

**ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES, PROGRAM
DEVELOPMENT, AND A CAREER PLANNING
WORKSHOP**

**GARY DAVIS
ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY
MAIS 701
MAIS PROJECT
MARCH 14/2004**

Acknowledgements

I first acknowledge my wife, Kerri for her continual support and feedback throughout this project and in other courses in the Master of Arts: Integrated Studies (MAIS) program. Without Kerri's patience and understanding this MAIS project would not be possible. I am forever grateful. My children, Marshall and Savannah, have sacrificed quality time with me throughout the project but are a constant reminder that my most important job in life is to be a good father. They have never complained and have blessed me with their unconditional love.

Professor Paula Brook, while not officially part of the MAIS project team, introduced me to the Lifelong Education Program Planning (LEPP) model in the MDDE 617 course and offered suggestions on how such a model can be applied to adults with learning disabilities. She permitted me to write a lengthy paper in her course in preparation for this project. Thank you, Paula.

Professor Lorraine Stewart, in her role as academic advisor and project reader, has provided me with uncompromising academic and personal support throughout this project. Her patience with my many project modifications, knowledge in the field of learning disabilities, and organizational prowess are invaluable to me.

Professor Eila Lamb has been an exceptional project advisor. She too has shown unending patience in this academic endeavor. Professor Lamb was a wonderful support in the MAIS 610 and MDDE 613 courses as well as in this project. When it came time to request a project advisor there was no question in my mind that Professor Lamb would be my first choice. The students and faculty of the MAIS program are truly blessed to have her as a staff member.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to Athabasca University and the administrators of the MAIS program for providing me with the opportunity to participate in this unique learning experience. When I began this academic adventure in 2000 there were only 27 program students. Today, approximately 400 students are enrolled in MAIS studies. Despite the distance between learners and professors, Athabasca University has created a closely-knit learning community that can affect social change in an ever-changing world.

Gary Davis

ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES, PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND A CAREER PLANNING WORKSHOP

Table of contents

Introduction	4
Definition of Learning Disabilities and Ongoing Issues	6
The Lifelong Education Program Planning (LEPP) model	26
LEPP Quadrant #1 (Exercising Professional Responsibility)	28
Sub-Quadrants	
a. Articulate a Working Philosophy	29
b. Enact a Sense of Ethical Responsibility	39
c. Work Effectively	30
d. Magnify Roles of a Lifelong Educator	31
LEPP Quadrant #2 (Engaging Relevant Contexts)	32
Sub-Quadrants	
a. Appraise Situation Internal to the Organization	33
b. Appraise Situation External to the Organization	38
c. Accommodate Characteristics of Adults	39
d. Assess Needs and Negotiate Stakeholder Interests	42
LEPP Quadrant #3 (Designing the Program)	47
Sub-Quadrants	
a. Set Goals and Objectives	52
b. Plan Process and Outcome Evaluation	54
c. Formulate Instructional Design	61
d. Designate Learning Procedures	63
LEPP Quadrant #4 (Managing Administrative Aspects)	70
Sub-Quadrants	
a. Plan Recruitment and Retention Strategies	71
b. Plan Promotion and Marketing	73
c. Determine Financial Responsibility	73
d. Plan Instructor Selection, Supervision, and Training	75
ESSAY CONCLUSIONS	78
APPENDIX (Career Planning Workshop)	79
REFERENCES	140

ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES, PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND A CAREER PLANNING WORKSHOP

INTRODUCTION

There are a multitude of famous individuals with learning disabilities who have achieved career success in society and its labour market. Thomas Edison, George Bernard Shaw, Vincent Van Gogh, Albert Einstein, and others have made immeasurable contributions to the world. Nevertheless, many adults with this disability have a great deal of difficulty obtaining job satisfaction in today's labour market due to lack of career planning, inadequate support, and insufficient disability-related accommodations in workplace and academic settings.

The purpose of this project is to develop a career planning workshop for adults with learning disabilities using the Lifelong Education Program Planning (LEPP) model as the workshop guide. The workshop will be tailored to accommodate the personal, social, career, and disability-related needs of all participants. The program plan for the workshop will be presented to Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE) in 2004 for funding consideration.

The LEPP model is designed to guide program planners through a series of central planning activities such as program design, budgeting, and recruitment in order to produce an educational program for adults. LEPP is intended to fulfill the needs of program stakeholders such as program planners, participants, facilitators, funding

organizations, advisory committees, and society at large. In this project I will integrate the principles and methods of the LEPP model with career planning techniques in order to help workshop participants identify realistic career goals. It is important to note that I intend to act as both program planner and co-facilitator of the workshop.

In my analysis, I provide answers to five main questions.

1. What is a learning disability and what are some ongoing issues for persons with this condition?
2. What are some positive trends occurring for adults with learning disabilities in terms of current research, labour market participation, and learning accommodations in workplace or academic settings? What supports are available in Alberta's community organizations and Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE)?
3. Why is a career planning workshop for adults with learning disabilities especially important?
4. What is the Lifelong Educational Program Planning (LEPP) model and how can it be utilized to accommodate the needs of Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE) and those of adults with learning disabilities in their career planning?
5. What would a career planning workshop for adults with learning disabilities look like?

1. WHAT IS A LEARNING DISABILITY AND WHAT ARE SOME ONGOING ISSUES FOR PERSONS WITH THIS CONDITION?

In order to adequately answer this question, I have chosen to present a definition of learning disabilities supported by statistical data and related information about our education systems, workplaces, and the North American labour market.

a. Definition

The Learning Disability Association of Ontario (LDAO) defines learning disabilities in the following manner.

"Learning Disabilities" refers to a variety of disorders that affect the acquisition, retention, understanding, organization or use of verbal and/or non-verbal information. These disorders result from impairments in one or more psychological processes related to learning in combination with otherwise average abilities essential for thinking and reasoning. Learning disabilities are specific not global impairments and as such are distinct from intellectual disabilities.

Learning disabilities range in severity and invariably interfere with the acquisition and use of one or more of the following important skills:

- oral language (e.g., listening, speaking, understanding)
- reading (e.g., decoding, comprehension)
- written language (e.g., spelling, written expression)
- mathematics (e.g., computation, problem solving) (LDAO, 2002, retrieved Nov. 15/2003)

Learning disabilities may also affect an individual's organizational skills, social interaction, and self-esteem. Types of learning disabilities include attention deficit disorder (ADD), dyslexia, dysgraphia, dysnomia, auditory processing disorders, and

many others. They are considered lifelong conditions and vary in severity from one individual to the next. Persons who have learning disabilities can also be affected by other conditions such as autism, depression, addictions, brain injury, and many more.

“Estimates of the prevalence of learning disabilities vary widely – ranging from 1 percent to 30 percent” (Lerner, 2000, p. 23) of the general population. A 10 to 15 percent estimate is considered to be the acceptable standard for most experts in the field according to Dr. Lerner. This means that more than 3 million Canadians have learning disabilities.

There are those who take issue with the lack of agreement over definition and numbers affected by this condition. Dr. Jan Strydom states:

For as long as children with learning disabilities become adults with learning disabilities, it will certainly not be appropriate to attach the term “advancement” to this field. In fact, the statistics and subjective observations of scholars in the field indicate an explosion in the number of students with learning disabilities. This clearly indicates that there is no progress at all, but that the movement that is taking place is going downhill at an alarming rate. (Strydom, 2000, retrieved November 15, 2003)

Dr. Strydom indicates that the estimated number of American children diagnosed with learning disabilities has almost quadrupled between 1976 and 1991. She wonders whether the term has been overused due to a fad-like need of teachers and parents to rationalize poor academic performance. Despite her skepticism however, Dr. Strydom does not dispute that learning disabilities exist.

There are some staggering statistics available about learning disabilities according to the Learning Disability Association of Canada (LDAC).

1. One in ten Canadians has learning disabilities
2. One in ten children received some form of remedial education during 1994-95. Children receiving remedial education often have multiple problems with the most common difficulties being a learning disability (51%) or an emotional or behavioural problem (23%).
3. 35% of students identified with learning disabilities drop out of high school. This is twice the rate of non-disabled peers and does not include students who are not identified and drop out.
4. Almost 50% of adolescent suicides had previously been diagnosed as having learning disabilities.
5. Volumes of research have shown that 30% to 70% young offenders have experienced learning problems. In the past two decades, the link between learning disabilities and delinquent behaviour has been examined and confirmed both in Canada and the US.
6. Adults with learning disabilities, who have not received appropriate education and/or training, typically hold a job for only three months. Employers, when questioned, report that the reason for termination in most cases related to the person's social skills deficits rather than to any job skill problems.
7. The Conference Board of Canada determined that dropouts from the high school class of 1987 will cost society more than \$1.7 billion in lost taxes. The cost of detaining a young offender is approximately \$100,000 a year.
8. 45.6% of adult inmates with learning disabilities have previous youth court involvement.
9. 50% of females with learning disabilities will be mothers within 3 to 5 years of leaving high school.
10. 30% of adults with severe literacy problems were found to have undetected or untreated LD.
11. 15% to 20% of Canadians with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) also have a specific learning disability.
12. 75% of children with reading disabilities in grade 3 who did not receive early intervention, continue to have difficulties to read throughout high school and their adult life. (LDAC, 2001, retrieved November 15, 2003)

These statistics suggest that those with learning disabilities often suffer from social problems such as chronic poverty, criminal activity, isolation, disproportionately high dropout rates, suicidal tendencies, unemployment or underemployment, early parenthood, and lack of career direction.

Despite growing and valuable research in the field, there are many social dilemmas that have yet to be resolved in helping these individuals succeed in their educational and career pursuits. Society's education systems and labour market have a poor history in meeting the needs of those with learning disabilities.

b. Education Systems

In our education systems, relatively few students are formally diagnosed as having learning disabilities and therefore do not receive adequate learning accommodations at school. Child and Family Canada report that: "Typically, only 3% of school-age children with learning disabilities receive special services within their schools -- the majority of students with learning disabilities are either unidentified or receive minimal service." (Child and Family Canada, 2003, retrieved November 15, 2003). This shocking statistic suggests that our education systems do not provide adequate support for 97% of students with learning disabilities! Such lack of regard for these students can affect their educational and career aspirations for life.

Many teachers at all educational levels, while acknowledging the presence of learning disabilities, are not able to provide adequate learning support for these students due to overly large class sizes; reductions in government funding; lack of staff expertise; insufficient time; and limited resources. There is ongoing debate in the public education system about whether students with learning disabilities should be fully integrated into regular classrooms or placed in special classes. As honourable as full integration or inclusion sounds, some are opposed to this movement. "Other educators are more cautious about the value of inclusion. They worry that children with learning disabilities

will not receive the intensive, direct and individualized teaching they need in the general education classroom” (Lerner, 2000, p. 47). On the other hand, if schools and students segregate children with learning disabilities from mainstream classroom activity at an early age they may continue to be segregated in future workplace settings and from society at large. I tend to believe that a combination of regular classroom education and special accommodations such as special resource rooms or teacher assistants works best.

c. Labour Market

Today’s labour market demands high levels of competency in communication and technological skills which can pose great difficulties for those with learning disabilities.

Janice Stein, in her book *Cult of Efficiency*, quotes Earl Mumford in his description of the competitive nature of society. He contends: “There is only one efficient speed, *faster*... only one attractive destination, *farther away*; only one desirable size, *bigger*; and only one rational quantitative goal, *more*.” (Mumford in Stein, 2002, p. 18) Today’s employers utilize high-speed technology to work *faster*, produce *more* goods and services while tapping into global markets that are *further* away. They also diversify to make their operations *bigger*. Companies such as Nike or General Motors have laid off thousands of workers and relocated to third world countries to reduce labour costs and maximize profits. Stein adds that, more often than not, our society is so consumed with efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and profit that our values are skewed and the needs of special interest groups are often overlooked.

Lynn Olson boldly posits: “Today’s economy has little room for those who cannot read, write, compute, frame and solve problems, use technology, manage resources, work in teams, and continue to learn on the job.” (Olson, 1997, Preface, p. vii)

The *Alberta Careers Update* describes several trends that are present in today’s labour market.

Economically, the world is getting smaller. Information technology has broken down barriers and created global markets for local goods and services. The global economy “is a highly competitive trading arena that focuses on innovation, flexibility, speed, productivity, easy movements of people information and capital.

The growth of information and communications also means that employees must have different skills. For example, computer literacy is often required for gainful employment. Although many workers come to the job with computer experience, some will need additional training to ensure that the technology is being used to its full potential (Alberta Human Resources and Employment, 2003, p. 6).

In Alberta there are social and demographic trends such as a disproportionate number of baby boomers and a shortage of youth. High-speed computer and telecommunications technology is now part of most, if not all, employment settings. Such “advances in technology have reshaped the work world.” (Alberta Human Resources and Employment, 2003, p. 7)

Clearly, persons with learning disabilities constitute a disadvantaged group in a society that values *faster, bigger, more, and further away*. The very skills that Olson deems necessary for success in today’s economy such as reading, writing, problem solving, computer literacy, teamwork, and ability to participate in lifelong learning are often lacking for those with a learning disability. Many are not able to read and write well and suffer from a lifetime of failure in academic and workplace settings. Some cannot

problem solve as easily due to an inability to follow simple directions. Still others may lack the social skills necessary to be highly valued team members. Difficulty keeping pace with the high speed demands of society often leave these individuals socially or personally troubled, uneducated or unemployed.

The *Alberta Careers Update* describes the contemporary workplace as one that is ever changing and flexible.

Work can be conducted from the home as well as at the office due to advances in technology. There are more opportunities to work with companies that provide “non-standard, non-traditional work arrangements such as part-time or casual status jobs, temporary or contract work, freelancing, multiple jobs and job sharing.” (AHRE, 2003, p. 15)

More is expected of today’s employees with emphasis on lifelong learning; interpersonal skills; competence in communications technology; team-based approaches when problem solving; productivity; multi-tasking; and speed in achieving corporate outcomes. The Government of Alberta estimates that in the next five years “one fifth of all new jobs will go to university graduates; nearly one third of all new jobs will be in occupations requiring post-secondary college, technical and trades training; over one quarter of all new jobs will be in occupations requiring completion of grade 12; and occupations requiring less than grade 12 will only account for about one out of every 10 new jobs” (AHRE, 2003, p. 37). Clearly, it is vital that adults with learning disabilities obtain and maintain the educational requirements of today’s workplace if they wish to remain competitive in the labour market.

d. Workplace Settings

Obtaining work can be particularly difficult for individuals with learning disabilities.

Estimates from the Florida's Bridges to Practice association identify as many as "48% of those with learning disabilities are out of the workforce or unemployed and 43% of learning disabled live at the poverty level" (Kenyon, 2003, retrieved Nov. 15/2003).

Employers often screen out job applicants based on their inability to write a resume, present themselves at job interviews or simply because they possess a disability. Many persons with learning disabilities lack the self-esteem, education, and literacy skills to present themselves properly to employers. Employers are often reluctant to hire individuals with learning disabilities due to potential training costs, loss of production or profit, lack of expertise, and fear that other staff may regard those with learning differences as receiving special treatment.

Maintaining employment represents another barrier to full workforce participation for persons with learning disabilities. This often depends on an employee's ability to master workplace learning whether it is formal, non-formal or informal training. Unfortunately, those employers willing to offer employment to adults with learning disabilities are sometimes unwilling to provide the necessary accommodations and training for workplace success. Accommodations may include additional time to complete tasks when necessary, assistive technology such as tape recorders, and directions that are provided in multiple formats. Several more are listed in a subsequent section of the paper. This lack of on-the-job support often leaves workers with learning disabilities

underemployed or unable to hold a job for more than three months as indicated in the above statistics by the Learning Disability Association of Canada (LDAC).

In order to maintain employment, adults with learning disabilities sometimes have to take external courses such as English upgrading or computer literacy to maintain parity with other employees.

Fortunately, most persons with learning disabilities have only one prominent learning difference such as attention and can compensate by using other job skills. Many workers in trades occupations lack literacy skills but possess excellent practical learning abilities. Actors or painters may have difficulty with written expression but communicate well verbally or artistically. Still others may lack mathematics skills but compensate with excellent computer skills.

In summary it appears that today's education systems, labour market, and typical workplaces have underserved adults with learning disabilities.

2. WHAT ARE SOME POSITIVE TRENDS OCCURRING FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN TERMS OF CURRENT RESEARCH, LABOUR MARKET PARTICIPATION, AND LEARNING ACCOMMODATIONS IN WORKPLACE OR ACADEMIC SETTINGS? WHAT SUPPORTS ARE AVAILABLE IN ALBERTA'S COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND ALBERTA HUMAN RESOURCES AND EMPLOYMENT (AHRE)?

Despite the negative picture of our educational system and labour market described earlier many positive trends are occurring today for persons with learning disabilities.

a. Current Research

There have been advances in research about learning disabilities in the past twenty years.

Experts subdivide historically relevant research into four main transition phases. The "Foundation phase" (1800-1930) was characterized by research of the brain. Between 1930 and 1960 the "Transition Phase" clinical studies were used for children with learning differences, formal assessments such as Intelligence Quotient (IQ tests) were developed, and follow-up treatment methods were prescribed. The "Integration Phase" (1960-1980) represented a period in which formal and informal assessment, teaching strategies, and legislation were introduced in schools. The "Current Phase" began in 1980. "Among the highlights of the current period are special education law, the inclusion movement, culturally and linguistically diverse students with learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, nonverbal learning disorders, education reform policies, and the increasing use of computer technology" (Lerner, 2000, p. 36).

Progressive research into the field of learning disabilities has led to improved formal and informal assessment techniques, creative learning strategies and accommodations, and disability-related computer technology.

Despite the bias of society and its labour market many persons with learning disabilities have developed effective personal and compensatory skills to help them overcome differences in learning. These may include keen organizational skills, computer expertise and the will to succeed.

More persons with learning disabilities are becoming aware of the unique complexities of their condition and demanding appropriate support from government, schools, employers, and community agencies. As awareness increases more employers and schools are opening their doors to adults with learning disabilities. Some employers are beginning to realize that they too may have a learning disability and are more willing to assist those with similar barriers to employment.

b. Labour Market

The number of occupations available in the labour market is expanding rapidly. As an example, the 2001 edition of the National Occupational Classification (NOC), developed by Employment and Immigration Canada, now lists over 32,000 types of jobs (National Occupation Classification, 2001, retrieved March 14, 2004). New careers are being generated on a daily basis due to advances in technology and a trend toward a service-based economy. This means that there are potentially more career-related opportunities for persons with learning disabilities who can obtain the necessary qualifications. It is also important to note that many careers are becoming more temporary in nature due to

globalization, influence of the just-in-time work force, effects of change, worker tolerance for stress, and demand for job-related education. This implies that, while there are more occupations available, more are of a temporary nature. Therefore, adults with learning disabilities should acquire skills and education that is transferable from one career field to another.

According to Statistics Canada, in March 2004 there was a national unemployment rate of 7.4% in Canada and only 5.2% in Alberta (Statistics Canada, 2004, retrieved March 14, 2004). While these rates are higher for persons with learning disabilities they do suggest that there is work available.

Sixth, government legislation, the Employment Equity Act under the Department of Justice Canada, is designed to protect workers in equity groups such as those with learning disabilities.

