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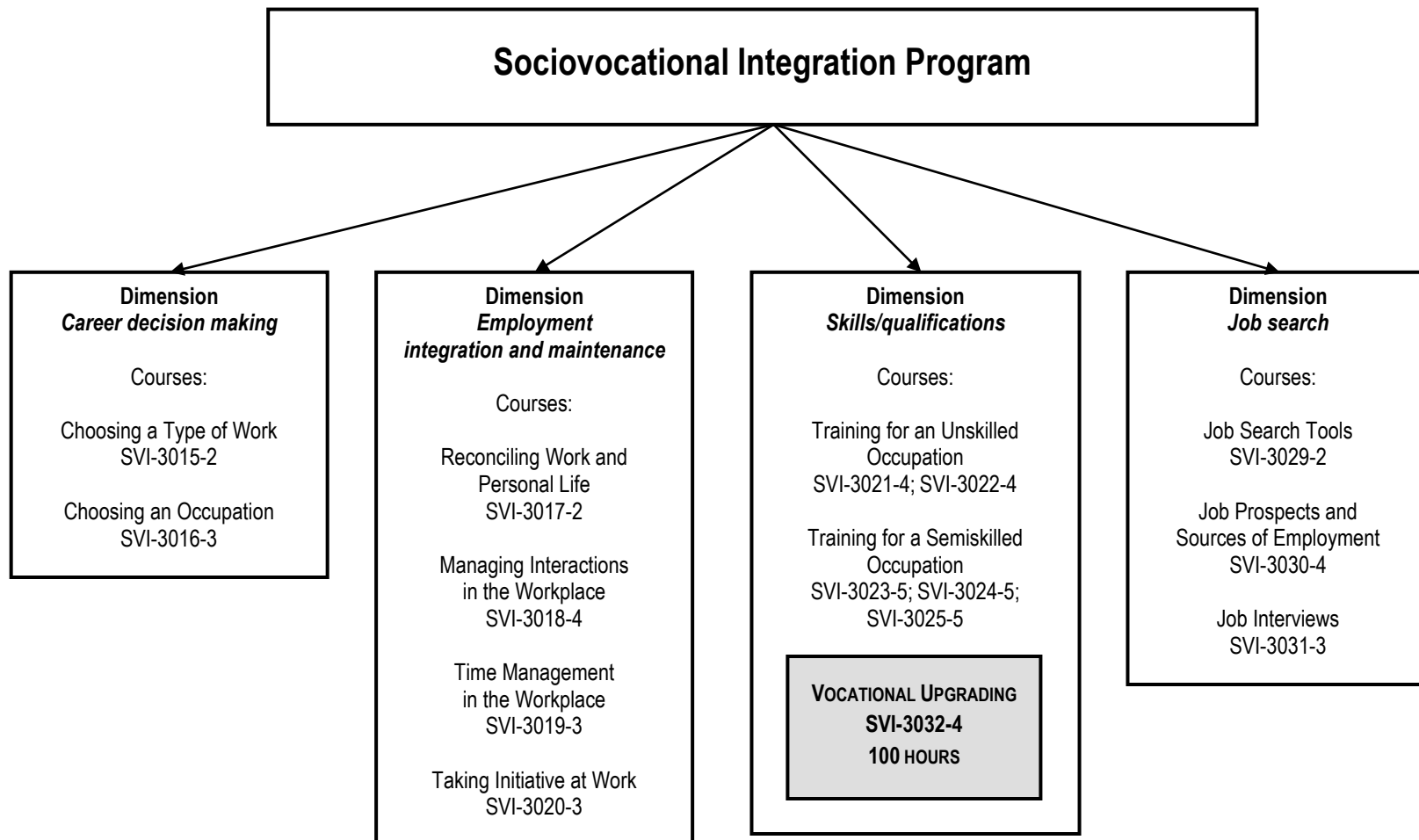
Vocational Upgrading

Secondary Cycle Two



Sociovocational Integration Program

Situating the Course *Vocational Upgrading*



Introduction to the Course *Vocational Upgrading*

The objective of the course *Vocational Upgrading* is to enable adults to deal competently with real-life situations pertaining to their occupational specialty with a view to ongoing improvement.

By the end of this course, adults will be able to determine their vocational development needs and implement their vocational development plan.

In this course, adults carry out a workplace practicum to determine the development needs related to their occupational specialty. They develop the vocational skills outlined in their training plan and apply what they have learned in carrying out work tasks.

