

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE PROFILE COACH'S MANUAL



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INTRODUCTION

THE COACH'S MANUAL

This manual is to help a coach or support person assist participants in completing the Skills and Knowledge Profile (SKP). Start by reading the Profile. Use this Manual as background information and resource material to assist participants who require support. Each section in the Manual corresponds to the headings from the SKP. There is space for 'coach's notes' at the end of each section. You might note difficulties people have in filling out that section, or might reflect on what helps people connect to their experience.

THE ROLE OF THE COACH

The Coach's role is to help people:

- re-think what learning is and record, in a systematized way, the skills and knowledge they have gathered over the years in non-formal or informal settings rather than in formal, institutional learning environments
- identify approaches and questions to clarify issues for participants

ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO FILL OUT A SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE PROFILE

Many of us underestimate how much we know, particularly the skills and knowledge gained in our daily life. We've learned from organizing and scheduling our children's activities, coaching a sports team, experimenting with

computer graphics, or building a deck in the backyard. This Skills and Knowledge Profile will help identify the wide range of skills and experience people already have.

Many of the things people need to know to do their work are not treated as valuable skills. Research has shown that as people become familiar with a job, they often adapt or invent better ways of doing things. A new worker learns this knowledge from a co-worker. Often this kind of learning, skills development and innovation, has gone unacknowledged.

Through the process of completing the skills and knowledge profile people may:

- Gain more self-confidence by realizing how much they have already learned.
- Identify the skills they have that are not tied to one particular job, but are 'portable' or 'transferable' to future employment.
- Recognize skills for improved income and greater employment security.
- Make better use of what people already know.
- Improve access to formal education and training.
- Identify gaps in knowledge and skills and plan how to fill them.
- Help unions, community groups or employers make better training decisions.

VALUE OF THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE PROFILE TO ORGANIZATIONS

Community organizations or unions may use it to:

- find out what people need from training programs.
- determine what skills and knowledge are available in the community; build a Skills Exchange

Community colleges may use it to:

- make more comprehensive and fairer assessments of people applying for entrance into study programs.
- ensure that the courses currently being offered match the learning expectations of workers.

Employers with the permission of the worker may use it to:

- develop better job descriptions
- ensure salaries reflect what people know

(Note: activists point to the potential for misuse by employers to de-emphasize seniority and/or to argue for multi-skilling of workers.)

Section A. PERSONAL INFORMATION

WHAT THIS SECTION IS ABOUT

Points to stress:

- establish clearly whether people want to keep their SKP personally, fill it out anonymously to help an organization plan, or share their results with others.
- people may choose not to answer any question that makes them uncomfortable.
- this section provides demographic information regarding who is completing the SKP, of interest to any organization promoting its use.

COACH'S NOTES

Section B. COURSES OR WORKSHOPS

WHAT THIS SECTION IS ABOUT

'Non-formal learning' is learning that goes on in structured educational settings but which does not result necessarily in publicly recognized credentials. Formal education usually takes place in public institutions while non-formal learning happens in places like the union, community groups, employer or employee organizations and private institutions such as exercise clubs or religious groups.

The examples given in the SKP should be enough here to clarify the concept of non-formal learning.

COMPLETING SECTION B.

The options in the SKP are intended to be a fairly comprehensive list. Encourage participants to read all these options and choose as many as they like that relate to their experience. Ask people to then list any other courses they may have attended in the OTHER category.

When people have finished their list they will pick three courses and answer the questions in the SKP. The questions are:

The questions are:

What was the course?

What was it about?

Who offered the course?

How long was the course?

What I learned?

Here is an example to help participants expand on the three courses they choose to describe in more detail.

What I did?	Teamwork course
Where and how long?	Neighbourhood House (my workplace)/12 hours
Why I took it?	To learn different approaches to decision making and to learn different ways of organizing teams
What I learned	Consensus decision making, ways to handle conflict, how to give and receive feedback, ways to evaluate and monitor the work of the team.

To answer the question "How I learned" participants are asked to select from a list of options.

COACH'S NOTES

Section C. PERSONAL INFORMAL LEARNING

WHAT IS IN THIS SECTION?

This section focuses on what is meant by informal learning, learning that occurs outside the classroom or the workplace. This learning is usually not recognized by any certificate. It happens in everyday activities, personal projects, and life challenges.

Here are a few examples of personal informal learning.

Participation in groups

People attend union, community or church meetings on a regular basis. Through this they use or improve their skills in communication such as listening or public speaking.

On the curling team

Members of a curling team organize a tournament. They use or improve their skills in setting team schedules, recording results and working cooperatively to complete the task.

Wiring the cottage

Working with a friend to do the wiring in a cottage uses or improves a range of skills including electrical wiring, choosing the appropriate tools, and the safety procedures involved in electrical work.

COMPLETING SECTION C

Work through the example cited in the SKP, cooking for a large family, to make sure everyone understands the steps required. There are four sections; family work, volunteer activities, recreational activities or hobbies and major events. In each section participants select as many choices as relate to their own lives and experience. Then, in each section people are asked to expand on some of the activities they chose. They do this by analyzing their experience in the following categories.