The purpose of this Act is to achieve equality in the workplace so that no person shall be denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability and, in the fulfillment of that goal, to correct the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities by giving effect to the principle that employment equity means more than treating persons in the same way but also requires special measures and the accommodation of differences. (Department of Justice Canada, 2002, retrieved November 15, 2003)

According to Statistics Canada, the Employment Equity Act has yielded poor to moderate results since its inception in 1989. For example, only 35.4 per cent of available workers with disabilities were employed in 2001. In terms of hiring, there has been a downward

trend in hiring members of equity groups since 1993 from 1.7% to 1.2% in 2001.

(Government of Canada, Workplace Equity 2002. *Persons with Disabilities 5.4 Hirings*, retrieved November 15, 2003)). Nevertheless, Employment Equity legislation does serve as a warning signal that employers have a duty to hire and accommodate persons from equity groups

Protective legislation, advancements in research, labour market trends, expanding occupational choice, and increased awareness are positive factors that can assist persons with learning disabilities to successfully participate in the workforce.

c. Learning Accommodations for Adults with Learning Disabilities

There is a growing array of learning accommodations that can be used by adults with learning disabilities in workplace and academic settings. Learning strategies and accommodations available at all levels of academia vary according to the severity of the learning disability, the instructor's expertise, and resources available.

Some learning accommodations in schools include:

- special seating arrangements
- note taking by other students
- extended time for exams
- topic-based learning strategies in subjects such as mathematics, reading and writing
- tutoring or mentoring
- multiple format instruction
- learning strategies such as mind-mapping or organizational strategies such as use of 3 x 5 cards, coloured pencils and highlighters
- well-structured instruction and limited clutter in the classroom

- taped texts
- handouts that are concise and conducive to student learning style (visual or auditory, for example)
- problem solving techniques (presenting problems orally, queuing, visual reinforcements, additional time, and others)
- additional time for completion of student learning activities
- provision of quiet areas made available to those with attention difficulties to help them complete learning tasks
- instruction in time management organization techniques
- teaching strategies that deliver subject matter such as English in several ways (group exercises, learning with a partner, or student projects that allow for freedom of choice and expression)
- use of flipcharts and power point presentations
- non-conventional teaching strategies to assist those with visual or auditory problems such as free use of television shows or tapes
- oral examinations
- subject matter that reinforces positive self-esteem, individual, and peer support;
- many others.

Experts at Alberta Learning indicate there are 9 key components that must be addressed when working with individuals with learning disabilities. These include collaboration (between parents, student and educators), meaningful parent involvement, identification and assessment, ongoing assessment, Individualized Program Plans (IPPs), transition planning, self-advocacy, accommodations, and instruction techniques (Alberta Learning, 2003, retrieved November 15, 2003).

Potential workplace accommodations, including modified versions of those listed above, can also be provided to adults with learning disabilities.

In order to effectively assist an employee with a learning disability, an employer must be willing to research the topic, provide tasks that maximize worker strengths, accommodate learning styles using multiple formats (visual presentations, for example), and be open to

suggestion. A high degree of structure and clear expectations are often necessary although employer flexibility is also required. It is vital to provide a supportive environment and opportunities for worker success in order to build skills and self-esteem. A worker has a responsibility to understand his or her disability-related limitations, locate resources, reframe negative thinking, and collaborate with an employer to identify possible workplace adjustments.

Sandra Kerka states that there are three main components to any program of workplace accommodations.

Once a learning disability is identified, three categories of assistance are psychosocial, technological and educational. In the psychosocial area, an individual's self-esteem can suffer from years of internalizing labels of stupidity and incompetence and experiencing dependence, fear, anxiety, or helplessness. Four ways to strengthen self-esteem (NALLD 1994) are "awareness" (knowing about and documenting the disability), "assessment" (understanding the disability and one's strengths and weaknesses), "accommodation" (knowing what compensatory strategies and techniques help), and "advocacy" (knowing their legal rights and services for which they qualify). (Kerka, 1998, retrieved December 1, 2003)

Increasing self-esteem or addressing the psychosocial characteristics of a worker may involve referral to stress management workshops, encouraging positive individual or group interaction with staff, or attending awareness workshops on learning disabilities. An employee with a learning disability may also have to educate co-workers to garner support and exchange feedback about ways of improving job performance.

Examples of ways that an employer can address the educational category of assistance include providing the employee with multi-formatted instruction and job tasks that draw

upon the worker's strengths rather than weaknesses. Completing paperwork orally rather than in writing is often less time consuming. Permitting the worker to ask questions repeatedly in order to follow instructions is advisable. Provision of an organized workplace with few distractions is an excellent strategy for assisting those with attention deficit disorder (ADD) or other learning differences. Additional time to complete job or workplace learning tasks is often helpful. If a worker is willing to allow an employer to review an IQ assessment and subsequent workplace recommendations then these should be stored in a confidential file for consultation.

There are a number of excellent web sites and other resources available for the workplace learning of those with learning disabilities. One web site that is particularly useful is the Job Accommodation Network (LaRosse, Mayda, 2004. retrieved March 14, 2004) which offers ideas for specific learning deficits such as reading, writing, organizing information, mathematics, and others.

There is an ever-growing list of technological options that may be utilized in the workplace or academic settings by adults with learning disabilities. These include tape recorders; PALM organizers; reading machines; scanners; Franklin Language Masters and other electronic dictionaries; and computer technology that includes spell check, grammar check, or voice recognition software. Specialized software includes Kurzweil 3000, Dragon Naturally Speaking, and others. Persons with learning disabilities may be effective computer users because computers can provide multiple formats of information and data that is easily stored and retrieved.

Many post-secondary institutions have departments that work specifically with persons with disabilities whether these students are engaged in workplace training or academic studies. These institutions can provide services and technology to persons with learning disabilities. Funding for disability-related supports can be arranged with AHRE Career Counsellors in Alberta. Assistive services include tutoring; exam accommodations; counselling; note taking; special workshops on strategies for reading, writing and mathematics; IQ testing; assistive technology assessments; and others as identified above.

d. Community Resources for Adults with Learning Disabilities

In Alberta there are no community organizations that provide exclusive service to adults with learning disabilities despite the fact that ten percent of the population is reported to have this condition. Learning disability associations in Calgary, Edmonton and other major centers provide information about learning disabilities, conference announcements, and references to resources. However, they do not provide direct services to needy adults. Many community organizations offer programs to adults with disabilities in general but not specifically, to adults with learning disabilities. These organizations also offer job search or career planning services but sadly, their employees often lack the expertise necessary to assist persons with learning differences.

e. Services Available at Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE)

Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE) offer a number of services such as labour market information, funding for community organizations, career counselling or

job placement services, and other resources that can be used to generate labour force participation. There are several AHRE Career Counsellors who have expertise working with adults with learning disabilities. They can authorize funding for psychological or technological assessments, assistive services, computer technology, and on-the-job support. There is a generous government budget available to assist students with disabilities. Unfortunately only those post-secondary institutions that can afford to provide services to students with disabilities take advantage of AHRE funding. Private institutions normally do not have the expertise or budget necessary to provide disability-related services so many students are not successful in their programs. Employers have not been accessing AHRE services adequately due, in part, to their hesitancy to hire adults with special needs.

The Calgary Learning Centre is one example of an organization that offers a variety of services to adults with learning disabilities but again, these are mainly restricted to assessment, academic learning, and individual counselling. My research suggests, however, that there is an absence of career planning workshops designed exclusively for adults with learning disabilities in Alberta or Canada.

3. WHY IS A CAREER PLANNING WORKSHOP FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT?

In order to overcome the biases of our education systems, labour market, workplaces, and society at large, it appears especially important that adults with learning disabilities engage in a career planning process that is able to meet their specific needs.

Most LD/ADD adults can recite a detailed laundry list of their dysfunctions, but few have had the support or opportunity to identify and take pride in their strengths, values, talents, and personal style. Self-assessment, via the career counseling model, brings awareness and validation not often accessible to this population. In addition, client and counselor can discuss specific needs associated with the disability. Often the career counselor's office is the only supportive place the LD/ADD adult can talk about daily work problems, and how they might be addressed. (Stearns, 1995, retrieved November 15, 2003)

As indicated above, adults with learning disabilities are often unemployed or underemployed in today's labour market despite possessing average or above intelligence. Negative experiences in family, school or work settings have left many adults with low "self-esteem" and a tendency to de-value their skills and abilities. Consequently, some adults with learning disabilities lack motivation, occupational goals, self-awareness, knowledge of disability-related accommodations, and understanding of career planning methods.

Career planning involves assessing one's skills and abilities, identifying careers options, researching options and labour market trends, decision-making, goal setting, and action planning. Career planning workshops are designed to provide individual and group support as well as instructional activities to help participants develop realistic career goals. A career planning workshop, tailored for adults with learning disabilities, can provide participants with confidence; self-awareness; ability to cope with change; support from others with similar difficulties; information on labour market trends; positive group interaction; guest speakers; opportunities to use and learn about disability-related accommodations; and career planning techniques. Such a program offers the opportunity for participants to pursue career paths that are achievable, personally meaningful, and financially rewarding. Perhaps, most importantly, the workshop provides its students with

an opportunity to reframe negative thinking, discover their potential, and develop practical ways of integrating into society and the labour market.

The Career Planning Workshop for Adults with Learning Disabilities, presented in this paper, is intended to meet the needs of participants in terms of identifying appropriate career goals but also to enlighten them on factors such as labour market and workplace trends, handling stress, effects of an ever-changing world, and the importance of lifelong learning.

Career planning is no longer a linear process where individuals choose one career, one educational path, or one employer for a lifetime. San Francisco State University indicates:

We must also remember that several career changes over a lifetime are becoming almost the norm. To make these shifts successfully, graduates will need timeless learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills that will outlast rapidly changing technical knowledge. Even for those who stay within one field, lifelong updating and re-tooling of skills will become a necessity” (San Francisco University, 2000, retrieved December 1, 2003).

In terms of career planning this implies that the workshop must be flexible and in keeping with current labour market demands.

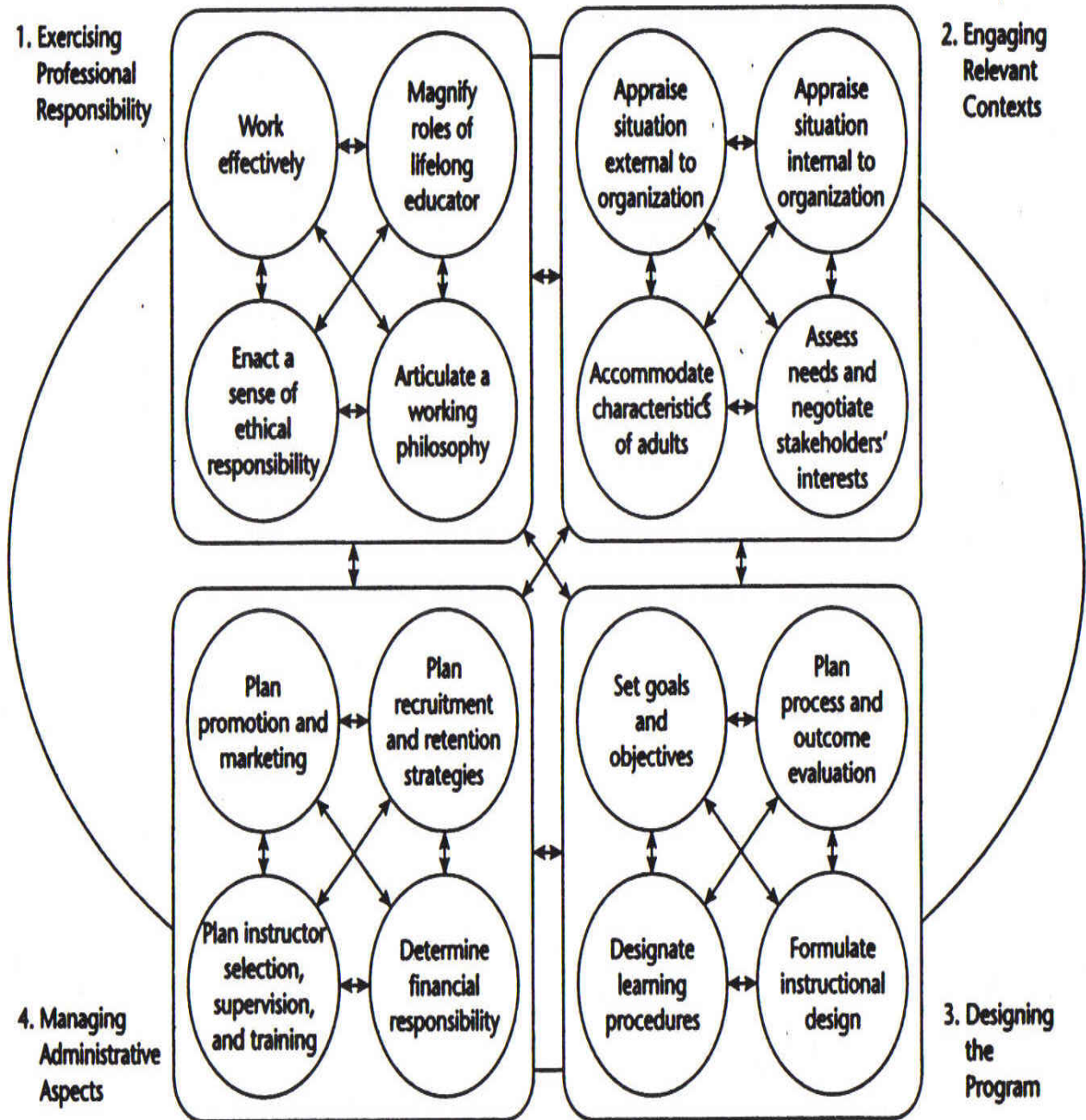
4. WHAT IS THE LIFELONG EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM PLANNING (LEPP) MODEL AND HOW CAN IT BE UTILIZED TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEEDS OF ALBERTA HUMAN RESOURCES AND EMPLOYMENT (AHRE) AND THOSE OF ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN THEIR CAREER PLANNING?

The Lifelong Education Program Planning Model (LEPP) is a guide that can be used for adult education programs that combine elements of both business and education. A career planning workshop that is written in the form of a service proposal to AHRE is a social, educational, and business endeavor. The LEPP model is flexible enough to be effective for social groups such as adults with learning disabilities. While LEPP incorporates basic structural components of other program planning models, such as program design or evaluation, it is far more open-ended than a step-by-step approach. This is desirable, in my opinion, because of the ever-changing labour market, the unique nature of each participant, and the need for the career planning process to be as flexible as possible.

Rather than linear steps or sequences, the LEPP model is “comprised of four quadrants: (1) exercising professional responsibility, (2) engaging relevant contexts, (3) designing the program, and (4) managing administrative aspects. Each quadrant, in turn, consists of four subquadrants. All quadrants are related to each other, as depicted in the figure (below) by the doubleheaded arrows connecting the quadrants. Reciprocal and continuous influences exist across quadrants. No single point of entry or fixed sequence exists in the model, so program planners are free to begin and end whenever they wish as circumstances require” (Cookson & Rothwell, 1997, pg. 8).

The following diagram illustrates the main “quadrants and sub-quadrants” of the LEPP model. These quadrants will be discussed in the context of the “Career Planning Workshop for Adults with Learning Disabilities.”

FIGURE 1.1. THE LIFELONG EDUCATION PROGRAM PLANNING (LEPP) MODEL.



(Cookson & Rothwell, 1997, p. 9)

LEPP QUADRANT ONE: EXERCISING PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

SUB-QUADRANTS

- 1. ARTICULATE A WORKING PHILOSOPHY**
- 2. ENACT A SENSE OF ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY**
- 3. WORKING EFFECTIVELY**
- 4. MAGNIFY ROLES OF A LIFELONG EDUCATOR**

LEPP QUADRANT ONE: EXERCISING PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

1. SUB-QUADRANT ONE: ARTICULATE A WORKING PHILOSOPHY

My working philosophy is based on the belief that the overall purpose of lifelong education and program planning is to assist learners to succeed in terms of personal, educational, and social development.

I believe that programs based on a combination of elements present in the humanist and behaviourist approaches work best to help learners achieve success. Adults with learning disabilities often need to change negative behaviours such as poor career planning or social skills. In the workshop it is important to assist participants to change negative behaviours by providing support that is based on humanist concepts such as positive regard, reflection of feeling, and empathy.

2. SUB-QUADRANT TWO: ENACT A SENSE OF ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY

Program planning does not take place in a vacuum. It is driven by values: values of the clientele, and values of society. In fact, it can be argued that the purpose of any adult education activity is either to promote change or to maintain the status quo. This simple observation clearly illustrates that virtually any decisions relative to adult education program planning will be rooted in values. (Brockett and Hiemstra in Cookson, 1997, p. 115)

I wholeheartedly agree with this statement. It is vital that the program plan promote compromise between the values of participants, Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE), myself as program planner and facilitator, the labour market, and society at large. Where there are clashes in values, it is my ethical responsibility to promote open discussion amongst all stakeholders.

3. SUB-QUADRANT THREE: WORK EFFECTIVELY

To *work effectively* program planners exercise effective time management skills and project management skills. In spite of the stress created by restructured and reengineered organizations, successful program planners perform multiple and complex tasks while satisfying the increasing demands of learners, managers, and other stakeholders. (Cookson & Rothwell, 1997, p. 8).

Clearly it is important to work effectively alone or with others in order for a workshop to be successful. Efforts must be made to meet time deadlines and adhere to an efficient and well-organized approach.

In my case, it is critical that I devote sufficient time to identify the need for the workshop; conduct research; establish goals and objectives; design the program; coordinate activities; facilitate collaboration amongst stakeholders; arrange workshop location and necessary facilities; write the proposal; conduct interviews with participants and staff; establish norms for formative and summative evaluations; work closely with management and other AHRE staff members; engage in follow-up activities; and carry out other tasks associated with the project.

I will use a collaborative approach when working with other stakeholders of the workshop in order to identify program needs and team-based solutions.

4. SUB-QUADRANT FOUR: MAGNIFY ROLES OF LIFELONG EDUCATOR

It is my belief that a program planner and workshop facilitator must play multiple roles inherent in the humanist approach such as facilitator, motivator, supporter, counsellor, and others that contribute to the personal development of the learners. I also believe that the program planners and facilitators must conform to behaviorist roles, common in management, in order to achieve the goals and objectives of their organizations. By developing appropriate behavioral skills, the participants learn to adapt and survive in the social environment in which they exist.

CONCLUSIONS FROM QUADRANT ONE: EXERCISING PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

By adhering to the above four sub-quadrants of the LEPP quadrant one (working effectively) I will be well on my way to developing a successful workshop that incorporates my working philosophy, ethical beliefs, notions of working effectively, and involvement in multiple professional roles.

