

ESI

Essential Skills Investigation

First Nations, Inuit and Métis Essential Skills
Inventory Project (FIMESIP)

Case Study:



ESI: Essential Skills Investigation
DVD Media Toolkit



Canada

This project is funded by the
Government of Canada's Office
of Literacy and Essential Skills



About the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Essential Skills Inventory Project (FIMESIP)

The Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) in partnership with Employment and Social Development Canada's Office of Literacy and Essential Skills, the Assembly of First Nations, the Métis National Council and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami developed a comprehensive inventory of Essential Skills initiatives aimed at First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. The *First Nations, Inuit and Métis ES Inventory Project's (FIMESIP)* goal is to better understand the state of practice with respect to Essential Skills initiatives tailored to First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth and adults living in diverse communities throughout Canada and to share these insights and lessons learned with a larger community of practice. Through FIMESIP, we have identified factors ("markers" of promising practice) that contribute to the initiatives' success.

CCDF gratefully acknowledges the support of the Steering Committee and Working Group of FIMESIP:

The markers, inventory, case studies and evaluation toolkit are available at: www.fimesip.ca.

CCDF gratefully acknowledges the support of the Steering Committee and Working Group of FIMESIP:

Steering Committee

David Boisvert, Métis National Council
Maria Wilson, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
Lu Ann Hill-McDonald, Assembly of First Nations
Bryan Hendry, Assembly of First Nations
Shareef Korah, Employment and Social Development Canada

Working Group

Kim Fraser-Saddleback, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies
Wayne Zimmer, Seven Generations Education Institute
Lizzie Aliqatuqtuq, Nunavut Arctic College
Cindy Cowan, Nunavut Arctic College
Guido Contreras, Rupertsland Institute
Sonya Howard, National Association of Friendship Centres

FIMESIP Case Study: ESI: Essential Skills Investigation, DVD Media Toolkit

©The Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF), 2014

The FIMESIP project was funded by Employment and Social Development Canada's Office of Literacy and Essential Skills.

About the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF)

CCDF is a non-profit organization that works to advance career services and the capacity of the profession to respond with empathy and skill to their clients and stakeholders in an ever-changing work environment. CCDF is a nationally and internationally recognized leader in the field of career development and works on a range of projects and specializes in areas of:

- **Applied Research:** Creating an evidence-base for the outcomes of career services and interventions;
- **Policy Consultation:** Bringing policy makers and service providers together to develop policy that is attuned to the realities of service provision in the field;
- **Training:** Developing and delivering training courses for a range of practitioners aligned to the competencies set out in the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners;
- **Resource Development:** Making career products that respond to client and practitioner needs;
- **Service Capacity Building:** Working with diverse partners to enrich and strengthen career services and to integrate career, community, economic and workforce development.

The Canadian Career Development Foundation
119 Ross Ave Suite 202, Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 0N6 Canada
Toll-Free: 1-877-729-6164
Tel: (613) 729-6164 Fax: (613) 729-3515

www.ccdf.ca



Overview

The Essential Skills Investigation (ESI) DVD originated from a desire to find a unique and entertaining way to make people aware of Essential Skills (ES) and how and why they are important. The ESI DVDs were the creative brainchild of members of the Aboriginal Essential Skills Guiding Team (AESGT) formally part of the BC - Yukon Network of Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement Holders, a volunteer network of Indigenous organizations providing employment and ES training programs to Indigenous people throughout the province of BC.

Produced in 2006, the first ESI DVD was a spoof on the popular TV crime show Crime Scene Investigation (CSI). It was about a team of ES Investigators who, through the exploration of the nine ES, find the real causes behind a suspicious fatal accident. It was meant to be a humorous, engaging and informative introduction to the nine ES and how they affect work safety.

The first ESI DVD was originally intended as a provincial resource for members of the AESGT and other BC organizations and training providers. The easily accessible format and recognizable storyline of the resource “caught on like wildfire”, according to Project Coordinator, Colleen Yamamoto and requests for copies came from across the country. The AESGT’s collaborative and open approach to development has resulted in numerous partnerships and to the development of a series of ESI DVDs and accompanying learning tools that are being used by Aboriginal organizations, secondary and post-secondary schools, sector councils, literacy councils and employment training programs across Canada.

This resource now consists of three 15-minute DVDs: ESI I, ESI II and ESI III. ESI I and II are available in both French and English and closed caption for the deaf and hard of hearing. In addition, facilitator guides and a learning package have been developed for ESI II and ESI III.

Essential Skill Focus

The original DVD (ESI I) sought to create awareness of [all nine ES](#) in a light, but factual manner. According to Yamamoto, “We wanted to engage our audience to be interested in ES as something new to the workplace, not just literacy or education.” In ESI I, the nine ES were tied to the idea of everyday safety and

accident prevention. “We wanted it this way so that [users] would understand the urgency about incorporating ES into existing or new programs.”

