

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES IN THE DELIVERY OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES

Partners in Innovation Symposium

May 30, 2017

Introduction

- This session will explore several innovative approaches in the delivery of quality training and employment services
- First, we need to define terminology
 - **What does it mean for training to be innovative?**
 - **What does it mean for training to be of high quality?**
- Evaluations often consider these questions only in terms of indicators of program success e.g. did the program increase employment and earnings?
- **To understand the nuance of training quality** one must look at a deeper set of indicators that consider the extent of **alignment**

Alignment

- **Alignment** refers to the degree to which **training** is effectively matched to **participant needs and the learning context**, on multiple levels:
 - **Learner profile** – type and degree of learner skills gaps
 - **Performance outcomes** – task-based behaviours that the training is ultimately looking to improve e.g. occupational requirements
 - **Business needs** – the primary objectives and business priorities of employers
 - **Learning context** – considers recent dynamics of the training environment that would diminish engagement in learning and use of new skills

Quality Training, Best Practices

- **High quality training** is any approach that *achieves alignment* while *maximizing engagement* in learning and the *application of skills*
- **Best practices for achieving alignment** are well documented (SRDC, 2014)
 - *A robust assessment* of baseline needs
 - *Embedding* of learning exercises in relevant *occupational context*
 - *Customization* of training to learner and business needs
 - *High relevance* through authentic workplace materials
 - Supports to encourage post-training *learning transfer*
- Training quality can be viewed as a **continuum** on these domains
- Recent evidence from UPSKILL has demonstrated that better alignment through these training practices leads to larger performance gains and ROI from training investments

A Pan-Canadian demonstration project that measured the impacts and ROI of workplace Essential Skills training

Large scale– implemented in 8 provinces with 110 firms and 1,500 workers in the frontline service positions

Firm-level randomized control trial (RCT) - provides rigorous estimates of impacts on job performance, business outcomes and ROI for firms

Sponsored by Employment and Social Development Canada

Demonstrated large gains in Essential Skills and job performance from a modest 20-hour training intervention

