

Using the Foundation Skills Framework for Goal Setting

Purpose

Adult learners need opportunities to make informed choices about the most appropriate options available to them. Such choices should be based on accurate appraisals of their needs and abilities, as well as the type and duration of services and the designated time period for achieving goals. Accurate and realistic goal setting represents the very core of workforce investment system activities. The foundation skills framework may be used to help workers, learners, and job seekers determine their specific foundation skills training needs and develop goals to meet those needs.

Realistic, measurable, and attainable career and education goals provide a structure for helping adults make informed choices, experience success, and move forward along their career path. The framework may be used to enhance this process by providing tools to 1) align career goals with education goals, and 2) set realistic and attainable education or training goals based on the development of specific competencies. This section describes the goal setting process as it might be used with the framework tools.

Align Career and Education Goals

The foundation skills wheel can be used to visually communicate the relationship between skills and employment goals. For example, Luz has been out of the workforce for ten years, and during questioning mentions that she enjoys elderly people and is interested in learning more about working in that field. The foundation skills model can be used to discuss the foundation skills and knowledge areas that are critical for success in the senior care service industry. Luz can then be encouraged to discuss her perceived skills strengths and weaknesses in those areas, and the groundwork for an education plan can be laid.

Goal Setting and Instructional Planning

Once the link between a career goal and the foundation skills has been made, the framework tools can be used to set specific education goals and begin instructional planning. For example, Jonathan is a new learner in your program. He is 40 years old and the custodial father of two boys, ages 10 and 12. He dropped out of school in the ninth grade. Until recently, Jonathan had been employed as a heavy construction worker. About three months ago, however, he sustained an on-the-job injury and can no longer work in a job that requires a high level of physical activity. Jonathan has told you he attended a demonstration of computer aided drafting and would like to more about jobs in that field. For example, the procedures described below can assist with linking skills and goals and begin educational planning.

1. Use goal-setting questions to guide initial discussion.
2. Use Job Profiling Resources (such as O*NET) to identify the types and levels of foundation skills and knowledge needed for job clusters. For Jonathan, you would identify the computer-aided drafting and design (CADD) skills and levels for entry level positions.
3. Use the Foundation Skills model to discuss the necessary foundation skills and knowledge areas.
4. Administer the **Foundation Skills Self-Appraisal** to determine the customer's perception of his or her foundation skills.

5. Then, administer a standardized test. Suppose you discover that Jonathan reads at about a 6th grade level and performs math at about a 5th grade level. An informal performance assessment indicates he has some basic computer skills.
6. Begin working with Jonathan to set realistic short- and long-term goals. For example, Jonathan may not yet have the skill levels needed for a CADD position-his long-term goal. Discussion may focus on education goals to begin moving him toward his career goal.
7. Complete the left side of the **Goal Setting and Instructional Planning** sheet. Review the appropriate competencies lists to identify specific competencies to target for instruction.
8. To complete "Evidence of Learning" section of sheet, describe success in performance terms. What will be acceptable and valid evidence that learning has occurred? What will Jonathan have to say or do before you would agree that the goal had been reached? Describe also when or how often the actions are supposed to occur.