



A Study Guide for Purposeful Exploration of Adult  
Education for Work:  
Teaching and Learning in a Work Context



A Project Developed by the *LINC S* Resource Collection Staff for the  
U. S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education

# A Study Guide for Purposeful Exploration of Adult Education for Work: Teaching and Learning in a Work Context

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## Preface

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education funds the Literacy Information and Communication System (*LINCS*). *LINCS* is a national dissemination, resource gathering, and professional development system providing information on a wide variety of literacy-relevant topics, issues, and resources. One aspect of *LINCS* is the online Resource Collections: 1) Basic Skills (reading, writing, mathematics & numeracy, and health literacy); 2) Program Management (program improvement, learning disabilities, assessment, and transitions to postsecondary education); and 3) Workforce Competitiveness (English language acquisition, technology, and workforce education). You can find the contents of all three collections, as well as many other valuable resources at the *LINCS* website <http://lincs.ed.gov>

The *LINCS* project team and expert reviewers have invested considerable time, energy, and expertise into selecting appropriate, evidence-based, high-quality resources for the collections. This rigorous process ensures that resources in the collections are based on solid, robust evidence or research. To learn more about the review process and see a list of the reviewers, go to the [LINCS Resource Collection Review Process](#).

## About This Study Guide

This study guide is intended to help *LINCS* users become more familiar with a resource in the Workforce Education Collection. Adult education practitioners can use it as a professional learning tool. Adaptations may be made to the activities included for individual or program-wide professional development activities.

The topic for this study guide is **teaching and learning in a work context**. This topic was chosen to help build a knowledge base on this timely and critical topic and to introduce the skills needed to apply that knowledge in practice.

Within the study guide are a number of resources to help you understand the concept of teaching and learning in a work context. These resources are hyperlinked so that you can access them easily. They are also included in “Weblinks Used in this Study Guide” at the end.

This study guide features the resource, One Step Forward Initiative—[Guide to Adult Education for Work: Transforming Adult Education to Grow a Skilled Workforce](#). (This will be referred to as the *Guide to Adult Education for Work*.)

This resource was selected because it provides a comprehensive and current view of the concept. Additional resources are used as part of some activities; others are included to provide more information about related issues.

In the Introduction to the *Guide to Adult Education for Work*, its authors explain that it “outlines the specific steps policymakers, program administrators, and providers can take to begin to transform their current Adult Education programs to Adult Education for Work” .<sup>i</sup> As you work through this study guide, you will become familiar with the ideas and strategies that define this new approach. You will be able to consider ways you can adapt your program structures and instructional practices to reflect this new model for the “education and training [of] low-skilled adults [so they can] become prepared for post-secondary education or training, and for family-sustaining employment and career advancement.”<sup>ii</sup>

### **Why is teaching and learning in a work context an important topic?**

Adult education has traditionally been a community-based effort focused on individual students’ educational needs and goals. These needs and goals were sometimes work-related, but were more often related to an immediate need or life skill, such as obtaining a driver’s license or understanding bills. The adult education system in the United States, as well as in other nations, is shifting focus to integrate teaching and learning of basic skills within a work context and to support smooth transitions to postsecondary education or training and to work.

Research studies from the military, cognitive and behavioral sciences, as well as adult education workforce programs show that contextualized teaching and learning is very effective, especially for adults. To gain an understanding of contextualized learning, first read Tom Sticht’s [\*The Theory Behind Content-Based Instruction\*](#).

Adult education programs that wish to remain competitive in the future need to restructure to provide their clients with work-focused educational opportunities. This framework requires strong partnerships and alignment across various service agencies to help adults develop career plans and enroll in education programs so they can obtain skilled jobs and begin to move along a career path.

Forward-looking public and non-profit adult programs are successfully aligning programs and services and building a well-coordinated system to help adults set career goals and to make the transition from adult basic education to postsecondary or advanced training and work. This system is most often referred to as “career pathways.” Effective partnerships among educators, workforce development systems, employers, and social service agencies are critical. The high priority industries and jobs within a region provide raw materials, work-based problems, skills, and knowledge that can be used to teach and learn in a work-contextualized program tailored to community needs and student interests.

## Organization of this Study Guide

This study guide is divided into three sections.

Section 1: Contextualized Instruction for Work contains a series of activities that will

- introduce you to the concept of contextualized instruction;
- help you develop instructional strategies for teaching basic skills in the context of work;
- identify ways to encourage the transfer of learning from the classroom to the workplace.

Section 2: The Importance of Adult Education for Work contains a series of activities designed to help you

- review the first section of the *Guide to Adult Education for Work* in order to understand the need for a new model of adult education;
- reflect on the various elements that go into a collaborative approach to providing services to adult learners;
- consider ways to transform your existing program into an Adult Education for Work system.

Section 3: Quality Elements of a Model Adult Education for Work Program presents

- the quality elements of outstanding programs described in the *Guide to Adult Education for Work*;
- a series of activities based on the seven focus areas of an Adult Education for Work program.

## Intended Audience

The intended audience for this study guide includes teachers, administrators, and community partners. The goal of the study guide is to provide professional learning opportunities for a broad spectrum of adult education practitioners. Individuals or small groups may use this document to learn more about contextualized teaching and learning for work. An individual practitioner can work through the readings and activities as a self-directed study. Indeed, Section 1 contains activities most appropriate for the classroom teacher and Section 2 contains activities most appropriate for an administrator. Ideally, however, administrators, teachers, and agency partners should work together to ensure proper understanding of the role of adult education in their local workforce development system. Some of the activities focus on program structure, some on instructional practice, and others on ways to work effectively in collaboration with partner agencies. Working together will provide opportunities to look at the topic from various, sometimes conflicting, perspectives.

After completing the readings and activities, users should be able to

- identify reasons that teaching and learning in a work context is important in the 21<sup>st</sup> century;
- explain how this topic is relevant for the work they do;
- describe the basic principles and components of a career pathways system;
- name the seven focus areas of a model adult education for work program described in the *Guide to Adult Education for Work*.

## Getting Started

To easily access the *LINCS* resources, you will need a computer with high-speed Internet access.

Print one copy of this study guide and (if desired) one copy of the [\*Guide to Adult Education for Work\*](#) for each member of the study group.

If you are using this study guide as a self-study exercise, think about what you want to learn and why. Think also about others with whom you can share your experience. Keep your long-term goal in mind as you read and complete the exercises.

If you are working in a group, set a time table. Determine which sections and activities you will complete before each session and decide who will facilitate each meeting.

To keep this study guide user friendly, all websites listed within the text are hyperlinked. If your computer cannot access the website via the hyperlink, you can find the website URL on page 70 in the section titled “Weblinks Used in this Study Guide.” Direct quotations have been kept to a minimum. They are referenced in the End Notes on page 74.

A final note: This study guide has links to other documents both in and outside of the *LINCS* collections. You may choose to refer to them while completing the exercises or wait until you have finished a section (or the entire study guide) and then read supplemental resources for further background information and knowledge.





Section 1  
**Contextualized Instruction  
for Work**

## Introduction to Section 1: Contextualized Instruction for Work

Adult education program staff who wish to remain current with the future need to know how to frame their programs as work-focused educational opportunities. By doing so, they will be better able to serve their students, providing them with the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and resources they need to move into postsecondary education and training or work.

### **What does it mean to frame your program as a work-focused educational opportunity?**

Adult education programs should

- teach work-readiness and employability skills to prepare students for work and help them to be successful at work;
- teach the basic academic skills in a work context so students understand how those skills will be used in a variety of occupations;
- build collaborative relationships with a variety of agencies and businesses in their community to offer a comprehensive education and a coordinated set of services to their students

The focus of this section is on classroom instruction. It contains a series of activities that will

- introduce you to the concept of contextualized instruction;
- help you develop instructional strategies for teaching basic skills in the context of work;
- identify ways to encourage the transfer of learning from the classroom to the workplace.

Activity #1 introduces contextualized instruction. You will read a research report and note items of interest.

Activity #2 introduces a process for infusing basic skill activities in the context of the workplace and invites you to explore the O\*NET OnLine website.

Activity #3 asks you to develop or adapt lessons to include work-contextualized situations.

Activity #4 will introduce more resources to help you plan to use work-contextualized instruction in your classroom.

