

TOWARD SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT: Building capacity for frontline practitioners in employment integration organizations

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Facts

1 / 5

One in five Canadians (6.2 million people), aged 15 and over, have at least one disability (Morris et al., 2018)

59% vs. 80%

In Canada, individuals with disabilities reported having a significantly lower employment rate (59%) compared to those without disabilities (80%) (Morris et al., 2018; OPHQ, 2017)



Inclusion and job retention

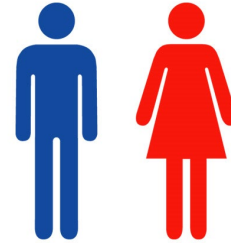
Alignment between individual / workplace needs



Adapting individual to the workplace
(individual-centred approach; based on individual liberties and natural selection)

Failing = dispositional

Failing = situational



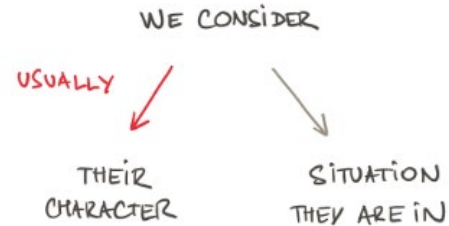
Adapting workplace to the individual
(community-centred approach; based on human and universal rights)



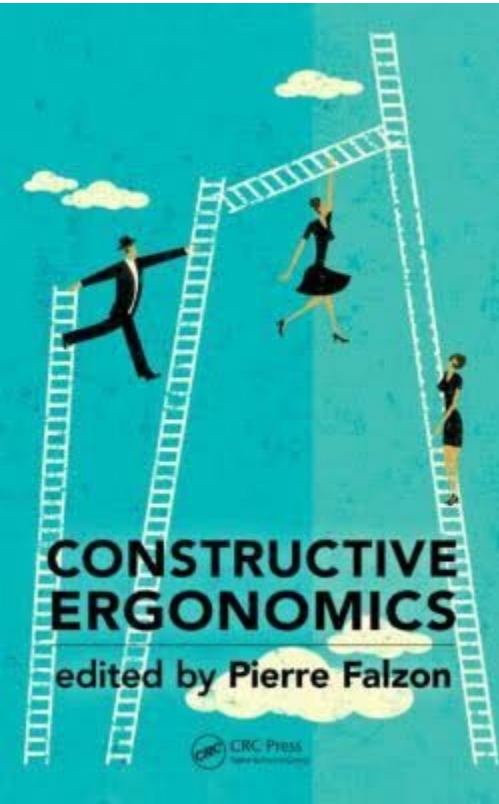
Fundamental attribution error theory

Tendency to overemphasize dispositional factors when explaining the actions of others, while underestimating the impact of the situation

HOW WE JUDGE BEHAVIOR OF OTHERS ?



Evolution of ergonomics scope



- Improving occupational health and safety
A healthy and safe environment



- Taking diversity into account in the workplace
Universal Environment



- Including human development as a goal of work
Enabling Environment



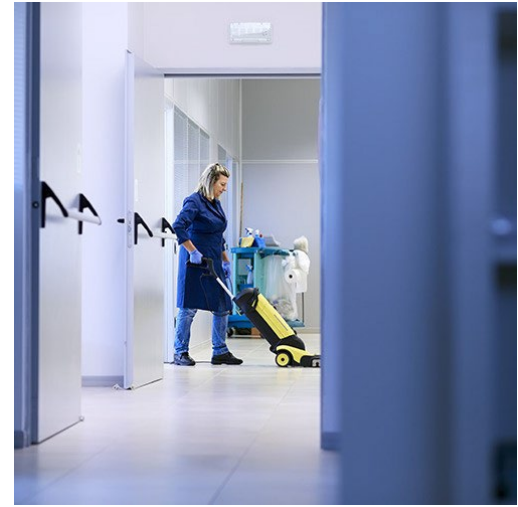
Research Project

Support Models Towards Employment Access

Team: Marie Laberge, Isabelle Berger, Sami Fettah, Savannah Laurence, Isabelle Feillou, Aline Lechaume, Loup Lavaud

Objectives : Analysis of the implementation of two employability services, with the aim of co-developing enabling environments for ecosystem stakeholders (trainers, integration agents, employment counselors, internship supervisors, etc.)