23 point gain in literacy levels compared to control group

12 percentage point impact on industry certification rates

Accompanying impacts on job retention, employment rates, and earnings

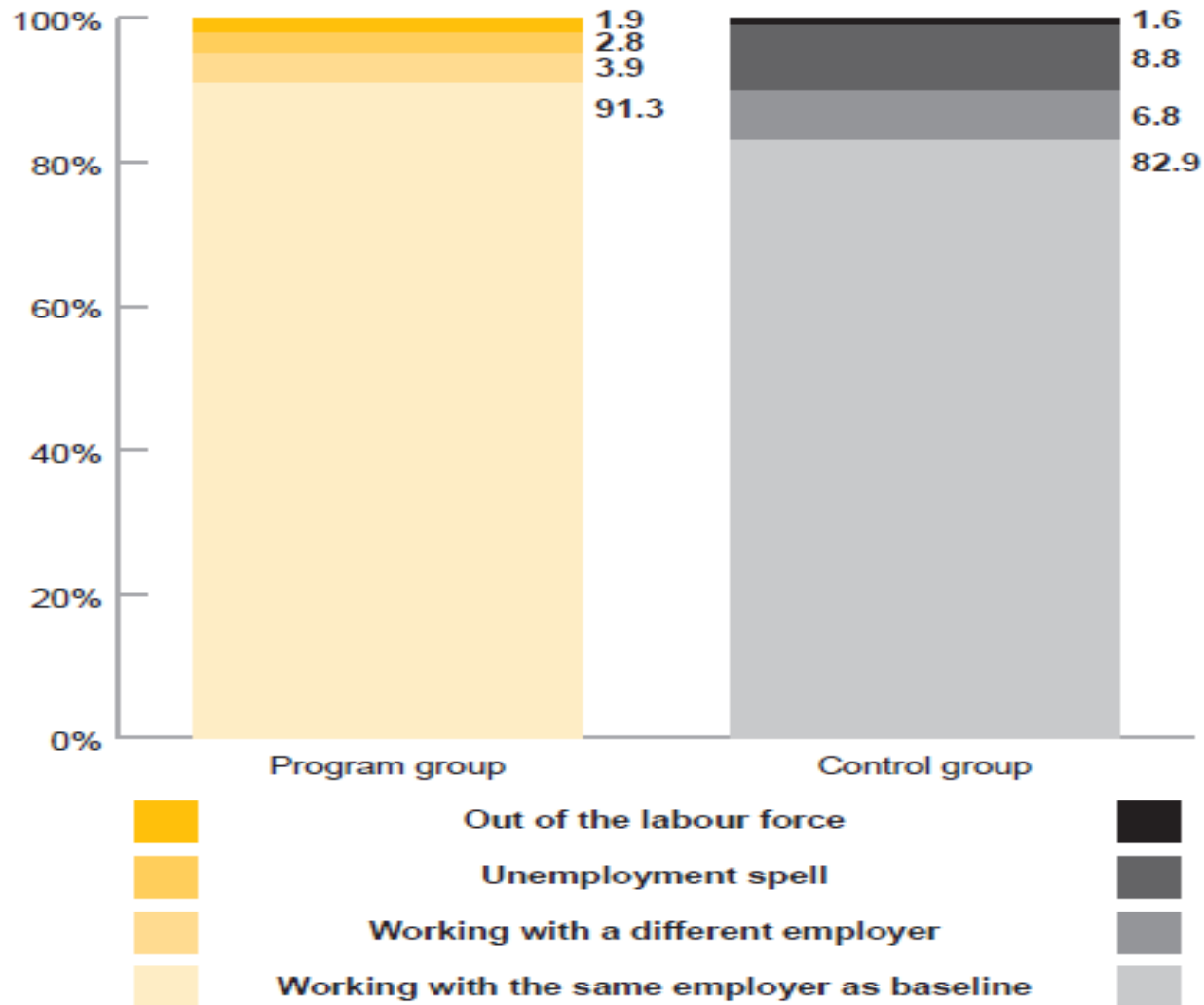
Job retention up 8.5 percentage points

Unemployment reduced by 6 percentage points

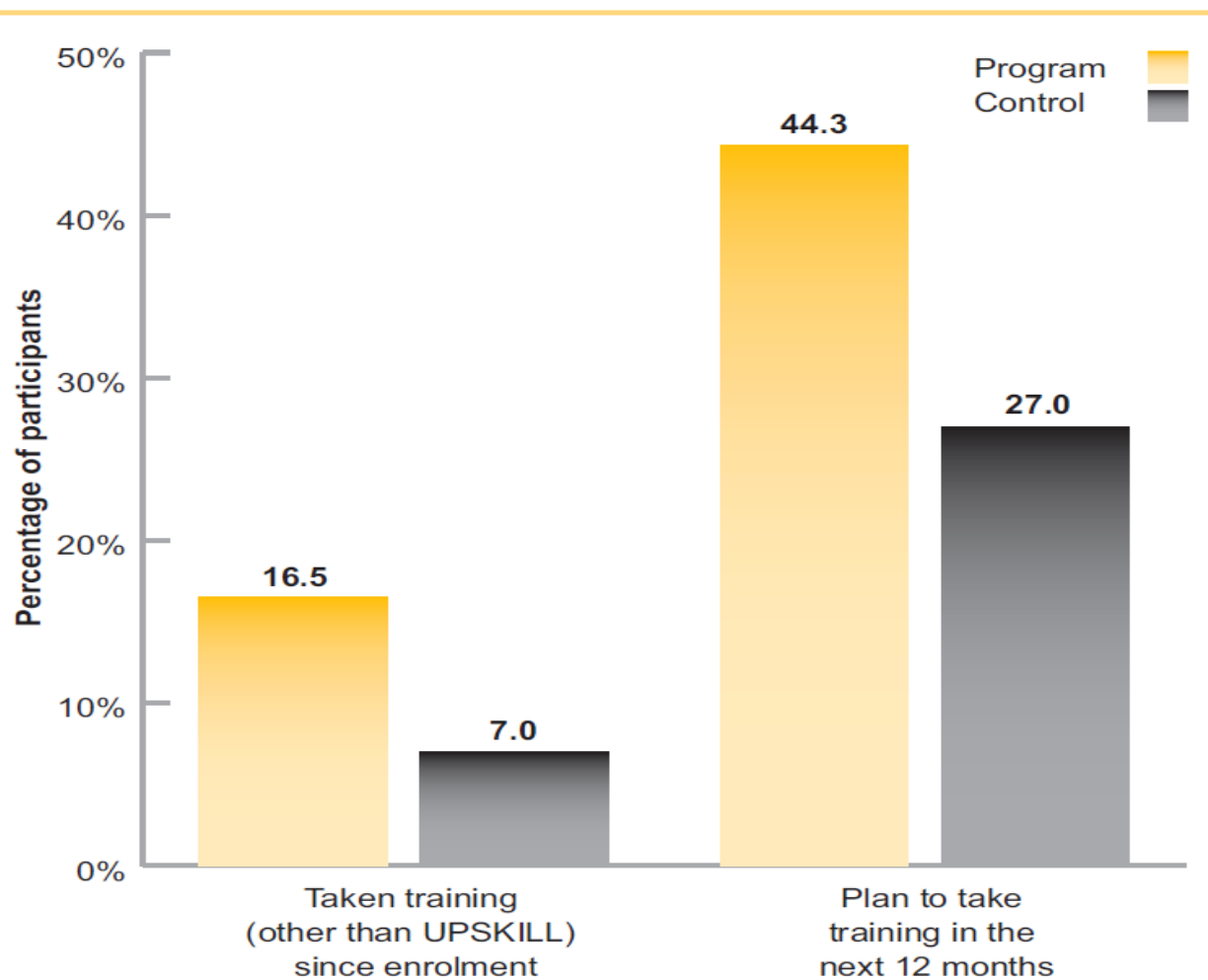
Substantial benefits for firms with positive ROI