LEPP QUADRANT TWO: ENGAGING RELEVANT CONTEXTS

SUB-QUADRANTS

- 1. APPRAISE SITUATION INTERNAL TO THE ORGANIZATION**
- 2. APPRAISE SITUATION EXTERNAL TO THE ORGANIZATION**
- 3. ACCOMMODATE CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULTS**
- 4. ASSESS NEEDS AND NEGOTIATE STAKEHOLDER INTERESTS**

LEPP QUADRANT TWO: ENGAGING RELEVANT CONTEXTS

The purpose of the quadrant, “engaging relevant contexts,” is to ensure that the program plan is considerate of the needs and perspectives of all stakeholders involved in a learning venture. This section contains four sub-quadrants that can be followed by program planners including “Appraise Situation Internal to the Organization; Appraise Situation External to the Organization; Accommodate Characteristics of Participants; and Assess Needs and Negotiate Stakeholders’ Interests.” Below, I explore how these sub-quadrants can be applied to the Career Planning Workshop for Adults with Learning Disabilities.

1. SUB-QUADRANT ONE: APPRAISAL OF SITUATION INTERNAL TO THE ORGANIZATION

In the LEPP model it is suggested that that program planners consider 5 major sub-systems when examining the internal contexts of the organization. These include (1) the goals and values subsystem, (2) the technical subsystem, (3) the structural subsystem, (4) the psychosocial subsystem, and (5) the managerial subsystem (Kast & Rosenzweig (1974) in Cookson & Rothwell, 1997, pg. 109)

Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE), as my employer and probable sponsor of the workshop, is the internal organization. AHRE is comprised of several departments including: Alberta Labour; Social Services and Income Support; Assured

Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH); Alberta Child Benefit; Skills for Work programs; Skills Investment Strategies; and a number of others. These can be located on the AHRE web site (Alberta Human Resources and Employment web site, 2002, retrieved December 1, 2003).

1. Goals and Values Subsystems

Recently, Minister Clint Dunford summarized the basic priorities of Alberta Human Resources and Employment with the following statement.

Our priorities are clearly focused on
breaking down barriers for all Albertans
so they can achieve greater independence
in a workplace climate that promotes
innovation, productivity, and worker safety.

On the AHRE web site several values are identified as priorities for the department.

These include:

1. Recognition of Potential - We see opportunity for everyone.
2. Respect – We treat everyone as we would like to be treated.
3. Caring – We want everyone to do well.
4. Learning – We always strive to improve.
5. Stewardship – We use public resources wisely.
6. Commitment – We believe our work makes a difference.
7. Self-determination – We believe that people should make their own decisions.
(Alberta Human Resources and Employment web site, 2002, retrieved December 1, 2003)

A major goal of AHRE is to assist Albertans successfully integrate into the workforce. In order to achieve this goal, related services and programs are provided for participants, employers, educational institutions, and communities.

Implications for Program Planner – Having worked for AHRE as a career counsellor for approximately 7 years, it is my opinion that these goals are generally upheld and respected by staff. Therefore, I feel comfortable that I can apply these goals and values to the Career Planning Workshop for Adults with Disabilities.

2. The Structural Subsystem

AHRE employs approximately 2400 staff members across Alberta with Minister Dunford occupying the highest position on the organization chart.

AHRE offers a wide variety of services and programs for Albertans to help them obtain and maintain employment. These include funding programs to assist individuals to pay for their education; financial assistance for community organizations that offer employment-related support; labour market information libraries and websites (ALIS); career counselling; extensive career and employment information for Albertans; specialized programs and services for persons with mental health, intellectual, physical, and other disabilities. Career and employment-related programs and services are available to persons who are on social services, employment insurance or lacking a source of income. Eligible employers are often provided with wage subsidies for providing on-the-job training for new employees. There are many more services offered by AHRE that are available to all Albertans.

I am employed as a career counsellor by AHRE and work with many counselling clients who are described above. Nevertheless, I am constantly networking with external stakeholders such as employers; schools; community agencies; psychologists; medical experts; and other professionals. AHRE Career Counsellors are a closely-knit group who are supported by supervisors and given sufficient autonomy to work effectively with clients.

Implications for Program Planner – As a program planner and respected employee of the organization, it is crucial that I am given the autonomy, flexibility, and support within this sub-system to design and develop the workshop for AHRE. I can turn to my colleagues and management team for support or feedback and hopefully, the required funding for the workshop.

3. The Managerial Subsystem

While I appreciate the support of my supervisors and autonomy to work effectively with my counselling clients, the AHRE management approach can be quite directive and top down at times. There are several levels of management that must be satisfied before decisions are reached and frontline staff can work with their clientele. For example, a community organization that submits a funding proposal for an employment initiative often has to wait months before all levels of management provide reach consensus. By the time funding approval reaches the frontline AHRE contract officer and the agency, their staff may often have found employment elsewhere.

Implications for Program Planner - The implication for myself, as program planner, is that the workshop proposal must pass through several layers of bureaucracy before funding is actually put in place. Approval is often based on the beliefs and values of management staff and funding available to deliver new initiatives. Fortunately, I am a permanent employee of AHRE and have the luxury of working with potential participants while waiting for project approval.

4. The Technical Subsystem

AHRE possesses the latest in technology, facilities, and equipment that can be used by participants and co-facilitators. As an employee of the department, I have free access to all AHRE technology in program planning and workshop delivery.

5. The Psychosocial Subsystem

For the most part, there is a fairly good relationship amongst staff at all levels. This helps to create a positive psychosocial environment in which to design and deliver the workshop.

2. SUB-QUADRANT TWO: APPRAISAL OF THE SITUATION EXTERNAL TO THE ORGANIZATION

There are several external contexts that affect AHRE and the services that it provides.

These include labour market demands, available resources, school or work programs, and the biases of society at large.

Labour market conditions affect the services that are provided by AHRE and these can have a direct impact on the workshop. Society's emphasis on lifelong learning and globalization create a need for AHRE to develop up-to-date programs that assist unemployed persons to retrain in careers that enhance the economy (Computer programming, for example). Alberta's fairly strong economy means there are more taxpayer dollars available to invest in employment-related projects with community organizations, academic institutions, and employers. The unemployment rate affects AHRE and the participant group. The lower the rate of unemployment the more careers are available for adults with learning disabilities.

The biases of society affect the programs and services of Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE). Adults with learning disabilities have generally been marginalized by society and experience ongoing failure in school and work. This can result in personality difficulties, lack of support, and social problems such as chronic unemployment or poverty. As an organization that purports to serve the employment needs of all Albertans, AHRE must tailor its programs and services to offset the biases of society.

Clearly, the availability of resources in schools and in the workforce has an affect on the services and programs provided by Alberta Human Resources and Employment.

Fortunately, AHRE has invested heavily in internal resources such as labour market information and career planning materials so that many gaps of service in the external world can be addressed. AHRE has also invested a great deal of money into programming such as the Disability Related Employment Support (DRES) program to provide adequate accommodations for those who require special learning assistance.

Implications for Program Planner – While there are a lack of community agencies and workplaces that accommodate adults with learning disabilities in Alberta there is a great deal of external and internal information available to enhance the workshop.

Keeping abreast of labour market trends, biases of society, available resources, and other factors external to AHRE is critical in the development of the workshop if it is to be practical.

3. SUB-QUADRANT THREE -ACCOMMODATE CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULTS

As part of their individual career plan all participants will be screened and referred to the workshop by the AHRE Career Counsellors. The workshop design calls for 12 participants. They meet the following general criteria.

1. motivated to obtain a career goal and interested in participating in a career planning workshop

2. have a learning disability with supporting documentation such as recent psychological testing results (neurological and educational) and/or other medical evidence
3. numeracy and/or literacy problems
4. out of regular high school for two years or more
5. less than grade 12 education
6. average or above average intelligence as per IQ test results
7. unemployed
8. limited success in matching their abilities to jobs in the labour market.

Generally, the participants do not have extensive social problems such as criminal records or addictions issues.

All participants will remain in a counselling relationship with their referring AHRE Career Counsellors after the workshop. They have been assessed, tested psychologically and declared to have learning disabilities prior to the workshop. Participants are seeking career direction or job search assistance with their individual career counsellors. The workshop is just one of several interventions that an AHRE Counsellor and participant collaboratively choose to pursue.

Potential workshop participants are quite underserved by municipal, provincial and federal levels of government as evidenced by the lack of suitable programming. They are often found in line-ups for income support from Alberta social services, unemployment insurance, and other forms of public assistance. As indicated earlier, many have a history of failure in work and education pursuits. Despite these issues there are few, if any, services that are tailored to meet the needs of person with this condition. There are no career planning workshops available in Alberta designed exclusively for persons with learning disabilities. The Career Planning Workshop for Adults with Learning

Disabilities can help shorten the welfare and employment insurance line-ups and assist these individuals to become more valued members of society.

In addition to providing a workshop to meet the specific needs of adults with learning disabilities it is also necessary to devise a program that conforms to the twelve principles of any adult education program as proposed by Cookson (Cookson & Rothwell, 1997, p. 119) below.

These principles include:

1. Adults tend to be problem-centred in their outlook.
2. Adult learners can be motivated by appeals to personal growth
3. Motivation to learn can be increased.
4. Pre-program assessment is important
5. Exercises and cases in programs should be realistic and should stem from the experiences and works settings to which program participants can relate.
6. Feedback and recognition should be planned.
7. Planned learning experiences should, where possible, account for learning-style differences.
8. Program designs should accommodate adults' continued growth and changing values.
9. Program plans should include transfer strategies (Workshop learning to job experience, for example).
10. Adults need a safe and comfortable environment in which to learn.
11. Facilitation tends to be more effective than lectures with adults.
12. Activity promotes understanding and retention. (Cookson & Rothwell, 1997, p. 119)

4. SUB-QUADRANT FOUR - ASSESS NEEDS AND NEGOTIATE STAKEHOLDERS' INTERESTS

1. Programmer Needs

I believe that the first set of needs that should be examined is my own, as program planner. I must give myself an initial assessment as suggested by Cookson (1997) and reflect on a number of important questions.

These include: Why do I think this program is worthwhile? Does the program fit the goals and mission of the sponsoring organization? Does the program meet the needs of the participants? Will people be interested in it? Can AHRE afford it? Can I obtain appropriate resources? How much time do I need to prepare, design, co-ordinate, and deliver the workshop? What are my reasons for being involved in this program?

It is my belief that a career planning workshop for adults with learning disabilities is worthwhile based on my work experience as a career counsellor, available research, and knowledge of those with learning issues. I feel that a successful career planning workshop can help participants to expand on their strengths and identify realistic career paths that can accommodate learning disabilities. I have interviewed hundreds of adults with learning disabilities and most, if not all, indicate they would benefit by learning a career planning process. The process includes conducting a self-assessment, generating career options, researching options, decision-making, prioritizing, and action planning. Other considerations such as dealing with change, obtaining careers through chance encounters, and drawing from the knowledge of experts in the field are also critical to the

process. My main reason for developing the program is because of client demand and the satisfaction that I gain from assisting those who are considered disadvantaged in society.

2. Stakeholder Interests

I plan to utilize an advisory committee of 8 members to oversee the actual workshop.

These stakeholders include myself, as program planner; two participants; a psychologist with expertise in learning disabilities; a representative from a post-secondary institution who works in a special needs department; another AHRE Career Counsellor; an employee of a community agency; and an employer representative.

On the first meeting I anticipate that advisory committee members would identify reasons for their interest in serving on the committee. A brainstorming session may include the following questions. Why do you want to participate? Does the workshop fit the goals and mission of your organization and for your clients or students? How much time are you able to commit to the project? What are your thoughts on advisory committee goals, directions, expectations, committee norms, and other important considerations? How should we begin?

Collaboration, consensus, participation, and commitment are keys to the success of the advisory committee and the workshop itself.

3a. Learner Needs (Needs Assessment)

There are many sources of information that can be used to determine learner needs for the workshop. These include the participants themselves; AHRE Career Counsellors; educators; employees of community organizations; employers; recognized experts in the field such as psychologists; information found in books or on the Internet; school records; and psychological testing results. All, or most, of these sources should be researched and utilized when gathering information about participant needs.

3b. AHRE Career Counselling Information

As indicated above, the workshop participants are referred by AHRE Career Counsellors. During the course of individual counselling, each AHRE Career Counsellor conducts an in-depth assessment of the participant's: work and education history; reason for coming to counselling; medical documentation; psychological and educational testing results; self-esteem; supports; special problems associated with the condition; motivation; and more. In some cases, the AHRE Career Counsellor and client have decided upon certain interventions that the individual can pursue. These may include research into community organizations, available schools or potential employers. An intervention may also include participation in career planning or other workshops. Most counselling clients, however, are lacking in a suitable career direction. A review of the documentation obtained during the counselling relationship is one way that AHRE Career Counsellors can assess client needs and make appropriate referrals to the workshop.

After reviewing a client's documentation and previous counselling notes AHRE Career Counsellors will interview the participant to establish workshop suitability. Clearly, it is up to the program planner to inform the AHRE Career Counsellor about the design and purpose of the program prior to the interview. Questions directly related to the workshop can include:

1. Can you identify any careers that you would like to pursue?
2. If so, what prevents you from obtaining that career(s)?
3. Have you ever formally documented your skills, interests or abilities?
4. Are you willing to return to school if you find a realistic career goal?
5. Have you ever researched a career that you find interesting? If so, have you talked to workers in the field, investigated appropriate resources or identified the aspects of the career that you would enjoy?
6. Have you ever participated in a career planning workshop before? If so, what were the pros and cons of participating in that program?
7. Are you willing to participate in a group workshop designed for adults with learning disabilities that teaches methods of finding careers and plans for obtaining them?
8. You have completed some psychological testing recently that determined you have a learning disability. Did you fully understand the information presented to you by the psychologist or would you like to learn more about your results?
9. Are you aware of some of the accommodations available that can assist you to overcome disability-related barriers at school or in the workplace? Would you like to learn about these and utilize special accommodations for the workshop? Are you willing to share information about yourself with others such as: interests; skills; work and education experiences; values; significant others (minimal); preferred employment conditions; disability-related concerns; and more?
10. Do you have any special learning needs that require accommodation during the workshop? Please explain.
11. Do you have any suggestions for facilitators on how to best accommodate you and others in the workshop? Please explain.
12. Can you commit 8 days of your time to the workshop?
13. Questions?

It is important to note that interviews, documentation reviews, and general research represent the best ways to conduct needs assessments for potential participants.

3c. Referral to Workshop

Based on all information gathered from counselling interviews, psychological testing, and workshop assessment interviews, the AHRE Career Counsellors will select and refer 12 participants to the workshop. These participants will then be oriented to the program during an 'Orientation Interview' with me and the other facilitator.

LEPP QUADRANT THREE: DESIGNING THE PROGRAM

SUB-QUADRANTS

- 1. SET GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**
- 2. PLAN PROCESS AND OUTCOME EVALUATION**
- 3. FORMULATE INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN**
- 4. DESIGNATE LEARNING PROCEDURES**

LEPP QUADRANT THREE: DESIGNING THE PROGRAM

Before proceeding to the four sub-quadrants of LEPP in this section of the paper, I identify stakeholder and learner needs in relation to the workshop and provide a means of prioritizing learner needs. This ensures that needs are always considered in the design of the workshop. The sub-quadrants of LEPP Quadrant Three are presented below and include: Set Goals and Objectives; Plan Process and Outcome Evaluation; Formulate Instructional Design; and Designate Learning Procedures. Examples of learning activities and formats that pertain to the workshop are also presented in this section of the paper.

IDENTIFYING STAKEHOLDER (ADVISORY COMMITTEE) AND LEARNER NEEDS

1. Stakeholder/Advisory Committee Needs

In order to oversee the workshop an Advisory Committee will be formed. This committee is comprised of 8 members from 5 stakeholder groups. These include representatives from AHRE (program planner and one referring career counsellor); post-secondary institution (one); community organization (one); participants from the workshop (two); a psychologist (one); and an employer representative (one) who has worked with the target population. The potential needs of each stakeholder are outlined below.

a. Alberta Human Resources and Employment Needs

By participating in the workshop, AHRE can fulfill a number of needs including:

1. responding to the career, educational and employment needs of all Albertans.
2. helping participants to make informed career decisions and become part of a workforce that is better trained and more productive.
3. reducing unemployment
4. motivating unemployed workers to become active members of society
5. generating future tax revenues by training participants to live up to their career and earning potential
6. assisting employers and schools by providing learners who are motivated and determined to succeed
7. raising the corporate image of AHRE as an organization that assists those with disabilities and works well with external stakeholders
8. creating awareness of labour market trends in Alberta
9. building a more humane society
10. improving the expertise of AHRE Career Counsellors
11. other ongoing needs

b. Post-Secondary Institution Needs

By participating in the workshop the needs addressed for a post-secondary institution may include:

1. Needs of institution, educators, and internal departments to assist students with learning disabilities to succeed in their schools
2. Need for increased revenue to the institution with increased student tuition payments
3. Need for improved student performance. This can be achieved with learning accommodations and expert instructors; student support; and focus on the career aspirations of students. While several services for students with disabilities are being contracted out to community agencies, I still believe that most institutions have a general desire to assist all students whether or not they possess disabilities.
4. Need to enhance institution's reputation by serving all types of adult learners including those from equity groups.
5. Other ongoing needs

c. Community Organization Needs

Needs served by a community organization include:

1. need to improve the social fabric of a community by providing services and programs to persons with disabilities.
2. other needs as identified in committee meetings

d. Psychologist Needs

A psychologist may benefit by participation in the workshop in the following ways:

1. need for professional development/interaction with target population and community.
2. need for work and potential compensation
3. other needs as identified in committee meetings

e. Employer Needs

Ways an employer may benefit from participation on the committee include:

1. need to fill potential job vacancies with motivated and informed workers
2. need to understand ways of accommodating adults with learning disabilities.
3. potential profits
4. other needs as identified in committee meetings

f. Participant's Needs

Participant representatives on the committee can help themselves and their workshop colleagues by addressing needs and deficiencies such as:

1. lack of confidence
2. knowledge of career planning methods
3. awareness of disability-related needs and resources that help them to overcome educational and workplace barriers
4. general knowledge and awareness of learning disabilities
5. knowledge of realistic career options
6. self-assessment information on participant education, work experience, values, personal style, special needs, significant others, personal and workplace supports, and knowledge of labour market information
7. decision-making skills

8. ability to develop action plans to achieve career goals
9. need adapt to personal, social, and labour market change

g. Co-Facilitator Needs

Co-facilitators needs that can be addressed by participation in workshop include:

1. need to provide quality service to counselling clients
2. need to provide group support for adults with learning disabilities
3. need for personal fulfillment
4. need for learning development

2. Method of Prioritizing Learner Needs

It is important that the advisory committee members collaborate to prioritize the learners' needs for the workshop that have been identified in the previous quadrant ('Anticipated Learning Needs of Participants'). Advisory committees can use several ways of prioritizing learner needs to develop the most relevant program. The purpose of prioritizing is to establish consensus amongst the advisory members; agreement on how best to meet learner needs; exchange ideas with other stakeholders; and utilize a systematic method to rank order each of the learner needs.

Some advisory committees rank each learning need on a one-to-five scale according to criteria such as importance to learners, feasibility of meeting that need, and importance to their organization. After all committee members have assigned a ranking score to each learner need the scores are totaled to form a group total. The learning needs that are given the highest group scores become the top priorities for the workshop. By ranking learner needs the advisory committee members have the opportunity to use a system of grading that provides some objectivity in determining priorities. .