Study design: Action-research following an ergonomics intervention approach, case study (2 sites)



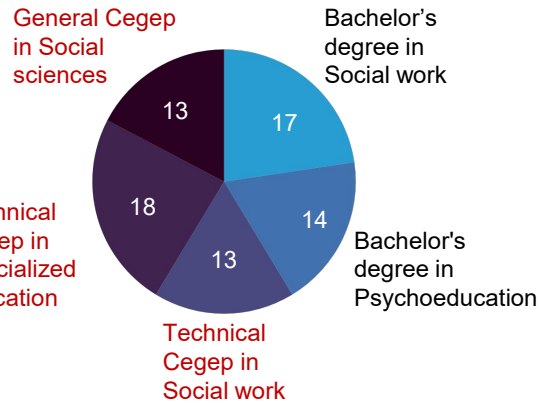
Initial questions?

- What do employment support organizations do to successfully integrate people with diverse kinds of needs into the job market?
- What challenges do these organizations face in their mission?
- Who are the frontline workers providing the employment support?
- What are their skills, qualifications, and tools used (are they adequately trained or equipped to fulfill their missions)?

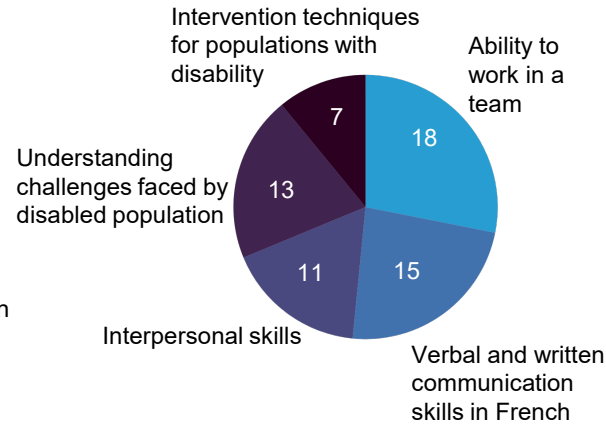


Analysis of job listings for employment integration agents, as advertised on prominent job boards in Quebec throughout 2023 (n=33)*

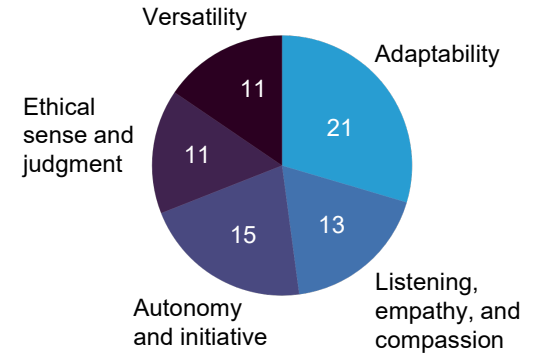
Most asked qualifications



Most asked knowledge and skills



Most asked aptitudes and qualities



*Analysis done by Savannah Laurence, PhD candidate

Tasks and responsibilities listed (categories)

Tasks and responsibilities	N
Guides, supports, and assists individuals in their integration process	46
Collaborates with various stakeholders in a concerted approach to the individual's integration process	38
Maintains individuals' records, completes administrative forms, and drafts intervention plans.	30
Evaluates the individual and their abilities, considering all aspects of their person	24
Raises awareness and equips stakeholders regarding the needs of individuals facing disability	23
Plans and supervises the individualized action/intervention plan	21
Develops and disseminates recruitment tools (advertising materials, posters, social media, etc.)	18
Provides tailored tools and adapts the work environment	16

*Analysis done by Savannah Laurence, PhD candidate

Cases studied

Structure 1

- Adapted company founded in 1975 (\approx 650 employees) – aiming to hire people with disability (social economy, NGO)
- 3 activity sectors – long term employment



Subcontractor
in corporate
cleaning
services



Subcontractor
in corporate
security
services



Packing and
handling
outsourcing
tasks

Structure 2

- Short-term employment structure for individuals aged 16 to 35 aiming to develop their personal, social, and professional skills (\approx 12 to 20 employees)
- 3 training platforms – 6 month program