Although this section focuses on instruction, there are activities and responsibilities that can be shared by administrators, agency providers, and business partners. While working through this set of readings and activities:

1. instructors should keep in mind the long-term goals of the students in their classes;
2. administrators should consider how they can provide additional professional development opportunities, materials, and support for teachers and students;
3. agency providers could identify services that they can provide to support adult education programs and students; and
4. business partners might help in identifying High Priority Occupations in the region and the skills required for entry-level jobs in those fields.

## Activity 1.1

### Understanding Work Contextualized Instruction

#### Objective

Explore the concept of contextualized instruction for work.

#### Description

This activity is an introduction to the concept of contextualized instruction. You will read a research report, list points of interest, and identify key assumptions mentioned within the article.

#### Step 1:

Read the [\*EFF Research Principle: A Contextualized Approach to Curriculum and Instruction\*](#) by Marilyn K. Gillespie.

This *EFF Research to Practice Note* provides an introduction to contextualized instruction and describes examples of specific classroom activities.

As you read, note at least three (3) ideas that you find interesting, important, or intriguing. (Note: The focus of this instructional approach is on the application and transfer of knowledge rather than the development of basic skills.)

1.

2.

3.

#### Step 2:

Identify the three key assumptions upon which this *Research to Practice Note* is based.

1.

2.

3.

**Step 3:**

Choose at least three of the “For Reflection” exercises in the article. Consider your own experiences and respond to the questions in the exercises as prompts for individual journal entries or as topics group discussion.

For additional information and strategies for developing basic skills in context, refer to the [L/NCS Basic Skills Resource Collection](#), [Workforce Competitiveness](#), and the [Program Management/Transitions to Postsecondary Collection](#).

Suggested resources include:

**Basic Skills**

- [Creating Authentic Materials and Activities for the Adult Literacy Classroom](#)
- [Construction Math Toolkit](#)
- [Literacy and Numeracy for Adults: Making Sense of Numbers to Solve Problems](#)

**Workforce Competitiveness**

- [ABE Career Connections: A Manual for Integrating Adult Basic Education into Career Pathways](#)
- [Business Results Through Essential Skills and Literacy](#)
- [Connecting Literacy, Learning, and Work](#)
- [The Embedded Learning Portal](#)

**Program Management**

- [Learners’ Engagement in Adult Literacy Education \(NCSALL Research Brief\)](#)
- [Beyond Basic Skills: State Strategies to Connect Low-Skilled Students to an Employer-Valued Postsecondary Education](#)
- [Breaking Through: Contextualized Toolkit](#)

## Activity 1.2

### Work Tasks and Related Basic Skills

#### Objective

Identify workplace tasks that require the application of basic academic skills: reading, writing, and mathematics.

#### Description

This activity invites students to think about careers they may want to pursue. There are several excellent websites you can use. Two new websites from the U.S. Department of Labor are good places to begin. [My Next Move](#) is geared to individuals in career exploration and is at a lower reading level. [CareerOneStop](#) is a website that presents career exploration, information about required education and training, salary and benefits, resumes and interviews and more. The [O\\*NET OnLine](#) website has information about jobs and about specific work tasks for jobs. This activity presents a process you can use to develop instructional strategies for teaching basic skills in the context of the workplace. To begin, have your students explore these websites. Consider the various targeted occupations your students identified in your geographic area as promising fields of employment to pursue. By navigating the O\*NET website you will learn about specific tasks required. Finally, you will map basic skills (reading, writing, and mathematics) needed to accomplish each task.

#### Step 1:

Determine the occupational interests of the students in your classroom. First, have them complete **an interest assessment or interest inventory**. A free computerized version can be found on the [O\\*NET website](#).

Review the results with your students. Encourage them to consider the high-demand jobs within your local area. Contact staff from your local One-Stop Career Center for this information.

#### Step 2:

With your students, choose two (2) occupations with potential for employment in your area:

- 1.
- 2.

**Step 3:**

Visit the [O\\*NET OnLine](#), [My Next Move](#), and/or [Career One Stop](#) websites to learn more about the selected occupations.

For each occupation, list three (3) specific tasks that are key components of this job. Identify specific reading, writing, and mathematics skills required to complete this work. Consider how the performance of these tasks requires the application of these skills. Use Table 1 to map the tasks and related skills. Complete a separate table for each of the occupations you identified in Step 2. Use the example about welding as a model.

**Table 1: WORK TASKS AND RELATED BASIC SKILLS SAMPLE**

<p><b>Occupation:</b> WELDER</p> <p><b>Job Description:</b> Using hand-welding or flame-cutting equipment to weld or join metal components or to fill holes, indentations, or seams of fabricated metal products</p>
<p><b>Work Task or Activity:</b> Observing, receiving, and otherwise obtaining information from all relevant sources</p> <p><b>Reading Skill:</b> Read a blue print, work order, or memo to identify specifications</p> <p><b>Instructional Focus:</b> “Reading to do,” establishing the purpose of a document, understanding specific vocabulary, structure and format of work-related materials, identifying key information, following a set of instructions</p>
<p><b>Work Task or Activity:</b> Providing information to supervisors, co-workers, and subordinates in written form (memo, letter, or email)</p> <p><b>Writing Skill:</b> Make regular entries in a record keeping log, write a note, complete a form, or send an email to notify supervisors of faulty equipment or defective materials</p> <p><b>Instructional Focus:</b> Using key concepts and vocabulary, following a set of directions, having awareness of audience, identifying the purpose and filling out short forms and reports, writing a brief memo, knowing appropriate word choice</p>
<p><b>Work Task or Activity:</b> Examine work pieces for defects and measure work pieces with straightedges or templates to ensure conformance with specifications</p> <p><b>Mathematics Skill:</b> Use a tape measure, protractor, gauge, scale, or other device to ensure proper angles, length, width, and weight</p> <p><b>Instructional Focus:</b> Reading specifications, making accurate measurements, understanding multi-step directions, interpreting results, understanding the basics of statistical process control, such as averaging positive and negative numbers</p>



**Table 1: WORK TASKS AND RELATED BASIC SKILLS *TEMPLATE***

<p><b>Occupation:</b></p> <p><b>Job Description:</b></p>
<p><b>Work Task or Activity:</b></p> <p><b>Reading Skill:</b></p> <p><b>Instructional Focus:</b></p>
<p><b>Work Task or Activity:</b></p> <p><b>Writing Skill:</b></p> <p><b>Instructional Focus:</b></p>
<p><b>Work Task or Activity:</b></p> <p><b>Mathematics Skill:</b></p> <p><b>Instructional Focus:</b></p>

## Activity 1.3

### Work-Contextualized Instructional Activities

#### Objective

Develop or adapt classroom exercises to include work-contextualized scenarios.

#### Description

In this activity, you will reflect on what research tells us about cognitive strategies and the transfer of learning from one context to another. Putting these ideas in practice, you will create classroom activities based on the work tasks and basic skills identified in Activity 1.2.

#### Step 1:

The [EFF Research to Practice Note 3](#), *EFF Research Principle: A Contextualized Approach to Curriculum and Instruction*, defines cognitive strategies as “any behavior, thought, or action a learner engages in during learning that is intended to influence the acquisition, storage in memory, integration, or availability for future use of new knowledge and skills”.<sup>iii</sup> Describe a strategy that you could use to help a learner acquire and store new information (cognitive strategy).

Write about or discuss the following questions:

- How could students demonstrate their newly learned skills?
- What opportunities will they have to practice these skills?
- How could you use contextualized examples to simulate various work environments?

#### Step 2:

The *EFF Research to Practice Note* defines the transfer of learning as “the ability to extend or adapt what has been learned in one context to new problems and settings.”<sup>iv</sup>

Describe how you could encourage the transfer of learning in your classroom:

- How do you connect the skills being taught to ways the skills are used in other areas of students’ lives?
- How many different examples do you share or demonstrate in the classroom?
- What opportunities do students have to practice the skills being taught?

#### Step 3:

With your students brainstorm ideas for replicating the workplace tasks in the adult education classroom to develop transferable learning.

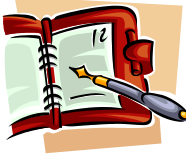
**Step 4:**

List instructional strategies that encourage students' retention and application of new knowledge and skills.

