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ABSTRACT

This training guide provides materials for a workshop for professionals in the adult literacy field. Broad purposes of the workshop are to improve adult literacy services in order to reduce illiteracy and to develop collaborative strategies involving employers at the community level in adult literacy activities. A content outline is accompanied by left-hand margin trainer suggestions. Worksheets are provided as necessary. Topics include current adult literacy problems, challenges, and progress in the community; help needed and help available; a review of the two purposes of the workshop; and community collaboration competencies overview. These six competencies are considered: inventory influential employers and other community organizations; enhance collaborative potential of employers and other community organizations; be persuasive in developing collaborative adult literacy activities; prepare adult literacy action priorities; facilitate and implement collaborative adult literacy activities; and monitor, assess, and improve the quality of local collaboration for adult literacy. The final activity of the workshop is a summary of what was learned and its usefulness. (YLB)

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IMPROVING COMMUNITY COLLABORATION FOR ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMS IN MARYLAND

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A TRAINING GUIDE

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The National Institute for Work and Learning (NIWL), a private, tax exempt, not-for-profit corporation, seeks to improve the relationships between institutions of work and of learning; to facilitate linkages between education and work for youth and adults; and to bring the supply of and demand for critical skills into better balance.

The means to these ends have taken a variety of forms, including: research, pilot programs, case studies, policy studies, information networking, and technical assistance.

While the means vary, a common thread runs through all NIWL undertakings: the pursuit of collaborative efforts among employers, educators, unions, service organizations, and government to resolve work and learning problems. The development of collaborative processes at local, state, and national levels has been a consistent focus of the Institute since its creation in 1971.

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1. What Have We Learned?
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PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

Trainer suggestions

- Host introduces trainer
- Welcome to our workshop: "Collaboration with Employers for Adult Literacy Action in Maryland"
- I am _____ _____

  I work for _____

  My work responsibilities bring me to adult literacy issues from a particular perspective:_____
- Introduce facilitators for small group discussions

Identify and orient group facilitators before meeting; stress neutrality and time-keeping roles for them. Facilitators should avoid being drafted as small group reporters.

- I'm here today because the Maryland State Department of Education, and especially the Department's Adult and Continuing Education Branch, has been pursuing a strategy designed to increase the attention paid, and resources devoted to, adult literacy issues. You are undoubtedly familiar with the basic concerns and facts related to the current state of adult literacy:

  -- A society of ever increasing sophistication, where written instructions are the key to success on the job, as a parent, as a consumer. Yet a society where at least 13 percent of the adult population (about 20 million people) is functionally illiterate. The facts will vary from community to community.

  -- A society where school reform is a major issue, where governors and employers are realizing that the limits of economic development are set in part by the communication and computing skills of workers, yet where school systems still have not found a way to retain and motivate, on average, 25 percent of the school population to the point of earning a high school diploma.

  -- A society where 5 percent of young adults can not read even at the fourth grade level and where about 20 percent are functionally illiterate at the 8th grade level.

- I am here, and we are here, in part because the Congress of the United States and the Executive Branch believe literacy is a national priority and continue to support the States in finding better ways of reducing adult illiteracy.

- So we can say the broad purposes of this workshop are two:

  -- Improve adult literacy services to reduce illiteracy.

  -- Develop collaborative strategies involving employers at the community level in adult literacy activities, because experience has shown that LEAs and literacy providers can not do the job alone.

Re Worksheet 1:

Even if everyone present knows each other, it is important to change the mood of the meeting from socializing to professional task attention.

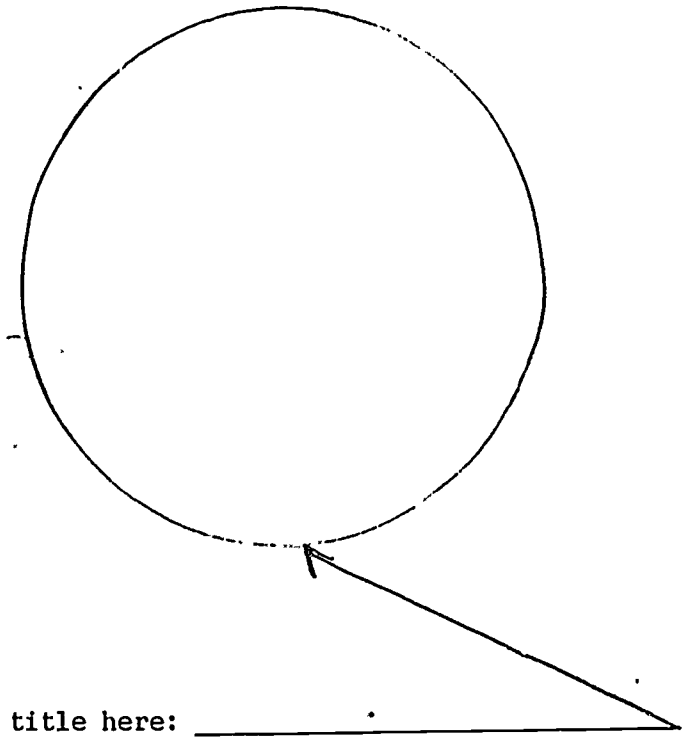
- And a special purpose: To help you improve your effectiveness as professionals in the adult literacy field. Now let's find out who you are. Please use Worksheet 1: "Welcome to Our Workshop".

WORKSHEET 1: WELCOME TO OUR WORKSHOP:
"IMPROVING COMMUNITY COLLABORATION FOR ADULT LITERACY"

I. Your First task: Use the circle below (it is really a map of your table) to write names and job titles of your circle-mates as they take no more than two minutes each to answer three quick questions:

1. My name and title
2. What brings me here
3. What I would like to know by the completion of this workshop

Just three minutes each, please. There will be plenty of time later to explain and discuss in more detail.



