An Archive of Work-Related Basic Skills Resources

The Open Door Collective
www.opendoorcollective.org

September 16, 2019 Edition
Introduction

This document presents an annotated mix of resource materials related to various aspects of work-related adult basic education for job-seekers and incumbent workers:

- Work-Readiness, College Transition, and Career Pathways for Job Seekers: Program Models and Practices;
- Work-Readiness for Particular Industries
- Workplace Education for Incumbent Workers: Program Models and Practices
- Tools for Assessing Worker Basic Skills;
- Tools for Program Planning and Evaluation;
- Work-Related Basic Education in the U.S.: Local, State, and National Policy;
- Interpretations of How to Make Workplace Education Relevant and Effective;
- Employer Perspectives;
- Labor Union Perspectives;
- International Perspectives.

These 150+ resources include both recent documents and “oldies.” This inclusion of older resources is to help newcomers to the field to (a) understand that work-related basic skills development is not a new topic and (b) access valuable resources they otherwise might not be aware of or able to locate. While most of these resources support a “contextualized” approach to work-related basic education, they are not unanimous in the particular contextualized applications they focus on nor in how they develop and run their programs.

While the Open Door Collective (ODC) advocates for worker basic education as a tool to help workers attain, perform, and advance in family-sustaining employment, not all of the documents here explicitly focus on that goal. They are nonetheless included here because we feel it is important to learn from a range of perspectives and experiences in this evolving field.

ODC’s Labor and Workforce Development Issues Group will periodically refresh this archive. We welcome suggestions for additional resources and how we might otherwise make this collection useful. Note that most of the examples presented in this Archive are linked to an on-line source for more information. If a link doesn’t work, please copy and paste the URL or the title of the document into your web browser.

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Work-Readiness, College Transition, and Career Pathways for Job Seekers: Program Models and Practices

- **What Works for Adult Learners: Lessons from Career Pathway Evaluations**: (Jobs for the Future, July 2019). This 30-page report summarizes findings from a review of studies of career pathway initiatives in the U.S. It outlines features of effective career pathway systems and includes recommendations for practitioners, researchers, and policy makers. It states that effective systems include mechanisms to help people move into a career pathway, integrated training and other key supports for learners, and ongoing supports (including workplace training) after individuals become employed to help them continue learning and advancing in meaningful careers. Available at https://www.jff.org/resources/what-works-adult-learners-lessons-career-pathway-evaluations/

- **Better Together: How Adult Education/CTE Collaborations Benefit Workers and Business**. (National Skills Coalition, January 2019): Describes how IET (Integrated Education and Training) can – in partnership with other stakeholders such as social service programs and employers -- help workers simultaneously develop the basic skills and technical/vocational skills needed to move into rewarding jobs in growing industries. Gives example of a Texas program and lists steps that advocates can take to help develop state policies that support more effective services and draw on existing workforce-related funding. Available at https://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/news/blog/better-together-how-adult-edcte-collaborations-benefit-workers-and-businesses

- **The ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) Clearinghouse** (an online library of education research and information, sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) of the U.S. Department of Education) has a collection of articles and reports on the theme of “career pathways.” Visit https://eric.ed.gov/?q=Career+Pathways.

Change Agent Issue 45: Career Pathways (World Education, September, 2017): “Students have a lot to say about career pathways, and we are proud to share their perspectives in this first-ever exploration of the topic from a student point of view. Hear what they have to say about the challenges and opportunities they face as they work to achieve their goals, share their hopes and moments of regret as they learn and grow from their sometimes twisted path toward a career. Hear from young people just starting out, older students switching careers, highly skilled immigrants who need new credentials, and those for whom available career pathways don’t quite align with their dreams. This document compares pathway maps, lattices, and roadways as well as study graphs and charts that encourage critical thinking about job prospects. Support your students to pursue research that will teach them about jobs and careers, as well as how to connect with resources.” Available at https://worlded.org/WEIInternet/resources/publication/display.cfm?txtGeoArea=US&id=18653&thisSection=Resources

Integrated Education and Training: Implementing Programs in Diverse Contexts (National College Transition Network, 2017): The federal Workforce Investment and Innovation Act (WIOA) supports the integration of education and training (IET) and career pathways. This guide emerged from in-depth conversations about how eight adult education programs around the country have been successfully integrating IET. These programs offer a wide array of approaches both in who the adult education programs partner with (Career and Technical Education departments within a college, the vocational technical high school, WIOA authorized training providers, or in-house technical training instructors) and how they collaborate in those partnerships to develop an integrated curriculum. Program profiles highlight the importance of designing programming that fits the particular context of a local community – both its opportunities and constraints. Available at https://worlded.org/WEIInternet/resources/publication/display.cfm?txtGeoArea=US&thisSection=resources&thisSectionTitle=Resources&thisPage=publications&id=18643

Preparing English Learners for Work and Career Pathways (Literacy Information and Communication System, 2015): This nine-page brief summarizes the changing nature of work and the workforce in the U.S. and how English-language-learner workers can be supported to develop relevant basic skills and technical skills. Information about a companion online course is available here: https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/esl-pro/preparing-english-learners-for-work-and-career-pathways An additional instructor guide relate to this course begins by explaining five approaches to contextualizing basic education instruction to career pathways. It then provides strategies for teaching career awareness, “learning to learn” skills, workplace and training vocabulary, “workplace soft skills,” and problem-solving skills. Provides links to other resources to use to explore these and related concepts more deeply. This guide can be accessed here:
Yesterday’s Non-Traditional Student Is Today’s Traditional Student: Non-Traditional Student Facts (Center for Law and Social Policy, January 2015). This two-page fact sheet succinctly presents the demographics of today’s college-going population. Shows that they are in many ways different than “traditional” college students, in terms of age, family and work responsibilities, minority status, lower income, and status as parents. Available at https://www.clasp.org/publications/fact-sheet/yesterdays-nontraditional-student-todays-traditional-student-nontraditional

Program Administrator Trainer Manual: Building Integrated Pathways through Collaboration (National College Transition Network, 2015): This trainer manual was developed by the NCTN for Accelerating Opportunity (AO), a Jobs for the Future initiative. AO seeks to change the way Adult Basic Education is delivered by connecting crucial pieces of the puzzle that are preventing lower-skilled adults from entering and completing postsecondary education. The AO model is based on Job for the Future’s (JFF) Breaking Through model and the I-BEST model developed by the Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). While this ready-to-use manual was developed for AO, it can be readily customized for the training of all administrators responsible for the on-the-ground implementation and coordination of an integrated career pathway program. The manual provides a full day of content delivery and face-to-face learning activities (approximately 7 hours, excluding breaks). Trainers have the flexibility to break up the training content into multiple sessions by content, and to modify for presentation via virtual platforms. The content, activities, tools, and resources of the manual are grounded in the understanding that effective local leadership requires:

- Collaborating across systems
- Engaging a broad stakeholder base
- Guiding a strategic communication process
- Selecting and training effective team teachers
- Coordinating comprehensive support services
- Identifying and mobilizing resources


- **Contextualizing Adult Education Instruction to Career Pathways** (Jobs for the Future, 2013). This 130-page guide provides an introduction to the idea of “contextualized” basic education, then goes into more detail to describe how educators can collaborate with other stakeholders to develop and implement a curriculum that integrates basic education with skills and knowledge related to particular jobs. It also discusses how to assess learners, tie the curriculum to a relevant career pathway and other educational and training opportunities, enhance learner retention and persistence (including helping learners to develop strategies for dealing with potential obstacles such as transportation problems), use technology appropriately, and select and train staff. Provides sample teaching strategies to actively engage learners. Profiles a variety of effective programs around the U.S. Available at https://tcall.tamu.edu/docs/ContextualizingAdultEdInstructionCareerPathways.pdf

- **Career Pathways for a Productive and Self-Reliant Workforce: A To-Do List for Adult Educators** (Adult Basic Education and Literacy Journal, November 2011): This article summarizes arguments for and components of career pathway models, then presents recommendations for how career pathway efforts can build on previous work done in work-related basic education. Available at https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ951352

- **Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE & ESOL Classroom: Curriculum Guide** (National College Transition Network, and Massachusetts System for Adult Basic Education Support, 2009): A curriculum guide to help adult education teachers and counselors guide adult learners through a comprehensive career planning process that promotes a full range of life skills. To give the curriculum maximum flexibility, we have designed the handouts so that you can use them as they are or modify them to meet the needs of your classroom. For example, you might want to add local information, include pictorial graphics to aid lower-level ESOL students, or break an activity into smaller steps. Available at https://www.collegetransition.org/career-pathways/publications/ica-curriculum-guide/

- **Appropriate Technologies for Workforce Learning: A New Approach to Using Educational Technologies for Adult Learning and Workforce Development.**
This article was presented at “Future of Adult Education in the Digital World” Conference, Virginia Commonwealth University, November 2009. It describes how adult educators can use common computer applications (e.g., Word, PowerPoint, web browsing) to help learners develop basic skills, computer skills, and job-related background knowledge and skills useful to attain and succeed in rewarding jobs. Available at http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_(US_&_Canada)_files/Approp%20Techs%20Oct%202009.pdf

- **Contextualization: Creating Career-Infused Classrooms: A Toolkit for Instructors** (Texas LEARNS): This 60-page “toolkit for adult education instructors for contextualizing Instruction for high demand careers” (a) recommends taking a team approach (to involving various stakeholders in program planning, (b) explains what a contextualized approach looks like, (c) provides “instructional maps” to guide planning, and (d) otherwise provides practical tips for organizing a contextualized program. Provides a useful list of on-line resources related to various aspects of this work (e.g., how to serve people who are homeless or have a criminal record). Available at https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55a158b4e4b0796a90f7c371/t/56f9e2282fe131b0560666f6/1459217002638/contextinstructor-toolkit.pdf A companion document (“Contextualization: Creating a Support System for Contextualized Instruction: A Toolkit for Program Managers” is available at https://tcall.tamu.edu/docs/ContextManager-Toolkit.pdf

- **College Transition Toolkit** (National College Transition Network, ongoing): The College Transition Toolkit is a comprehensive guide to program planning and implementation that draws on the expertise of practitioners from the New England ABE-to-College Transition Project and from around the country. It contains detailed information to help adult educators and administrators plan for the needs of students interested in pursuing postsecondary education and training. The CD contains a flexible, navigable, HTML version of the toolkit that enables you to move easily between chapter topics, accompanying documents, and online resources of immediate interest to you. Chapter topics include: Program Models; Partnerships and Collaborations; Recruitment; Assessment; Counseling; Curriculum and Instruction; and Using Data for Program Development. To receive a copy of the College Transition Toolkit, email literacy@worlded.org.

