

# SVI-3020-3

## Taking Initiative at Work

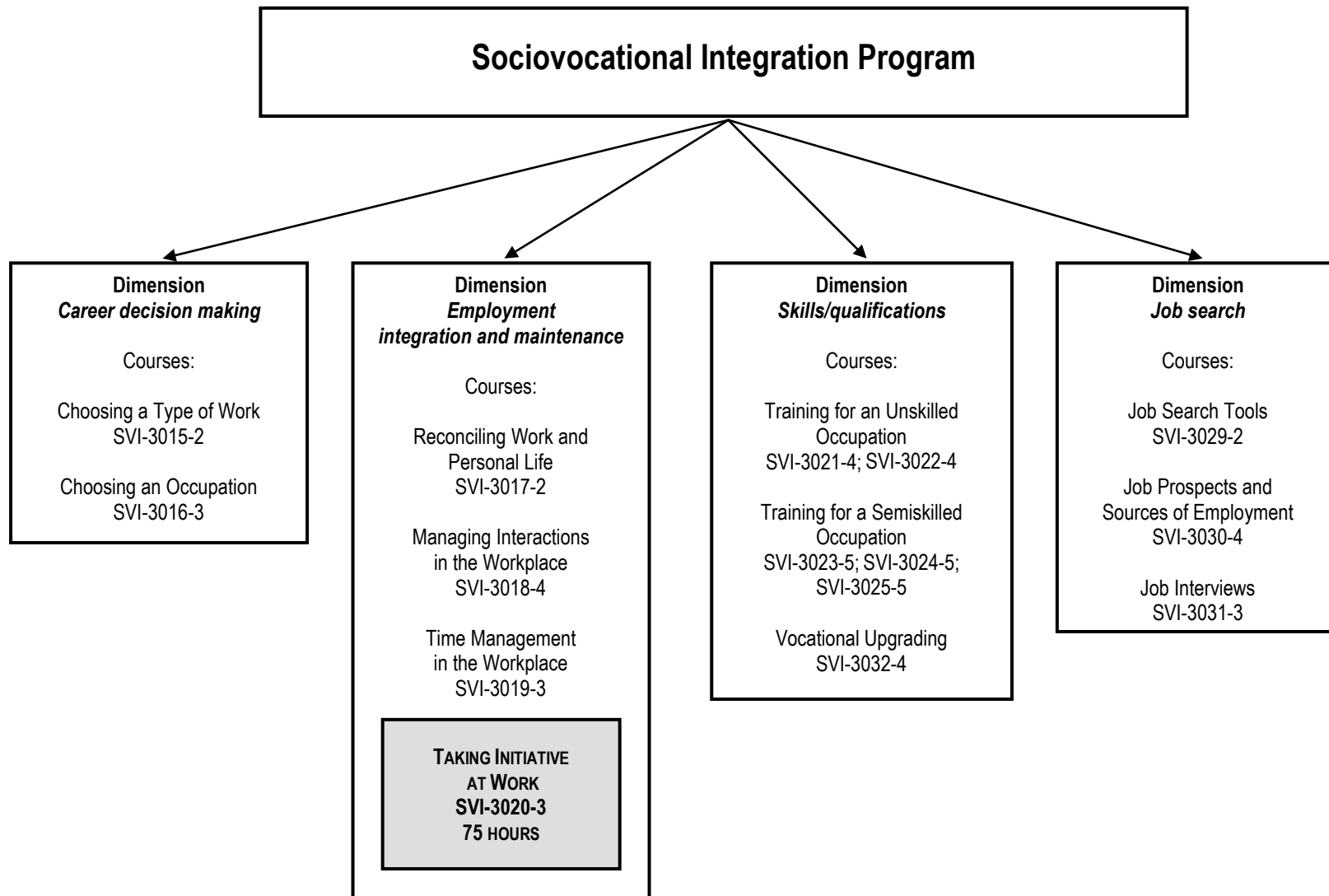
### Secondary Cycle Two



Sociovocational Integration Program



## Situating the Course *Taking Initiative at Work*



## Introduction to the Course *Taking Initiative at Work*

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The objective of the course *Taking Initiative at Work* is to enable adults to deal competently with real-life situations that involve taking initiative at work.

