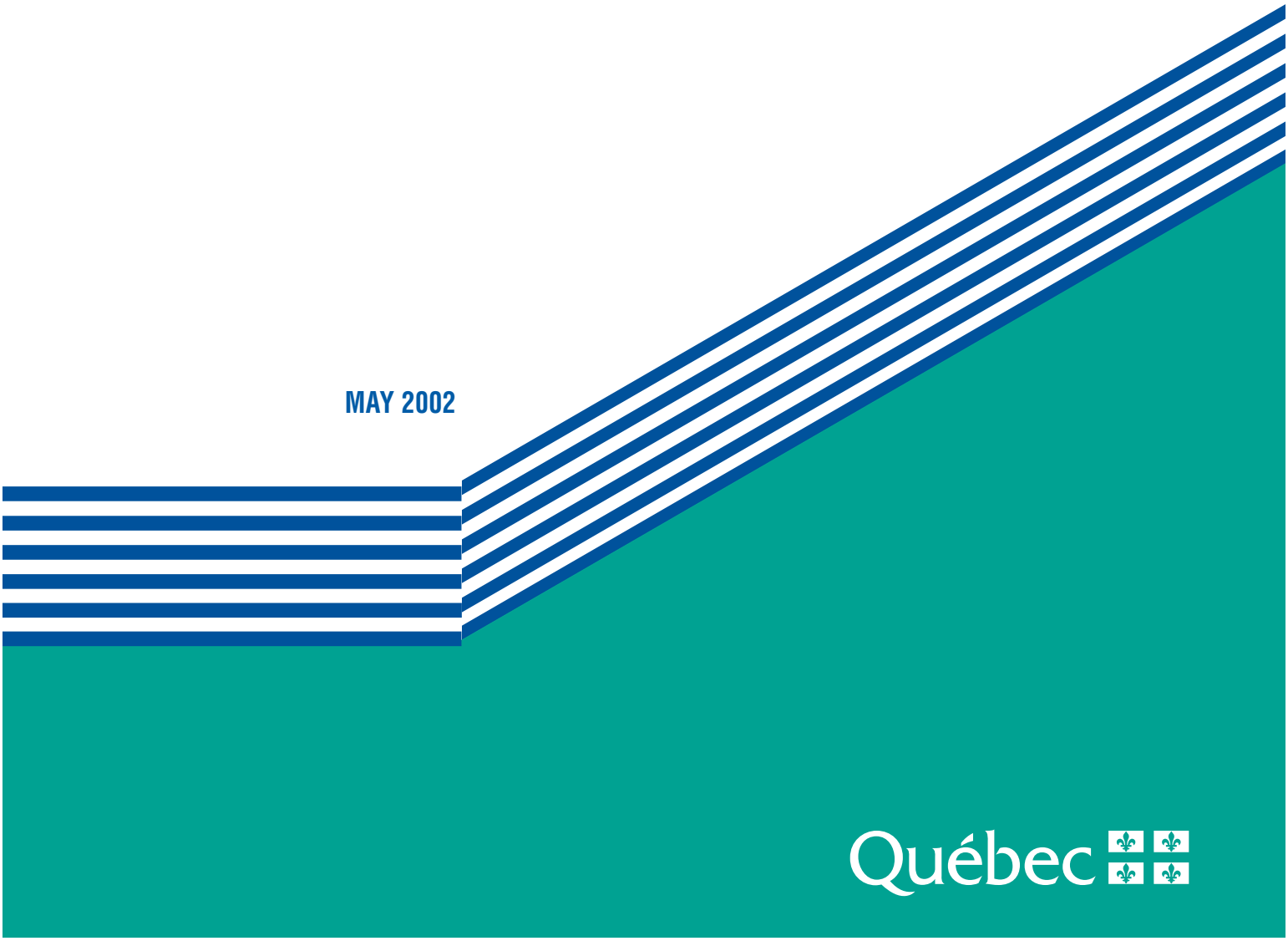
TRAINING MODELS

How to Use
A Practical Guide
for the Teaching of Literacy to Adults
With Learning Difficulties



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How to Use
A Practical Guide
for the Teaching of Literacy to Adults
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INTRODUCTION

A Practical Guide for the Teaching of Literacy to Adults With Learning Difficulties (or, *Practical Guide*) was designed for literacy instructors, and assumes a minimum level of training. This document comprises three training components:

- initial group training
- initial self-directed training
- ongoing training

This document presents models for each of the training components. Our goal is not to impose these models, but rather to propose them as possible approaches which can be adapted according to the specific needs of each group.