1. SUB-QUADRANT ONE - SET GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In this section of the paper the workshop's purpose statement, program goals, and objectives are presented according to LEPP Sub- Quadrant One (Setting Goals and Objectives).

Workshop/Program Purpose Statement – to assist adults with learning disabilities develop realistic career plans that can help them to successfully integrate into Alberta's Labour Market.

Workshop/Program Goals

The workshop or program goals are intended to assist the participants to:

1. learn the basic steps of career planning
2. assess participant strengths and abilities in relation to potential careers
3. learn about the nature of learning disabilities
4. understand the severity of their own learning disabilities
5. identify disability-related supports for learning at work and in school
6. learn about resources available for labour market research
7. increase self-confidence
8. other goals as determined by stakeholders

Program Objectives

The program objectives are ways in which the program goals can be achieved. Therefore, each program goal has one or more program objectives.

1. Program Goal – learn the basic steps of career planning

Related Program Objective(s) – to learn and document information related to the 5 stages of career planning in a measurable and time-effective manner. The five main stages of career planning include: Self-Assessment; Generating Career Options; Researching Options; Prioritizing/Decision Making; and Action Planning. All participant information is to be documented on a Career Profile Sheet that is to be updated by each learner throughout the workshop. The Career Profile Sheet is illustrated in Quadrant 3 (Designing the Program) under sub-quadrant four (Designating Learning Procedures) and on page 68 of this paper.

2. Program Goal – assess participant strengths and abilities in relation to potential careers

Related Program Objective – develop lists of participant strengths, abilities, and interests at all stages of the career planning process during the eight-day workshop and document information on Career Profile sheet and on tape (if required).

3. Program Goal – learn about the nature of learning disabilities

Related Program Objective (2 days) – provide a two-day mini-conference or seminar on “Learning with Learning Disabilities” and complete related learning activities. The seminar will include topics such as definition of a learning disability, symptoms, career-related problems, and more. Participants are to document relevant information in workbooks or on tape.

4. Program Goal – to help each participants learn about the severity of his or her disability

Related Program Objective – Collaboratively, each participant assesses the extent of his or her learning disability by reviewing diagnostic testing results with the psychologist who is a guest speaker in the workshop. Identify strengths and weakness with respect to learning.

5. Program Goal – identify disability related supports for learning at work and in school

Related Program Objective – introduce participants to disability-related accommodations in various learning environments through guest speakers such as psychologists; experts from community organizations; persons with learning disabilities

who have achieved career success; employers; and representatives from post-secondary institutions. Introduce participants to various forms of assistive technology and provide several opportunities for them to practice using these learning accommodations.

6. Program Goal – learn the resources available for labour market research

Related Program Objective – participants to research information on various careers and review labour market trends in Alberta; identify educational institutions that can be used for entry into careers; and take inventory of other related resources. Take participants on a tour of the AHRE’s Labour Market Information Centre in Edmonton.

7. Program Goal - increase self-confidence

Related Program Objective (8 days) – to identify and document ways that participant self-confidence has improved during the 8-day workshop. Provide confidence building learning activities in a safe and supportive environment where participants feel free to express their opinions. Ensure that participants are able to provide feedback and receive constructive input from other participants.

8. Program Goal – other goals identified by stakeholders

Related Program Objectives - Create awareness of the importance of chance encounters and other means of identifying career goals when career planning (one half-day). Document or record information; identify new program goals and objectives as determined by participants, facilitators and advisory committee members.

SUB-QUADRANT TWO – PLAN PROCESS AND OUTCOME EVALUATION

Plans for Evaluation

In the "Career Planning Workshop for Adults with Learning Disabilities" I plan to adhere to Daniel Sufflebeam’s two forms of evaluation. These include “formative” and “summative evaluation” (Sufflebeam, 1975 in Cookson & Rothwell, 1997, p. 172).

1. Formative Evaluation

Formative evaluation is a type of proactive and ongoing evaluation. For example, in order to improve the workshop, leaders and participants must make ongoing decisions and modifications before, during, and after the program.

Formative evaluations and decision-making will be conducted throughout the workshop. They are the responsibility of AHRE Career Counsellors, the co-facilitators, and the participants themselves.

a. AHRE Career Counsellor Evaluation/Screening/Referral/Follow-up

As indicated in the ‘needs assessment portion’ of LEPP #2 (Engaging Relevant Contexts), the participants of the workshop have been referred by AHRE Career Counsellors during the course of individual career counselling. Assessment interviews with referring AHRE Career Counsellors represent a form of formative evaluation because the information obtained will be used to determine whether or not a client is referred to the workshop. An AHRE Career Counsellor has a wealth of information from which to make workshop referrals such as neurological and educational testing results, counselling notes, academic transcripts, and client knowledge of career planning techniques.

In order to screen participants appropriately AHRE Career Counsellors are given pertinent information about the program itself including workshop purpose, goals, objectives, workshop design and learning activities, and more. In general, AHRE Career

Counsellors base their referral decisions on how well the workshop can meet the learning needs of the client and how suitable the client is for group interventions. AHRE Career Counsellors are expected to follow-up with their counselling clients to determine their level of progress and satisfaction throughout the workshop.

b. Orientation Interview with Program Planner and Facilitator

After the participants have been referred to the workshop by their AHRE Career Counsellors they have an orientation interview with myself and the other facilitator. This interview is not meant to be a screening session. Each participant is welcomed to the group, given further workshop information, asked questions about how the workshop can be tailored to meet his or her needs, and invited to provide feedback about their career planning experiences. The tone of the interview is very positive and welcoming rather than overly evaluative. Topics covered in the 'Orientation Interview' include:

- introduction to facilitators/workshop
- clarification / confirmation of information from referring AHRE Career Counsellor
- informal evaluation of individual learning needs to determine what special assistance (disability related or otherwise) are necessary for the participant
- evaluation of participant suggestions on how to adapt the workshop to meet group and individual needs
- open-ended questioning
- distribution of learning accommodations and technology such as Franklin Language Masters (electronic dictionaries), career planning workbooks, tape recorders, and pre-recorded cassette tapes as developed by facilitators. Prior to the workshop the facilitators will tape the instructional elements that describe each stage and topic of the workshop curriculum. Learning activities to be used in the workshop will also be included on the workshop tapes and workbooks although many of these cannot be completed without group input. This gives the participants the option of reviewing the content of the program curriculum prior to the actual start of the workshop.

By the end of the interview it is anticipated that each participant will establish an acceptable comfort level with the facilitators and be motivated to participate in the workshop.

c. Ongoing Participant Evaluation

The participant progress or regress is evaluated throughout the workshop by the co-facilitators. There are several learning activities planned for the participants. The facilitators and participants can make judgments on how well the program is meeting their needs.

Formative evaluations can be made based on input provided by each participant; quantity or quality of participant feedback provided during debriefing exercises; amount of enthusiasm put forth by the group during learning activities; quality of communication between co-facilitators and participants; participant understanding of materials and concepts in the workshop; degree of interaction amongst participants; and more. It is crucial that the facilitators adapt the workshop to meet immediate needs when necessary.

d. Ongoing participant evaluation of workshop

Two participants will act as representatives for the group, participate on the advisory committee, and assist in the evaluation process. Throughout the workshop these representatives can gather feedback from other participants on how well the program is meeting their needs. Issues can then be reported to the facilitators and advisory

committee for consideration. Participant anonymity is important if the issues presented truly reflect the feelings and thoughts of group members.

On a more formal basis, the participant representatives can also document any evaluative information at the end of the workshop and provide it to the facilitators and advisory committee. This would constitute a form of summative evaluation as the workshop would be over and the stakeholders can then take this information and make decisions on future workshops.

2. Summative Evaluation

Summative evaluation takes place after the educational program or workshop has been completed. The main purpose of summative evaluation is to provide justification and accountability for all activities connected to the workshop. Sufflebeam states: “In gathering such information, evaluators seek descriptive and judgmental information from everyone involved with the program, as well as from those who influence or who might be influenced by the program.” (Cookson & Rothwell, 1997, p.172) In terms of the Career Planning Workshop for Adults with Learning Disabilities, a positive summative evaluation will increase the chances that AHRE will provide funding for future workshops.

Information for summative evaluations can be obtained from group questionnaires, post-workshop interviews, facilitator evaluations, advisory committee reviews, and from the AHRE management team.

a. Group Questionnaire

The facilitators can provide a list of open-ended questions for the class to answer at the end of the workshop. These may include questions such as: How useful was the workshop? Did it meet your expectations? What were the pros and cons of the workshop for you? How effective were the instructors? Were the learning aids useful? Was the group supportive? How do you plan to use the information? What recommendations would you have to improve the workshop? The answers to these and other questions can be presented verbally or in writing to the learner committee representatives in a debriefing exercise on the last day of the workshop. The facilitators cannot be part of the actual debriefing exercise by the participant representatives but will review the feedback after the workshop. This summative information is also provided to the advisory committee to determine the success of the workshop.

b. Post-Workshop Interviews

A few days after the workshop ends the facilitators will conduct post-workshop interviews with each participant to discuss impressions of the workshop, the information documented on his or her Career Profile, what his or her next steps should be, and what else can be done to meet individual career planning needs. A follow-up interview with the participants will also be conducted 3-4 months after the workshop to determine if participants have made progress in their career plans or if more assistance is required.

The information obtained from the post-workshop interviews is reviewed by the advisory committee although participant confidentiality and anonymity is maintained.

c. Facilitator Evaluation of the Workshop

It is also important that the co-facilitators provide feedback about their experiences with the workshop, how it can be improved, and whether it meets the learning needs of adults with learning disabilities.

d. Advisory Committee Evaluation

All of the summative evaluation information gathered from the learners and facilitators can then be summarized by me and presented to the advisory committee for discussion. The advisory committee can then write a report to my supervisors at AHRE about the positives and negatives of the workshop.

e. AHRE Management Review

The management team from Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE) can review all summative information and make a decision on whether or not to provide the necessary funding for future workshops.

SUB-QUADRANT FOUR – FORMULATE INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

In this workshop I will use the nine-step ‘Action Learning Model (AL)’ presented by Bob Garratt (1991) as a basis for general workshop development.

Action learning is a process for the reform of organizations and the liberation of human vision within organizations. The process is based on taking one or more crucial organizational problems and, in real time, analyzing their dynamics: implementing proposed solutions derived from the constructive criticisms of colleagues; monitoring results; and through being held responsible for these actions, learning from the results so that future problem solving and opportunity taking are improved. This approach is akin to any form of human problem solving. (Garratt, 1991 in Cookson & Rothwell, 1997, p. 172)

The degree to which each of the nine steps are achieved during the workshop represents one way to gauge the success of the program in meeting group member needs. In the following section I relate the ‘Action Learning Model’ to the workshop itself.

Action Learning (AL) Model

Step 1. Transitioning from Earlier Action to Learning

The participants of the Career Planning Workshop for Adults with Learning Disabilities have chosen to change their perspectives from negative action or inaction into learning to overcome barriers to career success. They have made the first step of the AL by the time they have been referred and selected to participate in the workshop.

Step 2. Identifying the Problem

Persons in the workshop have, through interviews or needs assessments, indicated they have problems successfully integrating into the labour market. This has been partially due to their learning disability and partially to their lack of career planning. Problem identification is a critical part of the workshop activities.

Step 3. Taking Ownership of a Learning Experience

It is anticipated that group members will be motivated to take ownership of their problems. Group discussion, exercises that highlight participant strengths rather than weaknesses, and special accommodations for participants with learning disabilities including tape recorders, visual aids, and workbooks will provide the means by which the learners can take responsibility for their own learning.

Step 4. Creating a Learning System

The learning system used in this workshop includes group support; individual and group learning activities; continuous feedback; collaborative decision-making; acceptance of the methods and objectives of the workshop; and commitment to the steps involved in career planning.

Step 5. Establishing Contact over Time

All participants will be encouraged to maintain contact with co-facilitators, participants, guest speakers, and AHRE Career Counsellors after the workshop ends.

Step 6. Addressing Conflict and Tension

Sometimes conflicts arise amongst participants and facilitators during workshops. It is important that these situations are handled with immediacy and using appropriate conflict resolution techniques.

Step 7. Developing Identity

This step is often referred to as the transition stage of group development. In this stage members strive for enhancing group identity as well as personal identity. Examples include: using a teamwork approach to problem solving, developing group cohesiveness, and enhancing a tendency to achieve group objectives. Most learning activities in the workshop involve a combination of group and individual exercises.

Step 8. Making a Transition

The participants must make the transition from workshop members to individual workforce participants after the workshop ends. It is anticipated that they will take the knowledge obtained from the workshop to enhance their career success. AHRE Career Counsellors and workshop facilitators will be available for individual consultation.

Step 9. Preparing for Later Action and Learning

"In action learning, an effort is made to plan for future learning to meet needs identified during action learning experiences. In this way one experience leads to another in a continuing cycle of individual, group and organizational improvement." (Cookson & Rothwell, 1997, p. 204)

In this workshop participants will develop action plans to achieve career goals. After the workshop ends the participants can use the career planning steps learned in the workshop to pursue various careers of interest. They are preparing for "later action" as they identify career goals in the workshop in preparation for labour market integration.

SUB-QUADRANT FOUR – DESIGNATE LEARNING PROCEDURES

In the 'Career Planning Workshop for Adults with Learning Disabilities' I plan to incorporate the following methods, techniques and learning devices.

Methods – Individual and group activities designed to assist participants in a career planning process. These include use of:

- techniques to assist participants in career problem solving activities related to self-assessment, generating career options, researching, decision-making, and action-planning.
- introduction to each topic by co-facilitators which are available to learners on tape and workbooks
- collaborative decision making exercises for group problem solving
- use of individual and group activities to stimulate learning and discussion

Learning Devices - pencils, pens, poster-size paper, break-off rooms, round tables, tape recorders, note-takers, Franklin Language Masters, chalk boards, flip charts, power point, poster-sized Career Profile sheets indicating participant information for each of the career planning steps, workbooks

Disability-Related Facilitation/Instruction Techniques

Co-facilitators must utilize a number of disability-related instructional techniques when leading the participants in the classroom. These include:

- Providing both written and verbal instructions
- Allowing participants to use tape recorders, note takers, lap tops, or other forms of assistive technology when facilitators introduce topics although not during brainstorming sessions.
- Allowing participants to tape, rather than write, their responses to individual exercises if they so choose.
- Using isolated and quiet settings for focus groups or individual exercises
- Providing information in alternate formats (tapes, coloured illustrations, power point demonstrations etc.)
- Being patient and understanding
- Allowing students to demonstrate knowledge using alternate means (visual, written, other)
- Providing reading materials (instructional workbooks) and taped instruction in advance of workshop
- Allowing additional time for learning activities, reading, and writing
- Ignoring spelling errors/focus on content during brainstorming sessions
- Allowing participants to request the spelling of words if they choose and free use of Franklin Language Masters (electronic dictionaries that can provide users with information such as spelling, meaning of words, phonetics, antonyms, synonyms etc.)
- Providing a computer in the classroom so that participants can research occupations
- Encouraging feedback and utilizing praise
- Using point form rather than sentences
- Being brief and to the point
- Using examples.
- Speaking slowly and clearly
- Inviting individuals to speak in private if necessary
- Applying principles of adult education when facilitating groups
- Using handouts that have limited writing on them
- Allowing participants to leave class when necessary (to gather thoughts, for example)
- Making use of communication skills such as paraphrasing or reflection of feeling
- Using “soft skills” freely such as: positive regard; empathy; genuineness, kindness, and others when facilitating the workshop
- Others as determined by participant needs in the group

LEARNING ACTIVITY FORMAT

All learning activities will be formatted according to the following instructional design components.

Learning Activity Format

- topic
- goals of activity
- learning domain
- objectives / learning outcomes
- instructor activities
- learner activities
- resources / materials / equipment
- assessment / evaluation techniques
- time
- Expected outcomes/Anticipated responses

WORKSHOP AGENDA - CAREER PLANNING FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

The 8-day workshop consists of the main topics outlined below. On each of these days participants will be expected to complete a number of individual and group exercises (break-off groups or large group). Learning exercises for each day of the workshop can be found in the Appendix.

DAY ONE – INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP SELF-AWARENESS

1. Kick off Breakfast – Motivational speaker: “Staying Positive in an Ever-Changing World”
2. Introductions/Workshop Overview
3. Group Goals, Expectations and Norms
4. Dream Exercises
5. My Character Strengths
6. Beliefs and Behaviours
7. Summary/Debriefing of Day One

DAYS TWO AND THREE – LEARNING WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY

There will be several guest speakers making presentations on various topics pertaining to learning disabilities on these two days. Speakers include a psychologist, representatives from workplace and academic settings, community organizations, two individuals who have learning disabilities and achieved career success, AHRE Career Counsellors, and others. A film entitled “All about Us: Adults with Learning Disabilities” (1992) by the Learning Disability Association of Canada will also be featured. Open discussion and de-briefing exercises will be an important part of the two days.

DAYS FOUR TO EIGHT

The remaining five days of the workshop include instruction and learning activities for each of the stages of the career planning process. Again, the progressive stages of career planning include self-assessing, generating career options; researching; decision-making, and action planning. The need for participants to be aware of chance encounters when developing career direction is also addressed in the workshop. Workshop de-briefing, plans for follow-up, evaluations, distribution of certificates of completion, discussion of available resources, workshop wrap-up, and other topics will be discussed. A post-workshop lunch will officially mark the end of the workshop.

WORKSHOP TAPES

As indicated in the “Orientation Interview” section of this paper, the facilitators have developed a taped and written summary of the workshop topics for participant reference.

Learning activities and exercises are also documented on tape or in the workbooks although many of these cannot be completed without group input. By supplying the participants with tapes or workbooks in the orientation interviews, the facilitators are giving the participants the option of reviewing the course material prior to the actual workshop. Again, no taping of other participants is permitted.

WORKSHOP LEARNING ACTIVITIES

There will be several individual, sub-group, and large group exercises in the workshop. These will be delivered on each day of the program and most will relate to the stages of career planning. The participants will record corresponding information for these stages on the poster-size “Career Profile” sheet that is illustrated below. The participants can take their completed Career Profile sheets with them at the end of the workshop for future reference. The full workshop curriculum and learning activities of the workshop is provided in the Appendix of this paper.

CAREER PROFILE OF -----

A. PERSONAL AWARENESS INFORMATION (Day One)

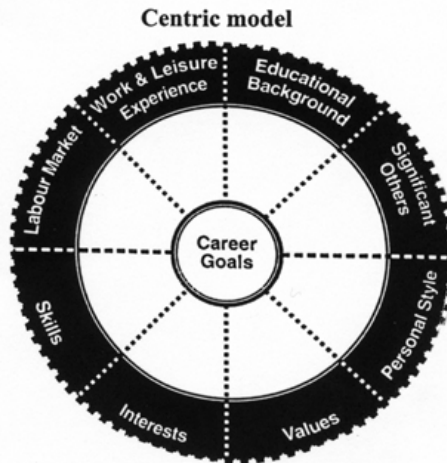
Dreams : Past, Present, Future

Character Strengths - 1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____

Beliefs - 1. Positive ____ 2. Negative ____ 3. Reframed Negative ____

B. STAGES OF CAREER PLANNING

Stage 1 Self-Assessment



Stage 2 Generated Career Options – 1.--- 2.---- 3.----

Stage 3 - Research following occupations – 1.---- 2. ---- 3. ----

Stage 4 - Decision Making/Goal Setting – (Chosen occupation?)