**Step 5:**

Use Planning Form 1 to create a contextualized activity for use in your classroom.

## Planning Form 1: WORK-CONTEXTUALIZED CLASSROOM ACTIVITY



# Work-Contextualized Classroom Activity Planning Form

1. Choose a basic skill (reading, writing, or math) upon which you will focus your instruction.
2. List the occupational goal for one student in your classroom.
3. What tasks, related to the chosen basic skill, are performed in this occupation? Refer to the [O\\*NET OnLine](#), [My Next Move](#), and/or [CareerOneStop](#) websites.
4. How could you replicate these tasks in your classroom? Is there anything you can do to simulate the work environment one would encounter in this occupation?
5. What other basic skills could you target for this occupation?

---

## Activity 1.4

### Exploring Instructional Resources

#### Objective

Review instructional materials designed to assist planning for contextualizing instruction within the classroom.

#### Description

In this activity, you will explore two online resources that include information, ideas, and examples of contextualized education for work.

#### Step 1:

To learn more about contextualized instruction, explore [Module 4 – Instructional Techniques: Contextual Instruction](#) within the Basics of Adult Literacy Education online course.

The four sections within this module examine various ways in which instructors can contextualize instruction. The discussion within the module will provide you with an overview of contextualized instruction and resources for further study.

#### Step 2:

Explore the [LINCS Career Pathways Instructional Materials Library](#).

This library contains instructional materials you can use to develop and implement work-based education programs leading to career pathways for students in your Adult Basic Education and General Educational Development (GED®) programs. You can find descriptions of the 16 clusters that are outlined in [The National Career Clusters™](#) Framework. The Career Clusters link school-based learning with the knowledge and skills required for success in the workplace. Each Career Cluster is a grouping of occupations and industries based on the knowledge and skills that they require. The clusters comprise:

- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
- Architecture and Construction
- Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communications
- Business Management and Administration
- Education and Training
- Finance
- Government and Public Administration
- Health Science
- Hospitality and Tourism

- Human Services
- Information Technology Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Safety
- Manufacturing
- Marketing
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
- Transportation, Distribution and Logistics

These occupational categories define the skills and knowledge needed to work in particular industries, and are listed by title with a short abstract and link to the resource.

**Step 3:**

Share these resources with others in your program during a staff meeting. Discuss ways you can use these resources to plan instructional activities or program improvement strategies.



Section 2  
**The Importance of Adult  
Education for Work**

## Introduction to Section 2: The Importance of Adult Education for Work

This section focuses on the underlying concepts of a model for adult education programs designed to prepare students to move into post-secondary education or training and work. It contains a series of activities designed to help you

- review the first section of the *Guide to Adult Education for Work* in order to understand the need for a new model of adult education;
- reflect on the various elements that go into a collaborative approach to providing services to adult learners;
- consider ways to transform your instruction and elements of your existing program into an Adult Education for Work system.

Activity #1 will have you think about your current beliefs about adult education.

Activity #2 invites you to look at the rationale for incorporating workforce skills and examine the implications this has for your program.

Activity #3 will have you consider the return on investment.

Activity #4 will address the roles and responsibilities of the different personnel in the adult education program and restructuring these for the Adult Education for Work concept.

Activity #5 addresses the language of adult education.

Activity #6 explores the services provided by local workforce partners to students in your program.

While working through these activities, you will become familiar with a workforce development system that is based on career pathways. You will be guided through a series of readings and activities that will assist you in identifying the various roles adult education practitioners might play in the overall Workforce Development System. You and your colleagues will identify ways that your programs can provide services to meet the needs of the local workforce. Together you will select areas on which to focus your program improvement efforts and develop a plan to implement your decisions.

There are variations in these activities for instructors, administrators, and partners:

- Classroom instructors should consider the implications the Adult Education for Work model has for the curriculum goals and classroom activities.
- Program administrators should compare the structures, goals, and practices of existing adult education programs with the one proposed in the *Guide to Adult Education for Work*.



- Agency partners might look for ways to coordinate services provided to adult learners in the community.
- Business partners can identify and describe short- and long-term demand for skilled workers in the region.

## Activity 2.1

### Beliefs about Adult Education

#### Objective

Reflect on current beliefs about the function of adult education and its place within a system to prepare students for the workforce.

#### Description

In this activity you will reflect on a series of statements about adult education.

#### Step 1:

Based on your current knowledge and beliefs, respond to each of statement using the following scale:

5 – Strongly Agree    4 – Agree    3 – Not sure    2 – Disagree    1 – Strongly Disagree

<i>I am knowledgeable about the increased educational demands of the United States and global economies.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
<i>I am familiar with current and expected future trends in workforce demands.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
<i>Adult education programs are largely separate from the rest of the educational system.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
<i>The appropriate focus of adult education programs is to help students reach their short-term goals.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
<i>I am comfortable with my knowledge and understanding of contextualized instruction.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
<i>Educators and agency partners in my community work together to provide services to meet the needs of adult learners and their families.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
<i>Business leaders in my community work closely with educators to identify skills and knowledge needed for employment in high demand occupations in our region.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
<i>I am familiar with the concept of career pathways.</i>	5	4	3	2	1
<i>Adult education practitioners should actively strive to prepare students to enter the workforce or go on to further education or training.</i>	5	4	3	2	1

**Step 2:**

As you read through the [Guide to Adult Education for Work](#) and complete the activities in Section 2, refer back to your responses and reflect on how your current beliefs compare to the assumptions and suggestions presented by the National Center on Education and the Economy.

## Activity 2.2

### *Guide to Adult Education for Work: Part 1*

#### **Objective**

Explore the reasons for incorporating workforce skills in the adult education system.

#### **Description**

This activity is based on the first part of the *Guide to Adult Education for Work*, which includes the background information necessary to understand the need for incorporating workforce skills as a major component of adult education. It introduces the concept of career pathways and the implications for adult educators and their community partners. You will consider how you might use this information so that your program can become part of the local workforce development system.

#### **Step 1:**

Read pages 1 – 12 in the [\*Guide to Adult Education for Work\*](#).

#### **Step 2:**

As you are reading this section, use the first column in Table 2 the *Guide to Adult Education for Work*, part 1 on the following page to list five key points that you find significant.

#### **Step 3:**

Use the second column in the table to note any implications these issues may have for the system of adult education in your community.

#### **Step 4:**

Together with colleagues and community partners, discuss the information in the *Guide to Adult Education for Work* and brainstorm ideas for developing a career pathways learning system for adult students within your local workforce development region.

**Table 2: *GUIDE TO ADULT EDUCATION FOR WORK, Part 1***

Key points	Implications for the adult education system in our region
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

## Activity 2.3

### Benefits of Increasing Educational Attainment

#### Objective

Understand the return on investment when students increase their educational attainment.

#### Description

This activity refers back to information presented in the *Guide to Adult Education for Work* and the conclusions included in the **Adult Goals and Objectives** section of [Washington's Strategic Plan for Workforce Development](#). You will consider the implications of low levels of educational attainment for individuals and communities in your state and/or region.

#### Step 1:

Re-read the section entitled **Why are adult education programs inadequate to meet current needs?** on pages 6 and 7 in the [Guide to Adult Education for Work](#).

#### Step 2:

Read the following excerpt from **Adult Goals and Objectives** portion of *Washington's Strategic Plan for Workforce Development*.

#### ***Increasing Education Attainment has Multiple Benefits***

Increased levels of educational attainment lead to increased earnings over a lifetime and increased tax revenues. Workforce Board evaluations of workforce education programs consistently show that students participating in these programs earn more during their lifetimes than individuals from similar backgrounds who do not participate in these programs. Our evaluations also show that the higher taxes generated by those who receive further education and job training outweigh the cost of these programs. Thus, taxpayers receive a significant return on investment.

At the same time, individuals with the lowest educational levels have trouble getting jobs and keeping them, let alone moving up the career ladder. There are other serious consequences related to health, inequality and crime. Adult literacy surveys show that adults with the lowest levels of literacy work fewer hours, earn lower wages, and are more likely to live in poverty than adults having higher literacy levels. Education and health are also linked. Studies show that educational background and opportunity is a "social determinant of health." Since students who do not fare well in our education system are over-

represented among racial and ethnic minorities, these racial and ethnic minorities are also at greater risk of poor health outcomes.