Your name and title here: _____

II. Current Adult Literacy Problems, Challenges, and Progress in Our Communities

Our second task involves another effort to gather information from your table-mates. There is no need to go around in order; feel free to alternate as people are ready to talk.

A. The topic: current adult literacy problems in our communities. What are the key literacy problems and challenges in your areas as you see them?

Ground rules:

1) Your group will be asked to report its summary of problems and challenges to the entire workshop group.
2) We only have 30 minutes now and everyone should talk.
3) Your group should select one member who will take notes and report to all of us later.
4) Select another person to serve as timekeeper, and hold each person to a maximum of 5 minutes until everyone has made his/her comments.
5) Focus on issues in your own community. Avoid national issues.

A problem is phrased as a complaint: "Oh boy, do we have a problem finding a place to teach reading near the shopping mall."

A challenge is phrased as a puzzlement: "How do we find a place near the mall where we can teach reading?"

The group summary report should be framed by four themes: problems, challenges, good news (progress), and summation. (See Worksheet 2: Four Themes)

Reports: Now let's hear from the reporters for each group: Who are you?

Use flip chart to note main points reported

Problems

Challenges

Good News/Progress

Summarize Summaries: Range of information as well as consensus

Summary ratings of perceptions of local adult literacy programs: Please make your reports concise.

Ask:
Is employer involvement a significant factor in your "good news" story?

Worksheet 2: Four Themes (from problems to progress)

1) The really important adult literacy problems in our communities are:

1a) To what extent are employers already involved in responding to these problems?

- o Significantly and on a sustained basis _____
- o Occasionally _____
- o Not at all _____
- o Don't know _____

2) The really important challenges for adult literacy in our communities are: (What really is difficult and what would really help in resolving these problems?)

3) What is the good news about adult literacy programs in your part of Maryland? Is there any particular progress about which you are especially proud? Summarize the important points.

4) o On a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), how do you feel about the status of adult literacy programs in your community? _____

o Through the eyes of others in your community, how do you think most people feel about adult literacy programs? Again use a scale: 1 (low), 10 (high). _____

III. HELP! Is It On The Way? (Discussion)

1. Building on your analysis of problems, challenges, and progress to date, we can look at three questions that can help point adult literacy activists toward the future:

   o Do we need more help in building and implementing effective adult literacy programs?

     Yes: ___
     No: ___
     Why: ___

   o What important help do you think employers could provide that would make a difference for adult literacy efforts in your communities?

     -

     -

     -

     -

   o Where can we find this help and the resources needed?

   o Is there an appropriate role (or roles) for local employers? If so, what?

     Now let's take a look at the next worksheet. (See Worksheet 3: Help Needed and Help Available)

Worksheet 3: Help Needed and Help Available

Kinds of Help Needed	Potential Sources of Help					
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						

IV. Reviewing the Purposes of this Workshop

1. Time to review the purposes of this workshop in light of the facts and opinions identified about ourselves and our communities.

1a) Purpose #1: To improve adult literacy services

Problem: Experience shows it is not enough to train someone to be a literacy instructor and expect that that is enough to get the job done.

Too many other factors (or needs) are at work, including the needs to:

-- Develop awareness
-- Develop individual motivations
-- Organize supportive coalitions
-- Develop adequate resources
-- Deliver quality services
-- Recognize people who have accomplished significant goals
-- Develop the policies of local, state, and national organizations, both private and public.

Are these categories comprehensive?

Let us compare the worksheet list of needs with these categories of adult literacy activities, and see where the group's emphasis is.

The kinds of help you said were needed in your communities: (e.g. tends to be primarily help in the areas of resources and delivery of services to illiterate adults...)

Compare these needs to the seven categories above: Have we left something out? Why?

Basic point: When we talk about needs and resources for adult literacy programs, we should think in comprehensive terms and look around for the variety of ways businesses, unions, community organizations, and individuals can assist us and themselves.

1b) Purpose #2: To develop collaborative strategies

There are always costs and disadvantages as well as benefits and advantages in working, or trying to work, with other people and organizations.

It is useful, I think, to put these varieties of relationships under a general heading: Collaboration. Working together.

2. What do we mean by collaboration? Is it good or bad?

Collect group responses on a flip chart; let group discuss variety of feelings and approaches possible.

- o How does the word make you feel?
  - Some people feel shamed, as though they were Vichy French collaborating with the German occupying army in World War II.
  - Other people feel great, as though they were Richard Rodgers collaborating with Oscar Hammerstein, or Paul McCartney with John Lennon, to produce great music.
- o Good or bad, there is a common theme: achieving your own goals by working in close partnership with other folks who are achieving their goals. Goals can differ. But if you go into collaborative ventures with your eyes wide open to what those other goals are, then you are dealing on a level of enlightened self-interest rather than manipulation.

3. A few words about types of institutional collaboration: (see handout chart for discussion):

- o Bilateral or multi-lateral collaboration
- o External or internal collaboration
- o Targetted or comprehensive collaboration
- o Individual or organizational collaboration
- o Superficial or profound collaboration

No one type is better or worse than another. The criteria for what constitutes good or bad, better or worse, are entirely pragmatic: does a particular type of collaboration fit the values and needs of the participants? Or put it another way: does it work? Are people pleased with the results? Are the results seen as significant?