Notes regarding initial group training

1. Initial group training presupposes the presence of a facilitator (or a facilitating team).

2. The facilitator must:

    - know how to apply generally recognized facilitating techniques: creation of a positive environment; adoption of an effective approach; and use of relevant material
    - be able to give a brief presentation on the theory of learning
    - have a practical understanding of the *Practical Guide*

INITIAL GROUP TRAINING

DURATION: 1 OR 2 DAYS

Note: The facilitator is responsible for the following activities.

IN A LARGE GROUP

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE SESSION

1.1 Objective of the session:

- to provide the instructors with the strategies they need to diagnose learning problems and take effective action

  This means learning new approaches rather than new material.

1.2. Desired results:

- greater effectiveness and satisfaction for both instructors and learners, in terms of diagnosing and dealing with learning problems

1.3. Method to achieve the objective and the desired results:

- work in small groups to enable the instructors to identify the skills they have acquired through their experiences

- presentations on learning and on the *Practical Guide*

1.4. Training process

- Training can be conducted according to the functional-learning- process approach (FLP).

  ◊ Ask the instructors to talk about what motivates them.

  ◊ Use passive methods (presentations) and active methods (work in small groups) to explore the material.

  ◊ Verify the instructors' level of understanding and their action plans.

  ◊ Encourage the instructors to take action (transfer of training).

2. SESSION THEME

2.1. Brief presentation on the theory of learning

The goal of this presentation is to define the theme of the session. The concept of learning is at the heart of the issues addressed in the *Practical Guide*.

Areas to explore:

- role and importance of cognitive skills, memory and sensorimotor skills in learning
- role and importance of the learning process (motivation, attention, generalization, application or transfer)
- role and importance of conditioning in learning

Note: The works cited in the bibliography may be used to prepare this presentation.

IN SMALL GROUPS

3. DISCUSSION

Discussion in small groups helps people to identify and reveal their own skills and knowledge, thereby facilitating the acquisition of new knowledge.

Discussion topic: "I have learned new things by **reflecting** on an action during the action."

What have I learned about:

- improved diagnosis of learning problems?
- strategies for resolving them?
- evaluation of the results?

Note: Learning that results from reflecting on an action during the action is stored as declarative knowledge (on "what"), procedural knowledge (on "how") or conditional knowledge (on "when and why").

IN A LARGE GROUP

4. EXCHANGE

The small groups then share the results of their work during a discussion led by the facilitator.

5. THE *PRACTICAL GUIDE*

5.1. Presentation of the guide

- General introduction

  See Appendix I, "General Introduction to the *Practical Guide for the Teaching of Literacy to Adults With Learning Difficulties*"

- Detailed presentation

  The objective of the detailed presentation is to enable the instructors to explore each of the 14 documents in the guide. Provide numerous examples and allow ample time for feedback, questions and discussion.

IN SMALL GROUPS

5.2. Exercise

- Sample exercise

  One of the participants presents a situation involving an adult with a learning problem. The small groups must:

  ◊ try to determine the nature of the problem

  ◊ explore the documents in the guide that may be helpful in finding a solution

  ◊ choose the module that contains elements of a solution

  ◊ formulate a diagnosis

  ◊ determine the most effective strategies

IN A LARGE GROUP

6. EXCHANGE

The small groups share the results of their work in a discussion led by the facilitator.

7. VERIFYING THE LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING BEFORE TAKING ACTION

The facilitator verifies the participants' level of understanding by asking and answering questions, which may spark a whole new discussion.

INDIVIDUAL WORK

8. ACTION PLAN

Using the guide, the participants identify a situation involving a learning problem that they would like to resolve. They then formulate strategies to deal with the situation.

IN A LARGE GROUP

9. PLENARY MEETING: EXCHANGING ACTION PLANS

TRAINING EVALUATION

IMPLEMENTING THE ACTION PLAN:
TRANSFERING TRAINING TO ADULT LEARNERS

INITIAL SELF-DIRECTED TRAINING

DURATION: ONE OR TWO SESSIONS

Note: The training described below uses an individualized approach designed for those who have not participated in initial group training.

1. Review the following three general texts:

   - *Introduction to the Practical Guide, Upgrading, General Bibliography and General Table of Contents*
   - *Learning Problems Among Adults: Difficulties or Disabilities)*
   - *Nomenclature of Learning Problems (Causes and Consequences)*

2. **Systematically** examine the 11 modules that address diagnosis and intervention strategies.

3. Consult with colleagues to compare each person's understanding and perception of the guide: organization of the material, the topic addressed in each module, the ways the modules could be used, etc.