The fact is that currently one out of four working families with children—a total of 42 million people—are low-income. These families pay a higher percentage of their income for housing than those earning more, are far less likely to have health insurance, and often lack the education and skills required to succeed in today's skills-driven economy.<sup>v</sup>

**Step 3:**

Reflect on what you've read by answering the following questions:

1. How closely does the profile of adults with low levels of educational achievement align with your observations of students in your adult education program?
2. How might a system focused on workforce preparation for poverty rates and the need for health services for individuals in your community?
3. Are there ways in which your current system of educational programming and services match the “new basics” outlined on p. 7 of the [Guide to Adult Education for Work?](#)

## Activity 2.4

### Roles and Responsibilities of Adult Educators

#### **Objective**

Identify and reflect on your role in the adult education system.

#### **Description**

In this activity you will describe your role in the adult education system in its current form. You will then consider how your work might be focused more directly to help students prepare for post-secondary education or training and work.

#### **Step 1:**

Write a short description of your role within the existing structure of adult education in your community.

Job title:

School, agency, or business affiliation:

Description:



**Step 2:**

Describe how the work you do with students helps them prepare to move on for more education or training or to move directly into the workplace.

**Step 3:**

Consider what you might do differently if you were to focus your program and/or classroom more directly on Adult Education for Work. What changes would you make in the existing program and/or classroom structure, policies, and practices?

## Activity 2.5

### Speaking the Same Language: Definitions

#### Objective

Define terms commonly used in the field of adult education.

#### Description

In this activity, you will consider several commonly used terms and acronyms used in adult education. You will determine ways that each of these affects your program structure and the instruction that you deliver.

#### Step 1:

How familiar are you with the following terms that apply to adult education programs and the content they deliver? Describe how you understand each. This activity can evoke interesting and sometimes different responses depending on the role you play in the adult education program.

Adult Basic Education (ABE)

Adult Secondary Education (ASE)

English as a Second Language (ESL)

One-Stop Career Centers

Career Pathways

Career Ladders

National Career Readiness Certificate

Workforce Investment Act

High Priority Occupations

**Step 2:**

Use the following questions as a guide to group discussion or personal reflection:

1. How much of your program is devoted to each of the categories listed above?
2. Are there any program elements listed that you would like to know more about?
3. For administrators: How might additional knowledge about these things affect your overall program structure?
4. For teachers: How might the concepts underlying each term impact individual students?
5. How can you use this information to enhance relationships with and interactions between public and private partners in providing adult education services?

## Activity 2.6

### Key Partners in Workforce Development

#### Objective

Explain the services provided by local workforce partners to students in adult education programs.

#### Description

This activity will help you identify your local workforce partners and the services they provide. You will explore how your students could benefit from these services.

#### Step 1:

The first block of the chart on page 11 of the [Guide to Adult Education for Work](#) identifies the roles and responsibilities of key partners in a successful career pathways system. As an adult education practitioner, you should be aware of these key partners and the services they provide.

Use Table 3 (p. 35) **LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS – SERVICES OFFERED** to identify the key workforce partners in your area. Identify at least one way your students could benefit from the services provided by each of these partners.

#### Step 2:

After completing Table 3, answer the following questions in discussion or in personal reflection:

1. What do you know about other workforce partners in your community?
2. Is there overlap in services provided by different workforce partners?
3. Are there ways in which various partners in the Workforce Development System might work together more closely to effectively serve adult students in your region?
4. What steps can you take to help your students take best advantage of the various agencies and organizations?

**Table 3: LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS – SERVICES OFFERED**

	Workforce Partner(s)	How can your students benefit from the services provided by these partners?
State agency that funds your adult education program		
Adult education providers		
Postsecondary and technical institutions (including community colleges)		
Workforce Investment Boards		
One-Stop Career Centers		
Career and technical education		
Social services agencies		
Community-based, faith-based, and/or volunteer organizations		
Others that provide or facilitate adult education and supportive services		

## Activity 2.7

### Collaborations in the Workforce Development System

#### Objective

Describe the role of your program or agency in the local Workforce Development System.

#### Description

This activity explores the role your program plays in the Workforce Development System in your region.

#### Step 1:

Now that you have an understanding of the key partners within your Workforce Development System, identify where your program fits within this system. Answer these questions in group discussion or individual reflection:

1. How are you collaborating with at least one of the key partners identified?
2. What does this partnership mean to you as an adult education practitioner?
3. Are there formal partner agreements established that specify the details of the collaboration?
4. How might you build on these partnerships to equip your students for success in finding work or moving on to postsecondary education and training?
5. Are there other agencies or businesses in your community that you would like to work with more closely?
6. What specific steps can you take to strengthen relationships between partners?

## Activity 2.8

### Contrasting Models of Adult Education

#### Objective

Compare features of traditional and restructured adult education programs.

#### Description

You will begin by examining the chart entitled **Moving Towards “New Basics” for Adult Education for Work** on page 7 in the [Guide to Adult Education for Work](#). As you work through this activity, you will identify the specific features of two different models for adult education.

#### Step 1:

Review the chart on page 7 entitled **Moving Towards “New Basics” for Adult Education for Work** in the *Guide to Adult Education for Work*. Using Table 4 **PRINCIPLES OF ADULT EDUCATION** on pages 38-39, record descriptions of what classroom instruction might look like in these two models for adult education programs.

#### Step 2:

Using the chart on page 7 of the *Guide to Adult Education for Work* and the ideas you listed in Table 4, determine where your program falls along this continuum for each of the identified focus areas.

**Table 4: PRINCIPLES OF ADULT EDUCATION**

	<b>Traditional Model</b>	<b>Adult Education for Work Model</b>
Customer	Student is the primary customer.	Students and employers are the customers.
Goal of curricula	Life skills, GED®, or adult diploma are the primary goals.	Work readiness skills and preparation for postsecondary education are the primary goals.
Content focus	Applying literacy, numeracy and English language learning to everyday life tasks.	Literacy and numeracy and English language learning as well as thinking and reasoning skills such as problem solving, team work and following instructions.



**Table 4: PRINCIPLES OF ADULT EDUCATION, cont.**

	<b>Traditional Model</b>	<b>Adult Education for Work Model</b>
How work readiness is taught	Might include some employment-related tasks like filling out a job application.	Teaches basic skills in a work context and stresses good work habits such as punctuality, diligence, communication, and appropriate dress and behavior.
Program focus	Driven by students' personal goals, needs and interests.	Driven by students' employment goals, the skill needs of family-sustaining jobs and the entry requirements for postsecondary education and training.
End goal	Many adult education students never achieve a GED®, much less the postsecondary education that is key to success in today's economy.	Most students achieve a high level of basic and workforce readiness skills and are prepared to enter postsecondary education and training and family-sustaining jobs.

## Activity 2.9

### Establishing Goals for Program Improvement

#### Objective

Identify areas for program improvement efforts.

#### Description

This activity reviews the Key Changes listed in the last block of the chart on page 11 of the [Guide to Adult Education for Work](#). You will consider what you can do to make the paradigm shift from your existing adult education program to one that implements the elements of an Adult Education for Work program. Finally, you will choose one key change and develop a plan to implement this change in your program.

#### Step 1:

Use Table 5 [ELEMENTS OF AN ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM](#) on the following page to record ideas for implementing changes in program structure, policies, and practices that will help your program move along the continuum towards becoming an Adult Education for Work program.

#### Step 2:

After you have completed the chart, choose one focus area and brainstorm ideas of how you could implement changes in this aspect of your program. Together with your colleagues, determine which of these ideas you believe is most promising.

#### Step 3:

Make a plan to begin working toward this goal. Decide

- who will have primary responsibility for this improvement project;
- what tasks each person on the team will complete;
- the date by which this change will be fully implemented;
- benchmarks for meeting your deadline;
- how you will assess the success of this change in the system of adult education provided to your students.