Carpentry



Cooking

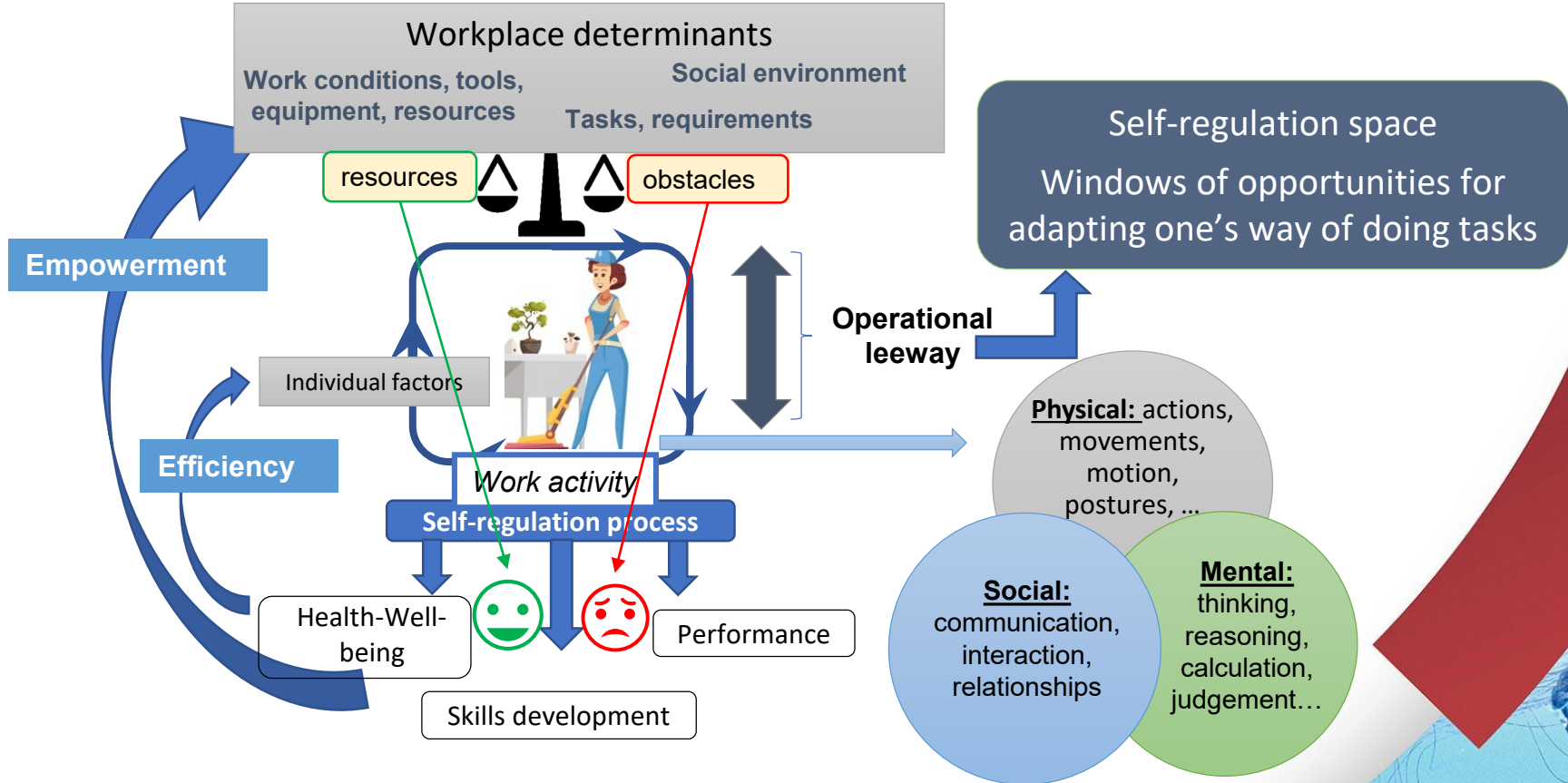


Agriculture

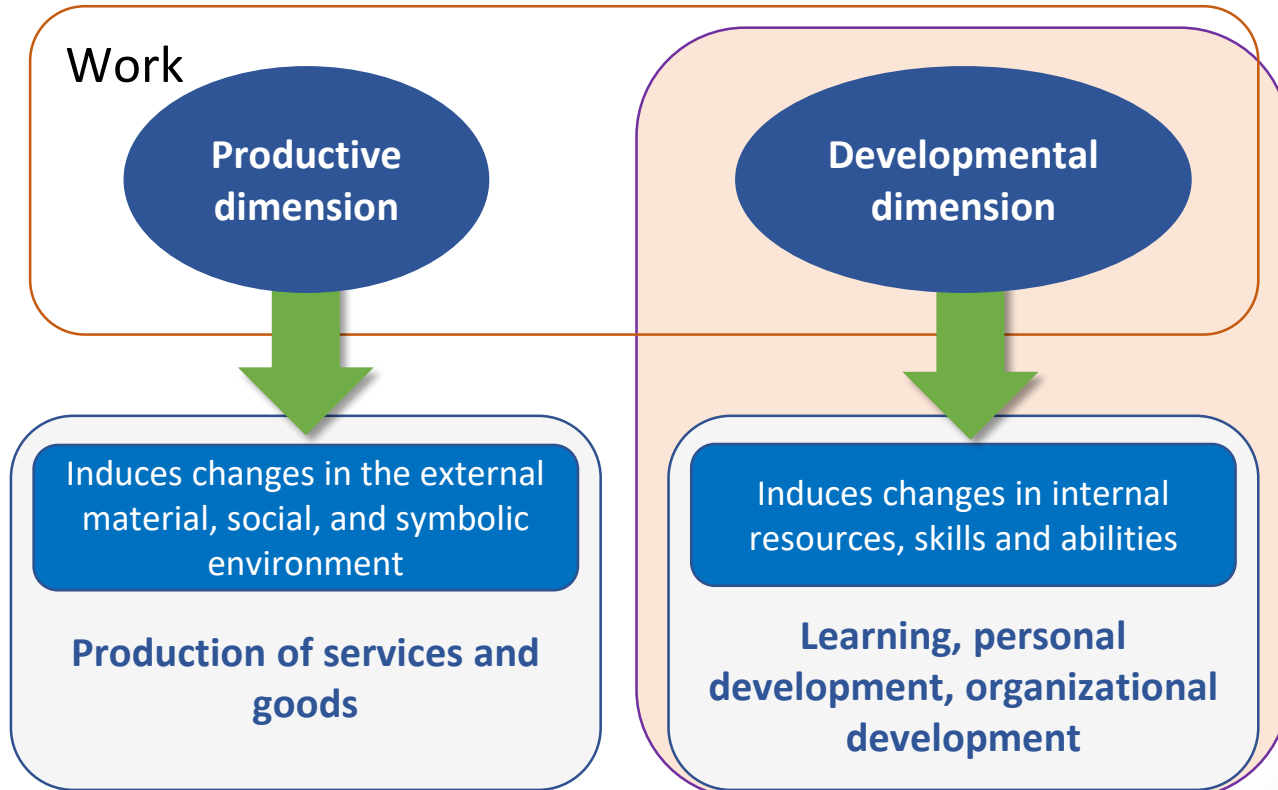
Sales counter



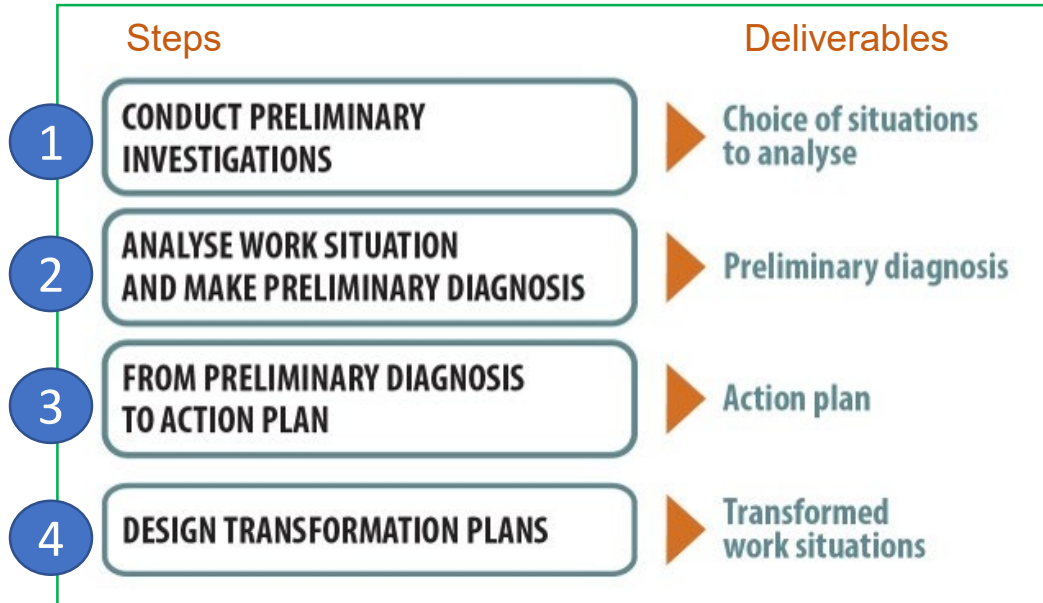
Analytical lens



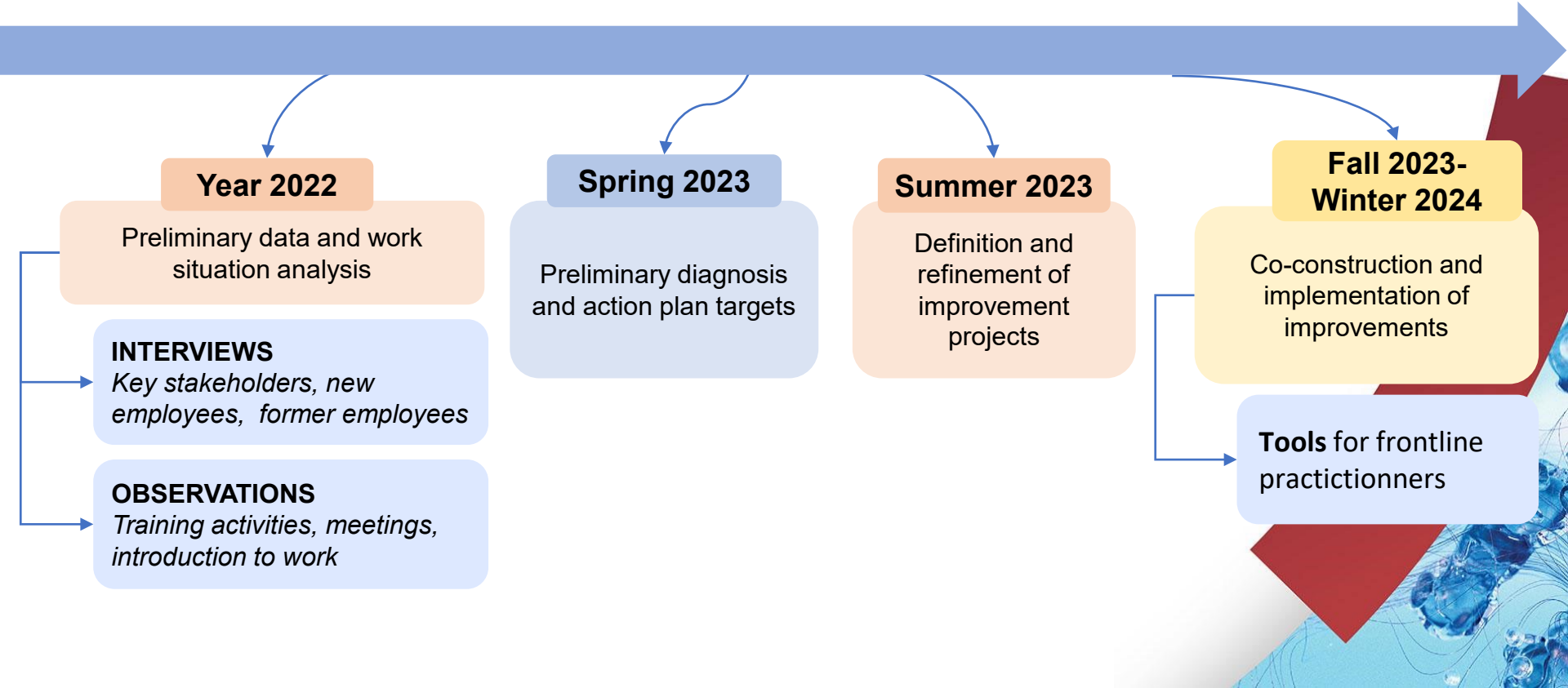
Potential impact of work activities



Steps and deliverables - ergonomics intervention study



Timeline



Data collected in the preliminary phase

- Preliminary interviews with diverse categories of key stakeholders (CEO, head of cleaning services, trainer, integration counsellor, human resources advisors (2), quality operations manager) (n=15)
- Preliminary *in situ* observations of a complete training session (10 days; trainer + 3-4 participants)
- In-depth analysis of work situations
 - Observations
 - Individual interviews
 - Group interviews



Key findings presented as preliminary diagnosis

OBSTACLES

- New employees with increasingly important challenges / needs
- Gap between theoretical and practical training
- Training based on standardized work methods
- Inadequate post-training monitoring
- Performance indicators unsuitable
- Cleaning deficiencies
- Communication challenges
- Physical strain and other occupational health and safety risks

RESSOURCES

- Company with a healthy financial position
- Creation of a new **integration counselor** job position (2022)
- Tailored teaching materials
- Extensive experience of the trainer in housekeeping
- New mentoring program
- Implementation of a frequent feedback system for employees
- Commitment to training all staff members on challenge-specific approaches
- Dedication to continuously improving work methods