- **Student Mentoring: Adult College Engagement and Migrant Youth Education** (National College Transitions Network, ongoing): Mentoring has a positive impact on student outcomes, including self-confidence, future aspirations, grade point average and persistence rates. The NCTN created tools and increased participants’ knowledge about mentorship through our Adult College Engagement and Migrant Youth Education projects. Our mentoring projects are designed to get new college students through the critical periods when they are most likely to drop out:
• the period between acceptance and when classes begin;
• the first month of classes;
• mid-terms;
• the end of the first semester; and
• while planning/waiting to enroll in 2nd semester.

For more information, visit https://www.collegetransition.org/student-supporters/featured-projects/student-mentoring/

- **Preparing for Work** (Center for Literacy Studies at the University of Tennessee, 2006): “Preparing for Work is a skills-based course designed for implementation in organizations and agencies involved in preparing their clients and students for entry level work. Each of the instructional modules that comprise the Preparing for Work course has integrated the specific SCANS tasks (Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills) and the EFF Content Standards, identified on the National Work Readiness Credential (NWRC) profile. The course is available with an accompanying two-day training (for program staff), during which participants begin to: facilitate the curricular activities from the modules; explain the connections among the EFF Standards, the SCANS skills clusters, and the Work Readiness Profile; and, articulate the critical features of the curriculum. Participants also receive an instructor manual, a hard-copy student manual, and a subscription to our online materials service, which allows instructors to with access online student materials, curriculum revisions, and updates, and eliminates the need to continually purchase student materials. In addition, participants are given the opportunity to join our discussion list, where training participants from across the country can share ideas, results, and information with each other.” For more information about Preparing for Work and to download a Course Overview, Course Brochure, and A Guide for Business and to see the Preparing for Work video, visit https://eff.clee.utk.edu/preparing_for_work.html


- **English at Work: Basic Work-Related Communications Skills for English Language Learners** (Consortium for Worker Education, 2003). A 37-page ESOL-for-basic-workplace-communications curriculum for NY City labor education instructors to use with English language learners who lost their jobs after the 9/11 attacks. Available
at
http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_(US_&_Canada)_files/English%20at%20Work%20March%202003.pdf

- **Job Seeker’s Handbook**: Prepared for English language learners at the NY City Consortium for Worker Education who lost jobs after 9/11 attacks, December 2002:

- **Learn & Work: Basic Skills for Job Seekers**: A 92-page curriculum for NY City Consortium for Worker Education instructors to use with English language learners who lost their jobs after the 9/11 attacks, November 2002:

- **Learning Skills Curriculum** (Center for Literacy Studies, University of Tennessee at Knoxville, 2001); This 405-page document is designed to help a new student to “rediscover the natural learner within himself or herself” through “work(ing) with inspiring teachers . . . to comprehend not only basic skills, but higher-level thinking concepts.” The course was created for participants in Tennessee’s Families First work-readiness program. It is organized around four week-long themes: “Motivation” (e.g., goal-setting, taking responsibility for learning, why we assess, how we learn); “Self-Discovery” (e.g., learning styles, the writing process, active listening, note-taking, research); “Lifelong Learning” (e.g., time management, team dynamics, thinking and memory skills, orientation to the computer lab, problem solving, stress management); and “The Next Step” (e.g., test-taking and study strategies, speaking strategies, next steps after this course, what I have learned in this course, graduation day). Appendices provide a learner handbook, teacher materials, a lesson using the Equipped for the Future standards, and a report from six programs that used the “Learning Skills Curriculum.” Available at [https://resources.clee.utk.edu/print/learning-skills.pdf](https://resources.clee.utk.edu/print/learning-skills.pdf)

- **Tennessee Adult ESOL Curriculum Resource Book** (Center for Literacy Studies, University of Tennessee at Knoxville, 2001): This 359-page guide opens with useful background about the National Reporting System Levels for Adult ESOL Programs. It then gives more specific information (i.e., indicators for various competency levels) about ESOL for civic and workplace uses. It then proceeds with specific instructional ideas for teaching all levels of competencies for civic and workplace uses. Then come many other teacher-written teaching ideas -- organized around “Student Learning Plans” -- for practical uses of ESOL (e.g., using the telephone; personal introductions; using the newspaper to buy groceries, find an apartment, or find a job; filling out a job application). While many of these uses of English might not fall under “job skills” per se, most of them are – indirectly or directly – related to workplace performance,
because (1) learners can use them to manage everyday tasks that they must perform (e.g., shopping, finding an apartment, dealing with transportation needs) to be able to work and (2) many of them (e.g., personal introductions, filling out a form with personal information, asking for and giving directions, understanding warning labels, managing money, taking care of one’s health, protecting the environment) are required in virtually all workplaces as well as in non-workplace settings. Available at https://resources.clee.utk.edu/print/esol.pdf

- **2000 Families First Idea Book: Integrating Work Skills and Basic Skills**
  (Center for Literacy Studies at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, 2000): This guide from the contains 60 work-readiness skill lesson plans written by Tennessee adult educators. Each lesson is designed to help learners practice a mix of skills as they would be used in a work-related situation. Topics include: Communication Skills (as applied in running a business, customer service, career exploration . . . ); Decision-Making Skills (as used when starting a new job, understanding one’s paycheck, using a cash register, using a time clock, filling out an income tax form, and using measuring equipment . . . ); Interpersonal Skills (as applied in teamwork and developing a new product . . . ); and Lifelong Learning Skills (needed for research, leadership, evaluation, diagnosing a technical problem, shopping on the Internet . . . ) Plans incorporate SCANS skills, Equipped for the Future standards, and/or the Tennessee Essential Workforce Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes (KSAs). Available at https://resources.clee.utk.edu/print/ideabook00.pdf

- **1999 Families First Idea Book: Integrating Work Skills and Basic Skills**
  (Center for Literacy Studies, University of Tennessee at Knoxville, 1999): Similar in concept to the 2000 Families First Idea Book, this 1999 edition likewise helps learners develop a range of basic skills through application to typical work-related tasks that job-seekers and employees carry out. Examples include: Job Acquisition Skills – Preparing for Work (e.g., awareness of skills needed for various jobs, personal budgeting, applying for a job, dressing for an interview, resume writing, completing a job application, interview skills); Job Management Skills (e.g., learning about Social Security, calculating take-home pay, problem-solving in the workplace, dealing with stereotypes, being dependable); Life Management Skills (e.g., balancing your budget, menu planning and nutrition on a budget); KSA (Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes) Direct Instruction (through workplace role plays, journal writing, setting job goals, using math to solve problems, dealing with communication barriers, ensuring accurate work by a team); and GED Acquisition (e.g., through analysis of news reports, travel geography, American history events, designing a room, cooking-related math, planning a vacation, everyday chemistry, and writing a business letter). Available at https://resources.clee.utk.edu/print/ideabook99.pdf
Making It On My Own: Helping Adult Learners Move Toward Self-Sufficiency. (Center for Literacy Studies, University of Tennessee at Knoxville, 1999): This 57-page report from the summarizes findings of an action research report conducted by and about adult basic education teachers in a workforce development program for welfare recipients in Tennessee. It begins with background information about the state Families First program, including a summary of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes desired by Tennessee employers. This is followed by case studies written by adult education staff in ten county welfare programs, which describes the various kinds of educational practices each program created to serve their particular learners. Chapter 3 summarizes “Twenty Ways to Make Families First ABE Classes More Work Focused. Chapter 4 discusses “How to Add a Job Shadowing Component to Basic Skills Classes. The last chapter presents “Teachers' Reflections” about the research process, what they learned, and how it has impacted their practice. Available at https://resources.clee.utk.edu/print/making-it.pdf.

Getting There: A Curriculum for People Moving into Employment. (Center for Literacy Studies, University of Tennessee at Knoxville, 1996). This innovative guide (available at https://resources.clee.utk.edu/print/getthere.pdf) was designed for adult basic skills students who want to move into new jobs. It takes a learner-centered, participatory approach in which learners work in teams, build on their strengths, and develop useful basic skills while also building knowledge about jobs and how to attain and perform them. In the process, learners build self-confidence and positive motivation. The guide is organized around four questions: (1) “Who am I?” (2) “What's out there?” (3) “What is the work world like?” and (4) “How do I get from here to there?” Activities include individual reflection, group discussion and projects, participatory research, development of written documents, and role plays. In addition to developing the above-described skills and knowledge, learners create a portfolio and a network to use as they move forward toward their job goals. The curriculum is accompanied by A Facilitator’s Guide: Introducing Getting There (1997) containing more background about the approach used and how lessons are organized. (Available at https://www.cls.utk.edu/pdf/getfacil.html ) and a Getting There: Appendix (activity sheets to be used with the curriculum, available at https://resources.clee.utk.edu/print/Getting_There_Appendices.pdf

Work-Readiness for Particular Industries

General

- LINCS (Literacy Information and Communication System) is an on-line professional development service provided by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education. Its searchable resource collections, on-line courses and webinars, and discussion groups provide adult educators, adult
learners, and others with opportunities to build expertise and networks on many aspects of adult basic education. Topics include job training for multiple career pathways and industries, as well as related educational topics such as health literacy and environmental education. Visit https://www.lincs.ed.gov