**Table 5: ELEMENTS OF AN ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM**

<b>Focus area for program improvement</b>	<b>Ideas for implementation</b>
Customer	
Goal of Curricula	
Content focus	
How work readiness is taught	
Program focus	
End goal	



Section 3  
**Quality Elements of a  
Model Adult Education for  
Work Program**

## Introduction to Section 3: Quality Elements of a Model Adult Education for Work Program

Section 1 of this study guide focuses on the concepts and methods for contextualizing instruction in Adult Basic Education so that lessons complement the skills used in the workplace and provide workforce education instruction to better prepare students for today's workforce. Section 2 is an introduction to the Adult Education for Work model. The activities included in these two sections asked you to reflect on the structures, policies, and practices of your current program. You were invited to make plans to enhance partnerships with other agencies and business leaders in your community.

The final section of this study guide, **Quality Elements of a Model Adult Education for Work Program** presents

- the elements of outstanding programs described in the *Guide to Adult Education for Work*;
- a series of activities based on the seven Focus Areas of an Adult Education for Work program.

It includes descriptions and examples of programs that are successfully helping their students take the first step on a career ladder that will lead to family-sustaining work. It encourages you to explore various ways an adult education program might begin to incorporate workforce education instruction into daily practice. The Focus Areas and specific Quality Elements outlined are research-based; the examples and descriptions showcase real programs making concrete changes in the way they provide services to their students.

Activity #1 introduces the seven Focus Areas and the twenty-three Quality Elements listed in the *Guide to Adult Education for Work*. After completing a self-assessment, you and your colleagues will identify the areas on which to concentrate your initial program improvement efforts.

Activities #2 through #8 address the Focus Areas. The activities are structured so that you will become familiar with each. We have chosen one Quality Element in each area and outlined a process you can use work toward reaching that benchmark.

Following each activity, we have listed suggestions for additional activities to help you address all of the Quality Elements outlined in each Focus Area.

You and your colleagues may choose to proceed by completing the activities in sequence, or you might begin with the areas you've identified as priorities based on the results of your self-assessment.

The assumption underlying these activities is that program administrators will take primary responsibility for planning and implementation. However, in order to develop an integrated workforce development system, it is crucial that adult educators, service agencies, and local employers work together. Classroom instructors, program administrators, agency partners, and business leaders each have a vital part to play in restructuring adult education so that students will be prepared to move into postsecondary education and training or work. To be most effective, find ways to invite all of the stakeholders into the process, to nurture collaborative relationships, and to celebrate your shared successes along the way.

## Activity 3.1

### Overview of the Quality Elements

#### Objective

Become familiar with the Quality Elements identified in the *Guide to Adult Education for Work*.

#### Description

This activity will introduce you to the Quality Elements of an Adult Education for Work program. The quality elements, based on extensive research, also represent what some innovative adult education programs are doing to prepare students for success in further education, training, work, or careers. You will reflect on your program in light of the benchmarks described. As the first step in this process, you will complete a self-assessment. You and your colleagues will begin to prioritize aspects of your current program on which to concentrate your restructuring efforts.

#### Step 1:

Read pages 13-33 in the [Guide to Adult Education for Work](#). This section provides an overview of twenty-three Quality Elements of Adult Education for Work programs divided into seven Focus Areas.

As you read, note at least three (3) ideas that you find interesting or important.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

#### Step 2:

Paraphrase the benchmarks so that people outside of the field, including your students, will be able to easily understand the goals of an Adult Education for Work program.

**Step 3:**

Complete the **Self-Assessment Tool: Are You Ready?** on page 38 of the [Guide to Adult Education for Work](#). After completing the self-assessment, reflect on your ratings.

Write about or discuss the following questions:

- Do you agree that these are appropriate and attainable goals for adult education practitioners working within an integrated workforce development system?
- How does your current program align with the benchmarks?
- What are the areas of strength in your program? Which do you feel confident that you already do well?
- Which areas do you think are most important in order for your students to be successful in meeting their short- and long-term goals?
- Which could be easily attained given existing relationships among adult educators, agency partners, and business leaders in your community?
- Which of the Focus Areas or specific Quality Elements seem to be the most pressing in terms of the needs of your students and local workplaces?
- Which seem the most promising; what restructuring efforts seem most likely to be accomplished successfully?

**Step 4:**

Together with your colleagues, determine a set of priorities for program improvement. Refer to page 14 of the [Guide to Adult Education for Work](#) for a complete list of Focus Areas and Quality Elements.

Items with a rating of 1 or 2 on the Self-Assessment are the areas you might choose to rank high on your list.

**Step 5:** Decide how you will use the rest of the activities in this section to support and guide your efforts.

- Will you complete all of the activities in consecutive order?
- Do you prefer to begin with the activities that address the priorities you identified?
- Will you work individually or in small groups?
- Who will take primary responsibility to lead each activity?
- How will you report progress back to the others on your team?



## Activity 3.2

### Focus Area #1: Program Design

Quality Element 1-A. Work with all partners to define the role of Adult Education for Work programs in the broader community-wide career pathways system.

#### Objective

Clarify your role within the context of a community-wide workforce development system.

#### Description

In order to help students move within a career pathways system, you should have a clear understanding of how your work with students supports and is supported by other agencies and organizations in the community. You should be knowledgeable of the customer referral process between the local One-Stop Career Center, your program, and other workforce development partners your students may work with while pursuing their educational and occupational goals. In this activity, you will write a mission statement and develop a chart that reflects the way your program functions within the workforce development system.

#### Step1:

Re-read pages 15-18 in the [Guide to Adult Education for Work](#). As an adult education practitioner, you should understand the career pathway system and the role your program plays to help students enter and advance through education and employment opportunities. Write a mission statement that clearly and concisely describes what students and partners can expect from you as you work together to help students attain their goals.

#### Step 2:

Refer back to the table you created in Section 2 Activity 6, Key Partners in Workforce Development, page 35. There you listed workforce partners in your community and considered ways your students could benefit by the services offered by each. Take the information you filled in on that table and make note of the customer referral process between your program and your partners.

If you are unfamiliar with the referral process for any specific workforce development partners, contact them for clarification. If they are unfamiliar with your program, inform them of what services you can provide and how they can refer students to you.

**Table 6: LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS – REFERRAL PROCESS**

	Workforce Partner(s)	How are students referred to and from these agencies to coordinate services?
State agency that funds your adult education program		
Adult education providers		
Postsecondary and technical institutions (including community colleges)		
Workforce Investment Boards		
One-Stop Career Centers		
Career and technical education		
Social services agencies		
Community-based, faith-based, and/or volunteer organizations		
Others that provide or facilitate adult education and supportive services		

## **Additional Activities and Topics for Discussion – Focus Area # 1: Program Design**

1. Create a form you can use to track individual students as they move through the system.
  - a. How were they referred to your program?
  - b. What level of education have they completed?
  - c. What are their short-term goals?
  - d. What is their ultimate goal?
  - e. What other services are they currently receiving?
  - f. What agency(ies) have you referred them to?
  - g. What program of study or job will they be moving into after completing your program?
  
2. Create a handout that explains the orientation process your students complete.
  - a. Where in this process do you discuss or share regional labor market information?
  - b. How do your students explore career options and education/training pathways to obtain regionally available jobs?
  
3. Assess your students' basic skills.
  - a. What skills do your students need?
  - b. How might you sequence the instruction for these skills?
  - c. What counseling, financial aid, childcare, and/or tutoring will the students require in order to be successful in improving their skills to the level they need to move into postsecondary education and training or work?
  
4. Identify the work readiness skills students need.
  - a. How are you teaching these skills along with basic skills?
  - b. What occupations do you use as examples during your instruction?
  - c. What certifications will your students strive to achieve?
  - d. Are there specialized skills specific to the fields students are interested in?
  
5. Identify the postsecondary education and training institutions that your students might attend.
  - a. Do you have a formal or informal partnership established with them?
  - b. If not, what steps can you take to initiate a collaborative relationship?
  
6. Determine the skills that students require before entering a postsecondary training program.
  - a. How can you incorporate instruction in these skills throughout your curriculum?

7. Identify accelerated pathways in place that allow students to quickly progress through your program.
  - a. Are there students who are co-enrolled in your program and another institution?
  - b. How can you support the students' effective participation in more than one program?
  
8. Identify potential barriers and consider the accommodations you may have to make for individuals.
  - a. Which students are already working?
  - b. Which students have families?
  - c. Which families lack transportation, or face other barriers that might impede their attendance?