4. Experiment

   In the presence of an adult with a learning problem:

   - observe the adult's behaviour
   - ask him or her questions
   - have him or her take tests available in the training centre
   - formulate a hypothesis
   - consult the guide based on the hypothesis (is the problem related to memory, written expression, etc.?)
   - identify the description that corresponds to the problem exhibited (diagnosis)
   - among the intervention strategies that are proposed or considered to be appropriate, choose the one most suited to the situation
   - rigorously implement the strategy

5. Evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention and the level of satisfaction.

6. Pursue the intervention until it becomes routine.

ONGOING TRAINING
USING THE SCIENTIFIC-METHOD-IN-ACTION APPROACH

DURATION: ONGOING

Ongoing training is the next step to initial group or self-directed training. It enables instructors to make better use of the guide to diagnose learning problems and identify appropriate strategies for addressing them.

Ongoing training is presented here using a very special approach called "scientific method in action." This method helps to **transform the workplace into a fascinating laboratory**.

The main characteristics of the scientific-method-in-action approach—a simple method directly linked to day-to-day practice—are the following:

1. The approach can be adapted to and is suitable for all roles and intervention models and therefore facilitates sharing and reconciliation.

2. It respects the individuality of each instructor.

3. It constitutes true **ongoing training** that enables instructors to improve their teaching practices.

4. It enables the instructor to **adapt** to each situation. Adaptation occurs when an equilibrium is reached between the individual's action on his or her environment and the action of the environment on the individual.[1]

5. It fosters greater awareness, autonomy, effectiveness and satisfaction for the person conducting the intervention.

6. It "recognizes" the scientific validity of knowledge derived from action or concrete experience and promotes the acquisition of this knowledge by means of systematic reflection on an action during the action.

7. It seeks:

   - to increase the effectiveness of each intervention and make it more rewarding

   - to advance scientific knowledge of the intervention

Note: To learn more about the scientific-method-in-action approach, see the bibliography.

[1] It is possible to distinguish two types of behaviour and two types of environment:

External behaviour is directly observable and involves movement through space (e.g. talking, walking, touching).
Internal behaviour is not directly observable and does not involve movement through space (e.g. thinking, calculating, imagining, recollecting).
External environment is composed of the following elements: individuals and their status, ideas of other people, events, places and things.
Internal environment is composed of the following elements: physiological phenomena (sensations) and psychological phenomena (emotions, perceptions, cognition, private actions).

PROCESS

Reflecting on an action during the action is an individual activity that is closely tied to the intervention. This individual activity is true ongoing training that adheres to the scientific-method-in-action approach only if it is followed by a group activity based on exchange. These two types of activities are illustrated below.

Individual activity (IA)

This activity can be conducted using the ongoing training method set out in Appendix II (*Scientific-Method-in-Action Booklet*).

Note: This method is used **exclusively** in cases where the intervention is aimed at resolving a problem.

Before the action

IA.1 The situation requiring change. The learning problem requiring resolution. The diagnosis (using the guide). What is occurring?

During the action

IA.2 Description of events.
The intervention strategies used, the effects. What is occurring?

Note: The strategies employed can be informed by any suitable approach, including the functional-learning-process approach (FLP), the actualization-of-intellectual-potential approach or any approach set out in the guide.

After the action

IA.3 Review of what has been learned.
Results obtained. Cause and effect relationship. What is occurring?

Group activity (GA) (scientific-method-in-action workshop)

Improving the effectiveness of each intervention and making it more rewarding are only one of the objectives of the scientific-method-in-action approach. A further aim is to advance scientific understanding of the intervention, both individually and collectively.

Consequently, the sharing of experiences and results is an essential aspect of this approach. Known as a **scientific-method-in-action workshop**, this process takes place during scheduled andragogical meetings, and can be organized as follows:

GA.1 Have the instructors list the various individual activities engaged in using the *Scientific-Method-in-Action Booklet*

GA.2 Group the activities by category, according to their nature (learning problems: memory, attention, writing, etc.; behavioural disorders; etc.).

GA.3 Select representative individual activities.

GA.4 Have individuals who completed these activities present them. See IA.1 to IA.3

GA.5 Discuss.

GA.6 Summarize the "Assessments of Training Results" as presented by the instructors during the individual activities.

Note: Every scientific-method-in-action workshop must end with a summary of the "Assessments of Training Results," as this allows "knowledge" to be shared. Without it, there is no true ongoing training, and the two objectives of the scientific-method-in-action approach—to improve practices and advance scientific understanding of the intervention—cannot be achieved.[2]

[2] **Individual activities** and **collective activities** can be enriched by **dyad activities** during which one of the two individuals acts as a consultant. This person's role is to provide support during the target action. The role of consultant can also be played by both people, in the form of reciprocal support during ongoing training.

