Life Situations
Managing interactions at work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Being part of a work team</li><li>• Participating in a work meeting</li><li>• Participating in a performance assessment meeting</li><li>• Carrying out teamwork</li><li>• Work conflicts</li></ul>

## Categories of Actions

The *categories of actions* are groups of actions that are appropriate for dealing with the real-life situations in the course. The *examples of actions* listed in the table below illustrate the scope of the categories and serve as a guide in conducting the learning activities.

Categories of Actions	Examples of Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interactions at work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asks a superior for time off</li> <li>Provides constructive criticism about how a work tool is used</li> <li>Expresses his/her opinion on a new work method</li> <li>Receives work instructions from his/her superior</li> <li>Receives criticism on the quality of his/her work</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulating his/her interactions at work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consults his/her superior about his/her expectations of teamwork</li> <li>Asks a colleague for feedback on how he/she is doing within the team</li> <li>Evaluates his/her way of using communication techniques in the workplace</li> <li>Develops an action plan for improving how well he/she receives criticism</li> </ul>

## Compulsory Elements and End-of-Course Outcomes

The teacher must take the compulsory elements into account when designing learning situations.

### Class of Situations

Managing interactions at work

### Categories of Actions

- Interactions at work
- Regulating his/her interactions at work

### Operational Competencies

Cooperates

- Takes the characteristics of the work team into account
- Takes each person's resources and limitations into account
- Observes the company hierarchy

Exercises critical and ethical judgment

- Identifies his/her strengths and limitations using an assessment form
- Distinguishes between fact and opinion
- Distinguishes between his/her perceptions and those of his/her superiors and colleagues
- Justifies the change he/she wants to make

### Essential Knowledge<sup>31</sup>

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Communication techniques specific to the sender of the message   | • Emotional control techniques                                 |
| • Communication techniques specific to the receiver of the message | • Characteristics of a work team                               |
| • Factors that influence communication                             | • Company's expectations in terms of interactions              |
| • Main forms of communication                                      | • Change he/she wants to make in terms of interactions at work |
| • Observance of basic social codes                                 | • Action plan regarding interactions at work                   |

<sup>31</sup> All of the compulsory essential knowledge is outlined under the heading *Essential Knowledge*.



The end-of-course outcomes describe how adults should use the compulsory elements to deal with the real-life situations addressed in the course.

### End-of-Course Outcomes

To deal with the real-life situations in the class of situations *Managing interactions at work*, adults interact with their superiors and colleagues and manage their own interactions at work.

To interact in an appropriate manner with their superiors and colleagues, adults use techniques that promote effective communication. They consider the factors that influence communication in the workplace and choose an appropriate form of communication. They observe the basic social codes (e.g. dressing appropriately, practising good personal hygiene, following the basic rules of courtesy, and ensuring confidentiality). They control their emotions at work, taking particular care not to act impulsively. At all times, they take into account the characteristics of the work team, as well as the resources and limitations of each person and observe the company hierarchy.

To manage their interactions in the workplace, adults assess their strengths and limitations using an assessment form and by taking into account the company's expectations regarding interactions. They distinguish between fact and opinion, and between their perceptions and those of their superiors and colleagues. They set a clear and precise goal with respect to a change they want to make. They explain the extent to which this change is feasible and meaningful on a personal and occupational level, and estimate the time required to make this change. They draw up an action plan for achieving their goal. This plan will include the means for succeeding in this regard, the internal and external resources they can rely on, deadlines, pitfalls and obstacles they may encounter, alternative solutions and follow-up measures.

## Evaluation Criteria

---

- Interacts appropriately in the workplace
- Manages his/her interactions at work

## Operational Competencies

The contribution of each operational competency is described in terms of the actions that are appropriate for dealing with the real-life situations in this course. These operational competencies are addressed in other courses and therefore all of the courses taken together contribute to their development.

In this course, only the following operational competencies are addressed: *Cooperates* and *Exercises critical and ethical judgment*.