By the end of this course, adults will be able to carry out tasks with a minimum of supervision, to offer their help to superiors or colleagues and to consider different factors in taking initiative 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 *Taking initiative at work*.

Taking initiative at work involves being autonomous, using one's judgment and making decisions in carrying out duties or completing an assignment. If people are to succeed in finding and keeping a job, it is essential that they be able to meet the company's expectations with regard to personal initiative at work. When they carry out unsupervised work or new work tasks, adults are encouraged to use their judgment and to make decisions by taking into account their role and responsibilities within the company. They anticipate the nature and scope of the required work tasks and carry them out with a minimum of supervision.

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
Taking initiative at work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Working alone</li><li>Working without supervision</li><li>New work tasks</li><li>Unexpected work</li><li>Working in teams</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>Carrying out work tasks with a minimum of supervision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cleans the workshop without being told to do so by his/her superior</li> <li>Consults a user's manual when using a fax</li> <li>Uses a new work method to clean the inside of a car</li> <li>Takes responsibility for opening the boutique</li> <li>Asks for a new work tool for assembling furniture</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offering his/her help to superiors or colleagues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps a colleague tidy up his/her work area</li> <li>Informs his/her superior that he/she is available to work when needed</li> <li>Helps a colleague package merchandise so that he/she can meet his/her production deadlines</li> <li>Helps a colleague move heavy materials</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considering different factors in taking initiative at work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consults his/her superior to find out his/her expectations with respect to workers taking initiative in cases of equipment breakdowns</li> <li>Makes sure his/her superior is satisfied with the use of a new work method</li> <li>Develops an action plan for improving his/her ability to anticipate tasks to be carried out</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

Taking initiative at work

### Categories of Actions

- Carrying out work tasks with a minimum of supervision
- Offering his/her help to superiors or colleagues
- Considering different factors in taking initiative at work

### Operational Competencies

Uses creativity

- Anticipates the tasks to be carried out
- Meets challenges
- Uses new work methods to improve his/her efficiency

Exercises critical and ethical judgment

- Fulfills the obligations and observes the limitations associated with his/her role and responsibilities
- 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>34</sup>

- Taking initiative at work
- Role and responsibilities within the company
- Ways of developing his/her sense of initiative at work
- Company's expectations regarding personal initiative at work
- Change he/she wants to make with respect to taking initiative at work
- Action plan for taking initiative at work

<sup>34</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 *Taking initiative at work*, adults carry out their tasks with a minimum of supervision, offer their help to superiors and colleagues, and consider different factors in taking initiative at work.

When carrying out work with a minimum of supervision, adults use different means for developing their sense of initiative at work. They make a point of being actively involved in their work in order to gain experience. They anticipate the tasks to be carried out by taking into account their role and responsibilities within the company. They carry out their work without waiting for instructions or support from their superiors or colleagues. They use the available resources to solve different problems and ask for help from their superiors or colleagues when necessary. They take on challenges, making sure that they have the skills to deal with the gradual increase in the level of difficulty involved. They adopt new work methods to help them increase their efficiency and examine them in order to determine what works and what should be done to avoid making the same mistakes again.

In offering their help to superiors and colleagues, they fulfill the obligations and observe the limitations associated with their role and responsibilities within the company.

When considering different factors in taking initiative at work, adults assess their strengths and limitations using an assessment form and by taking into account the company's expectations regarding personal initiative. 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

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- Carries out work tasks with a minimum of supervision
- Is realistic in offering his/her help to superiors or colleagues
- Carefully considers different factors in taking initiative 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: *Uses creativity* and *Exercises critical and ethical judgment*.

### Contribution of the operational competency *Uses creativity*

This competency involves the capacity to deviate from habits and routines when dealing with work-related situations.

In carrying out work tasks with a minimum of supervision, adults anticipate the tasks to be carried out. They meet challenges and use new work methods in order to improve their efficiency.

### 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.

In offering their help to superiors or colleagues, adults observe their duties and limitations associated with their role and responsibilities.

