



Implicit Career Search

Interim Evaluation Report

August 2010

Pilot Programme
August 2010

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Executive Summary of Training August 2010

A radical approach to motivating and focusing job-seekers (and other groups) has been highly successful in Canada, called the Implicit Career Search (ICS). Against more formal job-search courses the ICS approach has been shown to be at least 30% more successful at achieving job outcomes and other benefits have also been noticed such as raising self-esteem (see appendix 1).

To test whether the ICS would have a similar impact on British job-seekers, four courses of 10 delegates each were planned – two ICS and two Employability courses, for comparison purposes. The courses were to run in parallel and designed to test different formats. Impact was evaluated through the completion of questionnaires before and after the courses and a post-course evaluation form – Focus and CSE.

Due to a fall in numbers and operational issues affecting Working Links the second Employability course was cancelled and delegates moved to the second ICS course. This meant that there were only 7 Employability course delegates to compare with 24 ICS completers.

Therefore for more robust comparison purposes a further group of 27 delegates completed the Focus and CSE questionnaires. These will be re-taken after a time for input from consultants working with the delegates.

The feedback from both sets of training was very positive (see comments in appendix 2). The main difference noticed between the nature and content of ICS compared with the Employability course with ICS content receiving more favourable comments.

Nevertheless there are some points in the evaluation to be considered if the ICS programme is to go forward.

Ultimately the true test will be the impact on sustained job outcomes. This will be gathered over the next year and reported at planned intervals.

Nevertheless the quantitative measures and qualitative comments point to a significant impact from both courses, with very significant impact through ICS and at a deeper level.

Underlying Principles of the Project:

The study was designed to

- Enable a thorough and objective evaluation of ICS to support business decisions
- Compare ICS with more traditional job-search support activity
- Clearly demonstrate the level of impact on sustainable job outcomes (Work Programme requirements)
- Support ongoing reporting
- Meet academic standards to support a formal submission

- Meet British Psychological Society standards to support applications for delivery of papers at a range of conferences

Measures:

- Two main impact measures were used along with evaluation forms
- One measure was the Focus assessment tool created by JCS to enable Working Links' initial diagnostic assessment of job-seeker need and employment readiness.
- The Focus tool measure three broad domains under which each has three sub-domains (appendix 3)
- As this report is for Working Links there is no information on this tool here and is available on request.
- The other main measure was the Core Self Evaluations Questionnaire (appendix 4). This is a thoroughly investigated measure, with substantial research references, combining four aspects demonstrated to have a significant influence on positive job-search outcomes (in the research literature). The four aspects are: Locus of control; self-esteem; self-efficacy and emotional stability.

Key Findings: Nottingham Evaluations

- Full details are in appendix 2.
- The numbers are quite low so there must be caution about interpretation.
- Both courses received very favourable reviews. 80% would recommend the Employability course, one with reservations. 100% would recommend the ICS course.
- The Employability course received 43.7% high ratings (5 or 6) and ICS received 90.64%
- There was more variation in the ratings for the employability course than ICS
- Lower rating responses for the employability course were mainly linked to the content and relevance, with the ratings for the tutor higher
- Lower rating responses for the ICS course (although none were below a 3) seem to link to the relevance and ability to confidently apply the material. This may also link to the words chosen to describe the ICS course (appendix) such as it being more intellectual, hard work and challenging
- It is notable from the selected comments (appendices 2b and 2c) that the ICS course impacted at a deep level with a number of the delegates and at least one would have liked shorter sessions over a longer period (which is a model that one provider in Canada uses)
- The Employability course was seen as more applicable to younger job-seekers by some of the delegates

Key Findings: Mansfield Evaluations

The Employability course did not run in Mansfield and 15 delegates started the ICS course, 12 completed. The evaluation method was also different – all of the 12 completing delegates gave ratings and written testimonies (appendix).

Ratings (Appendix 2)

Monday's average rating = 5.5; ranged from 3 to 10

Friday's average rating = 8.7; ranged from 8 to 10

Some comments are very powerful such as:

"I was inspired to come up with new ideas that will change how I look for work and the kind of work I want to be in"

"The course made me think differently about myself and how I look at my job search and work"

"On the whole the course is informative helping me to see what I want to do within my working career. That I am in control of my life more than I think"

"Brilliant understanding of myself etc. Enjoyed the whole experience"

"I learned how to break down the goals into sections that could be tackled one at a time and how to focus without pre-conceived ideas"

"I learned that having a plan and putting it in action will deliver results"

"To embrace the concept of self/non-self that Steve and Bill were expounding. To use the tools that the models demonstrated to help me make positive + achievable choices"