Key targets for improvement projects



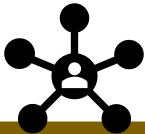
**Restructuring the training
(initial training)**



**Supporting the
integration process**



**Aligning customer
services with
integration logics**



**Optimizing
communication strategies
inside the organisation**



**Improving
occupational health
and safety**



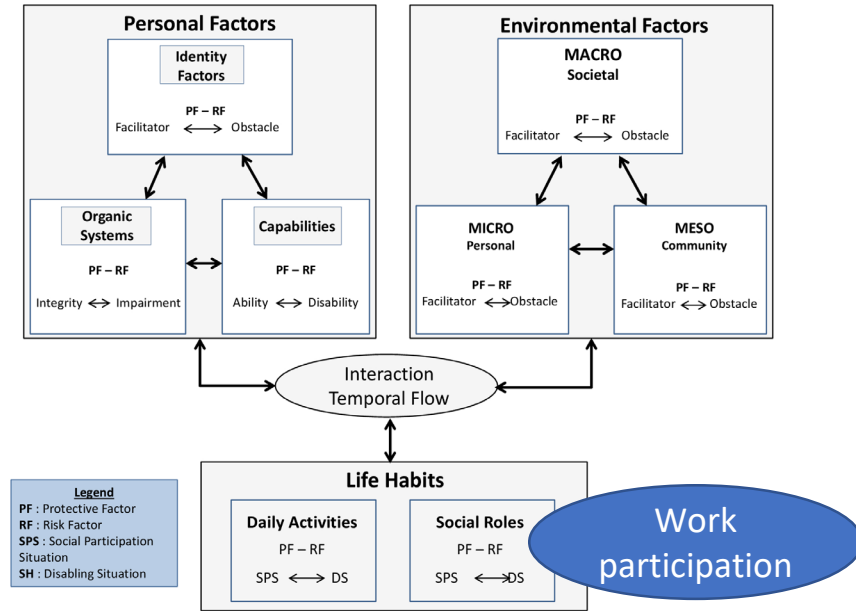
**Studying new
opportunities for
resources and financing**

Action plan: toolkit for frontline practitioners

1. Theory models
2. Learning at work
3. Work activity analysis
4. Collecting data on work activities
5. OHS prevention tools
6. Improve capacity for diverse kinds of disability
7. Appendices: questionnaires, forms and evaluation tools

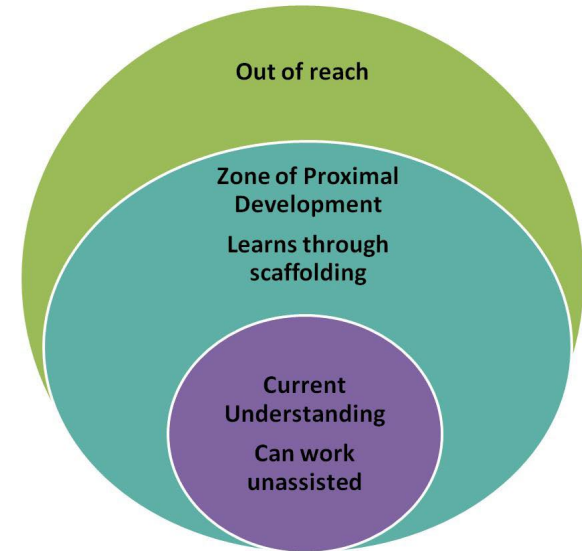


Tool 1: Theory models



The Human Development Model – Disability Creation Process (HDM-DCP)

