



CONNECT

Strategic Alliances

**Canadian Colleges and Essential
Skills in the Workplace:
Working with the Community**
Cégep de l'Outaouais



Findings

- Increase in number of registrations from newcomers in college programs (fast track)
- Increase in referrals to the practice firm from labour partner *Emploi-Québec*
- Increase in number of mandatory French immersion classes for newcomers



Challenge

Integration of newcomers into the community is possible by:

- Increasing awareness among employers
- Promoting skills to demonstrate the capacity of newcomers to contribute to businesses
- Developing tools for the evaluation of the target group's skills
- Providing efficient tools to show employers the array of skills that this group has to offer



Our Answer to the Challenge

- Selection of target group based on the expertise developed through practice firm: O'Bois International
- O'Bois International: focused on skills for the workplace and daily life integration
- Firm receives increased number of requests from skilled newcomers seeking employment for the first time in Quebec and in Canada
- Creation and refinement of tools to support target group
- Goals of simulated commercial activities: update knowledge, apply acquired professional skills, and facilitate job search



Selected Essential Skills

1. Oral Communication
2. Document Use
3. Thinking Skills

The 3 ES were selected following discussions with the practice firm, the Canadian Practice Firm Network and the consultant for French immersion classes at the Cégep de l'Outaouais.



Participating Colleges

➤ Early Childhood Care and Education Programs:

- Collège Gérald Godin, Sainte-Genève, Québec
- Cégep Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Brossard, Québec
- Cégep de Sainte-Foy, Sainte-Foy, Québec

➤ Practice Firms:

- The Practice Firm & ELSA for the Workplace, Douglas College, BC
- O'Bois International, Cégep de l'Outaouais



Participating Businesses

- O'Bois International has established a network of employers who have already demonstrated an interest in the project.



Tool Selected

Self-evaluation grid (pre- and post-training) allows for the:

- Identification of the desired job
- Identification of specific tasks and of the level of competency required
- Positive positioning of candidates toward prior professional experiences
- Identification of opportunities to improve ES in a program or in training
- Presence of a practitioner to encourage improvement and acquisition of ES



Validation Steps

- Development of a bilingual Practitioner's Guide
- Presentation of a bilingual Participant's Guide
- Tool testing with target group
- Modifications
- Validation of approach with employers
- Adding ES in an official report card



Expected Results

- Partners' concerns
- Best practices
- “Skills Assessment”
- Bilingual awareness tools*
- Validation of the assessment
- Users' feedback
- Bilingual Participant's Guide (assessment, self-evaluation grids and practice firms' appreciation)
- Presentation and dissemination of results

** Tools are adapted to each college's situation*



Future Use for the Tool

- Integration of approach in other college programs
- Integration of approach in the practice firm during the 16-week training program
- Eventually expand to the 6 other Essential Skills



Tool Versatility

- Based on National Occupational Classification
- Adaptable to any listed and documented occupation
- Useful to all types of clients
- Useful to validate progress in job search
- Develops work related vocabulary
- Gives confidence to learners
- Allows objectivity in progress evaluation of learners



Lessons and Recommendations

- Project based on real findings and real practices
- Employers support a successful working relationship with participating colleges
- Previous successful projects support future innovative projects

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