"I've learned to be honest with myself and not look for reasons to fail, but look for reasons to succeed. How to cope with stress plus not become upset but to focus on the future. This course will help you with your self confidence (whether you have a job or not) it was incredibly beneficial to my self esteem"

Some comments can aid the development and implementation of the course such as

"No real apparent awareness of what was expected"

"Thought it was just another course"

"At first I didn't know that much about the course and was wondering what the hell is this. Mainly because it wasn't explained well enough to me by my advisor at Working Links"

FOOTNOTE: *It is a view of this report's author from observing ICS in action that the ability of the tutor to create an inclusive atmosphere where individual and group*

responsibility for progress is encouraged is crucial. For example the issue of visual impairment and low levels of literacy – this was easily managed by the group in a low key way that enabled full participation and no humiliation. The ICS course does use booklets which individuals can choose how or whether they complete. This attitudinal mindset and skills needs to be incorporated into the recruitment and selection of trainers and is largely an attitudinal rather than skill-based requirement

Initial Findings: Focus and CSE Questionnaires

There is a significant amount of information still to be received. The following is from a sub-set of the eventual potential data from the before and after measures from the Nottingham course.

1. The Focus tool has an indicator of current likelihood of sustaining employment. This is on a rating of 1 to 27 with 27 as the lowest rating.

Employability course Focus rating before (average)	13.8
Employability course Focus rating after (average)	11.8
Improvement (6 delegates)	2.0
ICS course Focus rating before (average)	9.3
ICS course Focus rating after (average)	5.3
Improvement (6 delegates)	4.0

2. Core Self Evaluations is a 12 item questionnaire with a rating score of 1 (Low) to 5 (High) on each item.

Employability course CSE rating before (average)	3.45
Employability course CSE rating after (average)	3.65
Improvement (6 delegates)	0.2 (4%)
ICS course ICS rating before (average)	3.44
ICS course ICS rating after (average)	3.85
Improvement (8 delegates)	0.41(8%)

3. Focus reports have global scores for employment/job-seeking attitudes behaviours and Cognitive skills rated as Red, Amber and Green. The following gives change data across these.

<u>ATTITUDES</u>	<u>BEFORE</u>	<u>AFTER</u>
<i>Employability course</i>		
Red	2	1
Amber	3	2
Green	1	3
<i>ICS course</i>		
Red	4	0
Amber	1	2
Green	3	6

NOTE: The above section is the category which both courses are most likely to have a short term effect (i.e. over the 3 days of the course). Sections below are less open to immediate change

<u>BEHAVIOUR</u>	<u>BEFORE</u>	<u>AFTER</u>
<i>Employability course</i>		
Red	2	1
Amber	4	5
Green	0	0
<i>ICS course</i>		
Red	3	1
Amber	5	5
Green	0	1

<u>COGNITIVE</u>	<u>BEFORE</u>	<u>AFTER</u>
<i>Employability course</i>		
Red	1	0
Amber	1	2
Green	4	5
<i>ICS course</i>		
Red	1	1
Amber	1	0
Green	5	6

Note: The cognitive items include confidence in skills and this is more open to change in the short term (e.g. becoming less self-critical or more confident)

Key Recommendations (based on ICS being progressed):

- That the study continue with the whole cohort and that tracking data be gathered over the next 12 months
- Improvements are made to how the ICS course is described to potential delegates – past delegate comments to be used to aid this
- This is supported by taster sessions for referring staff
- Also that key personnel (advocates) attend a complete ICS course
- It may also benefit Working Links to gain further knowledge of the successful Canadian programmes currently in operation and how they incorporate ICS
- Supplementary brief data-based reports are issued at each reporting stage up to 13 weeks, then a 6 monthly and one-yearly report written based on job and training outcome data (Working Links to provide)
- Focus to also be re-completed at each stage
- That potential trainers be carefully recruited and trained
- Course design be carefully considered regarding such things as duration and how ICS dovetails with employability training and consultant input
- Lesson plans and materials be developed to ensure consistency
- Materials to include examples of action plans
- That the end point presentations by delegates are attended by consultants
- That there is a clear transition process identified and followed (for delegates and consultants) from the course to next step support
- That there is an identified way to gather ongoing evidence for ICS impact – for example that the testimonial review as used in Mansfield is implemented consistently

How the project ran

Pre Project Activity:

- Planning meetings at Working Links offices in Birmingham.
- Input about ICS to senior team members at the Nottingham office on 21st June 2010.
- Working Links identified 40 delegates to be randomly allocated to each of the courses.
- Delegates were informed about the courses they were to attend through the use of supplied literature (appendix 5)
- Apart from job outcomes the two impact measures to be used are the Focus questionnaire and the Core Self Evaluations questionnaire. See appendix for details of these.