Stage 5 - Action Planning – Step 1. Step 2. Step 3

CONCLUSION

In this section I have shown how the third quadrant of the Lifelong Education Program Planning (LEPP) model can be used for the Career Planning Workshop for Adults with Learning Disabilities. Learner and stakeholder needs are presented and a method of prioritizing these needs has been proposed. Program goals and objectives have been identified. Plans for evaluation are illustrated and these include formative and summative assessments. The Action Learning (AL) model has been selected as a guide to formulating the instructional design. Finally, several learning procedures have been presented including a proposed workshop agenda and examples of learning activities to be used. The remaining learning activities of the workshop are located in the Appendix.

LEPP QUADRANT FOUR - MANAGING ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS

SUB-QUADRANTS

- 1. PLAN RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGIES**
- 2. PLAN PROMOTION AND MARKETING**
- 3. DETERMINE FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**
- 4. PLAN INSTRUCTOR SELECTION, SUPERVISION AND TRAINING**

LEPP QUADRANT FOUR - MANAGING ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS

In this fourth and final quadrant of the 'Lifelong Education Program (LEPP) model I identify the ways in which the administrative aspects of the workshop are planned. This quadrant is presented according to the following four sub-quadrants:

- a. Plan Recruitment and Retention Strategies
- b. Plan Promotion and Marketing
- c. Determine Financial Responsibility
- d. Plan Instructor Selection, Supervision, and Training

1. SUB-QUADRANT ONE – PLAN RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGIES

1. Recruiting Program Participants

In the Career Planning Workshop for Adults with Learning Disabilities, I recruit participants exclusively from the AHRE Career Counsellors at Alberta Human Resources and Employment (Edmonton City Centre Office). The participants have been educationally and neurologically tested by area psychologists, possess appropriate school records, have undergone informal assessments by AHRE Career Counsellors, and have provided other written evidence of a learning disability.

2. Retaining Participants

In order to retain participant interest it is important that the learning activities be presented in multiple formats so that the learning styles of the group members can be accommodated. Participants who are not able to read or write adequately are permitted to tape instruction and make use of the pre-recorded audiotapes provided by the facilitators. Participants who are visual learners and have good writing skills can take advantage of the pre-workshop workbooks and complete these as they progress through the curriculum. Learning accessories such as coloured illustrations, flipcharts, highlighters, the Career Profile sheets, and other accessories will also be available to the group. This workshop utilizes both individual and group activities. Activities are designed to be interesting, emphasize participants' strengths, and encourage group support. The learning provided in this workshop is intended to focus on disability and non-disability issues such as general career planning. Naturally, the enthusiasm and facilitation skills of the co-facilitators also determine how well the program is received.

Retention of participant interest also depends on program continuity. The career planning steps of the workshop are progressive culminating in action plans that the participants can pursue after the workshop ends.

I plan to use several interesting motivators for participants such as a variety of guest speakers, certificates of workshop completion, opening and closing day meals, and positive ice breaking exercises.

2. SUB-QUADRANT TWO – PLAN PROMOTION AND MARKETING

There are few marketing strategies necessary at this stage of the program plan although all staff and stakeholders on the advisory committee are encouraged to share workshop information with their organizations. Should the program be approved, materials such as brochures, power point presentations, and other tools can be used for marketing purposes.

3. SUB-QUADRANT THREE – DETERMINE FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The budget proposal for the workshop is presented below. As the staff and facilities are already in place at AHRE, costs such as salaries, boardroom rentals, and overhead are negligible. There is a planned budget for the co-facilitators to attend various workshops or conferences on related topics prior to the workshop. These would represent the only exceptional staff costs for AHRE.

There will be no cost to the participants for the workshop.

BUDGET PROPOSAL

Staff Costs

Salaries (counsellors/clerical)	0
Marketing program to AHRE Counsellors	0
Evaluation	0
Staff training (workshops/seminars/travel)	2400
Sub-total	<u>\$2400</u>
Guest Speakers	<u>\$1000</u>

Overhead

Materials

Pens/felt markers/flip chart paper	80
Tape Recorders/tapes	1260
Franklin Language Masters	1800
Poster-Size Cardboard Sheets	200
Certificates of Completion/holders	60
Masking tape	10
Computer discs	25
Sub-total	<u>\$3435</u>

Food Costs

coffee/filters /creamer	40
juice	60
sugar	10
muffins	120
napkins	10
Workshop Opening breakfast/closing lunch	1000
Sub-total	<u>\$1240</u>
Transportation costs (bus tickets)	<u>\$480</u>
Miscellaneous	<u>\$300</u>
Total Workshop Cost	\$8855

Program Benefits

Most benefits of the workshop can be considered intangible. In the long term, the workshop can create savings to the accounts of Alberta Social Services and Income Support (welfare) or Employment Insurance (Government of Canada) once participants enter their chosen careers. Theoretically, the successful participants might eventually pay more in city, provincial, and federal taxes once they obtain work that provides them with adequate wages. AHRE can benefit from the use of more specialized career planning workshops for counselling clients; staff development; increased sensitivity toward adults with learning disabilities; and improved liaison amongst stakeholder groups.

Intangible benefits for participants include pride in completing the program; development of realistic career goals; mastery of the methods involved in career planning; social acceptance; improved self-confidence; and increased knowledge of overcoming learning disabilities.

4. SUB-QUADRANT FOUR – PLAN INSTRUCTOR SELECTION, SUPERVISION, AND TRAINING

1. Selecting Instructors

As indicated throughout the paper, I will act as one of the facilitators as well as the program planner.

I have more than 20 years of personal and career counselling experience with special interest groups including: adults with learning disabilities; immigrant women; inner city residents; youth on probation; mentally challenged adults; social service and employment insurance recipients; and those who are personally, physically, and socially challenged. I have also written proposals and delivered career planning workshops in the past.

I will select my co-facilitator from the core of AHRE Career Counsellors that I work with at AHRE's Edmonton City Centre office. In doing so I can use the LEPP quadrants as selection criteria. For example, I can choose a career counsellor who demonstrates "professional responsibility" as required in LEPP Quadrant one. It is important that my co-facilitator understands the "contexts" of all internal and external providers in relation to the workshop. "Engaging Relevant Contexts" of stakeholders is presented in LEPP Quadrant two. Expertise in designing a program to meet the needs of adults with learning disabilities is essential and these principles are covered in LEPP Quadrant three. A co-facilitator who is knowledgeable about the administrative aspects of the workshop (LEPP Quadrant four) would be most helpful so that we can collaborate to develop a cost-effective yet creative workshop.

b. Supervising, Evaluating and Developing Instructors

For this project the supervision of workshop facilitators rests with my supervisor at AHRE although I would choose the co-facilitator. Members of the advisory committee and the participants can also provide some direction. In addition to the participants, the advisory committee can provide an evaluation of the facilitators for AHRE. My co-

facilitator and I will evaluate our own performance and examine what worked well and what needs to be improved.

c. Training Instructors

Training opportunities for facilitators of the workshop include workshops, lectures or conferences on adults with learning disabilities; seminars on group counselling and facilitation techniques; case conferences with psychologists and clients who have been psychologically or educationally tested; and more. These will be arranged prior to the workshop itself.

CONCLUSIONS FOR QUADRANT #4

In this quadrant I have provided some strategies on how to tailor the workshop to meet the requirements of LEPP Quadrant Four (Managing Administrative Aspects). I have presented a proposed budget for the workshop and demonstrated how LEPP criteria can be used in the recruitment, training, and evaluation of facilitators. While adherence to the administrative aspects' of the LEPP model is a lengthy process, it is an excellent guide for the overall management of the workshop.

ESSAY CONCLUSIONS

In this paper I have provided the reader with a detailed account of how a career planning workshop for adults with learning disabilities can be planned and delivered. I have chosen to use the Lifelong Education Program Planning (LEPP) model as the workshop guide. The workshop provides participants with the basics of career planning; disability-related technology and supports; emphasis on learner strengths rather than weakness; individual and group related learning activities; and utilization of a humanistic and behavioural approach to problem solving. My goal is to present workshop in the form of a proposal to my employer, Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE), by the spring of 2004.

The answer to the fifth question of this project (“What would a career planning workshop look like?”) is provided in the Appendix of this paper.

APPENDIX

**THE CAREER PLANNING WORKSHOP FOR ADULTS
WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES**



5. WHAT WOULD A CAREER PLANNING WORKSHOP FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES LOOKE LIKE?

THE CAREER PLANNING WORKSHOP FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Workshop Agenda

The 8-day workshop will consist of the following main topics.

- 1.** Day One – Kick-Off Breakfast with Motivational Speaker: “Staying Positive in an Ever-Changing World”
- Individual and Group Self-Awareness
- 2.** Days Two and Three – Learning with a Learning Disability (mini-conference)
- 3.** Day Four and Five (am) – Stage One of Career Planning Process – Self-Assessment
- 4.** Day Five (PM) – Stage Two of Career Planning – Generating Career Options
- 5.** Day Six – Stage Three – Researching Career Options
- 6.** Day Seven – Stages Four and Five of Career Planning – Decision-making/Action Planning
- 7.** Day Eight – Careers and Chance Encounters/Evaluations/Workshop Wrap-up, Change. Closing lunch

On each of these days participants will be expected to complete a number of individual and group exercises (break-off or large group tasks, for example).

DAY ONE: INDIVIDUAL/GROUP SELF-AWARENESS



DAY ONE – INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP SELF-AWARENESS

- a. Kickoff Breakfast and Motivational Speaker
- b. Introductions/Workshop Overview
- c. Group Goals and Expectations
- d. Group Norms
- e. Dream Exercises
- f. My Character Strengths
- g. Beliefs and Behaviours
- h. Summary/Debriefing of Day One

a. Kickoff Breakfast and Motivational Speaker

The first day of the workshop will begin with a kickoff breakfast in a AHRE boardroom that is well suited for such an occasion. A motivational speaker will make a presentation entitled “Staying Positive in an Ever Changing World.” Some ideas about staying positive, managing change, emphasizing one’s strengths rather than limitations, facing fears, creating a better life balance, managing stress, and other topics will be discussed. The tone of the presentation will be extremely positive with a good mix of humour and informative subject matter. The breakfast and presentation will take approximately two hours beginning at 8 am.

b. Introduction/Workshop Overview

After breakfast the participants are gathered in their classroom at approximately 10 am. The facilitators introduce themselves and welcome the participants to the Career Planning Workshop for Adults with Learning Disabilities. Housekeeping items are presented such as washroom locations, hours of workshop, and overall length of workshop. The co-facilitators will invite participants to use disability-related accommodations such as tape recorders, voluntary note takers, or any other non-intrusive supports throughout the

workshop. A computer will be provided in the classroom for participants to utilize for career planning when appropriate.

It has been mentioned that the instructional workbooks and tapes developed by the co-facilitators contain summaries of all subject matter for the workshop but that group discussions are not to be taped. However, participants are encouraged to use tape recorders for individual exercises, rather than writing, if they so desire.

A brief description of the stages of the career planning process is described so that participants know what subject matter is to be expected. The participants then engage in the following exercise:

c. Introductions

Learning Activity – Participants interview the person sitting next to them and ask three main questions: Name? Why did you come to the workshop? Something interesting that you like to do?

Goals of Activity – Participants introductions

Objectives – participant self-disclosure; positive group interaction and cohesion; help group members to begin to know one another.

Learning Domain- affective

Co-Facilitator Activity – encourage and facilitate participant response; promote positive atmosphere; initiate sense of enthusiasm; motivate group; link ideas of participants to one another

Learner Activities – interview one another and introduce workshop “neighbors” to the rest of the group; self-disclosure

Estimated time of activity – 30 minutes

d. Group Goals and Expectations

Learning Activity – participants and facilitators generate a list of workshop expectations.

Goals of Activity – ensure that participants provide facilitators with their workshop expectations and then translate these expectations into workshop goals. For example, one expectation may be identification of career options. The group may then decide that generating options should then become a workshop goal.

Learning Domain – cognitive, affective

Objectives – group to identify at least 10 expectations for workshop.

Co-Facilitator Activity – prompt learners for responses; provide examples; indicate facilitator expectations; ensure that everyone has an opportunity to provide feedback; clarify participant responses; record answers on flipchart paper;

Learner Activity – think about workshop expectations and provide feedback to the group; listen to the feedback of others without interrupting.

Anticipated responses/Outcomes expected – career direction; ideas for education; funding information for those interested in returning to school; identification of resources; others.

Facilitators may also add that they expect everyone to respect one another, maintain confidentiality, and put forth a good effort. The list of group goals and expectations will be re-visited at the end of the workshop to evaluate workshop performance in these areas. It is expected that the group and facilitators will generate a comprehensive list of expectations and that all group members will be able to contribute to the discussion. It is also anticipated that group members will begin to bond with one another and establish a group identity.

Time of Exercise – 20 minutes

e. Group Norms

Learning Activity – roundtable discussion about expected norms for the workshop; listing of identified norms.

Learning Domain – cognitive; affective

Goals of Exercise – establishment of workshop norms or rules as proposed by participants and facilitators; group cohesion; supportive environment

Objective of Activity – list of norms that can be used throughout workshop as guide to appropriate group behaviour; minimum of 10 norms to be identified.

Co-facilitator Activity – motivate participants to identify group norms or rules that they would like followed during the workshop; one facilitator to record information on flipchart paper while the other motivates participants and debriefs the exercise.

Learner Activity – each learner thinks about preferred norms then provides feedback to the group. After the list is developed group discussion follows and each norm is evaluated. A final list of group norms is established based on participant consensus.

Anticipated responses/Outcomes expected – Norms might include: confidential environment (personal conversation is never to leave the classroom); maintenance of a positive atmosphere; no putdowns; no interruptions; everyone’s opinion counts; “No question is a dumb question”; etc.

It is expected that group will generate a comprehensive list. A key objective of this learning activity is to build group strength but also to promote the individual commitment of learners.

Estimated time = 30 minutes

f. Dreams

Facilitators discuss the practical importance of exploring one's past, present, and future dreams when career planning. Sometimes reviewing dreams can provide individuals with clues about what career direction to pursue. The participants complete both individual and group exercises during this session.

Learning Activity A. (Individual)

Learning Activity – Each participant is to reflect on past, present, and future dreams that are related or non-related to career. They record these in workbooks or on tape

Learning Domain – cognitive; affective

Goals of Exercise – to have each individual explore dreams in an effort to identify potential career direction; self-reflection

Objectives – each participant to generate an inventory of dreams

Co-facilitator Activity – ask participants not to consider any perceived barriers to achieving their dreams such as learning disabilities, lack of money or education; encourage learners to record past, present and future career-related dreams on rough paper or on tape; direct learners to isolated break-off rooms if necessary; answer questions; promote individual reflection and positive atmosphere; remain available for consultation.

In order to stimulate participant involvement facilitators can provide some leading questions such as: What type of work did you dream of doing when you were a child? As a teenager? Now? What dreams do you have for the future whether work-related or not?

Learner Activity - list dreams on workbooks or record them on tape; complete the exercise and record information on poster-size Career Profile sheets.

Expected Outcomes/Anticipated Responses – lists of dream careers at certain periods of participants' lives; dreams of returning to school; dreams of becoming a good parent. It is anticipated that the participants will appreciate the opportunity to reflect on their dreams and identify a link between dreams and potential career paths.

Learning devices – tape recorders, felt markers, rough paper or participant workbooks.

Time of exercise – 20 minutes

Learning Activity B (Group Discussion)

Learner Activity – group breaks off into 3 groups of 4 members to share information about their past, present, and future dreams although participants do not have to reveal anything that they consider to be overly personal.

Goal of activity – generate group discussion on the importance of dreaming in relation to career; provide group support for participant dreams.

Co-facilitator Activity – provide reinforcement of the importance of dreaming; ensure that participants feel comfortable in sub-group settings; arrange for participants to break off into 3 groups of 4 and discuss their individual dreams as recorded in Exercise A; act as recorders for each sub-group, if required; write “dream lists” on flipchart paper.

No names are identified on the flip chart information. No one is to make judgments or provide any negative verbal or non-verbal feedback. It should be noted that the participants have been identified by their counsellors and facilitators as willing to participate in the group process and generally, will provide input into the learning activity. However, some hesitation to reveal personal information is anticipated and if some participants do not feel comfortable disclosing their dreams then this is acceptable. Co-facilitators will debrief exercises A and B in a larger group of 12 and discussion will take place on the value of the “dream” exercises.

Learner activities – listen to each participant in the sub-group/general group in a non-judgmental way and without interrupting; present and discuss their dreams; provide supportive feedback to other group members; engage in friendly discussion with other learners on the similarities and differences of their dreams; record their top 3 or 4 dream careers on their Career Profile sheets.

Expected Outcomes/Anticipated Responses - list of dreams for each sub-group and larger group of 12.

Estimated time = 30 minutes

LUNCHBREAK

g. My Character Strengths

Everyone has character strengths that can be related to dreams and life in general. The co-facilitators ask the group members to list their most prominent ones. The co-facilitators emphasize that positive character strengths enhance one's ability to secure a stable career.

Exercise A (Group)

Goals of Exercise – to identify participant character strengths and group discussion; group cohesiveness; positive thinking; support for participants

Learning Activity - large group is asked to list positive character strengths that can be used to achieve goals, career direction, dreams, personal growth, and success in life; facilitator records the answers on flipchart paper

Expected Outcomes/Anticipated Responses:

The group will identify provide character strengths such as: able to effectively deal with stress; friendly; kind; self-directed; adaptable to change; courageous; organized; co-operative; hard working; healthy; creative; accommodating; verbally effective; positive; loyal; family orientated; independent; and others.

Estimated Time of Exercise = 20 minutes

Exercise B (Individual) – My Character Strengths

Goal of Exercise – participant appreciation and personal inventory of character strengths

Objectives – list of at least 10 character strengths per participant that can be used in pursuing a career; participant reflection on their unique character; participant focus on character strengths rather than character weaknesses

Learning Activity - Each participant is asked to select those from the list of character strengths identified by the group that he or she possesses. They are invited to add to their list by writing down their own character strengths. Again, participants are invited to utilize the break-off rooms and use tape recorders. Recorded personal lists are not formally shared with other participants if individual learners so choose.

Co-Facilitator Activity – facilitate; encourage; support

Learner Activity – develop list and record most prominent ones on Career Profile sheet.

Estimated time of exercise = 15 minutes

h. Beliefs and Behaviours

The facilitator leads an open discussion on how negative and positive beliefs can affect an individual's behaviour. While this workshop is not designed to be a life skills program it is important that each participant reflect on his or her own beliefs and how they affect behaviour.

Exercise A (Individual)

Goals of exercise – 1. help participants identify their positive and negative thoughts

1. assist participants to reframe negative thoughts into positive ones
2. assist participants to become aware of how their own thoughts influence their behaviour

Learning Activity – The learners are asked to complete a brief questionnaire that helps them ascertain whether they are negative or positive thinkers. They are asked to mark true or false to the statements that most applies to their situation. The list can be read aloud if some participants feel more comfortable.