ESI II was created after AESGT was contacted by Ed Nasello of the Canadian Automotive Repair Sector Council (CARS). The Council wanted ESI II to focus on Continuous Learning in order to encourage older workers to participate in professional development. The Council found that older workers in their industry were resistant to participating in skills training related to computer technologies found in newer vehicles. This lack of training was resulting in costly mistakes. It was CARS who initiated and sponsored the translation of ESI I into French and the development of ESI II and its accompanying facilitator package.

ESI III was created through a partnership between AESGT, ACCESS, a BC-based urban Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASET) holder and CARS. The focus for this DVD was Working with Others and Thinking Skills.

Both ESI II and III use plot lines related to the auto trades, but can be used with broader groups.

Yamamoto states, “Together I think both organizations [ACCESS and CARS], really believed in the value of the ESI series and wanted to work together. [They] believed it would be important to focus more specifically on core ES critical to their workplace.”

Objectives

While the DVDs’ ES focus has evolved, the story-line about a team of ES Investigators using ES to look into deadly events is consistent across the full series. The main objectives of the resource has also remained constant: build awareness and understanding of ES in a way that engages and informs. The media tools were made to introduce the concept of ES quickly and to reach new and broader audiences.

When asked about the overall objective of the DVDs, Yamamoto replied, “Truthfully I wanted a good product that people could enjoy and was a valid ES tool. We wanted an ES Aboriginal-made tool that was effective, accurate and entertaining.”

Promising Practice (Keys to Success)

Methodology/Approach

While ES awareness was the overall goal for creating the ESI DVD series, the AESGT wanted the resource to be innovative, entertaining and relevant to learners. The developers also wanted the tools to be factual and technically accurate, Aboriginal-made and affordable.

Structure of the Program

According to Yamamoto, the AESGT team began with the question “What will it take to get this video made?” Members of the team started promoting and fundraising for the project by approaching their own organizations. These AESGT organizations, along with the BC Aboriginal Human Resources Development Council, (now known as the First Nations Human Resources Labour Council) provided funding for the original DVD.

Developing the script for the first DVD was a challenge. The story-line needed to be straightforward, build ES awareness and hold the audience’s attention. AESGT wanted the script to be written in plain language and use proper ES terms. The DVD needed to portray a situation that was authentic to the kind of safety problems one might encounter in the workplace and it needed to be informative and technically correct.

From the beginning, the approach was one of partnership and teamwork. The script was written in collaboration with a number of organizations to ensure the content was inventive and correct. Douglas College, Métis Nation of BC and the Stó:lō Nation provided expert advice on ES language and members of the Canadian Propane Industry supplied technical advice to ensure the “propane BBQ accident” scenarios and accompanying language were realistic and accurate.

Bear Image Productions, a First Nations video company, was engaged in the scripting, production, shooting and editing of the DVD. Nadia Design, a First Nations Graphic Arts company, produced all the graphics for the resources and Aboriginal actors were used throughout.

“Everything we did, we wanted it to be Aboriginal-based.... [portraying that] this is us, something we’ve done!”

Colleen Yamamoto , Director, ACCESS-Essential Skills
Aboriginal Futures

This cooperative approach was extremely successful and built a “wonderful energy” among the entire crew. The finished product was well received by all partners and distributed to the members of the AESGT and partnering organizations. As one contributor put it, “We felt such a sense of pride in the creation of such a unique resource.”

While no formal marketing was done, the original DVD was promoted through AESGT’s network and the AESGT was soon approached by other organizations for new products (i.e., CARS, National Life-Work Centre and Deaf Literacy Initiative Ontario).

To help ensure the ESI products are reaching a wide market for little or no cost to end users, AESGT has established a Memorandum of Understanding with partnering agencies stating that after the initial purchase there is no charge to partners for their continued use of the resources, with the agreement that partners will not charge any fees for the use of the materials. Currently, AESGT does not actively market these resources, but features them at events AESGT members may be attending and advertises them on the ACCESS Urban Spirit Foundation website.

Content of the Program

The DVDs were created to bring awareness of ES to a broader audience. The stories, based on a well-known TV show, revolve around a mysterious death ultimately caused by a lack of ES and solved through the use of ES. It presents the practical application of ES in “real life” situations. Program facilitators attribute the effectiveness of the DVDs to their familiar format, use of everyday situations, plain language and mix of humour and crime. As one user stated, “It’s entertaining, fun and suspenseful. No one falls asleep....” A facilitator commented, “It’s grassroots; it’s relatable; it’s where the people live.”

Facilitators also appreciated that it’s a visual media-based resource and that the support activities presented in the facilitator’s package are all directly related to what happens in the video: What did you see? What did you learn? How is that important? As one user stated, “It’s how Aboriginal people learn, by seeing and then doing.”

Aboriginal learners especially see it as a resource designed for them; they see themselves in the faces of the Aboriginal actors. One BC-based facilitator noted that the participants in her program were able to recognize locations where the video was filmed and knew people involved in the performance and production of the resource.