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 *Working in one's occupational specialty*.

The globalization of markets and the rapid advancement of knowledge and technology require that adults constantly upgrade the vocational skills related to their occupational specialty. In order to maintain a job skill level that allows them to easily carry out the tasks related to their occupational specialty, adults must take ongoing responsibility for their learning and undertake a process of vocational development by taking into account their needs and the needs of the company where they wish to work.

The table below provides examples of work-related situations associated with this class of situations. In this course, the examples of work-related situations pertain to workplaces where adults can work in their occupational specialty. Moreover, since there are a great number and variety of workplaces, the teacher can plan a practicum in any other work setting that reflects the adults' interests and vocational development needs.

| Class of Situations | Examples of Real-Life Situations ⁴⁸ |
|---|---|
| Working in one's occupational specialty | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working for a retail company • Working for a wholesale company • Working for a repair service • Working for a processing plant |

⁴⁸ These examples may differ depending on the adult's occupational specialty.

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 for the occupation of *secretary*.

| Categories of Actions | Examples of Actions for the Occupation of Secretary ⁴⁹ |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determining his/her vocational development needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consults his/her superior regarding his/her expectations concerning customer service Checks to make sure that a colleague is satisfied with the creation of a new filing system Identifies areas for improvement regarding his/her use of word processing software Participates in a meeting to evaluate the customer service department |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing his/her vocational development plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtains information on a word-processing course Finds an appropriate distance learning course to improve his/her language skills Reads documentation on how to operate office equipment Consults a colleague regarding the rules for writing up the minutes of a meeting Observes a colleague's customer service approach at the reception desk Gets help from a colleague in using the functions of a new software program Applies what he/she has learned about a database software program to carry out work tasks |

⁴⁹ These actions may differ depending on the adult's occupational specialty.

Compulsory Elements and End-of-Course Outcomes

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

Class of Situations

Working in one's occupational specialty

Categories of Actions

- Determining his/her vocational development needs
- Implementing his/her vocational development plan

Operational Competencies

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 his/her vocational development goal
- Evaluates the extent to which he/she is satisfied with each vocational development activity

Acts methodically

- Compares his/her actual performance with the expected performance level
- Follows the procedure
- Records progress made in his/her vocational development plan

Essential Knowledge⁵⁰

- Company's expectations regarding the way work tasks should be carried out
- Vocational development goal
- Vocational development plan
- Conditions for a successful vocational development activity

⁵⁰ 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 *Working in one's occupational specialty*, adults determine their development needs and implement their vocational development plan.

When determining their vocational development needs, adults assess their strengths and limitations using an assessment form and by taking into account the company's expectations regarding the performance of work tasks. In this regard, they compare their actual performance with the expected performance level. They distinguish between fact and opinion and between their perceptions and those of their superiors and colleagues. They set a clear and precise vocational development goal. They explain the extent to which this goal is feasible and meaningful on a personal and occupational level, and estimate the time required to achieve this goal. They draw up an action plan for achieving their vocational development goal. This plan describes the specific aspects of the vocational skills to be developed, the type of development activities that will meet these needs, the internal and external resources they can rely on, deadlines, pitfalls and obstacles they may encounter, as well as alternative solutions and follow-up measures.

When implementing their vocational development plan, adults follow the procedure that will enable them to receive the type of training they have chosen and draw on the relevant internal and external resources. In each case, they take into account the conditions for a successful development activity. They actively participate in the activities, attend them regularly and meet deadlines. As they carry out work tasks, they apply what they have learned. They record their progress in their development plan by making connections with the vocational skills to be developed. They evaluate the extent to which they are satisfied with each vocational development activity and revise their vocational development plan, if necessary.

Evaluation Criteria

- Systematically determines his/her vocational development needs
- Methodically implements his/her vocational development plan

Note: The cooperation of the employer where the adult carries out his/her practicum is essential for evaluation purposes. This partnership can be organized in a variety of ways, but it is important to ensure effective lines of communication.

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: *Exercises critical and ethical judgment* and *Acts methodically*.

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 determining their vocational development needs, 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 their vocational development goal.

When implementing their vocational development plan, adults evaluate the extent to which they are satisfied with each development activity.

Contribution of the operational competency *Acts methodically*

This competency involves the capacity to systematically develop, choose and use techniques and methods appropriate for dealing with work-related situations.

When determining their vocational development needs, adults compare their actual performance with the performance level expected by the company.

When implementing their vocational development plan, adults follow the procedure and record the progress made in their plan.