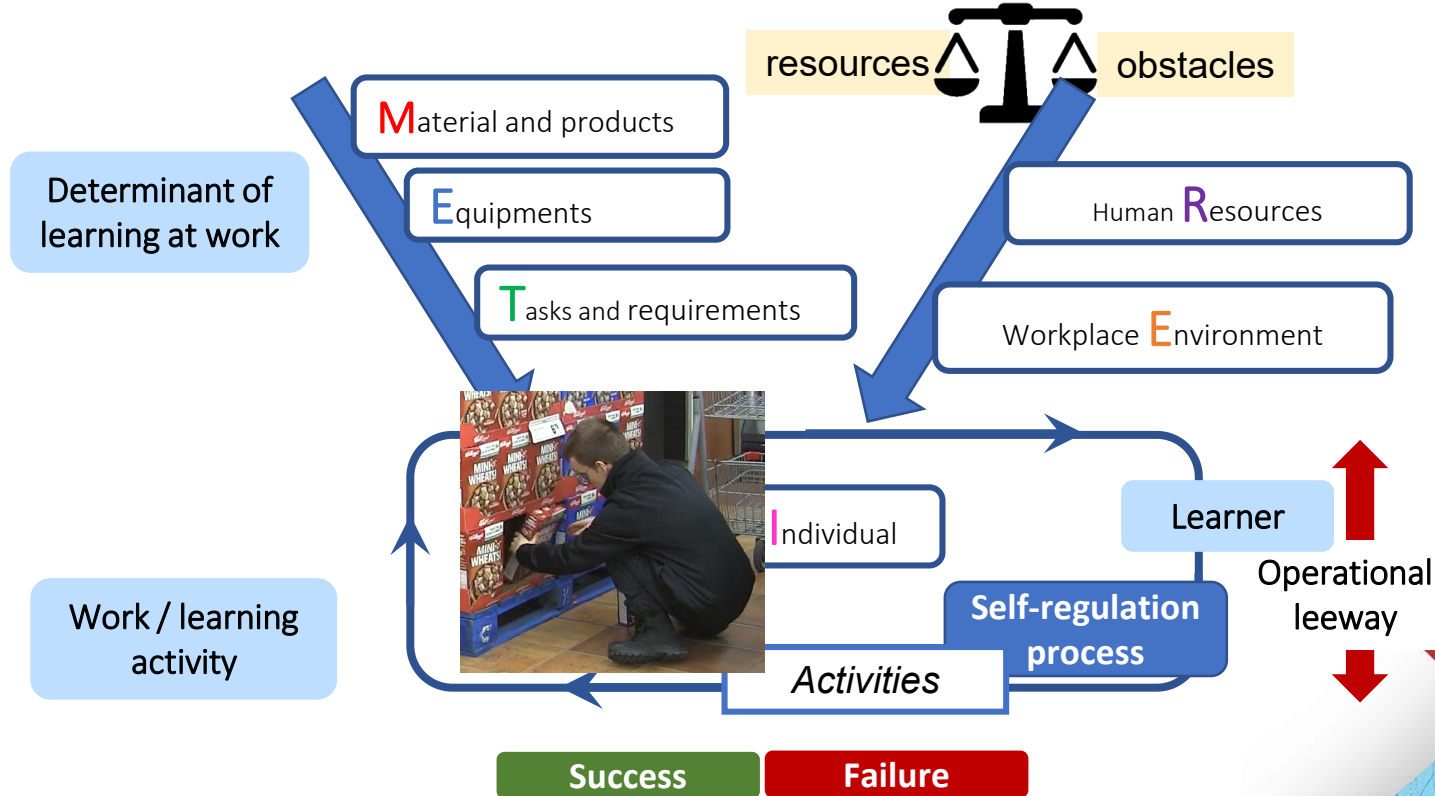
Zone of Proximal Development ZPD



Difference between what a learner can do without help and what he or she can achieve with guidance

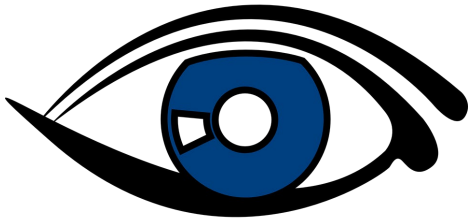
Tool 2: Understanding learning at work

METIER = French acronym meaning TRADE

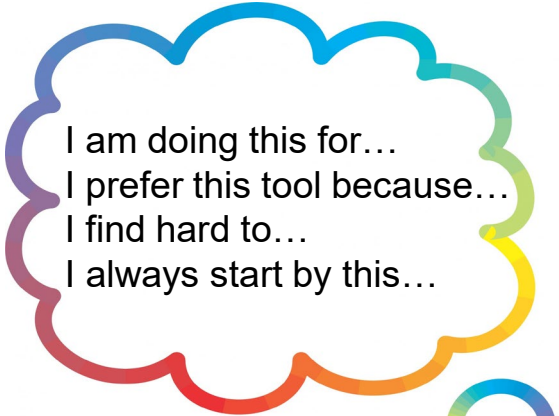


Tool 3: Work activity analysis techniques

Tools to guide work observation
(what, when, who, how)



Tools to guide verbalization
(access to reasoning behind actions)



I am doing this for...
I prefer this tool because...
I find hard to...
I always start by this...

A thought bubble with a multi-colored border (blue, green, yellow, orange, red, purple) and a white interior. It is connected to a red arrow pointing upwards and to the right. Below the bubble are three smaller circles with the same multi-colored border. The background features a blue and white abstract pattern of water droplets and lines.

