

An Integrated Learning Model for Workforce Development



CEDEC

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About CEDEC

As a global thinker and local actor, CEDEC is a trusted leader in exceptional collaborative and integrative action that helps communities to unleash and leverage their creative potential by pioneering government, community and private sector collaboration.

These mutually beneficial partnerships create forward-looking businesses, expand trade, future-proof jobs, up-skill workforces, and ensure that communities are resilient and have the opportunity to thrive.

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What does an Integrated-Learning Approach Look Like?

An Integrated-Learning Approach is a community-centered strategy that works with job seekers who have skills development needs and who are interested in advancing their careers in locally-available employment opportunities. Close collaboration between **community organizations**, **education providers** and **local employers** is essential to ensure the job seekers get a custom-training experience that will provide them with the skills they need to perform tasks on the job.



Community organizations



Education providers



Local employers

The Importance of Building Strong Relationships

Collaborative projects can experience many positive outcomes; however, they can also experience their fair share of challenges. Building strong working relationships with project partners will ensure a solid foundation, based on respect, understanding and trust, that will carry you through any difficulties that may arise. The nature of this work depends on strong collaboration, clearly defined objectives, established roles and responsibilities. This can take time to put into place; however, it is time well invested.



Feedback from the employer partner expressed that the biggest success from their perspective was the creation of a strong, positive relationship with the local Kebaowek community.

The relationship kept the project moving forward when challenges arose. The employer partner and the community partner shared common objectives, communicated regularly and worked as a team.



Look for the tips icons for Lessons Learned during CEDEC's pilot project

CEDEC's Integrated-Learning Pilot Project

From 2017-2019, CEDEC sought out and worked with community, educational and employer partners to develop a collaborative integrated learning model to deliver training in employability, customer service and second-language skills. The goal was to prepare adult students to have better skills alignment with local job opportunities in the tourism sector and to generate a model that can be reproduced in other sectors in Canada.

CEDEC worked closely with community partners in both Kebaowek and Gesgapegiag to identify potential participants that needed help to integrate or re-integrate into the local labour market. Next, a private sector partner with employment opportunities was found and finally, an education partner was identified to bridge the gap between the participants and the labour market by providing appropriate curriculum content.

These partners came together with a CEDEC co-ordinator to form a Steering Committee, which led the project from start to finish.

CEDEC's first cohort in Kebaowek, Quebec, followed Francization (French second-language) training that incorporated a work placement at Opémican Park, a new national park that is operated by the Société des établissements de plein air du Québec (Sépaq). Sépaq was looking to fill eight positions at the park, including a receptionist, trail maintenance workers and park wardens. Since the park was located on traditional Algonquin territory, Sépaq wanted to partner with the Algonquin people of Kebaowek.

CEDEC's second cohort was in Gesgapegiag, a Mig'Maq community located in the Gaspésie; this cohort was enrolled in a customer service program offered by the Government of Quebec's Ministry of Education and Higher Education. This program incorporated work placements, Mig'maq culture and language, mental health and French second-language training. In seeking to increase its capacity to offer tourism services, the community of Gesgapegiag identified six potential employers that would benefit from developing its local workforce; these included the Heritage Interpretation Centre, The Lobster Hut, The Cache and the Chalets de l'Anse Sainte-Hélène.

Each cohort had a tailored training program, designed with the intention of meeting the specific needs of the students and local employers.

Additional partners joined in the process of developing these programs. They acted as advisors and played an important role in the design of the training program. The success of integrated learning programs is based on partnerships between private, public and civil society sectors, which is essential in moving forward.

This process guide captures the ideal steps you will need to complete in order to create an integrated training program.



Visit:
https://youtu.be/wSITM_oVDhU

Getting Started

Before you can get started with an integrated-learning approach, there is groundwork to be done!

If you're ready to tackle some of those questions, CEDEC's online resource, [The Capacity Exists Toolkit](#), might be a good place to start. This toolkit illustrates and outlines basic strategies to initiate community engagement by identifying the skills, assets, resources and opportunities embedded within a community.

Once you've started the discussion, this current process guide will support you in continuing the groundwork. While this process guide outlines the steps it remains just that: a guide, a roadmap. As with all journeys and projects there are unexpected bumps and changes, successes and challenges along the way. This guide offers a glimpse of several challenges and successes lived through CEDEC's pilot project as examples of how a situation played out.

The groundwork takes time and energy and will likely include some steps forward and some backward. It's essential to have the right stakeholders around the table and, at a certain point, to formalize discussions, commitments and plans together. To do that means entering into formal partnership with organizations, institutions and companies in order to develop an action plan.

This guide tackles program design considerations in the section on "Organizing Your Integrated-Learning Project".

Once you've arrived around the table with invested stakeholders – or partners, there are discussions to be had and decisions to be made that will enable you and your team to build a solid foundation upon which to advance your project.

Consider the following questions:

- Have you clearly identified a need or challenge in your community around worker training?
- Have you found others (including local businesses, public officials and community organizations) who see the same challenge as a priority?
- Is everyone interested or, better yet, invested, in seeking a solution?
- Have you begun collecting information about what's already happening in your community or elsewhere to solve a similar challenge?
- Have you a clear idea of the resources available to you to solve the challenge?
- What does success look like for you, for other members of the group?
- Can you find common ground?
- What additional constraints and commitments must be considered?
- Will you need to seek outside funding to develop and manage your project?
- Who will be responsible for sourcing it and reporting on progress?



Expect to spend upwards of six months on identifying the information and partners you need to get this type of project started.