### Contribution of the operational competency *Cooperates*

This competency refers to the capacity to collaborate with others in dealing with work-related situations.	When interacting with superiors and colleagues, adults take into account the characteristics of the work team and the resources and limitations of each person, and observe the company hierarchy.
--	--

### Contribution of the operational competency *Exercises critical and ethical judgment*

This competency involves the capacity to question and assess the personal and social problems encountered in work-related situations according to the rules and principles of sound judgment.	When managing their interactions at work, adults assess their strengths and limitations using an assessment form. They distinguish between fact and opinion, and between their perceptions and those of their superiors and colleagues. They justify the change they want to make in the way that they interact at work.
---	--

## Essential Knowledge

**E**ssential knowledge is organized into categories. All of the knowledge mentioned under this heading is compulsory, except for the information in parentheses that serves to clarify or define the scope of the knowledge in question.

### Communication techniques specific to the sender of the message

- Clear and concise message
- Ideas presented in an organized manner
- Ensuring the message has been understood
- Use of "I" statements
- Consistency between body language and verbal message

### Communication techniques specific to the receiver of the message

- Empathy
- Eye contact
- Mirroring
- Reformulation
- Questions

### Factors that influence communication

- Physical environment
- Time available, deadlines
- Individual and cultural differences
- The audience's status and role
- Workplace culture

### Main forms of communication

- Verbal communication (face-to-face meeting, telephone conversation)
- Nonverbal communication (posture, facial expressions, gestures, etc.)
- Written communication (reports, letters, e-mail)

### Observance of basic social codes

- Dress code
- Personal hygiene
- Courtesy
- Confidentiality

### Emotional control techniques

- Types of emotion (impatience, frustration, anger, joy, etc.)
- Identification of the emotion
- Clarification of needs underlying the emotion
- Expression of needs by taking the situation into account
- Control of impulsive reactions

### Characteristics of a work team

- Common goal
- Interactions between team members
- Types of leadership
- Roles and responsibilities of team members
- Levels of participation (content, climate and procedures)

## Essential Knowledge (*cont.*)

---

### **Company's expectations in terms of interactions**

- Formal expectations (official rules)
- Informal expectations (unofficial rules)

### **Change he/she wants to make in terms of interactions at work**

- Determining the change he/she wants to make
- Clearly and precisely stated change that is feasible and meaningful on a personal and professional level and that can be made within a specific time frame

### **Action plan regarding interactions at work**

- Means for achieving desired change
- Internal and external resources
- Deadlines
- Possible pitfalls and obstacles
- Alternative solutions
- Follow-up measures (periodic review, logbook, discussions with a mentor, etc.)

## Attitudes

The development of certain attitudes, particularly those described in the table below, is facilitated by drawing on certain elements of essential knowledge. These attitudes also help adult learners to better exercise the operational competencies and make it easier to deal with the class of situations in question. The attitudes in and of themselves are not evaluated; however, their development is an important aspect of the learning process.

