

# Successful Employment Series

*Madeline Rosinsky, Barb Beystrom*  
Associate for Workforce Education, Adult Academic Instructor  
Winnetka Adult Academic Program

The Successful Employment Series consists of five eight-hour courses designed to provide learners with specific job-related skills. This practice was implemented in response to learner request and with input from the Business Partnership Council, a learning exchange between local businesses and the Robbinsdale Adult Academic Program. The targeted audience is adult ESL and adult ABE learners. The main goals are to teach learners how to find a job and retain it as well as teach skills that may enable learners to advance within a job. The curriculum is based on CASAS competencies.

The five sources are 100% attendance and demonstrated attainment of skills in order to receive a completion certificate to add to a resume. In the beginning of the series, each learner is given a three-ring binder with plastic sleeves to separate course handouts and to hold certificates of completion. In addition, a course summary of each class is included in the binder. This binder becomes a portfolio that can be shown to prospective employers.

The breakdown of the five courses is as follows:

## *Introduction to Workplace Technology*

- Understanding computer vocabulary
- Keyboarding
- Using the internet and email
- Using basic tools and equipment including phones, copiers and fax machines

## *Communicating Effectively in the Workplace*

- Speaking confidently with co-workers and supervisors
- Working cooperatively as a member of a team
- Respecting and adjusting to a diverse workplace
- Following directions, clarifying and responding to feedback
- Giving and responding to criticism
- Reporting work progress and problems

### *Reading and Writing on the Job*

- Interpreting and writing work-related correspondence
- Recording information on forms, charts and checklists
- Documenting workplace activities
- Understanding safety signs, manuals and procedures

### *Understanding Basic Principles of Getting a Job*

- Dealing with obstacles to employment
- Conducting a job search
- Assessing own skills
- Understanding job requirements and skills
- Completing job applications
- Writing resumes

### *Preparing a Successful Interview*

- Preparing oneself and one's materials
- Presenting one strengths
- Responding to questions
- Convincing the employer of ability to do the job
- Following up appropriately
- Participating in a role-play interview

### Tips for implementation of the *Successful Employment Series*:

- Distribute sign up sheets and promote each course two weeks before the course begins.
- Give learners personal reminders before the course begins.
- Courses should be limited to 20 participants and broken into English ability groups.
- Courses should be repeated throughout the year to provide the opportunity for learners to take the complete series.
- If a program is year-round, offer shorter summer courses of three weeks instead of four.
- Build course curriculum around CASAS competencies.
- Encourage learner input to the curriculum.
- Curriculum summaries should be kept in a central location for other instructors to use.
- One person should be put in place to oversee implementation of the series.
- Require perfect attendance in order to receive certificates.
- To maintain enthusiasm, offer courses on an on-going basis without breaks in between.
- At the end of each course, place course summary and certificate in the same sleeve.

This series improves an ABE program by focusing on workplace specific information. Individual classes may be repeated and additional classes or courses may be added to the series at any time. Possible expanded courses could include:

- Workplace Math
- Problem Solving
- Time Management (prioritizing tasks)
- Leadership Skills (Workplace Styles inventory, discussion-leading skills)
- Presentation Skills (influencing, negotiating)

The response to these courses has been greater than anticipated and expansion of the series is certain to continue into the future. The *Successful Employment Series* is completely replicable and the costs are not more than instructor time and classroom materials.