### Activity 3.3

#### Focus Area #2: Curriculum and Instruction

Quality Element 2-B. Make work a central context for the curriculum.

#### Objective

Begin to review and revise curriculum and instruction to focus on career goals.

#### Description

The following activity is designed for you to take steps toward altering curriculum and instruction to assist students in developing the skills needed to pursue their goals. This activity will build on work you did in Section 1 Activity 2, Work Tasks and Related Skills (page 15.) Using the information from this table you will write a lesson plan you might use in your adult education classroom.

Please note: This activity will be most useful for teachers, who should see immediate and practical applications for the planning process. However, program administrators, agency partners, and business leaders all have a role to play in this process. Administrators should give teachers time, training, and materials to allow them to plan curriculum and instruction. Agency partners can support efforts to teach and reinforce workplace readiness skills based on their interactions with their clients. Business leaders might provide information about the skills students will need for entry-level positions in high demand occupations.

#### Step 1:

Re-read pages 19 – 22 in the [Guide to Adult Education for Work](#).

#### Step 2:

Refer back to the work you completed in Section 1 Activity 2, Table 6: WORK TASKS AND RELATED BASIC SKILLS (page 15) and Activity 3, Planning Form 1: Work Contextualized Classroom Activity Planning Form (page 18). Using ideas you generated in those activities, develop a lesson plan for one specific skill a student would need to be successful in the given occupation.

A sample lesson plan for a writing skill needed for welding is included, along with a blank template you can use for your own planning.

Planning Form 2: WORK CONTEXTUALIZED LESSON PLAN SAMPLE

<b>Job</b>	Welder
<b>Work Task or Activity</b>	Communicating information to supervisors, co-workers, and subordinates by telephone, in written form, e-mail, or in person
<b>Basic Skill Area</b>	Writing
<b>Instructional Focus</b>	Filling out short forms and reports
<b>Objective</b>	Student will write a clear and concise explanation of an equipment failure in a key piece of welding equipment.
<b>Materials</b>	MIG welding  <a href="http://www.learn-how-to-weld.com/mig-welding">http://www.learn-how-to-weld.com/mig-welding</a>
<b>Activity</b>	<p>This activity is built on the assumption that the student has some knowledge of basic welding operations. The website listed above is a fairly straightforward explanation of MIG welding. The whole site could be used in a series of reading lessons.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read the section of the web page about wire feed issues.</li> <li>2. Imagine the following scenario: It is near the end of your shift, and your equipment begins giving you trouble. You are no longer able to meet the specifications of the job you are working on. Although you do some troubleshooting, you aren't able to get it working properly, and so you won't be able to finish the job. You must write a memo to your supervisor explaining what is wrong with your welding equipment.</li> <li>3. Draft a memo explaining the situation.</li> <li>4. Proofread carefully, remembering that because the note is for your supervisor, your explanation must be clear and your writing should be error free.</li> </ol>
<b>Success indicators</b>	Student writes a properly formatted two-paragraph memo with no more than two mechanical errors. The explanation is clear, and the language is appropriate for the intended audience.
<b>Follow-up activities</b>	Write an entry in the work log noting the problem you had with the equipment. Write an email to the manufacturer requesting a replacement part be mailed to you as soon as possible.

**Planning Form 2: WORK CONTEXTUALIZED LESSON PLAN *TEMPLATE***

<b>Job</b>	
<b>Work Task or Activity</b>	
<b>Basic Skill Area</b>	
<b>Instructional Focus</b>	
<b>Objective</b>	
<b>Materials</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	
<b>Success Indicators</b>	
<b>Follow-up Activities</b>	

## **Additional Activities and Topics for Discussion – Focus Area #2: Curriculum and Instruction**

1. Create a process for helping your students set career goals.
  - a. What skills do they need to reach these goals?
  - b. What are the steps needed to gain these skills?
  - c. How can you plan instruction to help them meet their goals?
2. Create a chart showing the alignment of basic skills, work readiness skills, and the entry requirements of postsecondary education.
3. Identify new instructional strategies to use in the classroom to reinforce the connections between basic skills and the skills needed for entry to the workforce.
  - a. How might you implement these strategies into your instruction?
4. Have your students make formal presentations to demonstrate their attainment of the skills you're teaching in the classroom.
5. Establish rules and regulations to enforce in your classroom.
  - a. What rules and regulations might one encounter in the workplace or in the postsecondary education setting?
  - b. How can you provide direct and indirect instruction to help your students conform to these guidelines?
  - c. How can you track students' improvement?
6. Integrate instructional technology in your classroom.
  - a. In what ways can you use instructional technology to support students' learning?
  - b. How will you measure the successful implementation of technology?
7. Review [\*Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE & ESOL Classroom\*](#).
  - a. How can your staff begin to incorporate career awareness into all aspects of the program?



## Activity 3.4

### Focus Area #3: Assessment and Credentialing

Quality Element 3-A. Use appropriate assessment tools, including assessments of postsecondary and work readiness, to place students, help them develop Career Pathway plans, and periodically assess their progress.

#### Objective

Understand the purpose, function, and effectiveness of the assessments used in your program.

#### Description

The following activity is designed to help you review the tools you use to evaluate students' progress and how these assessments can be used to inform instruction.

#### Step 1:

Review pages 23 – 24 in the [Guide to Adult Education for Work](#).

#### Step 2:

In group discussions or in reflection, answer the following questions about the formal assessments you regularly conduct. Consider ways to improve your program by using assessment results to help students advance to postsecondary education and work.

1. How often does your program assess your students' progress?
2. Which assessments are used?
3. For each of the formal assessments you administer, consider
  - whether it is expected (or mandated) by organizations outside your program that you report the data directly to them;
  - what you find valuable about the test;
  - whether you use the test results for baseline information, formative assessment, and/or summative evaluation;
  - what information it provides to program administrators, classroom instructors, students, and outside agencies.
4. How do program administrators and teachers use assessment data to
  - place students in appropriate courses or programs of study;
  - help students set short- and long-term goals;
  - plan instruction;

- facilitate students' transition to postsecondary education and training or work?

**Step 3:**

Investigate other assessments that could be used to gather additional information to help you develop a strong Adult Education to Work program.

A good place to begin your research is with the resources identified in the sidebars on pages 23 and 24 of the [Guide to Adult Education for Work](#).

**Additional Activities and Topics for Discussion – Focus Area #3: Assessment and Credentialing**

1. Outline the process of student advancement through your program.
  - a. Develop an estimated timeline for progression through each level.
  - b. Identify skills and knowledge assessed at each level.
2. Identify certifications or credentials students leaving your program might choose to pursue.
  - a. Determine how you can begin to prepare students to attain these certificates or credentials.

## Activity 3.5

### Focus Area #4: High-Quality Teaching

Quality Element 4-B. Provide ongoing professional development opportunities and classroom support for teachers.

#### Objective

Plan professional development opportunities for instructional staff based on individual and programmatic goals.

#### Description

This activity is designed to help you identify targeted areas for professional development based on the needs and goals of the teachers in your program.

#### Step 1:

Re-read pages 25 – 27 in the [Guide to Adult Education for Work](#).

#### Step 2:

As you think about how to offer quality professional development opportunities to your staff, remember that not only your students, but also your teachers are adult learners. As such, there are certain skills and specific information they must have in order to do their jobs well. However, it is important that the teachers are fully involved in identifying what they need and want to learn about. Individual learning styles and preferences should be taken into account, and the format and timing of activities should be structured to accommodate work schedules and other obligations.

Some information should be provided to new teachers as part of an orientation process. It is vital for new staff to have this information, but experienced staff can also benefit from regular updates. You should be able to answer the following questions. How do teachers learn about:

- the resources available through the local One-Stop Career Center;
- the local workforce development system;
- the programs at the local community college or trade schools;
- how students are placed in specific classes or courses of study;
- your program goals, policies, and practices;
- the curriculum and best instructional practices;
- how new curriculum is developed and how they can participate in this process;
- the case management system?

**Step 3:**

Discuss whether there are ways that you can make this information available in a more efficient way.