4. A few words also about the underlying principles, or SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) for collaborative ventures:

- o Voluntary
- o Multi-organizational leadership
- o Converging but independent goals
- o Shared responsibility for results and process (not merely "advisory")
- o A formal agenda with identifiable tasks
- o Leveraged resources
- o Strategic thinking (i.e. looking beyond the present task to future relationships and tasks)
- o Performance oriented
- o Patience needed to assure that good results flow from a good process routed in basic consensus

- o Here's a difficult concept: If performance and results are central to collaboration, how can the mere satisfaction of the collaborators be more important than observable results?

  One example: By itself, a workshop on literacy, even a successful workshop, does not make a real dent in adult literacy problems. But if the workshop's sponsors are, for example, a collaborative planning group of employers, educators, union leaders, CBOs, and PIC staff, then the chances are that this group will want to build on its incremental success.

  In essence: the process of collaboration is more important than the product.

  What this really means: Producing South Pacific and Oklahoma and a whole series of Broadway classics was more important to Rodgers and Hammerstein than any single hit song.

  We said: improving adult literacy services is the goal. Are we now saying: feeling good about literacy is more important than improving services? No!

  All we are saying is this: A comprehensive adult literacy strategy is best achieved one step at a time; starting with people and organizations where they are now and bringing them along as best you can; not always knowing what the next day will bring; but knowing when you can count on others to help out.

- Your job as a professional for whom improvements in adult literacy services are a constant priority: to look and plan ahead in the midst of today's details so that you can see the possibilities of different activities, and different consequences.

  The rest of the exercises in this workshop should help to sharpen your skills as a play-maker for local collaboration for adult literacy activities.

5. What this workshop is NOT

   - Not curriculum development
   - Not building awareness of literacy issues
   - Not suggesting ways of involving employers in job placement activities -- a quick way to ruin your credibility with employers.

   You could say this is an exercise in creative listening: what are those other folks really thinking and saying?

Handout Chart For Discussion

TYPES OF COLLABORATION

- Bi-lateral or multi-lateral (Two parties or more than two?)
- Internal or external (Parts within an organization or between organizations?)
- Targetted or comprehensive (Focussed on handicapped youth, fcr example, or on the young adult population generally?)
- Individual or organizational (Working through personal/peer relationships or involving formal leaders and policies?)
- Superficial or profound (Dealing with bake sales for literacy, for example, or grappling with complex community needs and politics?)

SOME PRINCIPLES OF COLLABORATION

- Voluntary
- Multi-organizational leadership
- Converging but independent goals
- Shared responsibility for priorities, implementation, and results
- Formal agenda with identifiable tasks
- Leveraged resources (Using one activity/donation as the vehicle for gaining other resources)
- Strategic thinking (Having a vision of a "good" system so that you know where you want the program to go and each step suggests next steps)
- Performance orientation (Getting something done about which your collaborative group can be proud)
- Patience for the "right" process

PART TWO

V. Community Collaboration Competencies Overview

HALF-DAY

Competency 1. Inventory Influential Employers and Other Community Organizations
Worksheet 4

Competency 2. Enhance Collaborative Potential of Employer and Other Community Organizations
Worksheet 5

HALF-DAY

Competency 3. Be Persuasive in Developing Collaborative Adult Literacy Activities
Worksheet 6
Worksheet 7
Worksheet 8
Worksheet 9

Competency 4. Prepare Adult Literacy Action Priorities
Worksheet 10
Worksheet 11

HALF-DAY

Competency 5. Facilitate and Implement Collaborative Adult Literacy Activities
Worksheet 12
Worksheet 13

Competency 6. Monitor, Assess, and Improve the Quality of Local Collaboration for Adult Literacy
Worksheet 14

Competency 1: Inventory Influential Employers and Other Community Organizations

LEARNING OBJECTIVE	Develop an inventory of community organizations and leaders involved in adult literacy activities in your community.
ACTIVITY	Examine your perceptions of organizations, leadership, and activities potentially important for collaborative adult literacy projects, using your own community as reference.
FEED BACK	Gather additional information from people in each community sector--education, business, labor, community services, government--and compare your initial analysis to the perceptions of others.

List the names of the organizations in your community most active with or most concerned about the status of adult literacy services. (This list should be your baseline. As you work through the learning experiences, add additional organizations, names of contact persons, telephone numbers, and comments as you obtain new information. Over time you will have a more complete list to serve as a personal directory to people, organizations, resources, past projects, and "background" insights essential to any collaborative planning for adult literacy projects.)

Once you have taken a first cut at Worksheet 4a move on to Worksheets 4b, 4c, and 4d. List community organizations according to the key adult literacy functions each performs.

Based on what you know about the organizations you have listed, fill out the right hand column of the worksheets. Don't worry if you leave blank spaces because you don't know enough about a particular organization. Fill in the blanks as you learn more about them.

Worksheet 4(a): Inventory Influential Employers and Other Community Organizations in Your Community

Local Organizations	Key Contact People	Telephone Numbers	Present Status of Adult Literacy Programs and Linkages
Employer Associations/ Groups:			
Influential Large Employers:			
Influential Small Employers:			

Summary Assessment: (Describe with a few key words the reputation of this sector as you perceive it. Are there individual exceptions to the general reputation? How are this sector's current adult literacy efforts affected by these perceptions and reputations?)

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION FOR ADULT LITERACY IN MARYLAND

Worksheet 4(b): Inventory Influential Labor Organizations in Your Community

Local Organizations	Key Contact People	Telephone Number	Present Status of Adult Literacy Programs and Linkages
Labor Councils:			
Influential Public Sector Unions:			
Influential Private Sector Unions:			

Summary Assessment: (Describe with a few key words the reputation of this sector as you perceive it. Are there individual exceptions to the general reputation? How are this sector's current adult literacy efforts affected by these perceptions and reputations?)

