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# Measuring Demonstration Success: Lessons Learned from the Limited English Proficiency and Hispanic Workforce Initiative

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# Goal of evaluation

Examine methods simultaneously enhancing English language and occupational skills in 5 demonstration sites supported by Department of Labor

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# Five Models

1. Sed de Saber – Texas
2. Career Launch – Minnesota
3. STEP-UP – Nebraska
4. Words for Workforce – California
5. LEP for Retail Industry of NYC – New York

(not specific to Hispanics)

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# Evaluation design

- Define nature of innovative approaches in language acquisition and occupational skills
- Compare strategies to identify common elements or practices proven successful as well as variances in performance
- Use data collected by grantees to determine effectiveness of strategies
- Identify lessons learned from each of the 5 grantees (implementation and outcomes)
- Determine sustainability of each project

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## Measures (in proposals)

- Completing curriculum
- Achieving credential/diploma (incumbent or dislocated worker)
- Attain targeted skills
- Gains in English language skills
- Job placement (incumbent or dislocated worker)
- Retention [after 180 days] (incumbent or dislocated worker)
- Promotion
- Average wage gain [over 6 months] (incumbent or dislocated worker)

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# Challenges

1. Each was structured differently (partnerships, outreach, etc)
2. Not all included outcome measures to evaluate English language skills
3. Skills development outcome measures focused on placement, retention, and/or compensation— not skills mastery
4. Cost per participant was widely diverse
5. Time line for program completion varied
6. Program strategies ranged from developing and offering self-paced learning tools to regimented participation in curriculum offerings
7. Participants served varied in scope (incumbent, displaced, pre-hires)
8. Projects did not collect data universally consistent with proposals

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# Five Components – Lessons learned

## 1. Organization

- Reinforce effective partnerships (and end ineffective partnerships)
- Align and modify services for employer participant needs and priorities

## 2. Outreach and recruitment

- Design appropriate strategies to employer needs
- Be flexible to adaptations based on participant needs (incentives, location, scheduling)

## 3. Assessment

- Establish realistic goals and align assessment criteria and data collected
- Track consistently for changes or potential need for intervention

## 4. Curriculum and instruction

- Curriculum content appropriate to employment/training
- offer case-management/wrap-around services

## 5. Leadership

- Active engagement of employers in program implementation
- Maintain continuity in management

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## Five recommendations - future demonstration projects

1. Build in evaluation at outset with program initiative (RFP) and fund appropriately
2. Require collection of common data (different approaches, common outcomes)
3. Provide technical assistance to ensure capacity to collect and evaluate data for internal program evaluation
4. Disseminate shorter report of project evaluation to share lessons learned
5. Build on lessons learned for future programs and respective evaluation designs