Green jobs

- **“Greening U.S. Adult Basic Skills Efforts: What Eco-Partners and Adult Educators Can Do Together”:** This 22-page guide (2019) presents why and how adult basic skills organizations can work with “eco-partners” (i.e., organizations supporting environmental sustainability and green jobs) to enhance adult learners’ and adult basic skill programs’ use of environmentally-sustainable practices and to help adult learners move into green job career pathways. The guide provides examples of eight types of collaborations with links to organizations doing this work and an annotated autobiography. This is one of a series of “Can-Do Guides” issued by the Open Door Collective. http://www.opendoorcollective.org/workforce-basic-skills-resources.html


- **ABE Clean Energy Ambassadors Curriculum Resource Guide** (National College Transition Network, 2013): The ABE Clean Energy Ambassadors project was designed to strengthen the on-ramp to clean energy occupations for Massachusetts ABE students. The guide helps build the expertise of ABE teachers and counselors who work with ABE learners, showing how they can help learners (through instruction and counseling) understand options (i.e., job prospects and requirements, training, and career pathways) in the clean energy industries. The value of this on-ramp can’t be underestimated: the shift that clean energy will create in our economy will require all citizens to know and understand these changes. This guide provides lessons and teaching strategies that integrate clean energy information into science, math, and English language instruction for adult learners. The guide was initially developed for adult educators from eight Massachusetts ABE programs participating in the ABE Clean Energy Ambassadors Project, funded with a Workforce Capacity Grant from the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center and additional support from World Education, Inc. Available at http://www.collegetransition.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/ABE-Clean-Energy-Ambassadors-Curriculum-Resource-Guide.pdf
Front-Line Worker Engagement: Greening Health Care, Improving Worker and Patient Health, and Building Better Jobs (New Solutions: a Journal of Environmental and Occupational Health Policy, Jan 2013): From the abstract: “Frontline workers have a great deal to contribute to improving environmental sustainability of their employers and the health of workers and patients. This article discusses a national project of the Healthcare Career Advancement Program, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor to support green jobs development. Implementation was accomplished through a labor/management collaboration between union locals and 11 employers in four regions throughout the United States. The project developed and implemented a model of training and education for environmental service workers and other frontline health-care workers in hospital settings that supported systems change and built new roles for these workers. It empowered them to contribute to triple bottom line outcomes in support of People (patients, workers, the community), Planet (environmental sustainability and a lower carbon footprint), and Profit (cost savings for the institutions). In the process workers more clearly articulated their important role as a part of the healthcare team and learned how they could contribute to improved patient and worker health and safety.” Available at https://europepmc.org/abstract/med/23896075

Contextualizing Literacy in Green Jobs Training (Jobs for the Future, 2013). Drawing on evidence from JFF’s GreenWays Initiative, this 14-page report describes the problem of inadequate basic skills in the workforce and the arguments for a contextualized approach for job-related basic skills education. Provides case studies of two programs (in Philadelphia and Detroit) that provide training for candidates for green jobs that integrate basic skills and technical skills. Available at https://www.jff.org/resources/contextualized-literacy-green-jobs-training/

Making Green Work: Best Practices in Green-Collar Job Training describes the Green Collar Jobs Campaign of the Ella Baker Center in Oakland, California. “We advocate for the creation of ‘green-collar’ jobs (quality, career-track, skilled, hands-on jobs in industries like renewable energy, water and energy efficiency, green building, habitat restoration, sustainable agriculture, and more), especially for low-income communities, communities of color and women. We (build) partnerships with cross-sector coalitions that include policy makers, organized labor, green businesses, environmental organizations, social justice groups, education and training institutions.” Visit https://lincs.ed.gov/professional-development/resource-collections/profile-237

The Green Collar Economy: How One Solution Can Fix Our Two Biggest Problems is a 2008 book by Van Jones that outlines a plan for simultaneously solving socioeconomic inequality and environmental problems. The book is a detailed proposal for a "green new deal" to create thousands of low- and medium-skill jobs that help conserve energy (for example, insulating older homes and buildings) or use alternate energy sources (solar panels). Go to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Green_Collar_Economy
The Power of Green is a 2007 article by Thomas L. Friedman arguing for green jobs as a strategy for three major issues: environmental sustainability, employment, and national security. Go to https://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/15/opinion/15iht-web-0415edgreen-full.5291830.html

Healthcare jobs

“Strengthening Public Health and the Healthcare Workforce: What U.S. Health Partners and Adult Basic Skills Programs Can Do Together”: This 35-page guide (2019) presents why and how adult basic skills organizations can work with “health partners” (i.e., organizations supporting public health and healthcare career pathways) to enhance adult learners’ and adult basic skill programs’ use of healthy practices and to help adult learners move into healthcare career pathways. The guide provides examples of eight types of collaborations with links to organizations doing this work and an extensive annotated autobiography. This is one of a series of “Can-Do Guides” issued by the Open Door Collective. http://www.opendoorcollective.org/workforce-basic-skills-resources.html

Front-Line Worker Engagement: Greening Health Care, Improving Worker and Patient Health, and Building Better Jobs: (See description under “Green jobs” above.

Preparing for Careers in Health Care (Center for Literacy Studies at the University of Tennessee, 2005). The National Health Care Skill Standards include an industry core of eight broad standards which serve as a foundation for occupations across the health services. To perform these skills, health care workers need to communicate well, read critically, apply math concepts accurately, solve problems, work well with others, and evaluate a variety of situations faced on the job. These skills align directly with the EFF (Equipped for the Future) Content Standards. Preparing for Careers in Health Care integrates the EFF standards and industry skills standards. By blending basic skills -- including the critical but difficult to teach and assess “soft skills” -- with industry skill standards, the course prepares adults for training in any health care field, from nurse’s aide to registered nurse to medical transcriptionist. The curriculum package includes:

- 1-2 days of training for your staff
- 4-week/120-hour course
- Flexible program that can be adapted to your specific needs
- Connection to GED so participants can reach their goals in a more timely manner
- Adaptable curriculum to suit a variety of needs, both workforce and academic
- Customized technical assistance to match your needs and fit your budget”
For more information and to download a course overview and brochure, visit https://eff.clee.utk.edu/preparing_for_careers_in_healthcare.html

- **Eldercare Careers Project at Union County College** (Union County College, 2009): Final report about a year-long project which piloted a curriculum to help advanced-level English language learners prepare for eldercare training and careers. Curriculum integrated EFF skills, occupational knowledge, and computer skills. Available at http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_(US_&_Canada)_files/Eldercare%20Final%20Report%20UCC%2012-6-09.pdf

- **To Reach the First Rung and Higher: Building Healthcare Career Ladder Opportunities for Low-Skilled Disadvantaged Adults**: This 2005 report by the Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy draws on an in-depth review of six exemplary career ladder programs offered in various institutional settings: a union, a hospital, a community-based organization (CBO), and three community colleges in partnership with an array of medical centers. The programs are profiled in depth and the paper contains ideas and suggestions for institutions that may want to either create a new healthcare career program for low-skilled, disadvantaged workers or improve existing programs. Visit http://www.caalusa.org/publications.html#health

**Service sector jobs**

- **Foundational Skills in the Service Sector (National Skills Coalition, February 2017)**. “This report offers a fresh analysis of rigorous international data, painting a picture of the approximately 20 million American workers employed in key service-sector industries who lack foundational skills. It highlights promising practices and interventions used by U.S. employers to help their workers to upskill. And it details key policy levers that can foster economic mobility for these workers . . . Approximately forty-eight million Americans, or 32% of the U.S. workforce, are employed in the service sector industries of retail; health and social assistance; and leisure and hospitality. However, low wages, unpredictable schedules, and limited opportunities for promotion can constrain the ability of workers to advance within the service sector. Lack of opportunity for advancement can affect workers’ decisions about whether to stay in the sector over the long term. Conversely, workers who do see their skill gains rewarded with opportunities to advance in their chosen field have a clear incentive to stay in the sector.” Available at https://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resources/publications/file/NSC-foundational-skills-FINAL.pdf

**Retail jobs**

- **Retail Industry Fundamentals**: The NRF Foundation is the philanthropic arm of the National Retail Federation. For more than a decade, the Foundation has provided
a series of courses and credentials to help job seekers and incumbent workers to attain, perform, and advance in jobs in the retail and related industries. This work has included use of the Equipped for the Future standards and other tools to help learners who are challenged by lower levels of basic skills and/or who lack a secondary school diploma. Courses focus on understanding of retail jobs, customer service skills, and how to find jobs in the retail industry. Currently, NFR Foundation houses its various training programs for entry-level workers in RISE Up, a collaboration with industry partners and training and education providers. Visit https://nrffoundation.org/training-and-credentials/about-rise

- **Employment Readiness Curriculum (for Retail and General Job Skills)**
  (Minnesota Literacy Council): This curriculum from the Minnesota Literacy Council “was developed for a low-level Employment Readiness class which focused on retail and general job skills. The students in the class had CASAS scores that ranged from 153 to about 195, but the majority of the students were on the low end of that spectrum. If your class is higher, some of the material can be adapted to be more difficult. Many of the hands-on materials used for this class came from the Hubbs Center Bridge Curriculum (https://www.spps.org/hubbs). A variety of books were also used during this class and are listed within the curriculum grids for each unit. In addition, the students used computers one time a week . . . Students also spent one day a week volunteering at The Alley Shoppe, a free clothing store that is housed in the Arlington Hills Lutheran Church. Activities in class were often aimed at preparing students to be able to conduct hands-on activities and practice during this volunteer time . . . Common activities that we repeated in most modules included using pictures to add to our Retail Vocabulary dictionaries; practicing vocabulary and comprehension skills with basic retail picture and word stories; developing language skills with class mingles, dialogues, and songs; practicing vocabulary and appropriate questions/answers through games such as fly swatter and concentration; hands-on activities using classroom and Alley Shoppe materials; and field trips.” Available at https://mnliteracy.org/tools/employment-readiness-curriculum

Transportation/logistics/distribution jobs

- **Career Pathway Curricula for the Transportation/Logistics/ Distribution Industry** (Union County College, 2009): With funding from the U.S. Department of Labor’s North Jersey WIRED’s economic development initiative, Union County College’s Industry-Business Institute developed a career pathway model to help job seekers learn about and move into careers in the transportation/logistics/distribution industry (a major employer in northern New Jersey and the nation). The following sample curricula integrate TLD occupational knowledge with Equipped for the Future Skills and basic computer skills. (See “Appropriate Technology” article elsewhere for more about this model.)