- Do you offer formal orientation sessions?
- Do you have a handbook that teachers can refer to?
- Is there a supervisory or mentoring process in place for program administrators and/or experienced staff to work with new teachers in a systematic manner?

If you answer “no” to any of these questions, decide whether any of these forums for providing information might work well for your program.

**Step 4:**

Survey your staff to identify areas they would like to focus on for their own professional growth.

**Step 5:**

Have each staff member (administrators, teachers, and support staff) establish a set of professional development goals.

**Step 6:**

The information gathered from the preceding steps should be used to direct program-wide or individual professional development efforts. Create a list of topics and establish priorities. Your priorities should strike a balance between the needs of the organization and the needs of individuals.

**Additional Activities and Topics for Discussion – Focus Area #4: High-Quality Teaching**

1. Establish a set of requirements regarding prior experience and credentials required for newly hired teachers and staff. Write a job description clearly outlining these expectations. (For example, do you require a teaching license?)
2. If current staff do not hold the credentials you will require of new teachers, make a plan to help them gain the requisite skills they would need in order to earn the appropriate certificate.
3. Have all members of the instructional staff create an individual professional development plan each year.
  - a. Build in time for these activities and experiences.
  - b. Find ways to provide formal support for teachers and staff to implement the new knowledge and ideas obtained through professional development.

- c. Encourage individual staff members to share what they have learned with others either in writing or through presentations during in-house professional development sessions.
  - d. Provide information for online staff development options or resources.
- 4. Put in place a process to involve all staff in curriculum decisions and program improvement efforts.

## Activity 3.6

### Focus Area #5: Support and Follow-up Services to Encourage Access and Retention

Quality Element 5-B. Partner with providers in the community to provide case management services to students, including counseling and social and academic supports.

#### Objective

Identify support systems available to students in your local Workforce Development System.

#### Description

This activity will help you define and identify support systems in place within your program and those available through other workforce development partners in the career pathways system.

#### Step 1:

Review pages 28-29 in the [Guide to Adult Education for Work](#).

#### Step 2:

The term case management is used to encompass the support services used to help students reduce personal barriers to retention and progress. Outline the case management system currently in place in your program. Identify the steps in the process and list the staff member(s) responsible for overseeing and coordinating work with individual students.

#### Step 3:

Refer back to Section 2 Activities 7, Collaboration in the Workforce Development System (page 36); Section 2 Activities 8, Contrasting Models of Adult Education (page 37); and Section 3 Activity 2, Focus Area #1 Program Design (pages 47-50.) As you complete the tables and answered the questions posed, you laid the groundwork for collaboration with outside partners. You should be familiar with the agencies and organizations that can help your students meet outside responsibilities and address barriers to their participation in the adult education system.

#### Step 4:

Together with partner agencies, discuss the existing case management system. Identify any missing or overlapping areas. Determine where there are gaps and how you might eliminate them and whether there is duplication of services and how to address this. Discuss ways you can strengthen the relationships and streamline the process in order to serve students and clients most effectively and efficiently.

**Additional Activities and Topics for Discussion – Focus Area #5: Support and Follow-up Services to Encourage Access and Retention**

1. Develop a flyer or brochure outlining the case management services available to your students.
  - a. Include contact information and a description of services provided.
2. Establish a formal referral process or communication link between partners to make the best use of available case management services.
3. Conduct exit interviews when students leave your program.
  - a. Note whether they have completed the program or are leaving for other reasons.
  - b. Ask them to describe their experience moving through the system.
  - c. Get their perspective on the strengths of the program and case management system.
  - d. Invite their suggestions for improvement.
4. Create a tool (letter, survey, or phone interview) to check on the progress of your students after they leave your program. Determine how often to contact them to request information. Report findings to staff and partners.

## Activity 3.7

### Focus Area #6: Connections to Business

Quality Element 6-B. Develop partnerships with employers.

#### Objective

Develop a process for establishing formal partnership agreements with local employers.

#### Description

This activity will help you develop a process for working with a local employer in order to coordinate specific workplace skills with the curriculum offered in your adult education program. Working closely with employers and aligning your services to meet their needs will enable you to more effectively contribute to local workforce development efforts.

#### Step 1:

Review pages 30 – 31 in the [Guide to Adult Education for Work](#).

#### Step 2:

Revisit Section 2 Activity 7 (p. 30), Collaborations in the Workforce Development System. Focus on your answers to questions 5 and 6: Are there businesses in your community you would like to work with? What steps can you take to develop a strong working relationship with at least one of these local business leaders?

#### Step 3:

Work with a representative of your local One-Stop Career Center to identify high priority occupations in your local workplace region. Develop a list of employers in these fields. Invite a representative of each business to attend a meeting in order to discuss skills needed for entry-level employment, including workplace readiness knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

#### Step 4:

Identify employers who are willing to work with you to develop curriculum plans to teach students the skills outlined.

#### Step 5:

Work to develop a partnership agreement with a representative of the business or organization. The chart on page 11 of the [Guide to Adult Education for Work](#) suggests elements to include in Key Partner Agreements. Use this list as a guideline as you develop your own agreements.



Whether this takes the form of a formal contract or an informal agreement, specify goals, timelines, and responsibilities. Include a plan to maintain regular contact and ways to measure successful implementation of the plan.

**Step 6:**

Together with your instructional staff, brainstorm ways to adapt your curriculum and instructional practices to meet the immediate needs of the employers in your area.

**Step 7:**

Follow up with business partners on a regular basis to continue discussions and to strengthen the collaborative relationship.

**Additional Activities and Topics for Discussion – Focus Area #6: Connections to the Business Community**

1. Create a bulletin board to post information about businesses that are hiring in your area.
  - a. Identify the skills that are essential to these occupations.
  - b. Whenever possible, contextualize instruction based on the required skills you've identified.
2. Invite employers to meet with your students to speak with them about the employment outlook locally and outside your immediate region.
3. Encourage students to conduct informational interviews with business leaders.
  - a. Provide direct instruction in interviewing skills.
  - b. Use class time for practice sessions before student meetings with employers.
  - c. Give students an opportunity to share their experience with others in writing or through discussion.

## Activity 3.8

### Focus Area #7: Monitoring and Accountability Systems

Quality Element 7-C. Use data to improve programs.

#### Objective

Develop a process for using data to focus on program improvement goals.

#### Description

This activity will help you establish a process for collecting and using data to improve your program. Program improvement is a continuous process and must be re-evaluated regularly. As you work through this process, remember your goals should be flexible enough to accommodate the changing needs of your local workforce. Remember to create measurable objectives that can be monitored through the collection of data.

#### Step 1:

Review pages 32 – 33 in the [Guide to Adult Education for Work](#).

#### Step 2:

Select a Quality Element that you would like to improve. Refer to the self-assessment you completed in Section 3 Activity 1, as well as the activities you have already completed to guide your choice.

#### Step 3:

Develop a plan using the following steps:

- Identify a targeted area of improvement.
- Determine data that can be collected to show success/failure and help guide your decision making process.
- Plan action steps to help you reach your program improvement goal.
- Establish a timeline for re-evaluating your progress.
- Revise your plan based on the data collected.

Refer to the sample Data-driven Program Improvement Plan, below, as a model.

#### Step 4:

Re-evaluate your improvement plan on a regular basis; adapt and revise the plan as needed. Program improvement is a continuous process of self-renewal. Your goals should always be flexible enough to accommodate the changing needs of your local workforce and the students and clients in your region.

## Data-driven Program Improvement Plan

**Quality Element #5-B:** Partner with providers in the community to provide case management services to students, including counseling and social and academic supports.

**Program Improvement Goal:** To increase the number of referrals of students to local One-Stop Career Centers.

**Timeline:** January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2012

**Process for Collecting Data:** Referrals will be recorded in a locally kept spreadsheet.

**Action Step 1:** Develop spreadsheet to record referrals.

**Action Step 2:** Introduce One-Stop Career Center services to students.

**Action Step 3:** Establish regular communications with agency staff to share information.

**Target:** Success will be achieved when 50% of students are enrolled in the local One-Stop system.

**Follow-up:**

Analyze data to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

Revise process based on observations and discussions with agency staff.

Adjust action plan as needed.

Future success will be evaluated based on steadily increased numbers of referrals and students' transition into employment, postsecondary education, or training as a result of collaboration between adult educators and One-Step staff.