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION FOR ADULT LITERACY IN MARYLAND

Worksheet 4(c): Inventory Local Education Organizations

Local Organizations	Key Contact People	Telephone Number	Present Status of Adult Literacy Programs and Linkages
Secondary Schools:			
Postsecondary Institutions:			

Summary Assessment: (Describe with a few key words the reputation of this sector as you perceive it. Are there individual exceptions to the general reputation? How are this sector's adult literacy efforts affected by these perceptions and reputations?)

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION FOR ADULT LITERACY IN MARYLAND

Worksheet 4(d): Inventory Influential Community Organizations

Local Organizations	Key Contact People	Telephone Number	Present Status of Adult Literacy Programs and Linkages

Summary Assessment: (Describe with a few key words the reputation of this sector as you perceive it. Are there individual exceptions to the general reputation? How are this sector's current adult literacy efforts affected by these perceptions and reputations?)

Worksheet 4(e): Community Organizations Listed by the Strengths They Can Contribute to Adult Literacy Efforts

Using the list of organizations compiled in Worksheets 4(a-d), allocate those organizations according to their active involvement in adult literacy functions listed below. "Active" may mean either providing services to others in the community, or actively providing adult literacy services to its own members and/or clients. The organization, in other words, should be recognized as having some expertise in at least one functional area, whether or not that expertise has been made available for collaborative purposes. For a few examples of each function, look ahead to Worksheet 7 (page 25).

- o General Awareness
- o Motivating individuals
- o Building Coalitions
- o Developing Resources
- o Delivering Literacy Services
- o Providing Recognition of Achievements
- o Developing local/state/national strategies & policies

Competency 2: Enhance Collaborative Potential of Employers and other Community Organizations

LEARNING OBJECTIVE Identify barriers to, and assess opportunities for, the participation of key sectors and organizations in joint planning and action for improved adult literacy services.

ACTIVITY Identify key organizations that will participate in a collaborative adult literacy program in your community.

FEED BACK Talk to people in these organizations. Compare your analysis to their viewpoints.

Step 1: For each sector, select one organization whose participation you consider absolutely essential for that sector to take a successful part in a community adult literacy program.

Step 2: Write the name of one organization at the top of Worksheet 5. (Notice that there are multiple copies of Worksheet 5. Use a separate one for each organization.) Based or what you know now about that organization, fill in the major sections (A-F) of the worksheet. Have you considered in each case the organization's various roles: as a provider of literacy services to its members and/or clients? As an employer of young people and adults? As a source of civic and political leadership in the community? As a source of philanthropy and of volunteers?

Worksheet 5: Enhance the Collaborative Potential of Employers and Other Community Organizations

Name of Organization _____

Section A: State concisely at least three reasons why participation by key leaders and/or staff of this organization is essential for improving adult literacy services in your community. Use "because" statements.

o Because

o Because

o Because

Section B: Major obstacles to participation of this organization in collaborative adult literacy activities may be:

1.

2.

3.

Section C: Potential motivations, needs, and pressures that tend to favor this organization's participation in adult literacy activities may be:

1.

2.

3.

Section D: Actions that could be taken within this organization to reduce these barriers may include:

1.

2.

3.

Section E: Actions that could be taken within this organization to enhance these positive factors may include:

1.

2.

3.

Section F: What are some actions that your organization could take which might assist the target organization to give more consideration to its possible participation in collaborative adult literacy activities? (Use "if...then..."statements)

o If

o If

Worksheet 5: Enhance the Collaborative Potential of Employers and Other Community Organizations

Name of Organization _____

Section A: State concisely at least three reasons why participation by key leaders and/or staff of this organization is essential for improving adult literacy services in your community. Use "because" statements.

o Because

o Because

o Because

Section B: Major obstacles to participation of this organization in collaborative adult literacy activities may be:

1.

2.

3.

Section C: Potential motivations, needs, and pressures that tend to favor this organization's participation in adult literacy activities may be:

1.

2.

3.

Section D: Actions that could be taken within this organization to reduce these barriers may include:

1.

2.

3.

Section E: Actions that could be taken within this organization to enhance these positive factors may include:

1.

2.

3.

Section F: What are some actions that your organization could take which might assist the target organization to give more consideration to its possible participation in collaborative adult literacy activities? (Use "if...then..."statements)

o If

o If

PART THREE

Competency 3: Be Persuasive in Developing Collaborative Adult Literacy Activities

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Estimate the relative importance of adult literacy activities in comparison to other goals of employers. Develop appropriate rationales showing how improved literacy activities contribute to the achievement of basic employer goals.

ACTIVITY: After assessing the relative importance assigned by employers to other issues, develop rationales designed to create greater employer commitments to collaborative adult literacy programs.

FEEDBACK: Compare your analyses and rationales to the viewpoints of other observers.

By now you should have a reasonably well-detailed understanding of the current "scene" in your community, including: major factors, major programs, extent of current linkages (informal and programmatic), and major obstacles to more effective services. Use your notes and insights to assist you in preparing a written rationale for business and other employers. Follow the instructions in Worksheets 6, 7, 8, and 9.

When developing your analysis of the relative importance of adult literacy activities in proportion to other interests, do not forget two key points: (1) regardless of individual motivations, organizations have priorities that must be taken into account. An effective rationale provides organizational legitimacy for individual action; (2) regardless of an organization's official position or apparent self-interest, an individual with strong interest in human resource development can cause an organization to play a more active role in community affairs than might normally be the case.

Worksheet 6: Adult Literacy in Relation to Other Employer Priorities

A. From what you now know, try to estimate the relative importance of adult literacy activities in comparison to all other categories of institutional concerns on the agendas of each sector in your community. Even if you know of single organizations that are exceptions, try to focus on the predominant point of view.