  - “Introduction to TLD Careers” PowerPoint: http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_(US_&_Canada)_files/Intro%20t

**TLD Ready** (curriculum to help learners develop work-readiness skills for the TLD industry) [http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_(US_&_Canada)_files/TLD%20Ready%2010-4-09.pdf](http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_(US_&_Canada)_files/TLD%20Ready%2010-4-09.pdf)

**Hospitality industry jobs**

- **Basic Skills in the Hotel and Food Service Industries.** (Business Council for Effective Literacy, June 1993): This report contains a list of contacts, reports, and guidebooks from workplace basic skills programs in the hotel and restaurant industries in the 1980s, and early 1990s, along with a summary of the state of such programs in the U.S. at that time. Available at [https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED359332.pdf](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED359332.pdf)

**Workplace Education for Incumbent Workers: Program Models and Practices**

- **Focus on Basics Issue on “Workplace Education”** (Vol. 7, Issue B, November 2004). This issue contains ten articles on various aspects of basic education for workers. Includes these case studies of workplace basic education programs:

  - Much More than ABE: A workplace education program in Pittsburgh.
  - Around to Stay: A worker basic skills program in Colorado.
  - Reading Work: An ethnographic study of how literacy is used in a Canadian workplace.
  - Education Leads to Investments: A description of a learner-centered program for transit workers in Washington, DC, which focused on a range of learning needs, including financial literacy.
  - Our Own Crossroads Café: A profile of a community adult ESOL program that served workers from a range of local employers.
  - **Balancing the Agendas of Management, Student, and Teacher in Workplace ESOL**: Describes a workplace ESOL program for employees in a large janitorial firm. “70 percent of the curriculum address employer-required language, such as: ‘Can you vacuum Building Five?’ ‘Did you punch in?’ ‘Clean the bathroom, please.’ Approximately 20 percent consists of employee and union issues, such as filling out leave of absence forms and accident reports. Around 10 percent is devoted to daily-life language outside of work: ‘Where do you shop?’ ‘Where is the post office?’ ‘What is your daughter's name?’”


- **Limited English Proficiency Workers: Health and Safety Education** (PubMed.Gov, National Institute of Health, 2001): Discusses principles on which to base health and safety training for workers with limited English skills. These include: “clear and vivid way of teaching; contextual curriculum based on work; using various teaching methods; and staff development.” The report describes two strategies used in one workplace program: integrating safety and health education with ongoing in-house ESL instruction and developing a multilingual video program. The author states that “successful development and implementation of proposed programs requires upper management support, workers' awareness and active participation, collaborative teamwork, a well structured action plan, testing of pilot program, and evaluation.” Available at [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11760274](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11760274)

- **An Introduction to ESL in the Workplace: A Professional Development Packet** (Building Professional Development Partnerships for Adult Educators Project, PRO-NET, 2000): Available at [https://www.calpro-online.org/pubs/intro_esl_89.pdf](https://www.calpro-online.org/pubs/intro_esl_89.pdf)

- **Learning at Work** (Center for Literacy Studies, University of Tennessee at Knoxville, 2000): This report from an action research project contains background about Tennessee's Workplace Instruction Grant program, profiles (written by participating adult educators) of eleven programs run by adult basic education programs in a variety of industries, a summary of strategies used in the programs, and recommendations for adult education practitioners and policy makers. Appendices contain details about the SCANS skills (developed by the US Department of Labor) and assessment, planning, and instructional documents developed in the participating workplace programs. Available at [https://resources.clee.utk.edu/print/learning_at_work.pdf](https://resources.clee.utk.edu/print/learning_at_work.pdf)
Reports from the National Workplace Literacy Program. From 1988 to 1994, the U.S. Department of Education’s National Workplace Literacy Program (NWLP) funded multi-year collaborations between employers, education providers, and – in some cases – labor unions. The purpose was to develop, demonstrate, and disseminate models of basic education customized to particular workplaces and worker populations. Each project was to produce a final report that summarized what it achieved and learned. Shown below are samples of such reports. (More will be made available here as they become available.)

- **Workplace Literacy” Evaluation of Three Model Programs:** A 2000 article summarizing three evaluations. Identifies elements of successful programs, including union involvement, learner participation, curriculum development, and staff training:

- **“Agriculture and the Future: National Workplace Literacy Program”:** A 1998 evaluation report about a federal workplace basic skills for farm workers:
  [https://archive.org/details/ERIC_ED426200/page/n1](https://archive.org/details/ERIC_ED426200/page/n1)

- **Collaborative Learning for Continuous Improvement: Team Learning and Problem Solving in a Workplace Education Program: A Guidebook from a Project of the National Workplace Literacy Program,** August 1998: This document summarizes the collaborative problem solving approach field tested over three years in a variety of workplace basic education projects in upstate New York, under National Workplace Literacy Program funding.

- **Evaluation of Western Suffolk BOCES Workplace Education Program: Final Report,** 1997:
  [http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_files/WSB%E2%80%9997.pdf](http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_files/WSB%E2%80%9997.pdf)
  http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_files/Semi-Alloys%20Eval%201995.pdf

  (Executive summary:
  http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_files/EPCC%20Exec%20Summary%208-95.pdf; Full report:
  http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_files/EPCC%20Report%208-95.pdf)

- **Outcomes of Workplace Literacy Training in a Midwest Industrial Center**: A 1994 doctoral dissertation analyzing a federal workplace literacy program. Includes extensive literature review.
  https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=12281&context=rtd

- **Team Evaluation: Case Studies from Seven Workplace Education Programs**
  (National Institute for Literacy and Literacy Partnerships, 1994): Evaluators used a team (collaborative) approach to work with multi-stakeholder evaluation teams at seven companies to evaluate their workplace basic skills programs. The resulting case studies
  (http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_(US_&_Canada)_files/NIFL%20Workplace%20Case%20Studies%206-94.pdf) were part of a project funded by NIFL to develop a collaborative approach to actively involve stakeholders in evaluating and planning workplace basic skills programs. These case studies were the basis for **Team Evaluation: A Guide for Workplace Education Programs**
○ Health and Safety Education for Workers with Low Literacy or Limited English Skills (Department of Family and Community Medicine, University of New Mexico, 1992): Low literacy and limited English proficiency have become a growing concern for health and safety educators. With one-fifth of the workforce reading below an eighth-grade level and possibly another tenth having limited English skills, health and safety educators and unions have increasingly become aware that current training programs often surpass the language and literacy abilities of workers being trained. This article describes the dilemmas facing health and safety professionals in incorporating knowledge about language and literacy skill levels. It documents creative strategies and new programs, largely based on participatory and popular education approaches, to provide training that simultaneously matches worker needs and leads to worker empowerment. Available at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/1442804

○ Report from Evaluation of the Massachusetts Workplace Education Initiative (1991). Summarizes findings of a team-based evaluation of workplace basic education programs in Massachusetts. With input from a range of stakeholders at six program sites (four manufacturing and two healthcare,) the evaluation focused on “outcomes” (i.e., what was achieved and appropriate goals and measures for worker education programs) and “curricula” (i.e., the various kinds of curricula used and recommendations for more effective curricula). Available from http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_(US_&_Canada)_files/MWEI%20Eval%201991.pdf

○ Community-Based Educators: Experts and Catalysts for Change: In this 1989 article (from Participatory Literacy Education), the author describes how he and colleagues adapted a participatory approach to ESL education to help factory workers develop both English skills and other basic skills which they could use to analyze, communicate about, and take action related to their workplace and their roles in it. Available at https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/ace.36719894206

○ The Academy: A Learner-Centered Workplace Education Program: Published in 1989 in Participatory Literacy Education, this article describes an education program for workers in a Ford plant in Michigan. It was based on learner-centered principles and focused on encouraging workers to improve their lives through reading and learning. Available at https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/ace.36719894209

Tools for Assessing Worker Basic Skills

- **National Work Readiness Credential and EFF Work Readiness Profile.** In the early 2000s, the National Work Readiness Council and the Equipped for the Future Center (at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville) developed a National Work Readiness Credential. The Credential was based on earlier work by SCANS and O*NET which identified essential skills needed for entry- to mid-level jobs. The result was an assessment tool that measured workers’ ability to perform a number of critical entry-level tasks such as acquiring and using information, using technology, using systems, monitoring and correcting performance, working with others, performing work with integrity and responsibly, allocating resources, solving problems, and self-management. Visit [http://www.workreadiness.com/](http://www.workreadiness.com/) and [https://eff.clee.utk.edu/PDF/WorkReadinessProfile.pdf](https://eff.clee.utk.edu/PDF/WorkReadinessProfile.pdf)

- **CASAS.** For three decades, CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems) has developed and disseminated a variety of assessments to measure the basic skills and other areas of knowledge and skill of adults in the United States. One of these tools, the Workforce Skills Certification System, documents potential employees' skill proficiencies in reading, math, critical thinking and problem solving, and soft skills (personal qualities, work habits, and workplace attitudes). Job seekers can attach their WSCS Certificate or Profile to their resumes to present in employment interviews. Visit [www.casas.org](http://www.casas.org)

- **Approaches to Assessment in Workplace Literacy Programs: Meeting the Needs of All the Clients** (Journal of Reading, Vol. 36, No. 7, Literacy Assessment, Apr., 1993, pp. 550-554): An early overview of assessment approaches that might be used in workplace literacy programs. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/40017407?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/40017407?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)