23 percent return on investment for firms within only 12 months

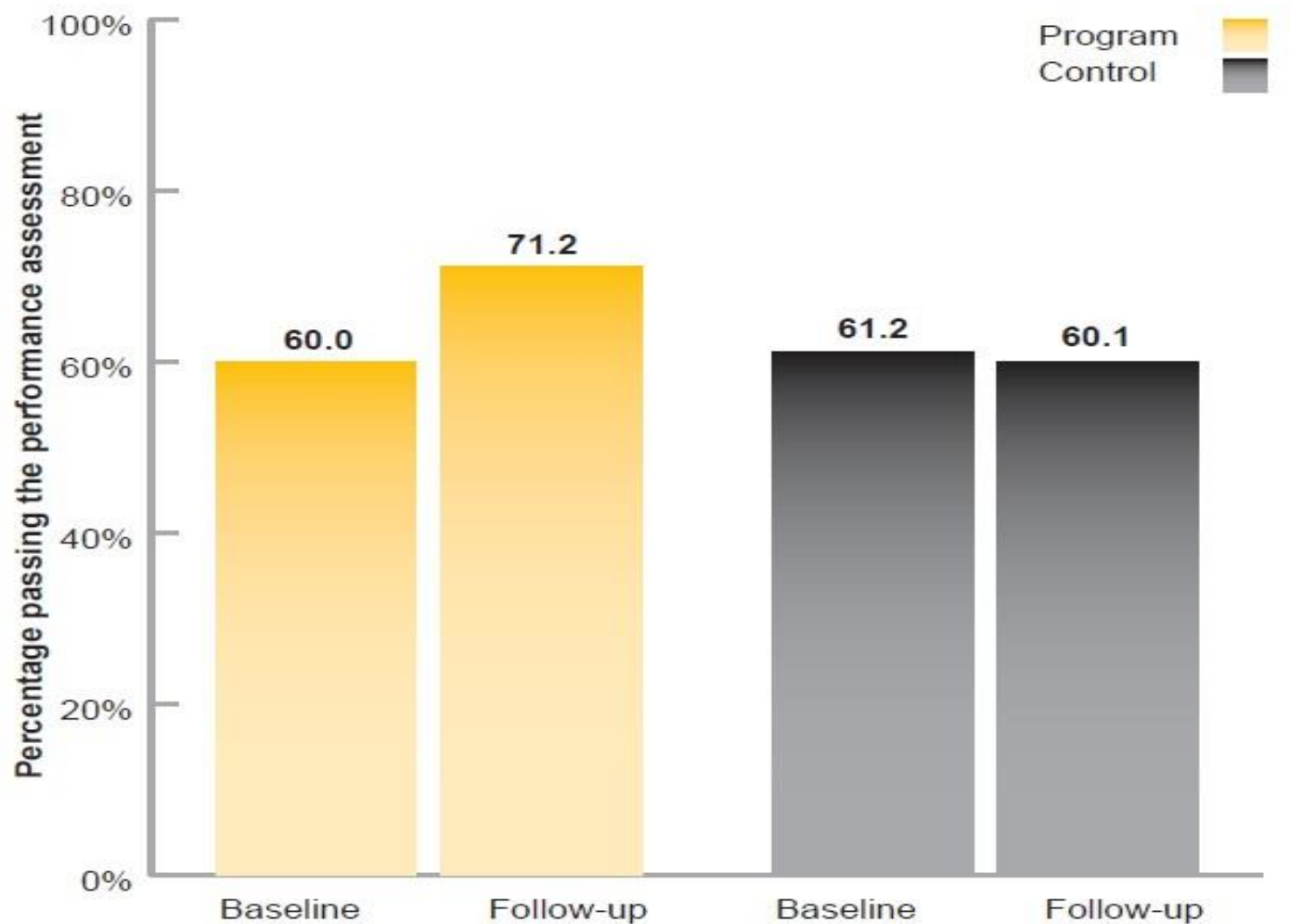
Employment Rates after 12-months



Further education and training



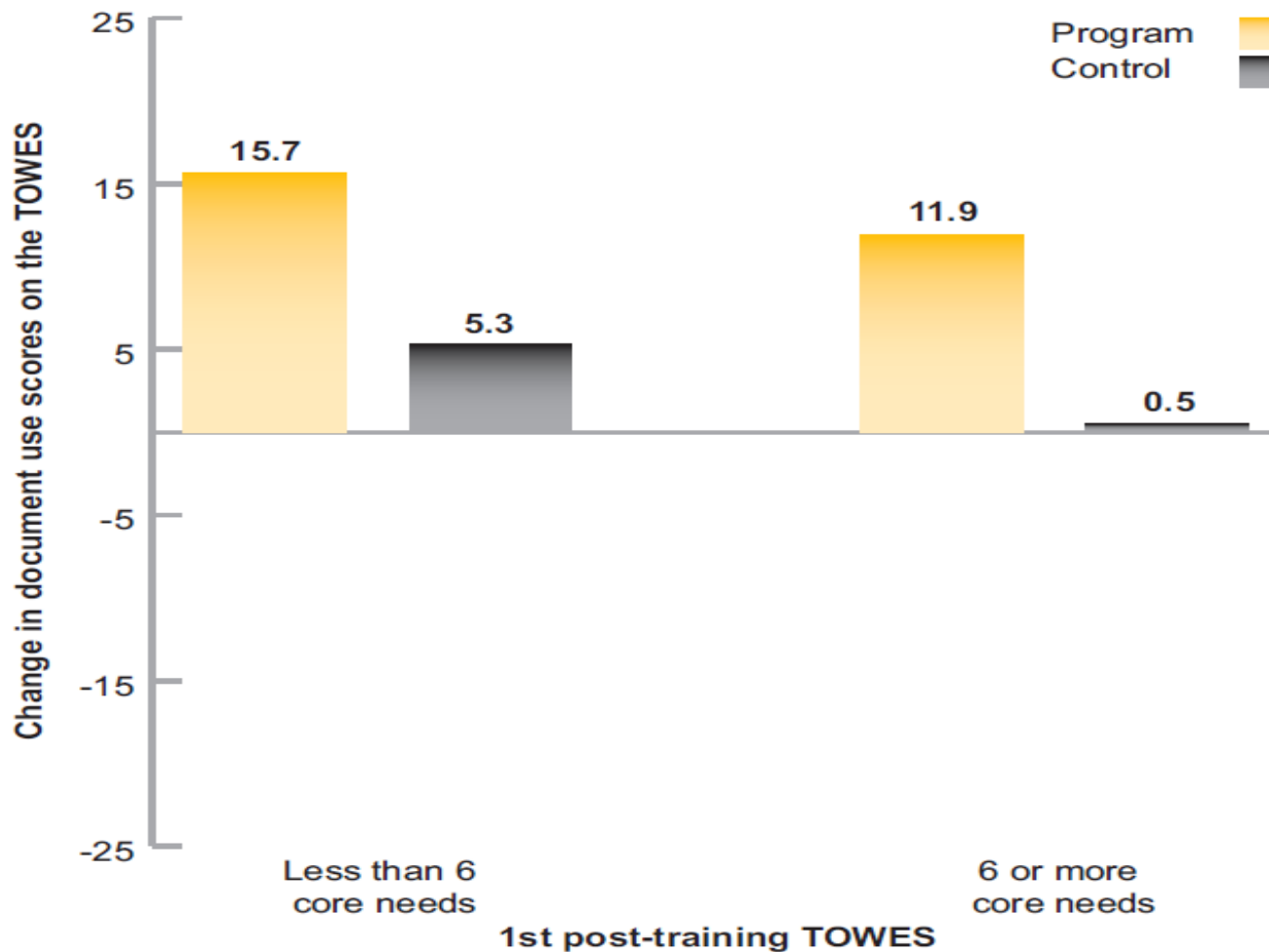
Industry Certification Rates after 12-months