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APPENDIX I

OVERVIEW OF A *PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR THE TEACHING OF LITERACY TO ADULTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES*

The guide contains 14 documents: **three** general texts and **11** texts that present diagnosis and intervention strategies.

1. The general texts are:

Introduction to the Practical Guide, Upgrading, General Bibliography and General Table of Contents

This text contains an **introduction** to the guide and addresses **upgrading** (timing, form, content, resources). It also includes a **bibliography** and a detailed general **table of contents**.

Learning Problems Among Adults: Difficulties or Disabilities

This document addresses **learning problems** observed during:

- educational activities: problems related to cognition
- social activities: problems related to interpersonal relations
- personal activities: problems related to social skills, autonomy
- professional activities: problems in work situations (job search, fulfilling workplace demands, etc.)

The document also explains the difference between learning difficulties and learning disabilities.

Learning difficulties:

- have an external cause of an emotional, cultural, social or economic nature
- are "temporary," in the sense that they can be corrected if a person's social or private environment is altered

Learning disabilities:

- have an internal cause of a neurological nature
- are innate or acquired
- are much less amenable to corrective action than are learning difficulties (particularly acquired disabilities)
- appear to be permanent

Nomenclature of Learning Problems (Causes and Consequences)

This document presents the **nomenclature** of learning problems, without providing **solutions**.

Its goal is to **familiarize** instructors with concepts related to learning problems, such as confusion, addition, inversion, omission, substitution and repetition.

Learning these concepts will help the instructor to identify problems that arise in everyday situations.

The concepts are described in relation to the **three basic subjects**: reading, writing and arithmetic.

Each subject is addressed from **three perspectives**:

- What happens "when it works."
- What happens "when it doesn't work."
- "Possible causes" when it doesn't work.

2. Different diagnosis and intervention strategies are presented according to the field in which they are to be used:

The strategies for the **remedial** field are grouped into five modules:

First module:	English (Reading)
Second module:	English (Writing)
Third module:	Arithmetic (Reading)
Fourth module:	Arithmetic (Writing)
Fifth module:	Graphic Motricity

The strategies for the **cognitive** field are grouped into six modules:

First module:	Attention
Second module:	Memory
Third module:	Receptive Language
Fourth module:	Expressive Language
Fifth module:	Perception
Sixth module:	Planning and Executing a Task

Note: Each document includes an introduction and a table of contents.

APPENDIX II

SCIENTIFIC-METHOD-IN-ACTION BOOKLET

This booklet suggests a simple method to reflect on an action during the action. I use it to record, **in writing**, the main events that occur while I am intervening to resolve a problem (to change a situation that I consider to be unique). All of the interventions conducted are referred to collectively as a **target action**.

BEFORE THE TARGET ACTION

THE SITUATION REQUIRING CHANGE: WHAT IS OCCURRING ?

1. I describe the situation in terms of behaviour that can be observed and measured (identifying/diagnosing the problem), basing myself on facts, not opinions.

2. I formulate my intentions in a realistic manner (What long-term result am I seeking? What are my objectives? What kind of change am I trying to bring about?).

DURING THE TARGET ACTION

DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS: WHAT IS OCCURRING ?

1. I employ strategies to produce, during each intervention, an immediate and observable result that will contribute to achieving the long-term result.

2. I describe the **main events** that occur during each intervention, recording the most important experiences, perceptions, thoughts and actions of myself and others. Each description is numbered and dated. Example: 4.2001-09-06.

3. I frequently refer to my notes. **This enables me to adjust my objectives and strategies**.

AFTER THE TARGET ACTION

ASSESSMENT OF TRAINING RESULTS: WHAT IS OCCURRING ?

1. Reread the booklet and answer the following questions:

   — Was the problem resolved in an effective and satisfactory manner? Has the situation changed? Was the desired result achieved without producing unwanted results?

   — What effect did the following elements have on the results? (show causality)

   - the accuracy of my description of the initial situation (the correctness of my identification/diagnosis of the problem)
   - the **realism** of my objectives
   - the appropriateness of the strategies used in relation to my objectives
   - my decision to change, or not to change, my objectives and strategies during the target action
   - any uncontrollable events

   Note: My assessment of the training results enables me to measure the degree to which the two objectives of the scientific-method-in-action approach were achieved: to increase the effectiveness of each intervention and make it more rewarding, and to advance scientific knowledge of the intervention.

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