Tools for Program Planning and Evaluation

- **Tennessee ESOL in the Workplace** (Center for Literacy Studies, University of Tennessee at Knoxville, 2003): This 172-page “Training Manual for ESOL Supervisors and Instructors” is a practical, adaptable resource to help adult educators prepare to provide ESOL (and other basic skills) classes for workers in workplace settings. It is divided in four modules: (1) Knowing and Presenting Your Adult Education Program to Business and Industry; (2) Knowing Your Community’s Needs and Understanding the Workplace; (3) Designing a Plan to Deliver and Sustain Services; and (4) Knowing Your Results by Monitoring and Evaluating Progress. Each module contains handouts (e.g., short summaries of relevant research, planning check-lists, profiles of programs in various industries) and activities that help practitioners how to customize an ESOL
program to particular workplaces and learners. These modules are followed by Appendices that include a glossary of workplace education terms, documents to use to assess the readiness of employers and educators to begin a workplace program, sample flyers for marketing workplace education services, and a PowerPoint to introduce educators to the why’s and how’s of workplace basic education. Available at https://resources.clee.utk.edu/print/Tenn_ESOL_in_the_workplace.pdf


- **Curriculum Development in the Workplace: A Resource for Educators** (ABC CANADA, 1996): Describes a collaborative approach to involving workplace stakeholders in the creation of participatory basic education curricula, customized to interests and needs of both the organization and worker participants. Available at http://en.copian.ca/library/research/abc/undcur/undcur.pdf

- **Collaborative Workplace Development, Collaborative Needs Assessment, and Collaborative Evaluation** (ABC CANADA, 1994). This series of resource materials for workplace education specialists presents the arguments and processes for a collaborative approach to worker basic education. Such an approach emphasizes and facilitates involvement of various stakeholders in the planning, implementation, evaluation, and sustaining of the program. This is done to ensure relevance of and support for the program in both the short and longer term. Documents include more-specific guides for assessing the basic education needs in a workplace and evaluating the resulting programs. Available at:
  - **Collaborative Workplace Development: An Overview**
    http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_(US_&_Canada)_files/Collab%20Workplace%20Dev%201994.pdf
  - **Collaborative Needs Assessment**
    http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_(US_&_Canada)_files/Collab%20Needs%20Assessment%201994.pdf
  - **Collaborative Evaluation**
    http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_(US_&_Canada)_files/Collab%20Eval%201994.pdf

- **Workplace Education: Stakeholders’ Expectations, Practitioners’ Responses, and the Role Evaluation Might Play:** (National Institute for Literacy and Literacy Partnerships, 1994). This 88-page report was prepared for the National Institute for
Literacy as part of a year-long exploration of how workplace basic skills were being designed and using evaluation and how a collaborative approach to planning and evaluation might help make programs more relevant and sustainable. Available at http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_(US_&_Canada)_files/NIFL%20Workplace%20Ed%20Eval%20Report%206-94.pdf


- **“Who Wants What Information – and How Do We Get It? Issues in Workplace Education Evaluation”**: This 22-page paper was the basis for a presentation at the Texas Workforce Literacy Conference in May 1993. It discusses possible stakeholders, purposes, information to be gathered, and how that information might be collected and used. http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_(US_&_Canada)_files/Who%20Wants%20What%20Info%20in%20Wkplace%20ed%20Eval%201993%20Jurmo.pdf

**Work-Related Basic Education in the U.S.: Local, State, and National Policy**

- **What Universities Can Do to Strengthen U.S. Adult Basic Skills Efforts** (Open Door Collective, December 2018): This 17-page guide explains why and how U.S. universities can support adult basic skills efforts through research, professional development, providing basic education for their own workforce and for members of their communities, and advocacy. This is one in a series of ODC guides that encourage various stakeholder groups to work with adult basic education organizations. Available on the ODC web site at http://www.opendoorcollective.org/workforce-basic-skills-resources.html

- **What Re-Entry Services Can Do to Strengthen the Basic Skills of Former Inmates** (Open Door Collective, December 2018): This nine-page guide explains why and how U.S. prisoner re-entry organizations can work with adult basic skills programs to help returning inmates develop the basic skills they need for successful re-entry. It includes examples of basic skills programs for inmates and returnees. This is one in a series of ODC guides that encourage various stakeholder groups to work with adult basic education organizations. Available on the ODC web site at http://www.opendoorcollective.org/workforce-basic-skills-resources.html

- **Career Pathways and Adult Literacy in Three U.S. Cities** (2018): This recent
study by researchers at Penn State’s Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy examines how Miami, Chicago, and Houston have organized workforce development services to help lower-skilled adults. Available at https://sites.psu.edu/adultpathways/files/2015/08/IES-presentation-v.-3-for-distribution-1r2flnu.pdf

- **Incarceration to Re-Entry: Education and Training Pathways in Ohio** (Center for Law and Social Policy, 2018): This Brief describes how Ohio is aligning education and training supports to help returning inmates integrate into the economy and larger community. Available at https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/incarceration-reentry-education-training-pathways-ohio

- **Upskilling the Immigrant Workforce to Meet Employer Demand for Skilled Workers** (Urban Institute, July 2018): This 56-page report states that, though immigrants make up one out of six workers in the United States, they are an often overlooked but vital part of local economies and should be a part of local workforce development strategies. This report examines the size and characteristics of the immigrant workforce and explores key strategies that organizations in three cities are using to support training for this population. The report uses recent census data to provide a demographic profile of the immigrant workforce with national- and metropolitan-level statistics for the largest 100 metropolitan regions, with a focus on lower- and middle-skilled job-holders. Drawing on interviews with service providers and stakeholders in Dallas, Miami, and Seattle, it identifies barriers to training for this population and the experiences of organizations serving immigrant communities. The report offers recommendations for policymakers, service and training providers, funders, and employers. Available at https://www.urban.org/research/publication/upskilling-immigrant-workforce-meet-employer-demand-skilled-workers

- **Basic Skills, A Key to Advancing the Workforce** (The Open Door Collective, March 2018). This article is one in a series of ODC “Making the Case” advocacy papers. It argues for integration of basic skills education into workforce development systems for employed and unemployed workers in the U.S. This would be done to ensure worker well-being (e.g., to secure family-sustaining employment) and workplace performance. http://www.opendoorcollective.org/basic-skills-a-key-to-advancing-the-workforce.html

- **Unlocking Skills: Successful Initiatives for Integrating Foreign-Trained Immigrant Professionals** (Migration Policy Institute, February 2017): “With nearly two million college-educated immigrants and refugees in the United States unable to fully utilize their professional skills, better understanding of the elements of successful programs and policies that reduce the waste of advanced education and skills can benefit immigrants, their families, and the U.S. economy more generally. This report explores a range of frontline programs and policy reforms that are providing cutting-
edge career navigation, relicensing, gap filling, and job search assistance for foreign-trained professionals in a wide range of occupations. It also examines different state policy and licensing contexts that affect these highly skilled individuals, with a focus on the dense thicket of state laws and regulations that slow or prevent qualified individuals from practicing in a wide range of occupations.” Available at https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/unlocking-skills-successful-initiatives-integrating-foreign-trained-immigrant-professionals?mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiTWpneFl6Z3hOR0U0T0RBMyIsInQiOiJPenZzOUJUSENCZnVRSzNwWDJuVU9hVcmRKaGo4Q21UZHNrNkIrXMQ1NXpDdFpVY01cL0ZWUG5kM2ZJRFc4VjlldmpvOENkM2dIaGJRaWJszZnhVeXBIUGMxajd0cEN5dU9vK25mYXdhTDlzbu3pWEFya3g4WkZmcWl4cEwxdlZvNVkifQ%253D%253D

- **The Role of Participation in ABE-to-College Transition Programs in Adult Student Postsecondary Enrollment, Persistence, and Success** (National College Transitions Network, 2016): The Adult Transitions Longitudinal Study (ATLAS) was an unprecedented longitudinal study of 227 adult students who entered one of 11 ABE-to-College transition programs in fall 2007 or spring 2008. The study followed these students for four years. The goal of these college transition programs was to help adult students build their personal, career, academic, and college knowledge readiness. The programs were all components of larger adult education programs participating in the New England ABE-to-College Transition Project designed and managed by World Education and funded by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation since 2000. Report available at https://www.collegetransition.org/college-career-readiness/research-briefs/atlas/

- **Boosting Adult Education in New York** (Center for an Urban Future, 2015): With 1.6 million adults in New York lacking a high school diploma, the authors argue that the state needs a bold new commitment to strengthening its adult education system. They lay out several steps policymakers could take to rebuild the adult education system for the 21st century economy. Available at https://nycfuture.org/research/adult-education-and-career-pathways-in-new-york

- **The Impact of ABS Program Participation on Long-Term Economic Outcome** (U.S. Department of Education, 2014): This report indicates that higher intensities of participation in adult basic skills (ABS) programs (with a threshold of around 100 hours) has substantial impact on future earnings of learners, though the impact typically takes several years to develop. Available at https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/ABS_EconomicOutcomes.pdf

Tuning in to Local Labor Markets: Findings from the Sectoral Employment Impact Study (Public/Private Ventures, 2010): This report indicates that sector-based occupational training programs (i.e., those that train workers for specific jobs in growing industries) produce positive impacts on participants’ wages, sustained employment, and access to jobs that provide higher wages and benefits. The report also identifies key features of effective programs. Available at http://www.aspenwsi.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/TuningIntoLocalLaborMarkets.pdf

Building a Workforce Learning System for Union County (Union County College, 2008): This “White Paper for the Union County (NJ) Workforce Investment Board” made the case that (a) significant numbers of residents lack the basic skills and educational credentials needed to work in decent-paying jobs in the country; (2) several key industries in the county are in need of qualified workers; (c) the current systems of adult education and workforce development services need to be strengthened and better coordinated; (d) in addition to providing educational services, adult learners can use other strategies (e.g., self-study and situated learning) to practice and strengthen the use of their basic skills; and (e) leadership and investment are needed by a number of stakeholders to build a more effective system of work-related learning. Available at http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_(US_&_Canada)_files/WIB%20White%20Paper%203-08.pdf