Delivery of the Resource

Given the product's general appeal to a broad audience (adults 18 yrs and over), the ESI DVDs are being used in a variety of settings. Practitioners have used the ESI DVDs during short presentations and workshops delivered to the general public, band councils and boards of directors to raise awareness about ES.

Mostly, the DVDs are being used in education and training programs. The 15-minute DVDs are not meant to be a standalone tool, but rather to be integrated into lesson plans to reinforce and summarize ES curriculum. They are used to break up more traditional teaching methods and can support transitioning into more in-depth discussions of the nine ES, their complexity levels and potential applications.

While no special training is required to use the ESI DVDs, knowledge of ES helps to maximize the instructional value and learning opportunities inherent in the resource. A number of practitioners described how they use the DVDs as a jumping off place to pull together related ES activities. They follow-up the viewing of the DVDs with their own questionnaires and activities, such as an ES analysis of different tasks portrayed in the video or the ES used by various characters. Deaf Literacy has posted the ESI I DVD with three ready-made lesson plans on their website (<http://essentialskillsdeaf literacy.ca>). Douglas College used the ESI I DVD with participants attending their Foundations Program to recap and support their initial introduction to ES. It provided participants with "a time to get out of their heads and just enjoy the learning."

Other users commented that the facilitator's package offers activities that not only help reinforce ES learning, but give learners the opportunity to practice ES skills such as Reading, Oral Communication, Document Use, Thinking Skills and Working Together. The facilitator's guides and participant workbooks are in an 8x11 inch format, so users can easily photocopy material as needed. The "activity cards" provide exercises that are interactive and reference back to specific clips from the DVDs. As one facilitator put it, "I have tons of resources on my shelf, books and binders... but one of my real go-to pieces is that DVD."

Outcomes of the Resource

When the ESI I DVD was first developed, Yamamoto describes it as a "whirlwind ride. We didn't expect that there would ever be a second or a third, that it would be translated or that it would be so widely used." Consequently, no formal evaluation plan was established.

Funding was limited to production cost, so distribution of the resource was done voluntarily by the Project Coordinator and now through ACCESS's Urban Spirit Foundation. Orders are tracked and data collected on the number of resources sold. Initially, an evaluation form was sent out with each new order requesting information on how it was being applied and effectiveness of the resources. Unfortunately, very few evaluations were returned. Presently there are no financial or human resources available to follow-up with users.

Word-of-mouth feedback and continued demand for the ESI DVD tools speak to the success of the resource. To date, approximate 1,500 DVDs and 110 facilitator packages have been purchased. Partnerships continue to grow and Deaf Literacy Initiative is working with the AESGT to secure funding for an ESI IV specifically for the needs of deaf and sight impaired audiences.

Transferability

The ESI tools are being used nationally. They cross the boundaries of a wide range of services and users include high schools, colleges, sector councils and service/education organizations throughout Canada. It is a resource made for-and-by Aboriginals; yet its application is also meant for the broader audience of adult learners.

Lessons Learned/Challenges

The AESGT sees a need for more Aboriginal-made ES tools that are creative and learner-centred. Adult learners want to be engaged and are motivated by resources that are relevant, current and relatable. They are inspired by resources that incorporate humour and "real stories".

An open and collaborative approach in the development of the product not only ensured the accuracy and validity of the resource, but also resulted in the creation of new story-lines, new products and more users.

Funding continues to be a major challenge. Despite the fact that all the Aboriginal actors in the DVDs volunteered their time, the cost of producing one DVD is approximately \$52,000.

Distribution, including filling ever increasing orders for the tools and tracking sales, is now done voluntarily through ACCESS (an AESGT member). Other than advertising of the tools on the Urban Spirit Foundation, Bear Productions and AESGT websites, the ESI resources are not actively marketed. One AESGT member stated, "We have more ideas, but funding is an issue.... We are always looking for more resources. If we were given funding, we would put them into producing a new [DVD] rather than marketing."

Members of the AESGT continue to look for and apply for funding, but do so "off the side of [their] desks." Presently, they are working in partnership with Deaf Literacy Initiative to secure funding to produce ESI IV.

Benefits

The ESI tools provide users with an affordable, innovative ES resource that has been proven effective and engaging for a range of adult learners. In addition, it has built capacity within the Aboriginal community to develop and produce exceptional ES instructional resources.

Contact

Cori Thunderchild

Director: ACCESS – Essential Skills Aboriginal Futures

T: 1 -604-521-5929

E-mail: cthunderchild@accessfutures.com

Colleen Yamamoto

Project Coordinator-ESI DVD Series

Aboriginal Essential Skills Guiding Team

E-mail: essentialskills.guidingteam@gmail.com

Resources

Copies of the ESI DVDs and ESI DVD facilitator packages can be ordered through the Urban Spirit Foundation's on-line store at:
<http://www.urbanspiritfoundation.com/store/>