Statements:

1. I have a wonderful support system in my life (family, friends, family and/or other supportive people).
2. Everything is changeable including my habits
3. I like myself and believe I have personal strengths that I can use on or off the job.
4. I am responsible for my own life.
5. I can succeed in life.
6. I am creative.
7. In general, I have a positive attitude.
8. I have a learning disability but, with supports and personal drive, I can reach my potential at work and in life.
9. I fail no matter how hard I try.
10. The world is a safe and happy one.
11. No one will hire me because I don't have a good education
12. No one will hire me because I have a learning disability.
13. There are no supports available to me in my career and job search.
14. I can learn to change my barriers to employment or career.
15. Some of my habits will interfere with my career path.
16. Other thoughts or beliefs that I hold that may influence my behaviour or career success.

After checking off the statements that apply most to them, the participants are asked to identify how their negative thoughts have contributed to negative behaviour and how positive ones have resulted in positive behaviour. They are then asked to reframe any negative statements from the above list into positive ones. Participants can use a blank piece of paper or audiotapes for this exercise.

Co-Facilitator Activity – read questions aloud: encourage participant response

Learner Activity – complete learner exercises and record most positive beliefs on their Career Profiles; tape or write responses in workbook.

Expected Outcomes/Anticipated Answers - Negative answers to above questions. Self-reflection when negative answers are turned into positive ones. For example, in #15 above a negative affirmation is: “Some of my habits interfere with my career path.” Reframed, positive answer – “I will try and limit my undesirable behaviours and thoughts so that I can obtain an appropriate career direction.”

Estimated time of exercise – 20 minutes

Exercise B (Group)

Learning Activity – Group discusses how negative beliefs have interfered with positive behaviours in their lives. Solutions, as well as problems, are identified. Examples of how positive beliefs have led to positive behaviour are also discussed and explored by the group.

Time required for exercise – 15 minutes

h. Summary and De-briefing of Day One

Group discusses how the day went. By the end of day the participants and group have participated in a number of learning activities that stimulate personal and group self-awareness. They have had breakfast as a group and heard a presentation about change; received an overview of the workshop; identified expectations; developed workshop norms; engaged in exercises to identify character strengths, beliefs and behaviours; reflected on personal dreams; and more. It is anticipated that group members feel their individual needs are being met by the workshop and that they are also committed to the needs of the group. Facilitators then describe the activities to take place over days 2 and 3 of the workshop. Feedback is invited.

By the end of day one, each participant has completed the first section of his or her Career Profile sheet. An example is provided below.

CAREER PROFILE

Name: John Smith

1. PERSONAL AWARENESS INFORMATION (Day One)

Dreams: Past – Athlete

Present – Adult Educator for persons with learning disabilities

Future - Writer

Character Strengths

Honest, caring, determined, loyal, creative, independence,

Beliefs

Positive – I am responsible for my own success and failure

- I am generally an optimist.
- I can succeed in life with a good effort
- My supports are extremely important to me
- I can learn as well as teach
- I am an extrovert

Negative

- I tend to procrastinate
- I can be too hard on myself at times
- I tend to worry too much about the feelings of others

Reframed Negative beliefs

- I don't have to procrastinate and can begin my career search today
- I will be as good to myself as possible.

END OF DAY ONE

**DAYS TWO AND THREE: LEARNING WITH A
LEARNING DISABILITY**



DAYS TWO AND THREE – LEARNING WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY

On days two and three the participants take part in a mini-conference where they study issues pertaining to learning disabilities and disability-related accommodations that can be used in academic and workplace settings. Guest speakers, question and answer periods, resource contacts, and general group bonding take place during this time. These 2 days are intended to be very positive and thought provoking for the participants. Below is the agenda for the “Learning with a Learning Disability” mini-conference.

Day Two

a. Guest Speaker (Psychologist/Expert in field of learning disabilities)

What is a Learning Disability? History? Definition? Symptoms? Positive and Negative impact on an individual’s personal or social life? Affect on career? Coping Mechanisms? Other topics as developed through discussion. (2 hours - AM)

b. Film and discussion: *All About Us: Adults with Learning Disabilities*. Learning Disability Association of Canada (1 hour - AM)

c. Psychological Tests: types (neurological and educational; value; what they measure; how to interpret them; how a learning disability is determined; recommendations for learning assistance; question and answer period: (1 Hour PM)

d. Review of participant test results; Participants bring their written psychological assessments and the psychologist describes each section of the document. No personal information is discussed during the session although participants are invited to approach the psychologist individually at a more convenient time. (2 hours - PM)

e. De-briefing (1 hour – PM)

END OF DAY TWO

Day Three

Guest Speakers

- a. **Testimonials by Individuals who have learning disabilities and have succeeded in their careers.** Q and A's (1 hour- AM)

- b. **Representative from Post-Secondary Institution** (Learning Support Services Departments and Academic Strategies)

Topic: Learning Accommodations/Strategies; Assistive Technology: Success Stories (1.5 hours – AM)

- c. **Representative from Community Organization** (Calgary Learning Centre)

Services and Supports Available in the Community (30 min. – AM)

- d. **Employer Representative** who has had successful experiences with employees who have learning disabilities; workplace accommodations; instructional methods (1 hour – PM)

- e. **AHRE Career Counsellor**

Careers and adults with learning disabilities: Matching strengths and weaknesses to demands of occupations; AHRE programs and services; Labour market trends; list of resources including workshop guest speakers provided to all members; Qs and A's. (1 hour – PM)

De-briefing of last 2 days

Exercise A: Group Discussion

Goal of Exercise – gather feedback about the last 2 days; discuss how investigation into available disability-related supports must become part of an overall career plan.

The group has a discussion about their feelings and thoughts on the previous day's presentation.

Questions asked include:

1. How do you feel about yesterday's presentations?
2. Did you realize that there are so many supports available for adults with learning disabilities?
3. How will this new information affect your career planning?
4. If you had the supports would you be more willing to further your education? Why or why not?
5. What other special learning strategies would you utilize that weren't mentioned in the presentations?
6. Do you feel that you have enough information about learning disabilities and learning strategies? Where would you obtain more information? Anticipated answers to this question would include schools, associations, agencies, career counsellors, web sites; and others. A list of resources can then be provided to all members.
7. What is your next step for researching careers? The group would be divided into sub-groups to answer to these questions and re-convene as a large group for general discussion.

Estimated time of Exercise = 60 minutes

END OF Day 3

**DAYS FOUR AND FIVE – STAGE ONE OF THE CAREER
PLANNING PROCESS - SELF-ASSESSMENT**

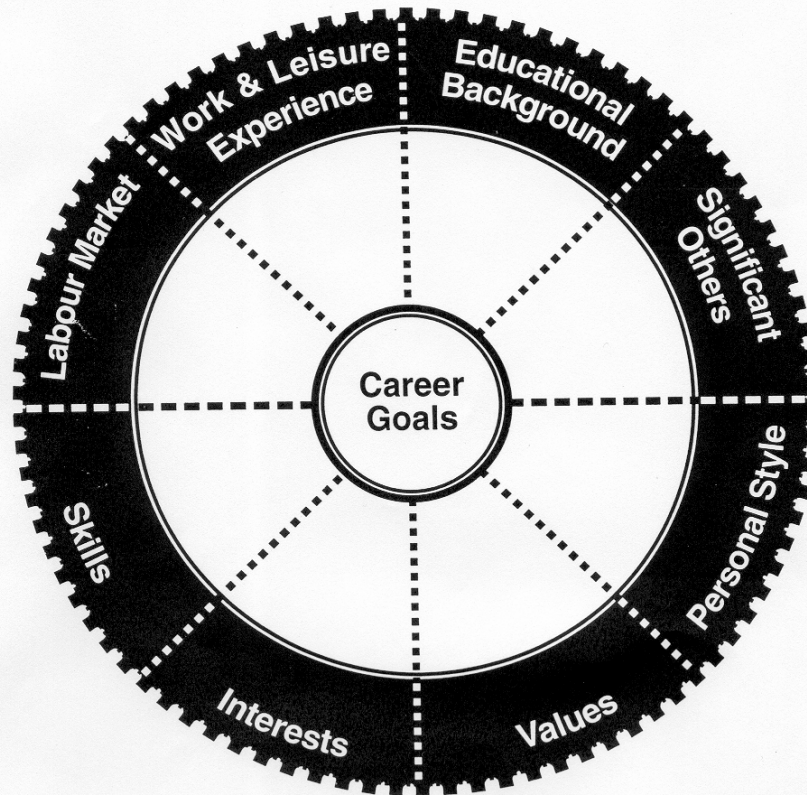


DAYS FOUR AND FIVE – STAGE ONE OF THE CAREER PLANNING PROCESS - SELF-ASSESSMENT

Thus far in the workshop the group has completed a number of individual and group exercises that have helped contribute to personal awareness and group cohesiveness. The participants have learned about the nature of learning disabilities, possible ways of coping with this condition, and how to interpret their own psychological assessments. They have also become more knowledgeable about the disability-related accommodations available at schools, community agencies, and work.

It is now time to re-visit the stages of career planning. The first stage is ‘**Self-Assessment.**’ Unlike the group and individual self-awareness topics discussed on day one, self-assessment refers more to a career directed evaluation. The ‘Centric Model’ or ‘Wheel’ is the main tool used for self-assessment in the workshop. An illustration of the model is provided below. It was developed by Norman Amundson and is illustrated in his Career Pathways exercise book (Amundson, 1996, p. 14). Exercises for each section of this circular model are provided below (Interests or Values, for example). At the end of each exercise the participants can document their data directly onto the Centric Model section of their poster-size Career Profile sheets. It is not necessary to identify a career goal in the Wheel at this point in the workshop. The Career Profile sheet is also illustrated below. It is understood that not all information generated by the learners will fit onto the Career Profile sheets due to their limited size. The participants can also keep this information in personal workbooks or on audiotapes.

The Wheel



The Wheel is a tool to provide a mental framework for understanding your marketable assets. It can be used throughout the career planning process to generate career options, to organize and

clarify information and ideas about these options, to evaluate these options and to establish occupational goals. The Wheel presents eight factors which are essential in career planning.

CAREER PROFILE OF -----

A. PERSONAL AWARENESS INFORMATION (Day One)

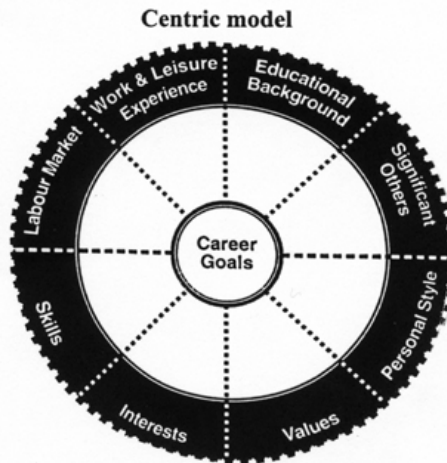
Dreams : Past, Present, Future

Character Strengths - 1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____

Beliefs - 1. Positive ____ 2. Negative ____ 3. Reframed Negative ____

B. STAGES OF CAREER PLANNING

Stage 1 Self-Assessment



Stage 2 Generated Career Options – 1.--- 2.---- 3.----

Stage 3 - Research following occupations – 1.---- 2. ---- 3. ----

Stage 4 - Decision Making/Goal Setting – (Chosen occupation?)

Stage 5 - Action Planning – Step 1. Step 2. Step 3

STAGE ONE OF CAREER PLANNING PROCESS - SELF-ASSESSMENT

In the workshop there are 8 areas of self-assessment that are addressed in the workshop. These include:

1. Values
2. Personal Style
3. Significant others
4. Work and Leisure Experiences
5. Educational Background
6. Skills
7. Interests
8. Labour Market

1. Values

The facilitator presents the need for individuals to review their values when considering a career plan. A facilitator description of values is necessary at this point.

Values are the ideas, principles, standards, and causes that are important to participants. They influence the way one behaves or chooses a career direction. When values are at odds with one's work, job satisfaction is affected. For example, if one values independence, he or she may be satisfied working for a manager who tends to micro-manage employees. Therefore, it is extremely important that individuals consider their values when career planning. Examples of values are presented to the large group. Feedback is invited and discussion occurs. Facilitators ask the participants to provide examples of when their values were compromised at work, school, or in personal relationships.

Exercise A (Individual)

Goal of Activity – participant awareness of the importance of values in career planning

Objective of Activity – documentation of participant values;

Learning Activity

Each participant is handed a list of approximately 50 values. Participants rate each value as either “Not Important,” “Important” or “Extremely Important.” For example, a participant may highly value independence in a potential career and would therefore rate this value as extremely important. Participants can find a quiet area of the room in which to focus on the activity and tape their responses if they so desire. The list contains values such as money; creativity; independence; variety; working alone; working with others; stability; positive relationships; and others. Individuals are invited to write down any other values not identified on the list. The co-facilitators can read the list of values to the learners if necessary.

Co-facilitator Activity – motivates; provides examples of how values can be linked to career decision-making

Learner Activity – record in writing or on tape their personal values then transfer information onto Career Profile sheet; brainstorming

Outcomes/Anticipated responses – list of participant values (10-20/participant).

Estimated Time of Exercises – 20 minutes

Exercise B (Group Activity)

Goal of exercise – generate list of jobs for each client that accommodates his or her values

Participants are asked to break up into 3 groups of 4 and share the values that they have chosen. They are also asked to brainstorm types of jobs that can accommodate the individual values of each participant. It is extremely important that the input of group members is accepted and not judged or suggestions will be limited. A sub-group spokesperson will be selected to present the values generated by his or her focus group to the larger group. Only positive feedback is permitted. Volunteers or a facilitator can record the information on flipchart paper. At the end of the activity, the sheets are taped to the wall, the large group reconvenes for a general discussion, and each sub-group representative presents the focus group information. The facilitator then presents a summary of the topic. Feedback is encouraged.

Each participant records the most prominent values that he or she possesses and places this information on the Career Profile sheet and under the appropriate section of the Centric Model.

Estimated time of Exercise – 30 minutes

2. Personal Style

Closely linked to values and character strengths is personal style. However, personal style in this context refers to general ways of doing things on and off the job.

Examples of personal style characteristics that a group member may possess include being organized; analytical; patient; compassionate; willing to take risks; responsible; thick-skinned; honest; able to learn quickly; and others. Personal style also refers to preference for working in small organizations versus large; working independently or as a team member; preferred hours of work or working conditions; ability to cope with change; salary expectations; and more. The facilitator introduces this topic and invites feedback.

Exercise A (Individual)

Goal of exercise – participant identification and understanding of his or her personal style in relation to career

Objective of Exercise – documentation of personal style for participant

Learning Activity - A list of personal style examples (above) is provided to the participants and they are asked to check off those that are “most important,” “important” or “not important at all.” Answers can be taped or written. Participants are encouraged to add to the lists provided in the exercise.

Co-facilitator Activity – motivate; provide examples of personal styles and effects on career; records information when appropriate.

Learner Activity – participate in exercise; record information on tape or rough paper; choose most prominent factors and record on Career Profile Sheet and/or on tape.

Outcomes Expected/Anticipated Responses – each participant to develop a list of at least 10 personal style factors that can be considered when choosing career options.

Estimated time of exercise – 20 minutes

Exercise B (Group)

Goal of Activity – encourage group support for each participant; further group development; input from group on additional personal style factors that might apply to each learner.

Learning Activity - Participants are broken up into groups of 4 to discuss personal style and exchange information. Job preferences of participants are discussed given their personal styles. Information is documented on flipchart paper. Sub-group spokespersons are identified. Groups reconvene for further discussion. Positive discussion only is permitted.

Estimated time of group exercise and discussion – 25 minutes

3. Significant Others

The facilitator stresses the importance of significant others in career decision-making and planning. Significant others can often provide participants with support, motivation, learning assistance, and direction. They can help learners to achieve career goals. Significant others can often influence how realistic a participant's career goals are. For example, a single parent who enjoys spending time at home with his or her child may not wish to become a travelling salesperson.

Exercise A (Group)

Goal of Activity – to stimulate group discussion about significant others in choosing a career direction.

Objective of Activity – participant inventory of significant others and analysis of how they can impact career decision-making.

Learning Activity - The large group is asked to brainstorm and create a list of types of significant others that can influence career planning.

Co-facilitator activity - Co-facilitator records information on flipchart paper and posts it on wall. He or she leads group discussion and generates feedback from all.

Expected Outcomes/Anticipated answers - teachers; family members; learning disability organizations; co-workers; students; friends; counsellors; and others.

Estimated time spent of Exercise – 25 minutes

Exercise B (Individual)

Purpose – to have each participant recognize the need and benefits of significant others when career planning.

Participants are asked to develop a list of significant others who can affect their career planning. The list is then documented by the individual in a workbook or on tape and then transferred to the Career Profile (Centric Model) sheet. This information is not disclosed to the rest of the group.

Estimated time of exercise – 15 minutes

.....

LUNCH

4. Work and Leisure Experiences

The hobbies, leisure, and work experiences of participants can help them to identify suitable career goals. Counselling clients have often indicated to me that they would love to turn their hobbies into paid career opportunities.

Exercise A (Individual)

Goals of Activity - participant identification of link between activities they enjoy and possible careers

Learning/Learner Activity

Each individual compiles a list of hobbies, leisure activities, and work experiences that he or she would like to see used in a career. The learner then records these on the Career Profile sheet in the appropriate section. Barriers to careers are not to be considered for this exercise.

Outcomes Expected/Anticipated Responses – participants begin to see connection between career direction and hobbies or recreational activities. It is anticipated that participants will indicate that they would love to turn some of their hobbies such as sports or computer interests into career goals. They will likely indicate that their hobbies can lead to occupations such as gym instructors, artists, or computer experts.

Estimated time – 15 minutes

Exercise B (Group)

Goal of Activity - group input for above exercise

Learning Activity - Participants break into groups of 4 and exchange information about their hobbies, leisure activities, and work experiences. This activity is expected to be extremely positive, identify common areas of interest, and strengthen member relationships. It is anticipated that the participants will begin identifying careers that would accommodate the hobbies and work experiences of one another.

At the end of the activity group members are encouraged to record relevant information on their Career Profile (Centric Model) sheets. Co-facilitators can record the information on flipchart paper and post it on the classroom walls.

Estimated time of exercise – 20 minutes

5. Educational Background

Although all participants in the group have not completed high school, it is still necessary for the facilitator to discuss education. For the workshop, it is important that the group identify their strengths as learners rather than their weaknesses. The facilitators indicate that everyone has strengths as learners and these may be obtained in school or through experiential learning.

The group focuses on positive information only and identifies strengths that participants can utilize while learning. Group members have worked hard thus far in the workshop and have remained extremely positive while gathering information about their strengths, attitudes, and other personal qualities.

Exercise A (Individual)

Goal of Activity – participant recognition of strengths as learner; confidence building

Objectives of activity – participant lists of strengths as learners

Learning Activity –

Participants are asked to write down or record answers to four basic questions.