Reach Higher, America: Overcoming Crisis in the U.S Workforce (National Commission on Adult Literacy, 2008). This 77-page final report of the NCAL documents the adult education and skills crisis facing American workers, proposes a fundamentally new approach to adult basic education and workforce skills preparation in America, and lays out the fiscal and social benefits that will result from substantially increased public expenditures for programs and services. Focus is on the needs of the unemployed, low-skilled incumbent workers, immigrants with limited or no English, parents or caregivers with low basic skills, incarcerated adults, high-school dropouts, and high school graduates not adequately prepared for college. Among other things, the Commission recommends transforming the current system, which reaches about 3 million adults annually, into an adult education and workforce skills system with the capacity to enroll 20 million adults by the year 2020 and a mission of moving adults to readiness for post secondary education and job training. The report offers a kind of “domestic Marshall plan” for meeting workforce education needs—including bold recommendations for state government, business and labor, philanthropy, and the general public. A clear message of the report is that unless the nation gives much higher priority to the basic educational needs of the workforce—adults 16 and older beyond the reach of the schools—America’s standard of living, its status as a leading world power, and its very social fabric will be severely eroded. In addition to the final report, a standalone Executive Summary and three one-page "pullouts" (Business,
Media, and Public Policy) are among the materials available from the Commission website. Available at [https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED506605.pdf](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED506605.pdf)

- **Workplace Education: Twenty State Perspectives** (National Commission on Adult Literacy 2007). This report summarizes findings from a survey of twenty states to clarify the following aspects of their workplace basic skills efforts: (1) how workplace programs are funded, (2) levels of effort for the past two years, (3) connections, partnerships, and/or strategic plans implemented by workplace education programs, (4) how states measure outcomes or determine success, (5) the nature of workplace education outcomes achieved, (6) challenges or barriers faced by states, (7) what the states consider to be the key elements of success in their workplace education efforts, and (8) what future policy options states would like to consider. States were encouraged to review the information and data they provided for the publication of the 2004 national report on workplace education. The report also profiles three categories of state models and concludes with options for state policy. Available at [http://www.caalusa.org/content/parkerpolicybrief.pdf](http://www.caalusa.org/content/parkerpolicybrief.pdf)


- **Chance of a Lifetime** (Center for an Urban Future, 2006). This report makes the case that, while significant numbers of NY City youth are “disconnected” from meaningful work and helpful education, a number of key industries (e.g., construction, healthcare, automotive industries, commercial driving) are hurting because they can’t find qualified workers to replace the older, experienced workers who are steadily retiring. The document argues that sector-based workforce development opportunities are needed to serve the various segments of the disconnected youth population (i.e., young mothers, youth with criminal records) and the industries which the city depends on for economic development. CUF – and other organizations around the country -- have subsequently issued similar reports, but this was one of the first and one of the best – clear, pointed, with real solutions relevant to a major city. [https://nycfuture.org/pdf/Chance_Of_A_Lifetime.pdf](https://nycfuture.org/pdf/Chance_Of_A_Lifetime.pdf)

- **Michigan Works! Newsletter** (Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, 2006). Summarizes variety of services for workforce and economic development in a state hit hard by economic downturns. Available at

After the Grant Is Over (Focus on Basics, Vol. 7, Issue B, Nov. 2004). Examines the question of “Do workplaces continue to fund programs that were initiative with public funds?” Draws on experience in the Massachusetts Workplace Education Initiative, a leader in such state efforts to develop educational resources for incumbent workers. Findings included: (1) larger firms tended to continue programs more than smaller firms, (2) those companies that do so see a value in supporting such efforts, (3) “The 24 programs that did continue all shared five common elements: a champion, a strategy, a problem, evidence, and access.” Concludes with recommendations related to state policy and program strategies. Available at http://www.ncsall.net/index.html?id=623.html


The Language of Opportunity: Expanding Employment Prospects for Adults with Limited English Skills (Center for Law and Social Policy, August, 2003). From the introduction: “In this policy brief, we describe the demographics and economic circumstances of low-income adults with limited English proficiency (LEP) as well as the language and job training services available to them. We summarize lessons from scientific evaluation research on employment programs for low-skilled adults and provide recommendations for policy and practice that would increase access for LEP adults to higher-paying jobs.” https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED481481

Don’t Forget the Ones Left Behind: How Career Centers Can Better Serve Job-Seekers Lacking in Basic Skills and High School Credentials (U.S. Department of Education, 2003) This paper was prepared for the U.S. Department of Education for Presentation at the Workplace Learning Conference, Chicago, December 2003. This was a time when the work-related basic education field was shifting its focus from “workplace literacy education” for incumbent workers to integrating basic education into community-level workforce development services for job-seekers. The paper makes the point that many job seekers are blocked from taking advantage of
workforce development services and job opportunities by their lack of basic skills and/or a secondary school credential.

http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_(US_&_Canada)_files/Left%20Behind%202003.pdf

- **The New (and Ongoing) Job Crisis for Adult Learners: How Adult Educators Can Respond** (Literacy Harvest, New York City Literacy Assistance Center, Fall 2002): This article describes how adult literacy and workforce development programs responded to the sudden need to help workers reconnect to employment in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks on Lower Manhattan. While many workers lost their jobs when a major hub of jobs was closed for much of a year, the adult education community stepped up to find creative ways to help. Available at http://911digitalarchive.org/files/original/b49759db08f9e2da59c16829182caeab.pdf

- **Building a Level Playing Field: The Need to Expand and Improve the National and State Adult Education and Literacy Systems** (National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, 2001): This Occasional Paper (a) provides data on the numbers of adults who lack English literacy skills and secondary education credentials; (b) describes why and how adults need such skills for work, family, and civic purposes; (c) describes the adult basic skills supports currently available in the U.S.; (d) identifies how many adults currently participate in such services; (e) suggests ways that current educational services can be strengthened and expanded; and (f) recommends immediate actions that can help move improvements forward. Available at http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/research/op_comings2.pdf


- **Literacy in the Labor Force: Results from the National Adult Literacy Survey** (National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, 1999): This detailed, 342-page report summarized key findings of the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey. It describes the literacy proficiencies of the nation’s overall workforce; of key demographic, socio-economic, and regional sub-groups; of workers in key industries and occupations; of income groupings; and of various levels of educational attainment. Available at https://nces.ed.gov/pubs99/1999470.pdf

- **Adult Education’s Role in New Jersey’s Workforce Development System** (New
Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning, 1999): This report of NJALL’s April 22, 1999 Pre-Conference Symposium summarizes (a) how national policy is now pushing adult education to focus more on workforce preparation; (b) how adult education was already providing work-related services; (c) factors supporting or blocking adult education’s ability to provide work-related services; and (d) components of a more effective work-related learning system. The document concludes with recommendations for state-level actions that could help adult education more effectively support the work goals of adult learners.

- **Politics, Policy, Practice and Personal Responsibility: Adult Education in an Era of Welfare Reform** (National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, NCSALL Report 10 A, April 1999): This paper argues that the common discourse on how adult education can help low-skilled, low-income workers succeed in the workplace is overly-simplistic and should be re-examined.
http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/research/d'amico1.pdf

- **Integrating Adult Basic Education with Workforce Development and Workplace Change: How National-Level Policy Makers Can Help** (U.S. Department of Education 1998): This monograph was one of the early papers funded by the USDOE to identify ways of integrating adult basic education with the work-readiness preparation of unemployed and employed workers. It describes various ways adult education had already been focusing on work-related skills, recommends ways to strengthen work-related basic skills services at local levels, and suggests actions that national-level decision makers can take to support more-effective work-related basic education systems. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED424363.pdf

- **State Level Policy for Workplace Basic Education: What Advocates Are Saying** (National Institute for Literacy, 1997). This study (conducted under a NIFL Literacy Leaders Fellowship) drew on input from stakeholders in 26 states and a document review to identify obstacles blocking development of workplace literacy initiatives and components of an effective system of workplace basic skills efforts.

- **“New Paradigms for a New Economy: Challenges for New Jersey Adult Educators”**: Written for the 1995 conference of the NJ Association for Lifelong Learning, this article describes new thinking, opportunities, and challenges that adult educators should consider as they plan work-related basic skills efforts.
“Understanding Lessons Learned in Employee Basic Skills Efforts in the U.S.: No Quick Fix”: This article in Basic Skills for the Workplace (edited by Taylor, Lewe, and Draper) describes diverse perspectives on workplace literacy, argues for clearer understanding of worker learning needs and potential solutions, and makes the case for sustained, informed worker basic skills efforts.
http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_(US_&_Canada)_files/No%20Quick%20Fix%201991%20Jurmo.pdf

Reinventing the NWLP: Recommendations for the National Workplace Literacy Program. (Workplace Education Collaborative, 1994): This paper was developed by adult educators involved in workplace basic skills education. (The group included members of the Workplace Education Collaborative, a group of adult educators developing participatory, collaborative approaches to workplace basic skills education.) The co-signers submitted this paper in November 1994 to the U.S. Department of Education, in response to the Department’s request for input related to the reauthorization of the Adult Education Act. It contains feedback about how the USDOE might strengthen the guidelines for the NWLP, which had been providing multi-year grants to workplace literacy demonstration projects around the U.S.
http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_(US_&_Canada)_files/Reinventing%20the%20NWLP%20Nov%201994.pdf

BCEL Newsletter for the Business and Literacy Communities (1984-1993). The Business Council for Effective Literacy was a national organization begun by the Chair of McGraw-Hill whose primary mission was to increase corporate support for adult literacy efforts in the U.S. It published a monthly newsletter and other documents (issue briefs, guidebooks, directories) on topics like basic skills in small businesses; intergenerational/family literacy; federal and state policy; labor union education; computer-assisted instruction; library-based literacy programs; community-based approaches to literacy education; correctional education; literacy in the courts; basic skills for youth; colleges and literacy; supported work programs; technological changes in the workplace; standardized tests; citizenship education; programs for special target audiences (homeless, dislocated workers, dropouts, welfare recipients, single parents, immigrants, refugees, minorities). BCEL became a reliable information source for companies, foundations, unions, policy makers, adult education practitioners, and news media. A sampling of BCEL publications can be found at https://eric.ed.gov/?q=BCEL.