What was it about?

Who offered the course?

How long was the course?

What I learned?

In the category entitled “What I learned” participants are asked to reflect on and record both skills and knowledge. You may find that people have difficulty naming their skills and some support is required.

Encourage the respondents to talk about the activity in order to define the learning that has occurred. It might help to suggest that people ask themselves these questions.

“What did you need to find out before you could do the job or activity well?”

“What did you do or know at the end of the process that was new?”

In the category entitled “How I learned” you might use the following examples to discuss different learning styles and methods.

reading books, magazines, catalogues

watching T.V., videos, films

listening to speakers or lectures
structured discussion groups or seminars

observing others

talking to family and friends,
neighbours, co-workers

practice, trial and error, repetition

An example under Recreational Activities and Hobbies is:

What was it about?

Gardening

What I learned

Recognition of plants and flowers;
how to plan a garden, growing seasons

How I learned

Watching gardening shows, talking to
neighbours, reading seed catalogues

COACH'S NOTES

Section D. JOB- RELATED INFORMAL LEARNING

WHAT THIS SECTION IS ABOUT

This section is also about “informal learning”, but this time it is the workplace that is the site of the learning.

You might stress the following points:

This is not a resume. This is an opportunity to record all the skills and knowledge needed to get a job done.

Many of these skills would be learned ON the job through coaching from co-workers, watching someone else do the job, or trying new ideas to improve the job or the system.

COMPLETING SECTION D.

Review the example of the bookkeeper to ensure participants understand the steps they will go through to complete this section.

Step 1 Job title and length of time

Participant writes the job title and a short description of the task or process. This includes approximately how long they were or are on that job.

Step 2 Skills learned

Most of us have trouble naming our skills. There is a list of skills to choose but ask people to keep in mind that this is not a final list and there are MANY more. You might add other examples.

Step 3 How you learned

The SKP uses an example of how John and Anne learned to use the computer program, Windows.

After reviewing all the steps, people are ready to complete this section.

Tell people to use the back of the form if more room is needed.

Additional questions you might find useful to help people move through this exercise are:

- What problems or difficulties were overcome while doing each job?
- How was the problem resolved?
- What were the results?

COACH'S NOTES

Section E. FUTURE LEARNING PLANS

What This Section Is About

At this point participants should be ready to think about future plans and how to apply the learning from the SKP. This might also be an opportunity to reflect on further skills development for work or personal reasons.

COMPLETING SECTION E

Question 1
This question encourages people to think about their own personal employment or career plans for the next five years. What are the options? Where will there be new or growing job opportunities? Where will job opportunities be lost or decreasing? You might help the individual use that information in developing their own employment plans.

Question 2
You might note that different courses can be taken through different organizations so people can check for various options.

Question 5 to 7
This lists some ways employers, unions and training programs can help participants continue learning. You might want to encourage people to reflect on what kind of program best suits their learning style.

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COACH'S NOTES

Section F. COMMENTS ON THE PROFILE

What This Section Is About

This section is intended to gather feedback on the SKP itself and the experience of participants in filling out the form. The information may be used by a training program, a workplace, or a community group in deciding whether to continue using the SKP, and how to get the most value from it.

COMPLETING SECTION F

You might encourage people to comment both on what helped them and what didn't and why. You might gather specific suggestions for improvement. Here is an example of both a not useful and a useful comment.

Not useful: 'the questions were too complicated'

Useful: 'Question #1 on page 12 had too many parts to it. It would have helped me if it had been broken down into two questions'.

You might also want to take this opportunity to record your own suggestions about the SKP and the Coach's Manual.

COACH'S NOTES

Section F. COMMENTS ON THE PROFILE

1. Was it easy to complete the profile?

2. What would have helped make it easier?

3. What would you suggest to improve it?

4. How useful did you find completing this Skills and Knowledge Profile in:

- reflecting on what you have done?
- planning what you might do next?

Section F. COACH'S COMMENTS ON THE PROFILE

1. Was it easy to complete the profile?

2. What would have helped make it easier?

3. What would you suggest to improve it?

4. How useful did you find completing this Skills and Knowledge Profile in:

- reflecting on what you have done?
- planning what you might do next?

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REFERENCES:

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Skills

Cooking

Community

Job

Practice

Knowledge

Reading

Gardening

Computers

The project co-ordinators were Karen Lior, formerly Executive Director, ACTEW, and D'Arcy Martin, Union Educator. Project Researchers were Anne Morais, Toronto, Peter Sawchuk, Toronto, and Priti Shah, Vancouver, British Columbia. The Skills and Knowledge Profile and Coach's Manual are available from:

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The cost is \$25.00 for single copies of the Skills and Knowledge Profile with the Coach's Manual, \$100 with the two videos. For rates on multiple copies and permission to reproduce contact the two sponsoring organizations.