



# Job Readiness Curriculum from Higher

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Job readiness is one of the most important components of resettlement as it helps clients prepare for and integrate into the American workforce. This course empowers clients to find and succeed in jobs in the United States. It also offers tools to help them understand their documents and their rights as American workers, career path options, and personal finances. As a requirement of employment programs, there are key topics which the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) — an Office of the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services — expects job readiness courses to include. Higher, a technical assistance program of the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), presents a complete Job Readiness Curriculum for the field of refugee employment. Higher worked closely with the Office for Refugee Resettlement, the Department of Labor, the nine Resettlement Agencies, and local affiliates across the country to develop this curriculum.

The following nine topics should be covered in a standard job readiness course:

Section 1: Working in the U.S. and Traditional First Jobs	Section 6: Applying for Jobs
Section 2: Identifying Skills and Resume Creation	Section 7: Documents and Identification Cards Completing Hiring/On-Boarding Paperwork
Section 3: Professional Networking	Section 8: Workers' Rights
Section 4: Interviewing	Section 9: Succeeding in the Workplace & Changing Jobs
Section 5: Financial Literacy	

When assisting clients entering the American workforce, first identify the potential or previous barriers thwarting each client's employment. A common barrier for all clients is understanding how to navigate the American job search process. To minimize this challenge, it is essential to teach job readiness courses to all employable adults. Job readiness courses are six times more effective than job development services when used as an intervention service for low- or no-income adults of all skill levels.<sup>1</sup> Job readiness classes teach newly arrived refugees the skills needed to find jobs and thrive in the U.S. workforce. The goal of this curriculum is to improve clients' abilities to obtain and maintain gainful employment.

This curriculum contains all the necessary chapters, lessons, vocabulary, links, and information needed to teach an effective job readiness course. This curriculum gives guidance for those who will implement and teach the lessons, and it contains contact information for agency staff who

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<sup>1</sup> Caroline M. Francis, "What We Know about Workforce Development for Low-Income Workers: Evidence, Background and Ideas for the Future" (working paper, Mathematica Policy Research Inc., Washington DC, 2013). This paper is available online at the National Poverty Center Working Paper Series index at [http://www.npc.umich.edu/publications/working\\_papers/](http://www.npc.umich.edu/publications/working_papers/)

can provide support and expertise. Ultimately, it aims for staff, interns, and volunteers to lead job readiness courses confidently because of this curriculum.

Designing instruction and conducting trainings can be challenging especially without formal training or teaching experience. It can also be fun and rewarding to see clients learn and grow from the training, as well as from the information they learn from one another about American life and the American workforce.

Great educators all have one thing in common: not that they have the most knowledge, but that they know how to facilitate learning. Teachers may be experts in their respective subjects, but if they do not possess the facility to assist students in the learning process, it does not matter how much they know.

Job readiness training can take many forms, from one-on-one consultations to classroom work. Regardless of how the training is structured, however, facilitators must understand how adults learn best in order to conduct the most effective trainings. Activities and learning objectives in this chapter are for the instructor of a class of adult learners.

## Getting Started: Notes for the Instructor

There are four important things to remember when creating training for adults:

1. Involve adult learners in the lessons. *They won't learn if they are sitting passively.*

Example: If teaching a class on interviewing skills, participants should practice shaking hands, introducing themselves, practicing their posture, and general interview decorum.

2. Activate prior personal experiences in adult learners. *Adults have life experience, so they are filtering what is said through their lens.*

Example: When teaching financial literacy open the lesson with a question. "What is your first memory of money?" This question allows participants to share whether their first memory has a positive or negative association surrounding money. Some participants may remember the tooth fairy putting money under their pillow. Others may remember their family having to pay money to a trafficker to help them across the border. This type of question not only demonstrates to clients how the lesson is relevant, but also informs the instructor about how much of the lesson needs to be about building trust in the financial system.

3. All lessons should have an immediate, relevant impact on adult learners. *They are busy people and will not attend class if it does not have tangible results.*

Example: When teaching resumes, do not simply teach adults how to create a resume or what goes on a resume. Rather, help participants create their own resume and teach them how to use it.

4. Use real-world problem-solving scenarios to engage adult learners. *Relevant problem-solving will interest them.*

Example: Teach clients the next steps to take after seeing a help-wanted sign in a store. Guide clients through all the steps they would take after seeing the sign. Do they go in and ask for an application? Do they go home and get a copy of their resume? What are all the steps they would take from first seeing the sign to finally applying for the job or even securing the job?

## Accessing the Online Learning Institute

Higher's Online Learning Institute is a free suite of online resources for staff and job readiness instructors and, later, clients as well. Higher's Online Learning Institute can be used for professional development or, if used in job readiness classes, training for a client. To access the staff and instructor resources, register on the website. On the welcome page, click on My Courses to take a tour of the course system. For staff click on courses to access sessions such as: [Adult Learning Principles](#), [6 W's of Good Case Notes](#), [Communicating with Employers: Initial Contact](#), and [Employability Assessment](#). There are also courses to share with clients and enhance job readiness training, such as [Introduction to Computer Technology](#), [How to Complete a Job Application](#), [Understanding your Paycheck](#), and [Interview Behavior](#).

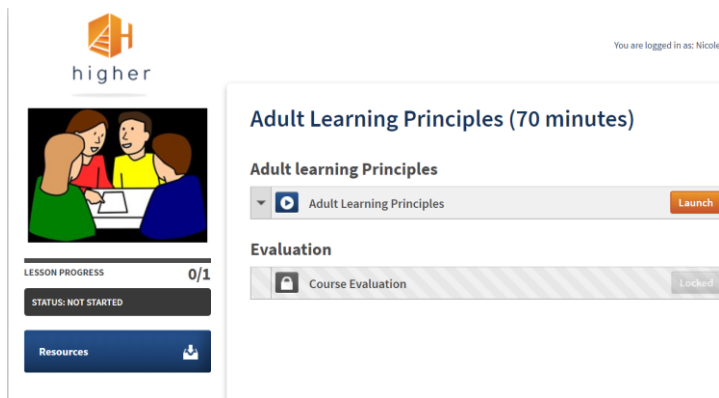
## The Course: Adult Learning Principles

The [Adult Learning Principles](#) lesson is available through the Online Learning Institute. This course helps instructors understand the theory of adult learning and how to tailor job readiness lessons to maximize benefits for adult learners.

New users can register for Higher's Online Learning Institute with [this link](#).

### Trainer's Tip

Adult learning theory helps teachers understand how to present lessons to adult learners. Job readiness courses should be as dynamic as possible so clients receive the best possible orientation to the American workforce system. Job readiness can be taught to newcomers or to clients ready for a job upgrade. Each lesson can be tweaked for adults at different stages of the career pathway process.



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### Adult Learning Principles (70 minutes)

Adult learning Principles

Adult Learning Principles Launch

Evaluation

Course Evaluation Locked

LESSON PROGRESS 0/1

STATUS: NOT STARTED

Resources

## Additional Resources

**Higher** resources include the following:

- [Adult Learning 101](#): includes an infographic on the andragogy of [Malcom Knowles](#) a leading expert in adult learning theory.
- [Job Readiness Activities for Adult Learners](#): presents some ideas for interactive classroom activities
- [How to Gain the Attention of Learners: video and infographic](#)

### Web Resources:

- [6 Top Facts About Adult Learning Theory](#): available on ELearning Industry
- [The Principles of Adult Learning Theory](#): available from Rutgers Online; discusses the history and basic definition of adult learning theory.
- [The Fundamentals of Adult Learning](#): an article that provides some more concrete examples of how to implement adult learning principles.