Re-Thinking How To Plan and Evaluate Workplace Education Programs: Innovations in New York State (New York State Education Department, 1992): In March and April of 1992, 60 representatives of state-funded workplace education programs in New York attended day-long regional workshops to identify ways of improving program planning and evaluation methods. After the workshops, the
participants returned to their home programs, organized local evaluation teams, and developed action plans to clarify their programs' goals, strengths, and problems and to suggest possible improvement strategies. In May 1992, the participants reconvened to present their draft action plans and the team process used to develop the plans. As a result of the workshop project, many of the action plans developed were incorporated into revised program funding proposals, several representatives who had participated in the workshops undertook special team-based planning and evaluation projects, New York's State Education Department began to revise its application format for workplace program funding, and many program participants developed links with other workplace educators in the United States and Canada. Possible future actions in the areas of staff development, collaborative site-level planning and evaluation, and collaborative statewide policy development were identified.

https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED362643

- **Workplace Education: Voices from the Field: Proceedings of the National Workplace Literacy Project Directors Conference** (U.S. Department of Education, September 1991). This is a summary of feedback provided by recipients of USDOE National Workplace Literacy Program grants at a national meeting in 1991. They recommend ways that the NWLP could be improved, based on their experience. Available at [http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_files/Voices%20from%20Field%201991.pdf](http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_files/Voices%20from%20Field%201991.pdf)

- **A Review of the National Workplace Literacy Program** (Pelavin Associates, May 1991). This report, prepared for the U.S. Department of Education, describes results of an evaluation of the first year of the National Workplace Literacy Program. The study identified components of effective programs identified both in professional literature and in the NWLP field sites. “Information from site visits identified four components associated with effective workplace literacy projects: (1) active involvement by project partners, such as businesses and unions, in project planning, design, and operation; (2) active and ongoing employee involvement in conducting literacy task analyses and determining worker literacy levels; (3) systematic analysis of on-the-job literacy requirements; and (4) development of instructional materials related to literacy skills required on the job. Five recommendations to improve program effectiveness were offered: (1) require workplace literacy projects to collect data; (2) lengthen the grant period; (3) develop procedures for disseminating information about successful projects; (4) require projects to evaluate effectiveness; and (5) support development of instruments to assess participant literacy levels geared for the workplace.” [https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED333199](https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED333199)

- **The Good News and the Bad News About Workplace Literacy Efforts in the United States**: This ten-page paper was presented at the Texas JTPA Workplace Literacy Forum in 1991. It outlines national developments related to awareness, curriculum design, collaborations, staff training, research and evaluation, and funding. It recommends actions that employers and other stakeholders might take at this early stage of the development of a new field of worker basic education. [Link](http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_(US_&_Canada)_files/TX%20JTPA%201991%20Jurmo.pdf)

- **Building Partnerships for a Stronger Workforce**: Presentation at Annual Meeting of Arkansas Governor’s Commission on Adult Literacy, 1990. [Link](http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_(US_&_Canada)_files/ARK%20Gov%20Comm%201990%20Jurmo.pdf)

### Interpretations of How to Make Workplace Education Relevant and Effective

- **Productive and Participatory: Basic Education for High Performing and Actively Engaged Workers** (New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, Jossey-Bass, Winter 2010): An argument for a collaborative, participatory approach to worker basic skills education, one that focuses on both enhancing worker job performance and on worker well-being. [Link](http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_(US_&_Canada)_files/Productive%20%26%20Participatory%202010.pdf)

- **Reading Work** (Focus on Basics, 2004): Describes workplace basic skills ethnographic research done in Canadian workplaces which showed that workers’ abilities to use reading and other basic skills are determined by a number of variables. These include how work is organized and supported by the work organization. Researchers state that those organizing and supporting workplace education efforts need to take such factors into account when setting program goals and organizing activities. [Link](http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/fob/2004/fob_7b.pdf)
**Problem-Posing at Work: Popular Educator’s Guide** (Grass Roots Press, 2004): This is an updated version of *ESL for Action: Problem-Posing at Work*, Elsa Roberts Auerbach’s and Nina Wallerstein’s 1987 guide to using a participatory, worker-centered approach to teaching ESL in the workplace. The contextual focal points of the curriculum include helping workers understand and protect their rights as workers. This newer version is available at [https://cpr.unm.edu/common/docs/freire.pdf](https://cpr.unm.edu/common/docs/freire.pdf). The original *ESL for Action* can be found at [https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/18644524](https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/18644524).

**Equipped for the Future Worker Role Map and Indicators** (National Institute for Literacy, early 2000s). Presents how the Equipped for the Future (EFF) adult basic skills initiative interpreted the basic skills needed by U.S. workers and developed corresponding learner-centered learning activities. Available at [https://eff.clee.utk.edu/fundamentals/eff_roles.htm](https://eff.clee.utk.edu/fundamentals/eff_roles.htm). To see the “Research to Practice Notes” summarizing the research behind the EFF model, visit [https://eff.clee.utk.edu/products_services/online_publications.htm](https://eff.clee.utk.edu/products_services/online_publications.htm).

**The Theory Behind Content-Based Instruction** (Focus on Basics, Volume 1, Issue D, Dec. 1997). Author Thomas Sticht summarizes research from the cognitive sciences which supports the use of work-related reading materials in workplace basic skills development programs. The author has used this as the basis for a “functional context” approach to adult literacy education which he has promoted for several decades. While the notion of contextualized instruction has become widely accepted in the adult literacy field (based on a number of research sources, including this author’s), there are important variations in how “contextualization” is defined and implemented (i.e., in how content is defined, what that content is, and the purposes of contextualized programs). [http://www.ncsall.net/index.html@id=433.html](http://www.ncsall.net/index.html@id=433.html).

**Too Little Time and Too Many Goals** (Focus on Basics, Volume 1, Issue D, December 1997). The author cites research that suggests that effective workplace programs need to avoid focusing on too many different objectives and instead allow learners to devote adequate time to practicing and mastering priority, relevant skills. This can be done by focusing instruction on work-related content that the learner deals with regularly. [http://www.ncsall.net/index.html@id=432.html](http://www.ncsall.net/index.html@id=432.html).

Changing Workers looks at U.S. factories and workplace education programs to see what is expected currently of workers. The studies reported in (editor Glynda) Hull's book draw their evidence from firsthand, sustained looks at workplaces and workplace education efforts. Many of the chapters represent long-term ethnographic or qualitative research. Others are fine-grained examinations of texts, curricula, or policy. Such perspectives result in portraits that honor the complex nature of work, people, and education. For example, one chapter examines the shop floor of a computer manufacturer in Silicon Valley and shows how well-intentioned organizational changes, such as the imposition of self-directed work teams, often go awry, particularly in multicultural workplaces. Another chapter provides the history of a federally funded literacy project designed for garment workers in New York City, documenting the struggles and achievements that accompanied this attempt to prepare immigrants for alternatives to work in a rapidly downsizing industry. Other settings and topics include a community college where minority women are prepared for the skilled trades; an auto-accessory plant with a "pay-for-knowledge" training program; a union-based literacy program designed for hospital workers; and the popular vocational curriculum called "applied communications." Available at https://www.sunypress.edu/p-2487-changing-work-changing-workers.aspx

- **“Functional Context’ vs. ‘General Literacy’”**: In 1994, the Adult Literacy Special Interest Group of the International Reading Association hosted a multi-part discussion in three issues of its newsletter on the topic of the definitions and pros and cons of two broad approaches to workplace basic education. Eunice Askov (Penn. State), Larry Mikulecky, and Paul Jurmo briefly interpreted these questions. http://www.pauljurmo.info/pauljurmo/Writings_(US_&_Canada)_files/IRA%20Func%20Context%20vs%20Gen%27l%20Litcy%201994%20Jurmo.pdf

- **Workplace ESL Instruction: Varieties and Constraints** (ERIC Digest, 1993). From the abstract: “Changes in the U.S. economy are altering employment patterns, and these changes have implications for workers whose native language is other than English. While the nature and type of English language skills needed to succeed on the job vary according to local employment patterns, many commentators on trends in the workplace see a broad-scale shift to jobs that demand better communication skills and thus assume English fluency, both oral and written (e.g., Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1990). Though the extent and impact of such a shift has been questioned (Mishel & Teixeira, 1991), lack of English language and literacy skills is clearly a barrier to many kinds of employment. Hence, many programs have been established to prepare adults for the workplace or to help workers already on the job. Here we summarize the types of existing programs and discuss constraints on program development.” Available at https://www.ericdigests.org/1994/workplace.htm

- **Job-Related Basic Skills** (ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, ERIC Digest No. 94, 1990): This publication is one in a series of resources
generated by ERIC ACVE in the early 1990s on the topic of work-related basic education. It states: “Once considered primarily a social issue, literacy has now become a business need. Changes in the nature of jobs and the composition of the work force are making workplace literacy programs a necessity. Although definitions of workplace literacy are much debated, many agree that the reading, writing, and analytical skills needed at work differ from those taught in schools or traditional literacy programs. The dimension of context is emerging: job-related basic skills are those skills needed to function successfully in the context of the workplace—in the performance of a job. In light of the recent explosion of information on workplace literacy and basic skills, this Digest updates a previous edition (Thiel 1985) by defining job-related basic skills and reviewing the current consensus on their importance. Levels of job literacy, examples of programs, and recommendations about ways to make skill development programs work are discussed.” https://www.ericdigests.org/pre-9215/job.htm