Use the scale below: 1 indicates a top priority; 10 indicates a concern so low that it does not even qualify as a "priority"; 5 indicates a concern of sufficient importance to receive top-level attention from time to time.

Literacy Sub-groups	Rating (Adult Literacy Priority)	Comments
Young Adults	Hi 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Lo	
Displaced Workers	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
New Immigrants (ESL)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
School Dropouts	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
AFDC Mothers	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	

Other: _____

B. On a separate piece of paper, quickly list topics that you think would have a higher priority than adult literacy in the minds of leaders of each community sector. Then prepare a similar list as it might be written by persons in each sector who are personally responsible for directing human resource and career development programs.

Are the persons responsible for adult literacy issues and programs likely to find their natural allies inside or outside their organizations? Where in their organization and outside are allies most likely to be found?

Can you identify plausible connections between adult literacy issues and other issues that are higher priorities for leaders of major sectors in your community? Why should these leaders pay attention to your requests for participation? How will participation benefit them and their organizations? How much will participation cost them and their organizations?

C. If you had an opportunity to persuade one key leader from each of the major community sectors to identify possible collaborative projects for the improvement of adult literacy services, what would you say? Prepare an outline (or full script) for your presentation. Use worksheets 7, 8, and 9 to help shape ideas.

D. Present your case as a mock inteview, discussing the validity of your points and likely objections that might be raised. In order to practice the mock interviews, try to find another person who is in fact familiar with the perspective of the sector in question.

Throughout this rationale development process, keep in mind the main features of your target organization: its type (e.g., bank, manufacturer, local government agency, etc.), size, current and expected economic condition, types of skills required of managers and employees, extent of training programs in-house, types of human resource problems, leadership position in the community, and other essential factors.

Worksheet 7: WHAT IS AN "ADULT LITERACY ACTIVITY"?

How can local employers be helpful to local adult literacy programs and practitioners? By participating in adult literacy activities, of course. That is, by doing something, rather than nothing.

But just what can an employer do? How can an employer best be involved in adult literacy activities? The answer will vary from employer to employer and may change from time to time. Finding the type and level of activity appropriate to a specific employer at a specific time takes skill and experience.

Here are some ideas. An employer can...

o... build public AWARENESS of adult literacy problems by...
(Example: for a local adverting agency: writing and helping to place public service announcements aimed at adult learners, their families, literacy volunteers, employers.)

o... help MOTIVATE employees and prospective employees to deal with their literacy problems by...
(Example: working with local chapters of personnel directors and career counselors to make career counseling services more accessible for all employees.)

o... help build COALITIONS of organizations to address adult literacy problems in the community by...
(Example: sponsoring meetings on literacy among employers and top executives of education and social service organizations; assessing extent of local literacy needs and resources.)

o... help deliver effective adult literacy SERVICES by...
(Example: seeking professional help to assess literacy needs within an organization and develop an action plan for services or for voluntary assistance to others outside the organization.)

o... help develop RESOURCES for adult literacy programs by...
(Examples: donating meeting space or office equipment, designing and/or printing of brochures, hosting receptions and coordinating marketing plans; reorganizing office/program management systems.)

o... help provide RECOGNITION for individual and organizational achievements in the field of adult literacy by...
(Examples: preparing news releases, organizing annual dinners, securing graduation speakers, providing certificates and/or prizes.)

o... help develop local/state/national STRATEGIES and POLICIES...
(Example: assuring that local branches and "home" headquarters are communicating about literacy issues, are in touch with national business and/or education groups involved in literacy action such as BCEL - Business Council for Effective Literacy.)

Worksheet 8: Suggested Format for Draft Rationale to Persuade Community Leaders to Participate in Adult Literacy Activities

Community Sector: _____

Name of Sector Leader: _____

Name of Leader's Organization: _____

A. Brief description of the importance of adult literacy concerns in the thinking and actions of these persons (cite evidence for your statements):

B. Brief descriptions of activities already being implemented in this leader's organization:

C. Problems faced by this organization that you think deserve attention from an adult literacy services perspective:

D. Outcomes/results that might be produced by a well-designed and well-implemented project(s) built on concepts which aid collaborative planning.

E. Specific examples of the kinds of projects that might benefit the leader's organization directly and indirectly.

F. The level of effort (time, funds, people) that would be required from the leader's organization in order to test the feasibility of the project ideas and, if feasible, to implement those projects.

Worksheet 9: Collaboration With Employers For Adult Literacy

Purpose: To develop rationales (arguments) that will persuade local employers to work with you on adult literacy activities. Keep specific employers in mind.

1. I think your company/organization should be actively involved in adult literacy activities because:

2. I think your company/organization should be actively involved in adult literacy activities because:

3. I think your company/organization should be actively involved in adult literacy activities because:

4. I think your company/organization should be actively involved in adult literacy activities because:

Competency 4: Prepare Adult Literacy Action Priorities

LEARNING OBJECTIVE Integrate the tasks of team selection and agenda building.

ACTIVITY Select the right people to be on your collaborative team and identify the initial agenda and its intended results.

FEEDBACK Compare your plans with questions asked in this exercise and with the opinions of other well-informed persons in your community.

Worksheet 10: Adult Literacy Functions of the Community

Based on what you know at present about adult literacy services in your community, assign values and concise comments to each of the seven functional areas listed below. For numerical ratings:

1 = excellent
2 = mostly adequate
3 = weak

Adult Literacy Program Function	General Availability	General Quality	Accessibility to Target Populations	Comments
General awareness	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	
Motivating individuals	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	
Building coalitions	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	
Developing resources	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	
Delivering literacy services	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	
Providing recognition	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	
Developing local/state national strategies and policies	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	

SUMMARY:

In which functions are the needs for service improvements greatest?