Respect	Open-mindedness
<p>Adults who are respectful are open to ways of thinking and acting that are different from their own. They show an interest in other people's opinions and are able to consider points of view that are different from theirs when interacting at work.</p> <p><b>Connections between respect and certain elements of essential knowledge</b></p> <p>This attitude can be addressed more specifically in learning situations that involve the following elements of essential knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication techniques specific to the sender of the message</li> <li>• Communication techniques specific to the receiver of the message</li> <li>• Factors that influence communication</li> <li>• Main forms of communication</li> <li>• Observance of basic social codes</li> <li>• Emotional control techniques</li> <li>• Characteristics of a work team</li> </ul> <p><b>Connections between respect and the operational competency <i>Cooperates</i></b></p> <p>This attitude can be addressed more specifically in learning situations that involve the development of this operational competency, notably with respect to the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes the characteristics of the work team into account</li> <li>• Takes each person's resources and limitations into account</li> <li>• Observes the company hierarchy</li> </ul>	<p>Adults who are open-minded consider different viewpoints and question their usual way of doing things. This attitude makes them more likely to thoroughly investigate and discover new outlooks in considering different factors when managing their interactions at work.</p> <p><b>Connections between open-mindedness and certain elements of essential knowledge</b></p> <p>This attitude can be addressed more specifically in learning situations that involve the following elements of essential knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Company's expectations in terms of interactions</li> <li>• Change he/she wants to make in terms of interactions at work</li> <li>• Action plan regarding interactions at work</li> </ul> <p><b>Connections between open-mindedness and the operational competency <i>Exercises critical and ethical judgment</i></b></p> <p>This attitude can be addressed more specifically in learning situations that involve the development of this operational competency, notably with respect to the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies his/her strengths and limitations using an assessment form</li> <li>• Distinguishes between fact and opinion</li> <li>• Distinguishes between his/her perceptions and those of his/her superiors and colleagues</li> </ul>

## Complementary Resources

---

The following resources are provided as suggestions only and consist of references that may be consulted in learning situations.

Social Resources	Material Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Superiors</li><li>• Colleagues</li><li>• Practicum supervisors</li><li>• Private sector companies</li><li>• Government agencies</li><li>• Community organizations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assessment form regarding interactions at work</li><li>• Print and electronic documents on workplace communication (magazines, books, Web sites, etc.)</li></ul>

## Learning Situation

---

The following learning situation is provided as an example to show teachers how the principles of the education reform can be applied in the classroom.

It is authentic in the sense that it addresses a real-life situation (taken from the class of situations in the course) that adults may find themselves in. It is sufficiently open and comprehensive to allow adult learners to explore several important aspects related to dealing with this real-life situation.

The examples of actions presented in the course help the teacher to identify those actions that an adult would take to deal with the real-life situation. The teacher can then refer to these examples in order to develop appropriate learning activities.

The learning situation is organized in terms of the three steps of the teaching-learning process, which are as follows:

- planning learning
- actual learning
- integrating and reinvesting learning

These steps highlight the principles of the education reform insofar as they encourage adults to be active, to reflect on their learning and to interact with their peers when the learning context is suitable. They include learning activities and may also include evaluation activities intended to support adults in the learning process.

These activities help learners to construct knowledge related to the compulsory elements of the course that are targeted by the learning situation concerned: one or more categories of actions, essential knowledge and the actions of the operational competencies associated with the categories of actions.

The example provided also refers to certain teaching strategies—instructional methods and techniques—that can be selected according to the learners, the context and the learning environment. Certain learning strategies may also be suggested, as well as a variety of material and social resources.



## Example of a Learning Situation

**Title:** *Making a request, providing criticism or expressing a positive opinion*

**Problem addressed in the learning situation:**

- Making a request, providing criticism or expressing a positive opinion when communicating with superiors or colleagues

**Instructional methods:**

- Interactive presentation
- Exercises in pairs
- Role-playing
- Class discussion

**Expected work:**

- Description of the situation
- Providing examples to illustrate the different points in the assessment form on the quality of workplace interactions
- Participating in a role-playing activity
- Completing an assessment form on the quality of workplace interactions

**Approximate time allotted:** 11 hours for a class of 14 adults

- Presentation of the learning situation and instructions: 15 minutes
- Description of the situation: 30 minutes
- Interactive presentation on communication: 45 minutes
- Exercise in pairs: 2 hours
- Preparing and participating in the role-play activity and evaluating the quality of workplace interactions: 30 minutes per adult
- Class discussion: 30 minutes