Project Activity:

- Delegates were invited in to complete the Focus and CSE questionnaires on the Friday before the course they were to attend.
- Due to the non-arrival of some delegates there was a re-allocation of individuals at the start of the first day.
- The three day courses were run concurrently in Nottingham, Working Links offices from 26th to 28th July. 9 attended the ICS programme and 7 the Employability programme. All delegates completed.
- Five day courses were scheduled to run concurrently at the Mansfield offices but were moved to the St Peters Centre.
- Due to lower numbers than expected and operational issues for Working Links it was decided to amalgamate the groups and run a course of 15 delegates with just ICS.
- 12 of these delegates fully completed the course with two withdrawing through illness (a bad cold was circulating amongst delegates throughout the course). One delegate failed to return after day 3 and no explanation has been found to date.
- Delegates re-completed the two measure at the end of the Mansfield ICS course
- Evaluation data was also collected. The Nottingham evaluation was by traditional use of mainly tick-based options with a few open questions. The

Mansfield evaluation was through an overall rating change (Monday – Friday) plus personal testimony.

Future proposed Project Activity:

- Collect and collate all data
- Write an initial report (this report)
- Identify and collect ongoing tracking data (appendix) to evaluate ongoing impact on jobseekers over the next 12 months
- Publish further reports at agreed intervals

Appendices:

1. Implicit Career Search brochure – Overview (see separate PDF document)

2. Feedback

COURSE EVALUATION ICS COURSE

GENERAL COMMENTS	RATING SCORE 5= VERY GOOD 1 = VERY LIMITED					RATING SCORE 5= VERY GOOD 1 = VERY LIMITED						
	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1		
Before the course my knowledge was ...		3	3				3	3		1		
After this course my knowledge is now ...		3	3				4	3				
	RATING SCORE 6= VERY GOOD 1 = VERY LIMITED					RATING SCORE 6= VERY GOOD 1 = VERY LIMITED						
	6	5	4	3	2	1	6	5	4	3	2	1
Overview												
My reason for attending were fully met	1	2	1	2			5	1	2			
There are ideas I can use straight away	1	2	1	1	1		4	2	2			
I am confident about putting into practise what I have learnt.	1	3	1			1	4	1	3			
About the tutors												
The tutors were helpful	4	2					7	1				
The course aims and objectives were shown	1	4	1				6		2			
The tutors really knew their subject	4	2					8					
My questions were answered	2	3	1				7		1			
Content and Structure												
The course was interesting		3	2			1	5	3				
I found the course well structured and easy to understand	1	3	1	1			5	2	1			
The course aims and objectives were reached	3	1					4	2	1			
The course was relevant to my needs	1	2	1	1		1	4	1	3			
The handouts/notebooks/visual aids were clear and easy to understand	3	2		1			5	3				
Overall the standard was	2	3	1				5	3				
Recommendation												
Yes		4					8					
No		1					0					

Note: 6 out of 7 completed evaluation forms

Note: 8 out of 9 completed evaluation forms

2a. ICS Evaluations (see separate PDF document)

2b. Employability course selected comments

Employability Course – Selected comments

These comments were taken from the evaluation forms completed by the delegates on the Employability course, Nottingham, 26th to 26th July 2010

Positive comments about impact

- I feel this course could help 25s and under
- (most useful) tea building, working together as a group and understanding how things are done, to how they used to be done
- The academic content
- The whole course was useful and is a good refresher for most people. Wendy was great, she pulled on personal experience

Development comments

- Aiming it at people who don't know the direction they wish their careers to go
- Implementing it to a younger demographic and/or those with little or no life/work experience and towards those with little confidence, education or much negativity
- Lighten up in the exercises
- I feel this course could help the 25s and under

2c. ICS course selected comments

Implicit Career Search Course – Selected comments

These comments were taken from the evaluation forms completed by the delegates on the ICS course, Nottingham, 26th to 26th July 2010

Positive comments about impact

- The most useful parts for me was when we worked in groups and partners and explained our feelings and awareness
- Giving me the confidence to go for what I want
- Tutor and Bill were helpful and encouraging. No-one was treated any differently and no-one was talked down to
- Getting to know my inner feelings – will take a deep breath and try to remember what Steve taught me
- Finding my essence
- The plans
- Action plans to get a job. Use what I was told to get a job.

Development comments

- Shorter hours and a longer period of time i.e. 5 mornings instead of 3 longer days
- Telling us what it was about from the start
- More job ideas

2d. How would you describe your course/tutor?