Which functions appear to exhibit the greatest strengths on which to build successful new initiatives?

What kinds of small, inexpensive improvements are suggested that might lead to more basic types of improvements further down the line?

From the perspective of individuals seeking assistance, where might closer inter-organizational coordination and collaboration make significant differences in the delivery of adult literacy services?

Which needs for improvement would be most difficult to tackle at this time? Why?

Worksheet 11: Matching Priorities, Opportunities, and Needs

Step 1: Identify no more than ten people (from a variety of organizations) who you expect will discuss openly why and how their organizations would consider participating in a collaborative adult literacy project. (If you can not identify at least five such people, you should do more work on Competency 1.) List these people below according to their organizations. Then list no more than three literacy related action priorities.

Step 2: Using your information on Worksheets 4a-e and Worksheet 5, as guidance, try to create "plausible opportunities" that connect individual needs with institutional priorities. If you can describe these opportunities with brief project titles, list those titles under the "opportunities" column.

Organization/Key Name:	Their Priorities:	Plausible Opportunities:
Education:		
o	o	o
o	o	o
o	o	o
Business:		
o	o	o
o	o	o
o	o	o
Labor:		
o	o	o
o	o	o
o	o	o
o	o	o
Community Service:		
o	o	o
o	o	o
o	o	o
Government:		
o	o	o
o	o	o

PART FOUR

Competency 5: Facilitate and Implement Collaborative Adult Literacy Activities

LEARNING OBJECTIVE	Distinguish between and explain differences in key roles that make the collaborative process succeed in community adult literacy programs.
ACTIVITIES	Examine different types of collaborative roles and how to use these roles for greatest effectiveness in a community adult literacy program. Select organizations and people with whom you want to work.
FEEDBACK	Ask colleagues to give their own assessments of which organizations and people to involve and how best to recruit them to literacy activities.

FACILITATE AND IMPLEMENT COLLABORATIVE ADULT LITERACY ACTIVITIES

Background Reading for Trainers

Every collaborative project places different demands on the skills of both the team of people responsible for project design and implementation and the other leaders and staff of collaborating organizations.

On Being A Buffer

Anyone who initiates and is responsible for contacts between organizations is acting as a buffer between two or more social systems. Each social system -- whether a school, bank, union, or government office--has its own history, mission, internal politics, special strengths and special problems, and its own way of doing things and relating to others. It takes special attitudes and interpersonal skills to work in this buffering environment. Effective organizations place a high value on people who can hear and see hidden cues, and help "outsiders" understand the needs and opportunities that exist for cooperation.

These special skills can be described in many ways. For purposes of discussion we have identified four sets of behaviors: facilitator, broker, catalyst, and manager. Undoubtedly these roles are not mutually exclusive. But just as they should help to distinguish types of individual behavior, they can also be used to distinguish different roles that members of a collaborative team can play.

Broker Role

The broker is a familiar role. We have power brokers, stock brokers, food brokers, and marriage brokers. The go-between concept is equally crucial to collaborative education-work projects. In all settings the go-between hopes to find the conditions that will permit two parties to strike a deal. But the broker in community collaboration is not finished when the deal is made. Projects need to be constantly monitored and nurtured. In effect, the deal is made and remade, week after week in some instances. The broker may be one of the few people who can really speak all the "languages" being spoken.

In a brokering activity, the team or its individual members act as mediators, arbitrators, or agents for other organizations and persons by various means, such as by initiating topics for mutual involvement, by helping others to understand and negotiate for themselves possible working patterns, or by intervening at critical points to help other organizations resolve problems or find needed resources. Acting in this role, a team may or may not receive recognition (publicly or privately) and may or may not be a participant in the programmatic relationships eventually established.

Catalyst Role

The catalyst role is by definition a subtle influencer of events. Only people close to the real action may be aware that the catalyst, whether an individual or a collaborative action team, played a key role in making things happen. The key point may be simply asking the right question of the right person at the right time, or making the right suggestion. Being a catalyst can be a negative as well as a positive experience; being the "fall guy" for a bad move may help someone save face and re-enter the collaborative game.

In a catalyst activity the team or its individual members initiate discussions (formal or informal); research other projects, programs or interventions; and eventually precipitate a process or event involving other organizations and individuals in similar or related activities.

The initiatives taken by other organizations and persons may be replications of, improvements on, or simply in competition with the initiative of the team. It is very difficult to document the fact that the team's initiative was a critical factor in the stimulation or modification of behavior. But that's what being a catalyst is all about.

Facilitator Role

In a broad sense, "facilitator" is simply another word for helper, someone or a group who helps things happen. But a narrower use of the word is intended here, emphasizing the objectivity and impartiality of the person or group who does the helping. This narrower meaning is implied when you visualize the facilitator at work. This means observing the facilitator helping the person do something that he or she wants to do but cannot do at that moment without a bit of outside help. The facilitator's assistance is crucial, yet also marginal. The person or organization being helped could almost do the task without external help; the will is there, but the know-how is a bit short.

In the sense, facilitation may be provided without collaboration being the result. The person or agency helped may now feel perfectly able to go off on its own. Or the agency may now feel capable of working with other organizations without the aid of further third party, intermediary assistance. Ideally, the facilitators are delighted to have worked themselves out of a responsibility and to be free to move on to other tasks. They are pleased because their objective awareness of needs tells them that the whole point of helping was to get an organization to the point where it could act on its own.