Employer Perspectives

- **What Forward-Thinking Employers Can Do to Strengthen the Basic Skills of Our Workforce** (Open Door Collective, December 2018): This five-page document summarizes why and how employers can work with adult basic skills educators to help employed and unemployed workers succeed in jobs that provide family-sustaining wages and benefits. Includes profiles of several employer initiatives in workforce basic education. One of a series of ODC guides which promote collaboration between various stakeholder groups and adult basic skills organizations. Available at http://www.opendoorcollective.org/workforce-basic-skills-resources.html

- **Employer Guide to Adult Education for Work: Transforming Adult Education to Grow a Skilled Workforce** (National Center on Education for the Economy, 2009): Written for employers and those who work with employers, this guide provides (a) a vision for how adult education programs can better prepare adults for work, (b) guidelines for how employers can better work with adult education programs, and (c) tools employers can use to assess their training needs, access and assess training resources, and advocate on behalf of high quality adult education systems. https://jfforg-prod-prime.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/Emp_Guide_Adult_Ed_Work.PDF

- **Why Do Companies Provide Workplace Education Programs?** (National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, Review of Adult Learning and Literacy, 2004, Volume 4, Chapter 3): This article summarizes research on (a) why employers invest in training, (b) impacts of worker basic skills programs, and (c) recommendations for how policy, practice, and research can expand workplace basic

- **Workplace Basics: The Essential Skills Employers Want** (American Society for Training and Development, 1990): This book followed a related study by Anthony Carnevale and a team at Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Economy which identified the basic skills that employees need and employers want in the changing U.S. economy and workplaces. Workers will increasingly, for example, need particular forms of reading, writing, computation, communication, problem-solving, creative thinking, and teamwork skills, along with self-confidence and motivation. This book provides suggestions for how to establish worker education programs that help employees to develop such skills. [https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED319979.pdf](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED319979.pdf)


- **Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the 21st Century** (Hudson Institute, 1987): Similar to a number of other reports issued in this period and subsequently, this document makes the case that, as manufacturing jobs decline in number in the U.S., the jobs that pay decent wages that remain will require higher and different types of skills. This has implications for workers who have lower basic skills and/or lack a high school diploma and who, in previous generations, might have been able to hold a job with decent pay but who now will have fewer such job opportunities. Available at [https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED290887.pdf](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED290887.pdf)
Labor Union Perspectives

- **What Labor Educators Can Do to Strengthen the Basic Skills of Our Workforce** (Open Door Collective, December 2018): This nine-page document summarizes why and how labor unions can work with adult basic skills educators to help employed and unemployed workers succeed in jobs that provide family-sustaining wages and benefits. Includes profiles of several union-based worker education programs. One of a series of ODC guides which promote collaboration between various stakeholder groups and adult basic skills organizations. Available at [http://www.opendoorcollective.org/workforce-basic-skills-resources.html](http://www.opendoorcollective.org/workforce-basic-skills-resources.html)

- **Contextualized Curriculum for Workplace Education: An Introductory Guide** (Massachusetts Worker Education Roundtable, 2008): This 31-page guide provides a helpful introduction to the purposes, stakeholders, content, challenges, and opportunities of workplace basic skills programs. It then presents principles of a learner-centered approach to workplace basic education, along with a process for developing a curriculum that is relevant and engaging for learners and responsive to other stakeholder interests and other realities. The document gives examples of the various work-related learning needs of a particular population of workers (e.g., immigrants) in a particular type of work organizations (e.g., a residential care facility for mentally disabled individuals). Readers are shown how the curriculum can be tied to the Massachusetts ESOL Curriculum Framework, how to develop an effective lesson plan, how to organize a multi-level class and how to maintain confidentiality of learners’ information and otherwise treat participants with respect. [https://www.umass.edu/roundtable/projects/Integrated%20curr_guide%20p1.pdf](https://www.umass.edu/roundtable/projects/Integrated%20curr_guide%20p1.pdf)

- **Workplace Health and Safety ESOL Curriculum** (Massachusetts Labor Education Roundtable, 2005). From the Introduction: “This curriculum is designed to help ESOL students (English for Speakers of Other Languages) learn about and exercise their workplace health and safety rights. The curriculum uses learner-centered activities that engage students in discussion, elicit and build on their experiences and encourage critical analysis and strategies. Teachers can use these lessons to create a participatory curriculum with students, in which teachers and students analyze issues that they have identified together, and develop strategies to address them.” Available at [https://www.umass.edu/roundtable/projects/Health-Safety-ESOL.pdf](https://www.umass.edu/roundtable/projects/Health-Safety-ESOL.pdf)


- **Union-Sponsored Workplace ESL Instruction** (Center for Adult English Language Acquisition and COSMOS Corp., 1996). This digest explores the history of union-sponsored workplace ESL instruction; discusses some models for program delivery; and briefly describes curricula and program goals. http://www.caal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/union.html


- **Labor Education Programs in Health and Safety** (1994): Labor health and safety programs encourage workers to take an active part in making the workplace safe. The authors describe the growing need for preparing workers to participate in prevention efforts, the role of training in addressing this need, educational principles and traditions that contribute to empowerment education, and a step-by-step process that is required to achieve the goals of worker involvement and empowerment. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/15114456_Labor_education_programs_in_health_and_safety
Union Roles in Workplace Literacy (Economic Development Assistance Center, Virginia Tech, 1993). This article describes the history of union-based education programs, the new emphasis on worker basic skills, guidelines for effective union-based basic skills programs, and examples of exemplary union basic skills programs. https://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/CATALYST/V23N3/hensley.html

Health and Safety Education for Workers with Low-Literacy or Limited-English (1992): From the abstract describing this article by Nina Wallerstein: “Literacy and limited English proficiency have become a growing concern for health and safety educators. With one-fifth of the workforce reading below an eighth-grade level and possibly another tenth having limited English skills, health and safety educators and unions have increasingly become aware that current training programs often surpass the language and literacy abilities of workers being trained. This article describes the dilemmas facing health and safety professionals in incorporating knowledge about language and literacy skill levels. It documents creative strategies and new programs, largely based on participatory and popular education approaches, to provide training that simultaneously matches worker needs and leads to worker empowerment.” https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/1442804

Worker Centered Learning: A Union Guide to Workplace Literacy (AFL-CIO, 1990): This early and influential primer on a union-oriented, worker-centered approach to basic education for workers was developed at a time when much attention was being paid to workplace literacy by policy makers, labor unions, employers, adult education agencies, and the media. It argues for an approach to basic education that helps to empower workers to not only perform their jobs efficiently but understand and protect their rights and otherwise ensure their well-being. https://wdr.doleta.gov/opr/fulltext/document.cfm?docn=5646

International Perspectives

Canada

Adult Learning and Literacy in Canada (National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, Annual Review, Volume 2: Chapter 6, 2001). Provides a history of adult literacy efforts in Canada, an overview of current services, and recommendations for expanding and strengthening services. Includes some suggestions for how to improve work-related and family-related services in particular. http://www.ncsall.net/index.html?id=558.html
Workplace Literacy and Basic Skills (National Literacy Secretariat of Canada, 1994). This early document by Sue Folinsbee defines the term “workplace literacy and basic skills, why such skills are important, factors to consider when setting up a workplace basic skills program, steps for doing so, and things to avoid. http://en.copian.ca/library/research/nls/inpub/worklit/worklit.pdf

United Kingdom


Australia

Reskilling the Manufacturing Workforce and Developing Capabilities for the Future (Australasian Journal of Engineering Education, Volume 22, 2017, Issue 1) From the abstract: “Australia needs a stronger workforce over the next three to five years with more qualified engineers and associated professionals with the high-level skills capable of delivering the needs of the advanced manufacturing and maritime industries. Australia’s graduation rates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields are low by international comparison, providing challenges in meeting qualified workforce needs. With a focus on Tasmania, this paper identified the mismatch between current skills and future needs from a literature review, and through semi-structured interviews with companies in these industries, qualitative data on future skills were determined. The results clearly indicate that there is a need for Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education to be flexible in their course offerings, work with industry to ensure that it is delivering consistent and quality learning outcomes, thus creating a culture of communication and collaboration underpinned by mutual understanding of industry and education and training sector needs, possibilities and constraints.” https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/22054952.2017.1338228


Skills in Australia: Towards Workforce Development and Sustainable Skill Ecosystems (Journal of Industrial Relations, 2006). From the abstract: “This article argues that there is a need to move beyond narrow ways of thinking about training to incorporate broader notions of ‘workforce development’ and ‘skill
ecosystems’. A market-based approach to skills development is contrasted with a social consensus model, which takes a more integrated view of how skills are formed and sustained. However, following a review of Australia’s brief and ultimately unsuccessful attempt to develop something akin to a social consensus approach, we argue that there is much to be gained from a workforce development approach and an understanding of skill formation as occurring in the context of skill ecosystems. To be most effective this approach to skill formation requires the facilitation of networks and nurturing of partnerships among the different agents and agencies concerned with skill development. Recent initiatives in Australia that explicitly adopt a skill ecosystem and workforce development orientation demonstrate the potential of these approaches to overcome many of the problems associated with currently dominant market-based approaches and avoid the pitfalls of social consensus models.”

New Zealand


Ireland

- **An Employer’s Guide to Basic Skills at Work** (National Adult Literacy Agency, Ireland, 2006): The activities described in this introductory guide were field-tested in an Irish county. It provides information on (1) why basic skills are an important concern for employers, (2) actions employers can take to get started (e.g., scan the work environment, analyze target jobs, assessing worker needs, identifying options for responding to those needs). [https://www.nala.ie/sites/default/files/publications/An%20employers%20guide%20to%20basic%20skills%20at%20work_1.pdf](https://www.nala.ie/sites/default/files/publications/An%20employers%20guide%20to%20basic%20skills%20at%20work_1.pdf)

Jamaica

- **Jamaica Workplace Literacy Program Report** (Unesco, 2016): Describes goals, content, activities, components, and lessons learned from this national program to upgrade the work-related basic skills. [https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/workplace-literacy-programme-wlp-jamaica](https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/workplace-literacy-programme-wlp-jamaica)