In considering different factors when taking initiative at work, adults identify their strengths and limitations by 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 terms of taking initiative at work.

## Essential Knowledge

Essential 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.

### Taking initiative at work

- Nature of the initiative (autonomy, judgment, decision making, ability to anticipate)
- Conditions associated with taking initiative (permission, risks, consequences)
- Advantages for the worker
- Advantages for the company

### Role and responsibilities within the company

- Job description
- Company hierarchy

### Ways of developing his/her sense of initiative at work

- Being actively involved in acquiring experience
- Carrying out his/her work without waiting for instructions from his/her superiors or the support of his/her colleagues
- Using available resources to solve different problems
- Asking for help when necessary
- Gradually increasing the level of difficulty of his/her tasks
- Examining new work methods to determine what works and what should be done to avoid making the same mistakes again

### Company's expectations regarding personal initiative at work

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

### Change he/she wants to make with respect to taking initiative at work

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

### Action plan for taking initiative at work

- Ways of making the desired change
- Internal and external resources
- Schedules
- 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.

Self-confidence	Sense of responsibility	Open-mindedness
<p>Adults who are self-confident believe in their own potential and are proactive. Confident adults overcome their fears and make better use of their talents and strengths in carrying out work tasks.</p> <p><b>Connections between self-confidence and certain elements of essential knowledge</b></p> <p>This attitude can be addressed more specifically in learning situations that involve the following element of essential knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ways of developing his/her sense of initiative at work</li> </ul> <p><b>Connections between self-confidence and the operational competency <i>Uses creativity</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>Anticipates the tasks to be carried out</li> <li>Meets challenges</li> <li>Uses new work methods to improve his/her efficiency</li> </ul>	<p>Adults who are responsible keep their commitments and assume the consequences of their decisions when offering their help to superiors or colleagues.</p> <p><b>Connections between a sense of responsibility and certain elements of essential knowledge</b></p> <p>This attitude can be addressed more specifically in learning situations that involve the following element of essential knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Role and responsibilities within the company</li> </ul> <p><b>Connections between a sense of responsibility 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>Fulfills the obligations and observes the limitations associated with his/her role and responsibilities</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 taking initiative 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>Change he/she wants to make with respect to taking initiative at work</li> <li>Action plan for taking initiative 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

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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>• Print and electronic documents on carrying out work tasks (magazines, books, Web sites, etc.)</li> <li>• Work tools and equipment</li> <li>• Safety equipment and materials</li> <li>• Chart for assessing initiative taken at work</li> </ul>

## Learning Situation

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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

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**Title: Doing your part**

**Problem addressed in the learning situation:**

- Taking initiative within a work team

**Instructional methods:**

- Interactive presentation
- Case study
- Guided practice
- One-on-one meetings
- Workplace practicum

**Expected work:**

- Results of the case study
- Writing down their thoughts on taking initiative

**Approximate time allotted:** 10 hours for a class of 14 adults

- Presentation of the learning situation and instructions: 30 minutes
- Interactive presentation on taking initiative at work: 1 hour
- Case study: 30 minutes
- Preparing lunch, serving it, eating it and cleaning up: 4 hours
- Writing down their thoughts on taking initiative: 30 minutes
- One-on-one meetings: 15 minutes per adult



## Example of a Learning Situation (cont.)

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### Planning learning

- The teacher invites the adults to a class lunch<sup>35</sup> to celebrate a special occasion (Halloween, Valentine's Day, Christmas, graduation, etc.). He/she hands out a written invitation a few days before the event.
- The day of the event, the teacher tells the adults that they will be carrying out the following activity to develop their sense of initiative at work:

*Together, we will be preparing our own meal. Each team must prepare a dish, serve it and then clean up their work area, showing initiative in doing so. You will be given an envelope containing a recipe as well as the role and responsibilities of each team member. You have two hours to prepare your recipe.*

- The teacher then divides the class into teams and makes sure that all the adults understand what they are being asked to do and that they are motivated to carry out the activity.