Tool 4: Approach for analysing needs

Step 1	Identify critical tasks (CT)
Step 2	For each CT, describe work activities (how it is done actually)
Step 3	Identify the impacts (health / well-being, performance, skills development)
Step 4	Describe the determinants of work context that facilitate or hinder the achievement of CT (obstacles and resources)
Step 5	Identify and provide resources that could compensate for CT obstacles

Determinants of work	Obstacles	Resources to counterbalance
Material and products	Toxic and non-toxic product same color	Visual signs on the bottle
Equipments	Heavy load on the cart	Regular maintenance of bearings
Task and requirement	Hard to remember infrequent tasks	Photo or video examples in cellphone
Individual*	Hearing impairment	Visual alerts
Workplace Environment	Swinging door without windows	Signage panels
Human Resources	Lack of supervision	Clear instructions, visual hints

* To be considered (not necessarily to change or target)

Tool 5: OHS prevention tools



**STUDENT OCCUPATIONAL
HEALTH AND SAFETY
HAZARD ASSESSMENT
TOOLKIT FOR TEACHERS
SUPERVISING WORK-ORIENTED
TRAINING PATH PRACTICUMS**



- FACT SHEET 1** Chemical Hazards
- FACT SHEET 2** Biological Hazards
- FACT SHEET 3** Machinery and Equipment Hazards
- FACT SHEET 4** Slips, Trips and Falls
- FACT SHEET 5** Falling Objects
- FACT SHEET 6** Vehicle Hazards
- FACT SHEET 7** Awkward Postures
- FACT SHEET 8** Repetition and Contact Stress
- FACT SHEET 9** Lifting, Pulling, Pushing, Carrying
- FACT SHEET 10** Workplace Violence and Harassment
- FACT SHEET 11** Noise
- FACT SHEET 12** Temperature Hazards
- FACT SHEET 13** Vibration
- FACT SHEET 14** Other Hazards

Tool 6: Improve capacity for diverse kinds of disability



For whom?

This guide is addressed to employers hosting adolescent trainees as part of a work-study traineeships program

Why ?

In this type of training program, students may encounter learning challenges, at school or in the workplace. These challenges may be related to various impairments or functional limitations. This guide provides sheets explaining the challenges students may face. Possible solutions to implement as well as additional resources are provided.

Types of challenge

Related to:

- Attention / concentration disorders
- Developmental coordination disorder
- Communication disorders
- Oppositional defiant disorders
- Dyslexia-dysorthographia
- Intellectual developmental disorders
- Anxiety disorders
- Visual impairment
- Hearing impairment
- Difficulty in social interaction
- Sensory processing difficulty

Tool 6: Improve capacity for diverse kinds of disability (2)

Attention / Concentration challenges

The person struggles to control and inhibit ideas, gestures, and behaviors.

Possible signs



Attention and concentration regulation



Tendency to procrastinate less interesting tasks



Possibility of over-commitment (accepting too many tasks)



Spontaneous gestures or words that may seem inappropriate



Difficulty in time management

Adapted approaches



Suggest short, regular breaks (7-8 minutes)



Suggest breaking tasks into small steps



Suggest a workspace that limits distractions



Encourage task variety

Developmental coordination challenges

The individuals involved have difficulty coordinating their movements in sequence.

Possible signs



Clumsiness



Lack of manual dexterity



Anxiety towards new tasks or unforeseen events



Mental fatigue



Difficulties in social interactions

Adapted approaches



Establish routines for tasks to be completed



Implement a mentorship program from the outset of employment



Suggest breaking tasks into small steps



Embrace mistakes and regularly encourage

Conclusion: Theory of capabilities

- Functionings are the various things a person may value doing or being, such as working
- Capabilities refer to the freedom or opportunity to achieve these functionings.
- In other words, capabilities represent the real opportunities that individuals have to choose and achieve various functionings



(Sen, 2010)

What is an enabling environment?

- Without harmful effects and preserving future capacities to act
- Taking into account individual differences
- Compensating for individual challenges
- Allowing the development of skills and knowledge
- Expanding possibilities for action
- Enabling individuals to succeed at work (enhancing self-esteem, autonomy, personal fulfillment, contribution to collective work...)



Enabling environment for whom?

- Workers integrating a workplace
- Surrounding staff
 - Managers
 - Trainers
 - Supervisors
 - Integration counsellors (frontline practitioners)





*Thanks for
coming!*

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