## Example of a Learning Situation (*cont.*)

---

### Planning learning

- The teacher asks the adults to participate in a role-play activity based on a work-related situation that involves communicating with superiors and colleagues. He/she asks the adults to provide a detailed description of the work-related situation in which they had difficulty interacting with others. They could also anticipate a work-related situation in which they might experience difficulty interacting with others. In writing, each adult must indicate the following:
  - the situation in question, i.e. the circumstances of the interaction (e.g. joining a work team, participating in a work or a performance assessment meeting, carrying out team work, work conflict)
  - his/her role in the situation described (employer or colleague)
  - subject of the interaction (e.g. request for time off, scheduling change, decreased workload, criticism regarding completed work or behaviour at work)

### Actual learning

- The teacher leads an interactive presentation on the communication techniques used by the sender of the message, the attitudes that foster communication and the factors that influence communication in the workplace.
- The teacher hands out a chart for assessing the quality of workplace interactions. He/she asks them to form teams of two and to find an example and a counter-example that illustrate each point on the chart. He/she encourages the adults to use a dictionary if they feel the need to clarify some of the terms used in the chart.

The chart includes the following points:

- Observance of communication techniques used by the sender of the message:
  - Clear and concise message
  - Ideas presented in an organized manner
  - Ensuring the message has been understood
  - Use of "I" statements
  - Consistency between body language and verbal message
- Consideration of the factors that influence communication:
  - Physical environment
  - Time available, deadlines
  - Individual and cultural differences
  - The audience's status and role
  - Workplace culture
  - Company's expectations in terms of interactions
- The teacher then has the adults reconvene and asks them to provide two or three examples for each of the points in the assessment form. If necessary, he/she provides additional information and clarifies the concepts discussed.

- The teacher provides instructions on how to participate in the role-playing activity and on how to observe others' participation. Point out that the adults must participate in all the role-playing activities, acting as either the employer or the colleague, taking into account the situation imagined by the adult. The teacher addresses the different factors that influence communication and points out the difficulty involved in the situation (being reluctant to grant a request, reacting negatively to criticism, etc.). In addition, some situations may require the participation of several adults.
- As the protagonist in a role-play activity, the adult briefly presents the situation to the class and participates in the role-play. He/she then analyzes the quality of his/her interactions using the assessment form presented in the previous activity.
- As the observer in the role-play activity, the adult assesses how well another adult interacts and provides his/her evaluation.
- After each role-play activity, the teacher does a detailed evaluation of how well the adult interacted and shares this information with the adult in question in front of the class so that all may benefit from this feedback.
- The adult compares his/her own evaluation with that of the observer and that of the teacher. He/she indicates and clarifies the difficulties he/she experienced in the role-play activity.

### **Integrating and reinvesting learning**

Class discussion:

*What did you learn from this role-play activity? What are the advantages of adopting techniques and attitudes that foster good communication? Are there contexts in which communication can be particularly difficult? What difficulties did you experience when you were evaluated on how well you interacted at work? What did you learn from your experience as an observer? How will your experience of this learning situation help you improve your ability to interact at work?*

## Elements of the Course Addressed by the Learning Situation

Class of Situations	
Managing interactions at work	
Learning Situation	
<i>Making a request, providing criticism or expressing a positive opinion</i>	
Categories of Actions	Operational Competency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interactions at work</li> <li>Regulating his/her interactions at work</li> </ul>	<p>Exercises critical and ethical judgment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies his/her strengths and limitations using an assessment form</li> <li>Distinguishes between fact and opinion</li> <li>Distinguishes between his/her perceptions and those of his/her superiors and colleagues</li> </ul>
Essential Knowledge	
<p>Communication techniques specific to the sender of the message</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear and concise message</li> <li>Ideas presented in an organized manner</li> <li>Ensuring the message has been understood</li> <li>Use of "I" statements</li> <li>Consistency between body language and verbal message</li> </ul>	<p>Factors that influence communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical environment</li> <li>Time available, deadlines</li> <li>Individual and cultural differences</li> <li>The audience's status and role</li> <li>Workplace culture</li> <li>Company's expectations in terms of interactions</li> </ul>
Attitudes	Complementary Resource
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respect</li> <li>Open-mindedness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment form regarding interactions at work</li> </ul>