**Note:** *The teacher provides a minimum of guidance to encourage the work teams to take initiative. In addition, he/she makes sure that the teams do not have all the ingredients needed to make the recipe, that the responsibilities are divided up unequally and that some of them are not even assigned.*

### Actual learning

- Before the adults begin preparing the meal, the teacher gives an interactive presentation on taking initiative at work by first defining the term *initiative* and leading a discussion on how taking initiative can be of benefit to both the worker and the company. The adults are then asked to think about an initiative they have taken in the past and to share it with the class. The teacher uses these examples to illustrate ways of developing their sense of initiative at work (being actively involved in acquiring experience, carrying out work without waiting for instructions or support from others, asking for help when necessary, etc.). It is important to emphasize the need for adults to fulfill their obligations and to recognize the limitations of their role and responsibilities at work.
- The adults then form teams and read a description of someone's work day. They identify passages that provide examples of initiatives taken by this worker and relate them to the ways in which adults can develop their sense of initiative at work and to the actions associated with the operational competency *Uses creativity*. The teacher then goes over the answer key for the activity.

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<sup>35</sup> This learning situation can be adapted to the resources available to the adults in the learning centre. For example, the group lunch could be replaced by a room renovation or decoration project.

- The adults go to the work area they have been assigned for preparing the meal and read the contents of their envelope, which contains the recipe as well as information on the role and responsibilities of each team member. The teacher asks the adults to start preparing the meal and reminds them that this activity focuses on taking initiative within a work team. The adults must then prepare the dish in question, serve it and clean up their work area. Throughout the activity, the teacher helps the adults learn about the ways of developing their sense of initiative at work and the actions associated with the operational competency *Uses creativity*. The teacher fills out an assessment form on taking initiative at work so that he/she will be able to provide the adults with feedback.
- The teacher reads the answers given by the adults and meets with them individually to provide them with feedback on taking initiative within a work team by referring to the assessment form he/she completed beforehand. The adults must also identify situations and ways of applying what they have learned in the activity during a future practicum.
- The adults apply what they have learned in the activity in a practicum. The teacher regularly meets with each adult to see how he/she is doing in the practicum, discussing any difficulties encountered, evaluating learning and providing feedback with regard to initiative taken at work. If necessary, the teacher could reuse the assessment form on taking initiative at work.

### **Integrating and reinvesting learning**

- Working alone, the adults answer the following questions:

*Did you take initiative within your work team? Give examples. Did you notice any specific initiative taken by your teammates? Give examples. Is it difficult to take initiative? If so, why? Did you fulfill your role and responsibilities? Did you take on the role and responsibilities assigned to others? What did you learn in this activity?*

## Elements of the Course Addressed by the Learning Situation

Class of Situations	
Taking initiative at work	
Learning Situation	
<i>Doing your part</i>	
Categories of Actions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carrying out work tasks with a minimum of supervision</li> <li>Offering his/her help to superiors or colleagues</li> </ul>	
Operational Competencies	Essential Knowledge
<p>Uses creativity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anticipates the tasks to be carried out</li> <li>Meets challenges</li> <li>Uses new work methods to improve his/her efficiency</li> </ul> <p>Exercises critical and ethical judgment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fulfills the obligations and observes the limitations associated with his/her role and responsibilities</li> </ul>	<p>Taking initiative at work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nature of the initiative (autonomy, judgment, decision-making, ability to anticipate)</li> <li>Conditions associated with taking initiative (permission, risks, consequences)</li> <li>Advantages for the worker</li> <li>Advantages for the company</li> </ul> <p>Ways of developing his/her sense of initiative at work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being actively involved in acquiring experience</li> <li>Carrying out his/her work without waiting for instructions from his/ her superiors or the support of his/her colleagues</li> <li>Using available resources to solve different problems</li> <li>Asking for help when necessary</li> <li>Gradually increasing the level of difficulty of his/her tasks</li> <li>Examining new work methods to determine what works and what should be done to avoid making the same mistakes again</li> </ul>
Attitudes	Complementary Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-confidence</li> <li>Sense of responsibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work tools and equipment (kitchen equipment and ingredients)</li> </ul>