1. What have you learned to do well in your lifetime? (artwork, a trade, or communicate with others, for example)
2. How have you learned to master the activity? Practical learning? Following the example of others? Using a mentor? Studying on your own?
3. How can your learning method be applied to a job or specific job tasks?
4. How much more formal education are you willing to undertake to achieve your career goals?

Co-Facilitator Activity – provide examples; encourage feedback; motivate; maintain positive attitude for exercises; present a clear rationale for the learning activity; record responses on flipchart paper; post information on classroom walls

Learner Activity - Participants are asked to write down their responses on the Career Profile sheets and record in workbooks or on tape.

Expected Outcomes/Anticipated Responses – participants to reflect on how they have learned well in the past and developed their skills as learners. e.g. tradesmen may have learned best through the example of mentors; academic instruction; practical experience; group learning.

Estimated time of exercise – 30 minutes

Exercise B (Group)

Goal of exercise – exemplify different ways in which participants learn and identify personal learning methods that can be used in jobs or careers.

Learning Activity - Members are divided into 3 groups of 4 members and asked to discuss their answers to Exercise A. Learning experiences and learning methods of participants are then recorded on flipchart paper by a volunteer or facilitator. The group members are invited to offer additional insights into the learning of others and offer positive comments. A group spokesperson is elected for each sub-group and the information is presented to the larger group.

Co-facilitator activity – leads discussion; records participant learning activities/learning styles on flipchart paper; posts lists on walls of room

Estimated time for exercise – 30 minutes

After the exercise members are asked to record their favourite learning methods on their Career Profiles and/or on tape.

6. Skills

Often adults with learning disabilities underestimate the skills they possess. The facilitators explain that identification and development of personal and work skills is a key to career development. In general, the more people utilize their skills, the higher the level of career satisfaction.

Exercise A (Group)

Goal of Activity – review the story of a fictitious worker and generate a list of work skills

Objectives of Activity – generate a list of skills that are used in various occupations and allow the participants to begin developing their own skills list. The facilitator is addressing the entire group during this exercise.

Learning Activity - The facilitator tells a story of a fictitious person with a learning disability who has a limited education but has succeeded in the workforce. After reading the following story the group is asked to indicate what skills this individual has developed in order to succeed. The co-facilitator records the responses.

.....

Marshall's Story

Marshall is 35 years old, has trouble reading and writing, performed poorly in his school years but has gradually learned to appreciate the skills that he has acquired throughout his lifetime. Most of Marshall's learning has come in the form of on-the-job learning but he has also successfully completed some short-term upgrading courses along the way. He is now a journeyman plumber who has a supportive family, operates his own business, teaches others the trade at a nearby college, and feels extremely confident in his abilities.

The picture was not always so rosy for Marshall. He did not do well in elementary school and was often labeled "stupid" by his classmates, teachers and his parents. He felt intelligent in most academic areas but had trouble reading. He failed twice before he made it to high school. There he had even more problems. Gradually he began "hanging out" with other students who were also ostracized by their peers. They engaged in activities such as crime, drugs or alcohol, and violence. He still tried hard to pass his school subjects but could only succeed in art and trades classes. He felt his basic mathematics skills were adequate but he couldn't quite obtain a passing grade. Marshall was very good at story telling though and was quite popular among his friends. He was also an excellent basketball player and fixed his own car in order to keep it functional.

After dropping out of high school he worked unsuccessfully at a few restaurant and manual labour jobs. One day a plumber came to his house and did some repair work. Marshall watched with great interest. He later applied for a job as a plumber's assistant and eventually completed the requirements to become a journeyman

plumber. Marshall passed his written apprenticeship exams because he was allowed additional time to complete them. He also learned that if he used 3” x 5” cards he could organize his studies more efficiently. A student in his plumbing classes volunteered to take notes for him so he could focus more on what the instructor was saying. Marshall began forming a social life around persons who had similar interests and were not as involved in illegal activities. After earning a fair bit of money he was able to open up his own successful business. Eventually, he married and had two wonderful children.

I have heard many similar success stories from individuals such as Marshall in my career counselling job. I have also seen adults with learning disabilities become psychologists, computer specialists, business consultants, teachers, tradespersons, architectural designers, and others.

Co-Facilitator Activity - The main group task here is to identify the various skills that Marshall had developed and used to obtain career success. One facilitator lists 10 skill clusters (Communication or financial skill clusters for example) on separate pieces of flipchart paper. The group then provides input on what skills Marshall must have in these areas in order to succeed. The skill clusters and related skills generated by the group are then posted on the walls of the room for all to see. It is anticipated that the group would provide answers in the following manner.

1. Personal – persevering, self-confidence, creating
2. Practical – repairing, working with hands, using mechanical abilities
3. Communication – persuading, negotiating, teaching
4. Financial – budgeting, utilizing mathematics skills
5. Management – supervising, role modelling
6. Physical – strong, agile
7. Teaching skills – facilitating, explaining
8. Helping – assisting, interpersonal, guiding
9. Clerical – writing, organizing
10. Creativity – drawing, inventing

Expected Outcomes/Anticipated Responses – a variety of skills listed by group under each of the above 10 headings or skill clusters. Participants will begin to see that they possess many of the same skills identified by the group. They are motivated to begin listing some of the skills they have in common with Marshall. This is expected to be a very positive and enthusiastic session.

Time required for exercise – 40 minutes

Exercise B (Individual)

Goal of Exercise – individual awareness of skills

Learning /Learner Activity - Each member is asked to list the skills that he or she possesses in each of the above areas (personal, communication for example). The previous lists provided by the group can be used as a wonderful guide although the participants are expected to add to their individual skills lists.

Estimated Time – 20 minutes

Exercise C (Sub Groups)

Goal of Exercise – group feedback on individual skills

The large group is then sub-divided into three groups of 4 learners. Each focus group is to add to the skills list of each participant. The facilitators or volunteers can list the skills for each participant on flipchart paper. Each member provides the rest of the group a summary of his or her work experience, education, hobbies/interests and list of skills identified up to that point. The role of the sub-group is to brainstorm additional skills that the individual may have. The individual “on the spot” is not allowed to make negative judgments about the suggestions made by others. No negative feedback is permitted. Each member takes his/her expanded skills list and records the information on his or her Career Profile sheet and/or audiotape at the end of the day.

Estimated time of Exercise – 30 minutes

Debriefing of Day 4

The facilitators and group members engage in a half-hour discussion to see how everyone feels about the day’s activities. Those who require some individual attention are invited to speak with either of the co-facilitators after class.

END OF DAY 4

By the end of day four, the participants have evaluated 6 categories of personal information to be considered when making their career choices. These categories within the “Self-Assessment Stage” of the career planning process include values; significant others; skills; personal style; hobbies and recreation preferences; and education. It is anticipated that by the end of the day four all participants will feel be very positive because they have focused on their career and personal strengths. Each participant has also provided and received some very positive feedback from the group and sees value in the teamwork approach. All information has been recorded on rough notes, audiotapes, and on the Career Profile sheets.

.....

DAY FIVE (AM) – SELF-ASSESSMENT (cont'd)

7. Interests

Clearly, a person's interests can give clues as to what careers may be most desirable. Many, if not most participants have lacked interest in their jobs and have experienced feelings such as boredom, resentment, apathy, and hopelessness. For this activity the facilitators hand out the Harrington O'Shea Career Decision-Making System: Revised (Harrington -O'Shea, testing folder, 1995)

Exercise (Group)

Goals of Exercise – to help each participant identify clusters of interest areas.

Learning/Learner Activity

The facilitator asks the group to open the 'survey booklet' to page 5. The exercise lists 120 interest activities and each participant systematically indicates his or her feelings about each. In the box beside the activity each participant place a '2', if he or she likes the activity, '1' if he or she can't make up his or her mind, and '0' if he or she dislikes the activity. The facilitator reads each of the activities outlined in the booklet and the participants record their answers.

After all of the interest activities have been evaluated by the participants they are asked to add up the totals and place them in the interest clusters. These interest clusters include: Crafts (trades); Scientific; The Arts; Social; Business; and Office Operations (Clerical). The highest total that each participant identifies corresponds to his or her most prominent interest areas. The actual careers found within each cluster will be identified in the next stage of career planning or the 'Generating Career Options' stage.

If any participant disagrees with his or her interest areas they are encouraged to add others.

Participants are then asked to place their interest areas or clusters on their Centric Model.

Outcomes expected/Anticipated Responses – Most participants will identify at least two areas of interest or career fields as a result of the exercise. There are many careers listed in each of the clusters that may be of interest to the learners.

Estimated time of Exercise – 40 minutes

8. Labour Market

Evaluation of the labour market represents the eighth and final section of the self-assessment stage. The facilitator defines the term labour market and indicates that the group will be taken on a tour of the Labour Market Information library at AHRE's City Centre office during 'Research Stage' of the workshop. Labour market information is more a function of research than of self-assessment although it is obviously important in identifying career goals. Participants discuss their views on Alberta's labour market (unemployment rate or labour market trends, for example).

Time of discussion – 20 minutes

DEBRIEFING STAGE ONE (SELF-ASSESSMENT)

Two-way discussion on how everyone feels about the activities of the past two days and the workshop in general. Participants are invited to provide constructive criticism and make recommendations for change if necessary.

LUNCH

**DAY 5 (PM) - STAGE 2 OF THE CAREER PLANNING
PROCESS – GENERATING CAREER OPTIONS**



DAY 5 (PM) - STAGE 2 OF THE CAREER PLANNING PROCESS – GENERATING CAREER OPTIONS

The facilitator indicates that the career planning stage following self-assessment is entitled Generating Career Options. Career options are generated from the self-assessment information that each participant developed above. Participants are first asked to neatly write all self-assessment information on their poster-size Career Profiles (Centric Models) so that it is legible to others in the group. Therefore, every participant's information on values, interest areas, education, personal style, significant others, work and leisure experiences, and skills is visible to all.

Exercise A (Group) - Generating Career Options

Goal of Exercise – to assist participants to generate lists of career options.

Objective – each participant to generate at least 10 potential career options

Learning/Learner Activity

The large group is sub-divided into 3 groups of 4 participants. Each participant brings his or her 'Career Profile (with Centric Model information) to the groups and is to present the information. The participant also adds information such as: work history; education (best subjects); hobbies; general personality; and other attributes. Given this information, the sub-group recommends as many occupations as possible that seem suitable to the participant. The presenter is not to make judgments, assess the information or provide negative feedback to the sub-group. The co-facilitator or another volunteer writes down the career option list of each participant on flipchart paper and then posts the information on the wall. Each participant will end up with a list of potential jobs that are generated by the group. After the sub-groups have completed their exercise, everyone in the large group is instructed to walk about and review all participant lists. They can add more career options to their own lists if they find other interesting careers to consider. Participants can record potential career options on tape if they so desire.

Expected Outcome/Anticipated Response - Each participant walks away from the group exercises with a long list of potential careers that are to be researched.

Estimated time of Exercise – 90 minutes

Exercise B (Individual)

Goal of Activity – to generate career options

Objective of Activity – identify at least 10 potential career options using the ‘Harrington-O’Shea Career Decision-Making System.’

Learning/Learner Activity

Each participant takes the information that was previously completed on the Harrington-O’Shea Career Decision-Making System. The cluster of job categories identified as being the most appropriate for the participant (i.e. social, scientific, crafts etc.) is now matched to a corresponding lists of careers. These careers are found in the ‘Interpretive folder’ of the package. The participant then adds any careers that appear worth researching to the flipchart list that was generated by the group.

Clearly, there are other ways of adding career options to the list of careers identified by the participants. While researching one career, participants may find that they are more interested in investigating related careers and their list grows larger once again.

There were also occupations that were generated by the group during the self-assessment stage of career planning. Psychological testing results provide excellent information on a participant’s verbal abilities, auditory or visual processing capabilities, motor skills, and more. Information on these tests can help the participant focus on careers that best utilize his or her strengths.

Estimated time for exercise – 20 minutes

.....

END OF DAY FIVE

By the end of day five the participants have generated a long list of potential career options to pursue. They have documented these on their career profile sheets and/or recorded them on audiotapes. The co-facilitators debriefs the day's activities with the group and identify 'Research' as the next stage of the career planning process. It is anticipated that the participants will be highly motivated at this point of the workshop, knowing that they possess a wide variety of strengths and are suitable for many careers.

**DAY 6 - STAGE 3 OF THE CAREER PLANNING
PROCESS – “RESEARCHING CAREER OPTIONS”**



**DAY 6 - STAGE 3 OF THE CAREER PLANNING PROCESS –
“RESEARCHING CAREER OPTIONS”**

It is now time for the participants to research their many career options in order to make informed choices about which career paths to choose. It is my belief that the participants are highly motivated due to the many positive individual and team-based learning exercises they have completed. For the most part, these learners have focused on personal and career-related strengths.

Conducting extensive research is particularly important for adults with learning disabilities. Due to their learning difficulties it is essential that they investigate careers that accommodate their special learning needs as well as their skills or abilities. The sessions held on day 2 and 3 (“Learning with a Learning Disability”) allowed the participants to begin researching the disability-related accommodations available in post-secondary institutions, workplaces, and community organizations.

An entire day has been devoted to research on day 6. In the morning, participants discuss basic research methods and sources of information available in career planning. In the afternoon the learners will go on a tour of the Labour Market Information Centre at AHRE’s City Centre Office. The participants are then left on their own at the centre to conduct individual research.

Exercise A (Group) – AM

Topic – Basic Information on Researching Careers

Goals of Exercise - to discuss sources of research, methods and basic information

Objective – participant understanding of how to conduct research and where to do so.

Learning Activity - The facilitator asks the group to identify available sources of information for career planning.

Outcomes Expected/Anticipated Responses - libraries; employers; Internet; newspapers; bookstores; Internet; Apprenticeship Board; Schools; Union Halls; personal contacts; conventions; and more.

Estimated time of Exercise – 30 minutes.

Exercise B. (Group) - PM

Topic – Basic information required when researching

Goals of Learning Activity - to identify the information that one would request when conducting research

Objectives – participant identification of information required in researching their possible career options; introduction to the “Research Checklist sheet.”

Learning Activity - A general discussion takes place about the type of information that one should gather when researching a career.

Expected Outcomes/Anticipated answers - include all eight factors on the Centric Model; working conditions; salary; benefits; hours of work; labour market demand; accommodations for adults with learning disabilities; related occupations; education required; entry level qualifications; potential affect on significant others; and any other factor in a career that is important to the individual.

An example of a research checklist (below) that is available in the Career Pathways handbook is to be used as a tool for career investigations and is distributed. All participants are encouraged to consider as many factors as possible when exploring careers in order to tailor research to meet their needs.

Methods of gathering and organizing information are also discussed. Anticipated suggestions include: Index cards; notebooks; audio cassettes; simple notes; binders; contact person sheets/cards; and more.

Estimated time of Exercise = 60 minutes



RESEARCH CHECKLIST

Occupational Title: _____

Duties: _____

Source of Information: _____

Areas for Consideration

- a. Future Prospects
- b. Educational Requirements
- c. Necessary Prior Experience
- d. Salary Levels
- e. Working Conditions
- f. Location
- g. Possibilities for Advancement
- h. Level of Long Term Security
- i. Variety
- j. Responsibility
- k. Others (You may have others to add):

On a separate sheet of paper, draw two columns to list the advantages and disadvantages of this particular occupation.

(Amundson and Poehnell. 1996, p. 56)

Exercise C - Group (PM)

Labour Market Information Centre

The Labour Market Information Centre in Edmonton is introduced to the group. The centre is owned and operated by Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE). It is a tremendous source of information for all participants. The LMIC contains information on thousands of careers that is available on videos, audiotapes and in written form. Workshops are regularly held on topics such as career planning; job search; interviewing; transition to new careers; interest tests; general publications; student funding; and more. The LMIC has a help desk for persons who wish to speak to resource consultants about career and job search. The centre provides resume services, publications, and other information that are available to the public. Business directories, career planning tip sheets, and school calendars are available. Photocopiers, computers, telephones, and other forms of office equipment are available to career planners. Most of the resources are user-friendly and suitable for adults with learning disabilities.

Topic – Tour of AHRE’s Labour Market Information Centre (LMIC) .

Goals of Learning Activity – introduce participants to LMIC information and resource personnel the “Help Desk”; utilize career related information while researching their potential career options; identify additional careers to research

Objectives of Learning Activity – each participant to document information on potential careers using the ‘Research Checklist’

Learning/ Facilitator and Learner Activity –

Co-facilitators act as tour guides of the LMIC then assist each participant to gather information on their chosen career options. Participants are also left alone to utilize information. Computers are available to all participants in the LMIC for online research. A resource attendant in the centre can assist the participants with their computer needs. Participants are encouraged to record research information on tapes if necessary. They might use their Speaking Franklin Language Masters (electronic dictionary) to look up

definitions or spelling of words. As indicated previously, the participants are able to keep these devices after the workshop, courtesy of AHRE.

Outcomes Expected – Participants tailor their research to accommodate career preferences. It is anticipated that some participants will have difficulty gathering information when left alone. These participants can receive assistance from facilitators, participants or employees of the LMIC.

De-Briefing – to take place for approximately one-half hour early on day seven.

Estimated time of Exercise = 120 minutes

END OF DAY SIX

**DAY 7 - STAGE 4 OF THE CAREER PLANNING PROCESS –
DECISION- MAKING (AM)**

**DAY 7 (Late AM/PM) - STAGE 5 OF CAREER PLANNING
PROCESS – GOAL SETTING/ACTION PLANNING**



DAY 7 – STAGE 4 OF THE CAREER PLANNING PROCESS – DECISION MAKING

Making decisions can often be the most difficult of tasks for group members. In this section the facilitator stresses that career decisions are not meant to be permanent and participants should be open to change. Many factors are to be considered. Some of these have been discussed in the workshop. Sometimes individuals have difficulty choosing between one career and another. In this workshop participants are presented with a decision-making model that can be used to rank-order careers.

Exercise A (Individual)

Topic – Career Decision-Making Model

Goals of Exercise – to provide participants with a method of making career decisions.

Learning/Co-Facilitator and Learner Activity An example of a decision-making model is presented to participants. It is illustrated below. The participants are asked to compare their occupations of interest to the factors that are most important to them in a career choice (labour market demand, supports for learning disability, interests). Participants are encouraged to write down as many factors as possible on the left column of the decision-making chart in addition to the Career Pathways illustration below. For the purpose of comparison, three alternative careers are placed on the horizontal plane at the top of the grid. The participants rate each career on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 representing the most favourable choice. Totals are then added for each column. The highest total score indicates the participant's most suitable career choice. These are recorded in the participant's 'Career Profile' and on tape if required.

In the example below, as found in the 'Career Pathways' resource workbook, Employment Counsellor appears to be the most favourable choice. A group discussion follows this individual exercise and everyone states his or her most suitable career goal(s) according to the Decision-Making exercise.

DECISION-MAKING – EVALUATION CAREER OPTIONS

The career options that you listed should reflect your self-assessment findings (i.e. your unique wheel): e.g. interests, skills, personal style, values, etc. You could probably do all of these careers well, but you cannot do more than one at a time.

List the 10 factors which you would consider to be most important in evaluating these career options and in making your career choice.