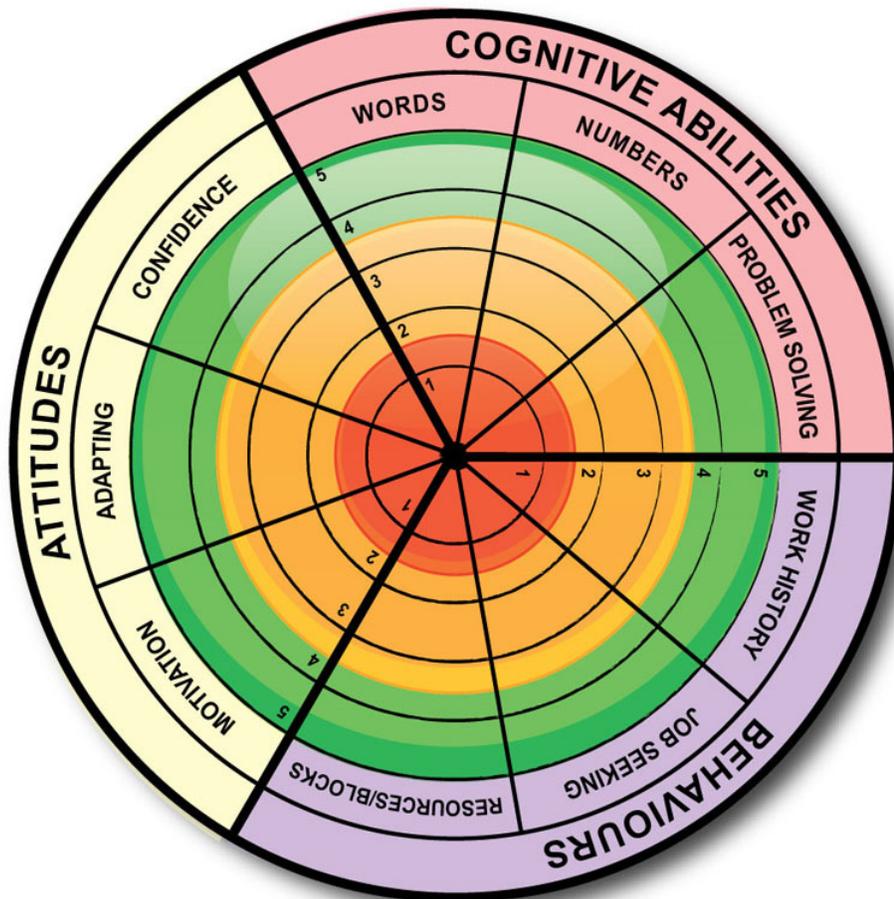
How would you describe your course/tutors?

Nottingham Groups – 26th to 28th July 2010

The descriptive words on the left are taken from the list of options given to the delegates on the application form. The numbers indicate how many delegates selected that description.

ITEM	Employability	ICS
Lively tutors	5	5
Professional	2	5
Interesting	3	6
Participative	2	2
Valuable	2	2
Fun	3	3
Good support materials	1	3
Useable	2	4
Interactive	2	6
Stimulating	2	2
Rewarding	1	5
Intellectual	0	4
Fulfilling	0	3
Thorough	0	1
Hard work	0	1
Challenging	0	1

3. Focus Spidergram showing the domains of assessment



4. Core Self Evaluations questionnaire

Introducing the questionnaire below

- This questionnaire is being used in a study to help Working Links understand better what things effect job seeking success
- Your honest responses will be an important way to help Working Links help people looking for work
- Your responses will be only used for this study and will not affect the services and support you receive
- The results will be kept confidential so that only the staff on this training will see your results
- When the study is over your results will be destroyed

By completing and signing this questionnaire you agree to the use of your answers for this study only

QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions:

Below are several statements about you with which you may agree or disagree.

Using the response scale below, indicate your agreement or disagreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item.

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

01. _____ I am confident I get the success I deserve in life.
02. _____ Sometimes I feel depressed
03. _____ When I try, I generally succeed.
04. _____ Sometimes when I fail I feel worthless
05. _____ I complete tasks successfully.
06. _____ Sometimes, I do not feel in control of my life
07. _____ Overall, I am satisfied with myself.
08. _____ I am filled with doubts about my competence.
09. _____ I determine what will happen in my life.
10. _____ I do not feel in control of my success in my career
11. _____ I am capable of coping with most of my problems.
12. _____ There are times when things look pretty bleak and hopeless to me.

Your Name:

Your Signature:

5. Course information sheet – ICS (see attached PDF)