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.

Company's expectations regarding the way work tasks should be carried out

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

Vocational development goal

- Establishment of a vocational development goal
- Vocational development goal: clear, precise, feasible, meaningful on a personal and occupational level, and limited in time

Vocational development plan

- Vocational skills to be developed
- Types of vocational development (courses given in a school, distance learning, self-training courses given online, consulting with an expert or a resource person, self-teaching)
- Internal (needs, motivation, personal qualities, time) and external (educational institution, training manual, colleague, mentor) resources
- Schedules
- Possible pitfalls and obstacles
- Alternative solutions
- Follow-up measures (periodic review, logbook, discussions with a mentor, etc.)

Conditions for a successful vocational development activity

- Active participation
- Regular attendance
- Observance of deadlines
- Application of what was learned in carrying out his/her work tasks

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.

| Open-mindedness | Sense of responsibility |
|---|---|
| <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 when determining their vocational development needs.</p> <p>Connections between open-mindedness and certain elements of essential knowledge</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"> • Vocational development goal • Vocational development plan <p>Connections between open-mindedness and the operational competency <i>Exercises critical and ethical judgment</i></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"> • 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 | <p>Adults who are responsible keep their commitments and assume the consequences of their decisions when implementing their vocational upgrading plan.</p> <p>Connections between a sense of responsibility and certain elements of essential knowledge</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"> • Conditions for a successful vocational development activity <p>Connections between a sense of responsibility and the operational competency <i>Acts methodically</i></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"> • Follows the procedure • Records progress made in his/her vocational development plan |

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"> • Superiors • Colleagues • Practicum supervisors • Private sector companies • Government agencies • Community organizations • Educational institutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Occupation Classification • Academic and vocational software: <i>Repères</i> or other • Print or electronic documents on carrying out work tasks (user's manuals, magazines, books, Web sites, etc.) • Assessment form on work tasks |

Planning the Workplace Practicum*

In the course *Vocational Upgrading*, adults have an opportunity to update the vocational skills specific to their occupational specialty. Academic and vocational information banks, dictionaries of trades and occupations, and the National Occupation Classification are examples of resources that can help adults plan their workplace practicum, as they contain information regarding the specific skills required for a multitude of trades and occupations. Before the practicum, the adults could, with the help of their teacher, consult these resources in order to draw up a list of the vocational skills they will need and to guide them in choosing a work setting. The first few weeks of the practicum will enable the adults to compare their performance with the expected performance and to more precisely draw up a vocational development plan that reflects their needs.

During the practicum, the supervision provided on the job is intended to help adults to develop the competencies in their training plan and to implement this plan to the extent that the host company permits. One-on-one talks between the teacher and the adult learner could focus on what the adult has learned and what he/she has still to learn with reference to the training plan. This approach makes it easier to identify progress made and possible ways of applying learning in future situations, while giving the adult an opportunity to identify the difficulties encountered and to develop possible solutions.

The workplace supervisor should play a prominent role in helping the adults make progress in the practicum. This person should provide them with appropriate guidance by sharing his/her expertise regarding occupational practices related to the occupation in

question. The supervisor's ability to serve as a role model, to guide the adult learners in the performance of work tasks and to explain the reasons behind each action will help them move beyond mere task repetition to monitor how they carry out their work tasks.

This guidance could not be properly provided without close cooperation between the teacher and workplace personnel. Scheduled meetings between the teacher and the workplace supervisor make it possible to precisely determine the adult's vocational development needs and to guide him/her in implementing his/her training plan. This ongoing interaction also makes it possible to check the quality of workplace activities and their compliance with the adult's training plan as well as the general conditions of the practicum.

Although the company is a partner in the development of certain competencies, responsibility for evaluation lies with the teacher. It is up to the teacher to make the workplace supervisor aware of the observable indicators that best demonstrate the student's development of the program competencies and to provide him/her with the necessary recording tools.

Meetings with the workplace supervisor are an opportunity to gather sufficient objective and pertinent information so that the teacher can make an informed judgment about each adult's level of competency development. This information is then shared with the adults in order to evaluate their performance and help them gain a better understanding of the quality of their achievements. This feedback session, in which the adults are active participants, also enables them to monitor how they carry out their work tasks and to recognize their strengths and needs, as well as the steps necessary to achieve success.

* Adapted from: Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, *Work-Oriented Training Path: Guide to Organizing Practicums in the Workplace*, interim version, [n. d.].