Using a grid as in the example below, evaluate your career options in light of the ten factors you have listed. Along the top, place your career options, along the side, place your ten factors. Rate each career option with respect to each factor on a 5-point scale, with +5 being high and 0 being low. Total the points for each career option. For example,

	(Career Options)			
	1. Social Worker	2. Employment Counsellor	3. Counsellor in a Group Home	4. Financial Assistance Worker
(Factors)				
1. Challenge	+ 5	+ 5	+ 3	+ 2
2. Freedom	+ 4	+ 4	+ 3	+ 1
3. Flexibility	+ 4	+ 4	+ 2	+ 1
4. Use Abilities	+ 2	+ 4	+ 1	0
5. Exciting	+ 2	+ 3	+ 1	0
6. Creativity	+ 2	+ 4	+ 1	0
7. Money	+ 3	+ 4	+ 2	+ 2
8. Reward Hard Work	+ 2	+ 2	+ 1	0
9. Help Others	+ 4	+ 3	+ 2	+ 1
10. Opportunity to Travel	0	0	+ 1	0
Total Score	<u>28</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>7</u>

(Amundson and Poehnell, 1996, p. 62)

It is understood that it is quite realistic to have more than one career goal and that career goals change over a lifetime. It is also possible that individuals can still have difficulties choosing from alternative careers. If so, it may be advisable for the participant to

schedule an individual appointment with a facilitator or AHRE Career Counsellor. Re-cycling through all, or most, stages of the career planning process may be necessary to see where the participant is having difficulties and what corrective measures can be taken. It is anticipated that participants have to re-cycle through the model several times in a lifetime or whenever they explore new career goals. Participant often add as many as 30 factors to the 10 listed above in order to make their career factors as personal as possible.

Expected Outcomes - participants to identify potentially suitable career goals as a result of the decision-making exercise (and information obtained from previous stages).

Estimated Time of Exercise – 45 minutes

DAY 7 (Late AM/PM) - STAGE 5 OF CAREER PLANNING PROCESS – GOAL SETTING/ACTION PLANNING

Most participants have tentatively decided upon a suitable career goal by this stage of the workshop. It is now time to check the appropriateness of the goal. This is particularly important for adults with learning disabilities as they must determine if the goals are realistic. The co-facilitator introduces the participants to the SMARTS chart to check the appropriateness of their career choice(s).

While instructing the group on goal setting, the facilitators will use the **SMARTS** chart. It is a particularly useful acronym for checking the suitability of a career goal. The **S** represents the need for choosing a career goal that is **Specific (S)**. It is important to

identify a specific occupation rather than a career field. The career goal should be **Measurable (M)**. For example, to become a journeyman welder an individual must be indentured by a willing employer for up to 4 years and successfully complete the apprenticeship exams. Career goals should be **Achievable (A)**. If a career goal requires long-term education and the individual has no personal savings then the goal may not be achievable at the time. Participants must try and be as **Realistic (R)** as possible when goal setting. If a workshop member has a severe learning disability in reading, and is not motivated to improve in this area, then a job such as an editor may not be very realistic. It is highly recommended that career goals be **Time-targeted (T)**. A participant who wishes to become a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) by the year 2006 may have to complete one year of upgrading and a 5-month PCA program at Norquest College before entering the profession. Finally, career goals should be **Supported (S)**. Adults with learning disabilities often lack personal, financial, professional, and disability-related support while pursuing their career goals. Friends, counsellors, parents, teachers, group participants, and others can play an integral role in assisting one to succeed in a career. Financial support is often available through Alberta Learning, Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE) and Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC).

Action Planning involves listing the steps necessary to obtain a career goal. It is often too overwhelming for adults with learning disabilities to think in terms of one all-encompassing goal. However, if a participant thinks in terms of progressive, yet small steps, then he or she can be regularly rewarded for completing each step and more motivated to achieve a career goal. The example below illustrates the steps that someone

may have to complete in order to become a Personal Care Attendant. Note that these steps are progressive and time-targeted.

Adults with learning disabilities often have additional barriers to career success such as mental health or learning problems. Action planning steps can also be illustrated in which the participants identify strategies such as obtaining personal counseling, literacy training or assistance with addictions.

Exercise A (Individual)

Topic – Career Goal Suitability/Action Plan

Learning/Learner Activity

Participants are asked to evaluate a chosen career goal against the ‘SMARTS’ chart and determine whether or not their goal is suitable. They are then asked to map out the action plan steps required to achieve their career goals using the example below as a model. The participants are invited to work with another participant if they so desire. A group discussion follows and the members indicate the positive and negative experiences they encountered during the exercise. As always, the participants record their information on the poster-size Career Profile sheets and workbooks or on tapes.

NECESSARY CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPANT GOALS

S – SPECIFIC

M- MEASURABLE

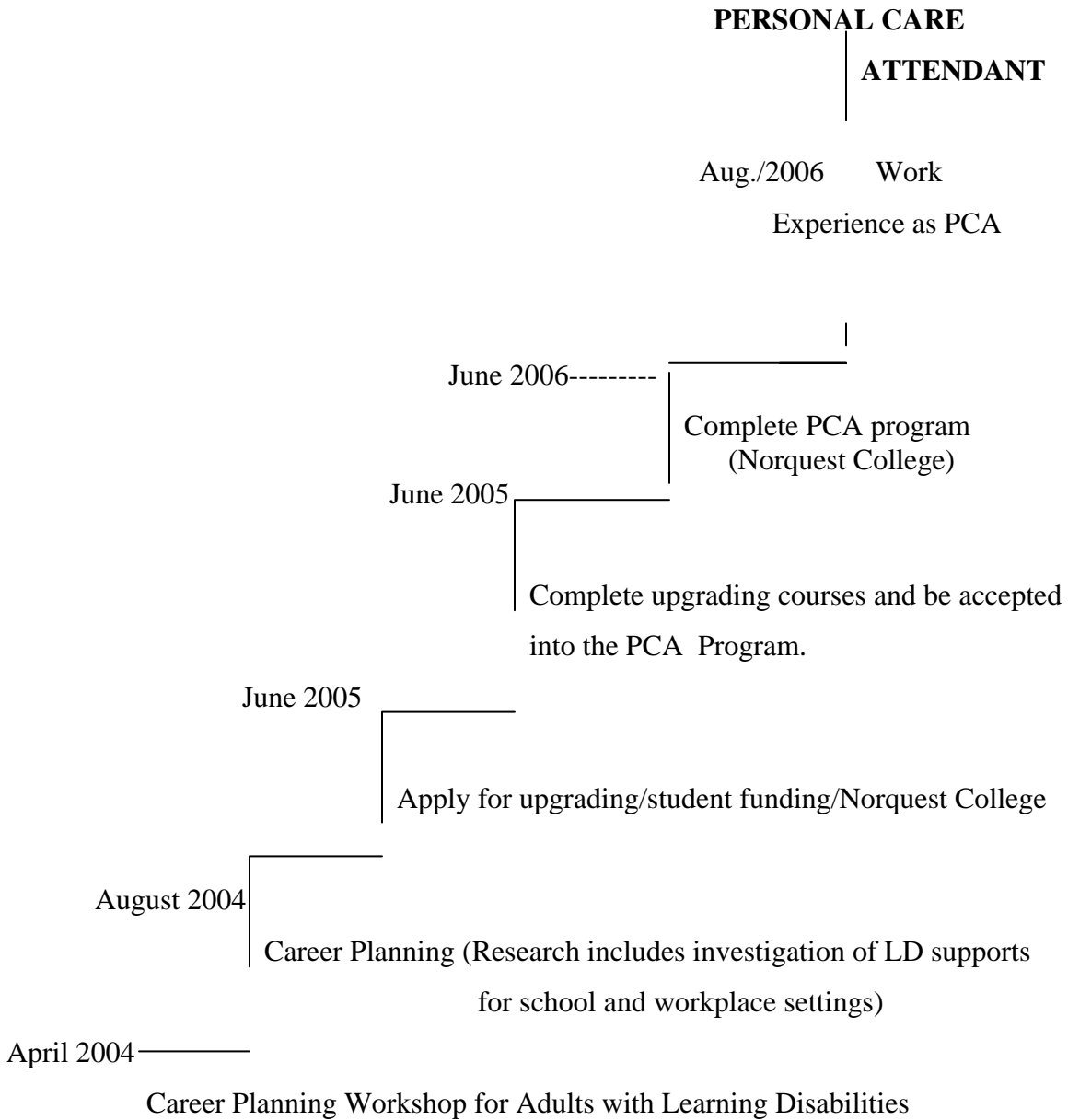
A – ACHIEVABLE

R – REALISTIC

T – TIME TARGETED

S - SUPPORTED

EXAMPLE OF ACTION PLAN FOR A PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANT



Expected Outcomes/Anticipated Responses – Each participant chooses a realistic career goal and provides an illustration of an action plan on how to achieve that goal. There may be one or two participants who find that their chosen career goal is not as realistic as anticipated. Even so, they are asked to complete the action planning exercise for practice. Undecided participants are invited to meet with the co-facilitators after class for further career counselling. A participant may have to meet with their individual AHRE Counsellors for further interventions but they have learned appropriate career planning techniques throughout the workshop.

Estimated time of Exercise = 90 minutes

.....

END OF DAY SEVEN

**DAY EIGHT – CHANCE ENCOUNTERS AND WORKSHOP
WRAP-UP**



DAY EIGHT – CHANCE ENCOUNTERS AND WORKSHOP WRAP-UP

Chance Encounters (AM)

In the morning the participants learn about the value of obtaining careers through chance encounters. Examples of chance encounters include social interactions; work experiences; traumatic events; medical changes; and general life experiences. A roundtable discussion about chance encounters and career direction takes place, followed by an individual exercise.

Exercise (Individual)

Topic - Chance Encounters and Career Direction

Goal of Exercise – participants to learn about the value of chance encounters when career planning; teach participants ways of remaining open to chance encounters in determining career direction

Learning/Learner Activity – Participants are asked to provide answers to the following questions and/or statements.

1. What chance encounters have influenced your life to date and how?
2. When have you obtained a job through unplanned chance encounters? What happened?
3. There are several ways that one can prepare for chance encounters throughout a lifetime. These include: being open-minded; developing an exploratory attitude; seeking situations that provide new and unexpected opportunities; remaining curious; staying persistent; remaining flexible to change; staying optimistic; examining career potential in every job; and taking risks. Provide an example of how you benefited by using each of these methods during your education or job history.
4. How are awareness of chance encounters and the 5 stages of career planning complimentary to one another?

Expected Outcomes/Anticipated Responses

With the linear methods of career planning that are suggested throughout the workshop participants may be a little surprised that chance encounters and career planning are discussed concurrently. For example: A participant may self-assess, generate career options, research options, make a decision and develop an action plan on how to achieve a career goal. This process is somewhat linear in that only one or two career options are identified. While it is recommended that the methods taught in the workshop be used when career planning, it is also important that participants remain open to unplanned events, personal interactions, and other chance encounters in our ever-changing world. In this segment of the workshop, participants will identify many incidences where their lives had changed due to chance encounters. They can then use the information obtained from their self-assessments, career options, and more to identify potential chance encounters that could advance their career direction.

Time of exercise – 45 minutes

EVALUATIONS AND WORKSHOP WRAP-UP

The workshop wrap-up is 90 minutes in length with facilitators available for individual consultations in the afternoon. Each participant is given the opportunity to complete his or her final version of the Career Profile sheet so that it is completed neatly and can be used as a visual tool for future career planning. A list of career and disability-related resources are also presented to the participants.

EVALUATIONS (SUMMATIVE)

a. Discussion

A round table discussion about the workshop is held to see if the workshop has met the participants' expectations. The original expectations and subsequent goals that the participants established were listed on the first day of the workshop. The participants evaluate whether or not their workshop goals and expectations have been met in the program.

b. Questionnaires

Evaluation questionnaires are distributed which can be answered individually or in sub-groups. The questionnaires contain questions such as:

1. Has the workshop met your original needs? Why or why not?
2. Were the facilitators knowledgeable or supportive of your endeavors? Explain.
3. Which of your needs did the workshop meet? Fail to meet?
4. Were your disability-related needs met during the workshop? Explain.
5. Please comment on how well you progressed during the 5 stages of career planning. Self-Assessment? Generating Career Options? Research? Decision-Making? Action Planning?
6. Did you learn more about learning disabilities and accommodations during the "Learning with a Learning Disability" segment of the workshop? Please explain.
7. How do you feel about utilizing the concepts underlying chance encounters in your career planning?
8. Would you recommend the workshop to others with learning disabilities? Why or why not?
9. Did you find the workshops accommodations adequate? Were the learning devices useful?
10. What recommendations do you have for future workshops?

WORKSHOP WRAP-UP

Certificates of completion are distributed, a closing lunch is held, and good wishes and phone numbers are exchanged. All participants are invited to contact the facilitators for further assistance and those who wish to speak confidentially to the facilitators can do so in the afternoon. The workshop is officially ended after the closing lunch.

POST-WORKSHOP PHASE

The post-workshop component of the workshop includes all activities that take place after the program is completed. Participants may return for further help or advice. Some may return to their AHRE Career Counsellors for job search assistance or funding for educational pursuits. Others may wish to consult with the facilitators about the career planning process or disability-related supports. In any case, the facilitators make themselves available to all group members. In some cases the participants and facilitators make arrangements to meet on a social or professional basis at some time in the future. This would be entirely up to the group. During this phase the co-facilitators evaluate their own impressions of the workshop including what went well and what didn't; recommendations for changes in future; and other components that they wish to discuss. The co-facilitators will have the opportunity to report their findings to the advisory committee approximately one month after the workshop.

END OF WORKSHOP

REFERENCES

Advanced Education and Career Development. (1993). *How to Research Handbook*.

Edmonton: Information Development and Marketing Branch.

Alberta Human Resources and Employment. (2003) *Alberta Careers and*

Employment. Alberta Careers: An Update. Edmonton: Alberta. People, Skills and

Workplace Resources.

Alberta Human Resources and Employment web site. The People and Workplace

Department. Retrieved December 1, 2003 from

<http://www3.gov.ab.ca/hre/aboutus.asp>

Alberta Learning. (2003). *Unlocking Potential: Key Components of Programming for*

Students with Learning Disabilities. Retrieved on December 2, 2003 from

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/specialneeds/unlock.asp

Amundson, Norman E. Westwood, Marvin. Borgen, William. Pollard, Diane. (1989).

Employment Groups: The Counselling Connection. Ottawa: Lugus Productions.

Amundson, Norman E. (1996). *Career Pathways: Second Edition*. (in association

with Human Resources Development Canada). Richmond, British Columbia: Ergon

Communications.

Calgary Learning Centre. Retrieved December 1, 2003 from

<http://www.calgarylearningcentre.com/>

Child and Family Canada. *Fact sheet Statistics on Students with Learning Disabilities.*

Retrieved December 1, 2003 from <http://www.cfc-efc.ca/docs/ldac/00001132.htm>

Cookson, Peter S. and Rothwell, William J. (1997). *Beyond Instruction: Comprehensive Program Planning for Business and Education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Cookson, Peter S. Editor. (1998). *Program Planning for the Training and Continuing Education of Adults: North American Perspectives.* Malabar, Florida; Krieger Publishing.

Department of Justice Canada. (2002). *Employment Equity Act. Purpose of the Act.*

Retrieved online November 15, 2003 from

<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/E-.401/48801.html>

Finger, Mathias & Asun, Jose Manuel. (2001). *Adult Education at the Crossroads.*

Learning Our Way Out. London and New York: Zed Books.

Garratt, Bob (1991) in Cookson and Rothwell's *Beyond Instruction:*

Comprehensive Program Planning for Business and Education(1997). p. 119. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Government of Canada, (2002). *Persons with Disabilities 5.4, Hirings*. Retrieved

November 15, 2003 from http://info.load-otea.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/workplace_equity/leep/annual/2002/2002annualrep10.shtml

Harrington, Thomas F. & O'Shea, Arthur J. (1995). *The Harrington-O'Shea Career Decision-Making System Revised*. Toronto: PSYCAN.

Kast, Freemont, and Rosenzweig, James. (1974) in Cookson and Rothwell, (1997). *Beyond Instruction: Comprehensive Program Planning for Business and Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kenyon, Rochelle. (2003). *Bridges to Practice. Facts and Statistics on Learning Disabilities and Literacy. Statistics. P. 15*. Retrived November 15, 2003 from <http://www.floridatechnet.org/bridges/factsandstats.pdf> .

Kerka, Sandra. (1998). *Adults with Learning Disabilities* in ERIC Digest 189. Retrieved December 1/2003 from <http://www.ericfacility.net/ericdigests/ed414434.html>

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada. (1999) *Destination Literacy: Identifying and Teaching Adults with Learning Disabilities*. Willowdale, Ontario: Grass Roots Press.

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (1992). *All About Us: Adults with Learning Disabilities*. Video.

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada. Retrieved on April 1, 2003 from <http://www.ldac-taac.ca/>

Learning Disability association of Canada (LDAC). *LD indepth – LD Background: Statistics*. Retrieved on December 1, 2003 from <http://www.ldac-taac.ca/english/indepth/bkground/stats01.htm>

Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario. (2002). *About Learning Disabilities*. Retrieved on November 10, 2003 from http://www.ldao.on.ca/about_ld/adults/adobst.html

Lerner, Janet. (2000). *Learning Disabilities: Theories, Diagnosis, and Teaching Strategies (Eighth Edition)*. Boston; Houghton Mifflin Company.

LaRosse, Mayda (2004). *Job Accommodation Network (2004): Jan: Work-site Accommodations Ideas for Persons with Learning Disabilities and/or Attention Deficit Disorder*. Retrieved on January 31, 2004) from <http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu/media/LD.html>

Mumford, Earl (2001). in Stein, Janice. 92002). *The Cult of Efficiency*. Niagara Falls, New York: House of Anansi Press Ltd.

National Occupation Classification (NOC) (2001). Retrieved on March 14, 2004 from <http://search.yahoo.com/search?p=NOC+2001&fr=fp-tab-web-t&n=20&fl=0&x=wrt>

Olson, Lynn. (1997). *The School to Work Revolution: How Employers and Educators are Joining Forces to Prepare Tomorrow's Skilled Workforce*. Preface. Pg. Vii. Reading Massachusetts: Persus Books.

Print Master Software. (2002). *Workshop photos*. Edmonton: Broaderbund Properties. Companion Software.

San Francisco State University (2000). *Envisioning Our Second Century: Context for Planning*. Retrieved December 1, 2003 from <http://www.sfsu.edu/strategicplan/append.htm>

Statistics Canada (2004). *Latest Release from Labour Force Survey*. Retrieved on March 14, 2004 from <http://www.statcan.ca/start.html>.

Stein, Janice. (2002). *The Cult of Efficiency*. Niagara Falls, New York: House of Anansi.

Stearns, Sharon. (1995). *Career Planning for Adults with Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorders*. Retrieved November 15, 2003 from <http://www.netacc.net/~gradda/wi95care.html>

Strydom, Dr. Janet. (2000). At the Crossroads (Chapter 6) in *The Right to Read*.

Retrieved November 15, 2003 from <http://www.audiblox2000.com/book6.htm>

Sufflebeam, Daniel (1975) in Cookson & Rothwell (1997). *Beyond Instruction: Comprehensive Program Planning for Business and Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.