Manager Role

Being a manager is the most visible of the roles, if only because the manager is identified publicly, or at least within the group, as the person in charge. Managers are important as official spokespersons, as articulators of consensus, and as taskmasters responsible for holding projects on course and on schedule. Managers, by being visible, can as easily find themselves taking undeserved flak as taking unearned credit. Simply being able to take and deflect all this public attention and knowing when and how to share it are heavy responsibilities.

Managers are frequently described as decision makers, people who know how to bring closure to research and discussion and move on to the next step. There are all types of decisions, and some managers do not so much make decisions as direct the process by which decisions are made by others.

Being the "out front" person or group and being held accountable for decision making is a demanding role. It helps to be well-informed, to have many channels of formal and informal information, to be adept at determining people's personalities and hidden agendas, and to have a well-tested sense of timing and of power. In collaborative situations some institutions are always stronger than others. But strength can be derived simply from having the least to risk in a particular activity and therefore being the most willing to take chances. The manager must understand these political aspects of collaboration and be able to build upon varieties of vested interests to achieve the final result.

Worksheet 12: Picking a Preferred Role for Yourself

Using the definitions of key roles--facilitator, broker, catalyst, and manager--describe cases in which each role could prove most effective in developing organizational support for adult literacy projects.

Use examples from your own experience, focusing wherever possible on projects designed to assist individual learners. Explain the consequences of using alternative roles in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each role. Describe situations in which each of these roles might prove ineffective.

Reviewing again the definitions of the four roles, identify which role(s) are most comfortable for you. Which have you used most frequently? Which would you prefer to avoid?

Do you think you should be the person to initiate a collaborative team in your community? Would your chances of success be greater if you were more "behind the scenes" assisting someone else? Would you be better off encouraging another person in your organization, on in another organization, to take on the programmatic responsibility of initiating a collaborative activity?

How is your thinking on these questions influenced by (1) your organization's place in the community? (2) your own place in your organization? and (3) your own personal style of working with people?

Worksheet 13: Select the right organizations and people.

This activity consists of four steps:

Step 1: Review Worksheet 4 in Competency 1. You may want to revise that listing so that it can serve as a more accurate summary of current services available in your community. Restrict your list to those providers offering the bulk of services or to those whose participation in a collaborative program would be most necessary.

Step 2: Turn to Worksheet 11 (Functions of the Community). The simple analysis should indicate whether all the work done thus far on organizational perspectives about barriers, opportunities, and rationales is roughly congruent or noncongruent with services as experienced by individuals needing assistance. A generalized, informed assessment of the availability and quality of adult literacy services will help focus attention on an initial agenda.

Step 3: Worksheet 12 is designed to reveal appropriate matches between the needs of individuals, the priorities of organizations, and opportunities for action.

Can you identify possible projects that satisfy these three constraints: (1) fill a gap in services important to individuals, (2) fill a need deemed important by key organizations and leaders in principal community sectors, and (3) appear to reasonably present opportunities? Do some sectors (or leaders and organizations within these sectors) appear to be excluded from participation in action opportunities? How essential is the participation of each key organization or sector at this time?

Step 4: Finally, contact the right people in these key organizations. Check out their interests and other responsibilities. Invite their suggestions. Invite them to participate.

Competency 6: Monitor, Assess, and Improve the Quality of Local Collaboration for Adult Literacy

LEARNING OBJECTIVE Identify, anticipate, and cope with the systems of success or danger in the community collaborative process

ACTIVITY Itemize things that could go wrong or right at each step of the community collaborative process. For each statement, identify signals that might have preceded the actual major event and corrective actions that might have been applied.

FEEDBACK Compare your list to the questions provided on page 39.

Anticipating Consequences

When we assess collaborative projects (and all projects for that matter), we should be concerned with both process and outcomes. Hopes and expectations have a tendency to exceed results in all new undertakings. So we look for a process that enables people to do their best with the resources at hand. Then the outcomes can be judged in proportion to the resources and the quality of the effort.

Getting from here to there as a collaborative program requires a clear sense of plausible cause-and-effect relationships: if such-and-such happens, then so-and-so will occur. Working backward from desired effect to possible causes is also essential: if we want so-and-so to happen, then we should first try such-and-such. Figure 1, by diagramming a flow of plausible (if ambitious) events, helps us anticipate both opportunities and problems.

Readers familiar with PERT charts used to schedule complex tasks such as the preparations for a space shuttle launch or the marketing of a new detergent will find these logic diagrams far more informal. Time lines are loose, sequences imprecise.

But here we are trying only to sort out possibilities and troubleshoot our assumptions about the ability of organizations and people to make and follow through on commitments. Thus, the diagram exercise is also an opportunity for creative design. As new people, resources, and ideas arrive on the scene, our logic path diagrams should help us determine whether and where they might fit.

Worksheet 14: Develop a Project Logic Chart

This activity consists of three basic steps.

Step 1: Examine the chart for Worksheet 14. This is a diagram of the logic path for a hypothetical collaborative adult literacy project.

Step 2: Now construct a similar logic chart for at least one of the potential adult literacy projects you identified in Competency 4 Worksheet 11. Remember, the boxes in the main left-to-right axis of the logic chart represent events performed by groups of individuals and/or organizations. The arrows between boxes represent the influences of specific events on subsequent events. In other words, event A is at least a partial (but probably major) cause of event B.

Select a relatively simple project for your first chart, then a more complex project for a second try.

Step 3: Analyze the linkages on your diagram and the detailed conditions under which those linkages will be successfully accomplished. Worksheet 14 has a series of analytic questions that can be asked at any point in the flow of events. The answers to these questions will have to describe behaviors of one or more participating groups. The results of this analysis should be two lists of performance indicators: indicators of progress and indicators of problems.