**Planning Form 3: DATA-DRIVEN PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN *TEMPLATE***

**Data-driven Program Improvement Plan**

**Quality Element:**

**Program Improvement Goal:**

**Timeline:**

**Process for Collecting Data:**

**Action Step 1:**

**Action Step 2**

**Action Step 3:**

**Target:**

**Follow-up:**

### **Additional Activities and Topics for Discussion – Focus Area #7: Monitoring and Accountability Systems**

1. Identify systems in place in other agencies to track longitudinal data on your students. Brainstorm ways you might share that data to develop program and system-wide improvement plans.
2. Review historical changes that have been made in your program in response to data collected in the past. Highlight what you have learned over the past five years and what changes have occurred in the adult education field.
3. Develop additional mechanisms to track data about students over multiple years and through various transitions in a career pathway.

## Moving Forward: The Transition to Adult Education for Work

### Why we wrote this guide:

After working through this study guide, you should have a clear understanding of why and how traditional adult basic education programs can be restructured to focus on preparing students to move into postsecondary education and training or work. It is clear that the benefits of this shift will be felt not only by individual students and their families, but local employers and communities as well.

### Contextualized instruction

The activities in Section 1 introduced you to the concept of contextualized instruction and encouraged you to consider ways to infuse your curriculum with information and skills necessary for success in specific high demand occupations that are of interest to your students.

### The new model

In Section 2 you explored the components of a new model for adult education that entails collaboration between adult educators, service agencies, and local employers. This model is outlined in the *Guide to Adult Education for Work*, one of the many resources available to you through *LINCS*.

### Critical elements for success

Section 3 of the study guide outlined the seven focus areas and twenty-three quality elements that comprise a successful Adult Education for Work program. You identified priorities and began to plan to revise your program policies and practices.

### Making change

Working with your team, you and your partners are now ready to implement changes that will move your program forward.

Program improvement is an ongoing process. The shift from a traditional model of adult education to one that strives to prepare students for entry into postsecondary education and training or work won't take place quickly. It will take time to build partnerships, policies, and systems. You will be off to a good start if you begin by building on the strengths of your program and the relationships you already have with potential partners.

### Existing programs experiencing success

Throughout the *Guide to Adult Education for Work* you'll find examples of adult education providers that are making great strides toward developing a strong workforce. They are coordinating the delivery of services to adult students, helping them step onto and make their way up career ladders. The sidebars and case studies

included in the *Guide to Adult Education for Work* direct you to organizations that you can contact to get additional inspiration and suggestions.

#### How LINCS can help

The *LINCS* resource collections are made up of a wealth of information and strategies for adult educators. In addition to the written documents, *LINCS* offers professional development trainings and online courses.

Take advantage of the support available to you, both outside and within your own community. Identify and network with other adult education providers through professional organizations, publications, and electronic sources. Enjoy the journey and celebrate every victory. Good luck to you and to your students!

## Weblinks Used in this Study Guide

Adult Goals and Objectives in *Washington's Strategic Plan for Workforce Development*.  
<http://www.wtb.wa.gov/Documents/HSHW2008Adult.pdf>

CareerOneStop  
<http://www.careeronestop.org/defaultB.aspx>

Gillespie, M.K. (n.d.) *EFF Research Principle: A Contextualized Approach to Curriculum and Instruction*. National Institute for Literacy: Washington, DC.  
<http://www.edpubs.gov/document/ED001934W.pdf>

*Guide to Adult Education for Work: Transforming Adult Education to Grow a Skilled Workforce*  
[http://www.ncee.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/adult\\_ed\\_work\\_guide.pdf](http://www.ncee.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/adult_ed_work_guide.pdf)

*Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE & ESOL Classroom*.  
<http://www.collegetransition.org/publications.icacurriculum.html>

LINCS website  
<http://lincs.ed.gov>

LINCS Basic Skills Resource Collection  
<http://lincs.ed.gov/lincs/resourcecollections/BasicSkills>

LINCS Program Management Collection  
<http://lincs.ed.gov/lincs/resourcecollections/ProgramManagement>

LINCS Workforce Collection  
<http://lincs.ed.gov/lincs/resourcecollections/Workforce>

LINCS Career Pathways Instructional Materials Library.  
<http://lincs.ed.gov/pd/careerpathways>

LINCS Resource Collection Review Process  
<http://lincs.ed.gov/lincs/resourcecollections/reviewprocess.html>

Module 4—Instructional Techniques: Contextualized Instruction  
[http://www.c-pal.net/course/module4/m4\\_functional\\_skills.html](http://www.c-pal.net/course/module4/m4_functional_skills.html)

My Next Move  
<http://www.mynextmore.org/>



O\*Net OnLine

<http://onetonline.org/>

Sticht, T. (December, 1997). The theory behind content-based instruction.

<http://www.ncsall.net/index.php?id=433>

The National Career Clusters™ Framework.

<http://www.careertech.org/career-clusters/glance/clusters.html>

## Additional Resources

In addition to the references used in the study guide, you may find these resources helpful to your work in making changes to your program structures, organizational policies, and instructional practices.

ACT (2011). *National Career Readiness Certificate*. <http://www.act.org/certificate/>

Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters. (n.d.). *Business results through essential skills and literacy*. [http://www.cme-mec.ca/pdf/Business Results Through Essential Skills and Literacy.pdf](http://www.cme-mec.ca/pdf/Business_Results_Through_Essential_Skills_and_Literacy.pdf)

Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. (1998). *The "plain English" version of the workforce investment act of 1998*. <http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/wia/Runningtext.cfm>

Estrada, R. A. (2010). *How to build bridge programs that fit into a career pathway: A step-by-step guide based on the carreras en salud program in Chicago*. [http://www.iccb.state.il.us/pdf/shiftinggears/Instituto2010 HowToBuildBridge Programs.pdf](http://www.iccb.state.il.us/pdf/shiftinggears/Instituto2010_HowToBuildBridgePrograms.pdf)

Houghton, T. & Proscio, T. (2001). *Hard work on soft skills: Creating a "culture of work" in workforce development*. Public/Private Ventures, Philadelphia, PA.

Jacobson, E., Degener, S., & Purcell-Gates. (2003). *Creating authentic materials and activities for the adult literacy classroom: A handbook for practitioners*. National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. [http://lincs.ed.gov/lincs/resourcecollections/abstracts/basicskills/RC skills abs06.html](http://lincs.ed.gov/lincs/resourcecollections/abstracts/basicskills/RC_skills_abs06.html)

Learning and Skills Improvement Service. (2011). *Excellence gateway: Nationally developed skills for life resources*. <http://rwp.excellencegateway.org.uk/>

Maguire, S., Freely, J., Clymer, C., Conway, M., & Schwartz, D. (2010). Tuning in to local labor markets. *Public/Private Ventures*. [http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/325\\_publication.pdf](http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/325_publication.pdf)

MPR Associates, Inc., Initials. (2010). *ABE career connections: A manual for integrating adult basic education into career pathways* [A].

[http://www.policy2performance.org/wp-content/uploads/ABE\\_Career\\_Connections\\_Manual.pdf](http://www.policy2performance.org/wp-content/uploads/ABE_Career_Connections_Manual.pdf)

Pennsylvania Department of Education. (2011). *Workforce education resources*.

[http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/resources\\_documents/9086/workforce\\_education\\_resources/523341](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/resources_documents/9086/workforce_education_resources/523341)

Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by design*. (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ/Alexandria, VA: Pearson Education/Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development.

Women employed. (2010). *The career coach curriculum: Using strategies for success*.

<http://www.womenemployed.org/index.php?id=143>

## End Notes

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<sup>i</sup> National Center on Education and the Economy. (2009, p. 3). *Guide to adult education for work: Transforming adult education to grow a skilled workforce*. One Step Forward Initiative.

<sup>ii</sup> *Id* at p. ii.

<sup>iii</sup> Gillespie, M. K. (n.d., p. 7) EFF research principle: A contextualized approach to curriculum and instruction. National Institute for Literacy: Washington, DC.

<sup>iv</sup> *Id* at p. 7.

<sup>v</sup> Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board. (2008, pp. 48-49). *Washington's strategic plan for workforce development: Adult goals and objectives*.