QUESTIONS FOR LOGIC PATH ANALYSIS

(See Chart for Worksheet 14)

People questions:

- Who has a vested interest in seeing this event succeed? Who has a vested interest in seeing the next step succeed? Why?
- Would anyone benefit from seeing the project fail? Why?
- Are the right people included? Are the right people excluded?
- Is the activity being initiated at the appropriate organizational level? How was the appropriate level selected?

Process questions:

- Were all important bases touched before decisions were made?
- Were the opinions of the client group actually gathered, or were they inferred from past experience of providers?
- Were resources adequate for the activity?
- Is feedback information available at each stage?

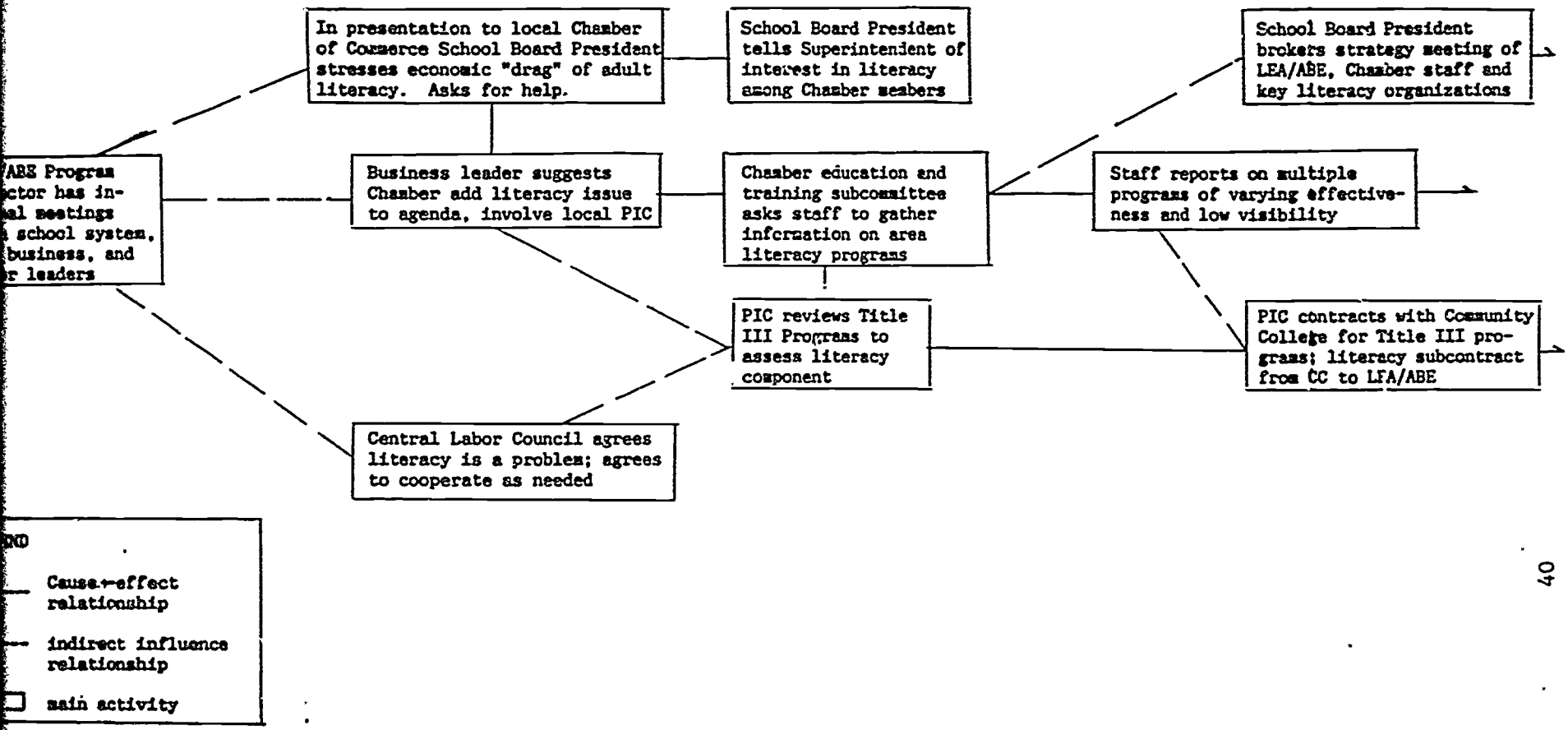
Logic questions:

- Were alternatives considered? What was learned from considering alternatives and why were they rejected?
- What backup activities are available if this event proves disappointing?
- Does the plan seem rational and achievable to major participants?
- Are go/no-go points present and can alternative directions be introduced at those points?
- Are the events and resources in proper proportion to the task?

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION FOR ADULT LITERACY IN MARYLAND

CHART FOR WORKSHEET 14

LOGIC PATH FOR COLLABORATIVE ADULT LITERACY PROJECT



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VI. Workshop Summary: What Have We Learned?

1. What Have We Learned?

	Pre Workshop Need	Post-Workshoop Need
Competency 1:		
Inventory Influential Employers and Other Community Organizations	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Competency 2:		
Enhance Collaborative Potential of Employer and Other Organizations	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Competency 3:		
Be Persuasive in Developing Collaborative Adult Literacy Activities	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Competency 4:		
Prepare Adult Literacy Action Priorities	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Competency 5:		
Facilitate and Implement Collaborative Adult Literacy Activities	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Competency 6:		
Monitor, Assess, and Improve the Quality of Collaboration	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Overall Assessment: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. How useful will this be: questions and discussion

o How useful was this workshop for you?

o When do you expect to use what you've learned?

o How will you know if what we have done here is useful to you?

o How can the Maryland State Department of Education remain informed and helpful on adult literacy matters?