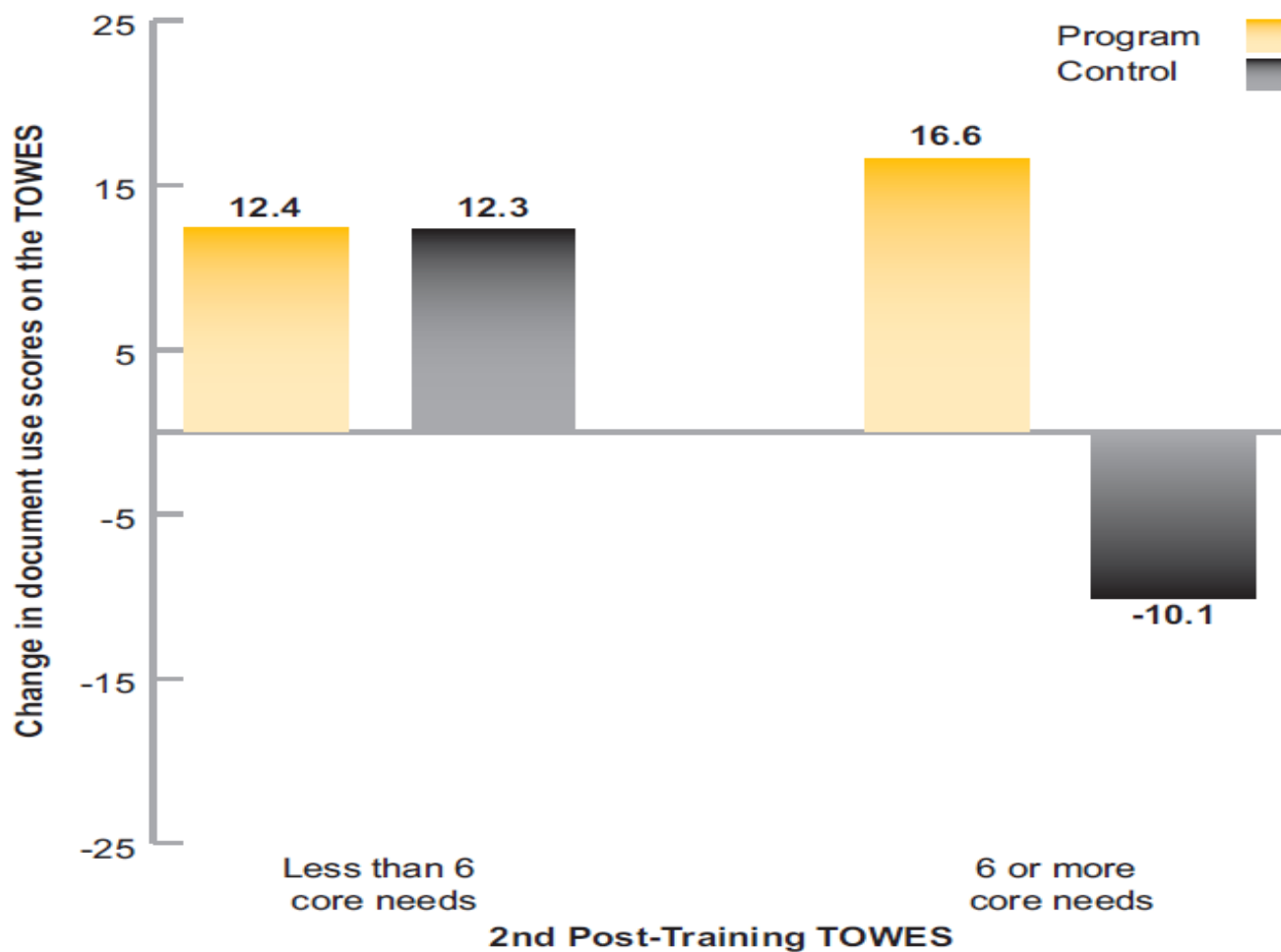
Does *alignment* really matter?

- Average impacts can mask important differences in effectiveness of training and employment services across a sample
- Subgroup analysis can help us understand how impacts vary across groups based on critical factors, such as need and context
- ***Alignment with needs***
 - *How important are baseline needs assessments?*
 - *How important is customization?*
- ***Alignment with context***
 - *How important is it to consider the training environment?*
 - *How important is workplace context?*

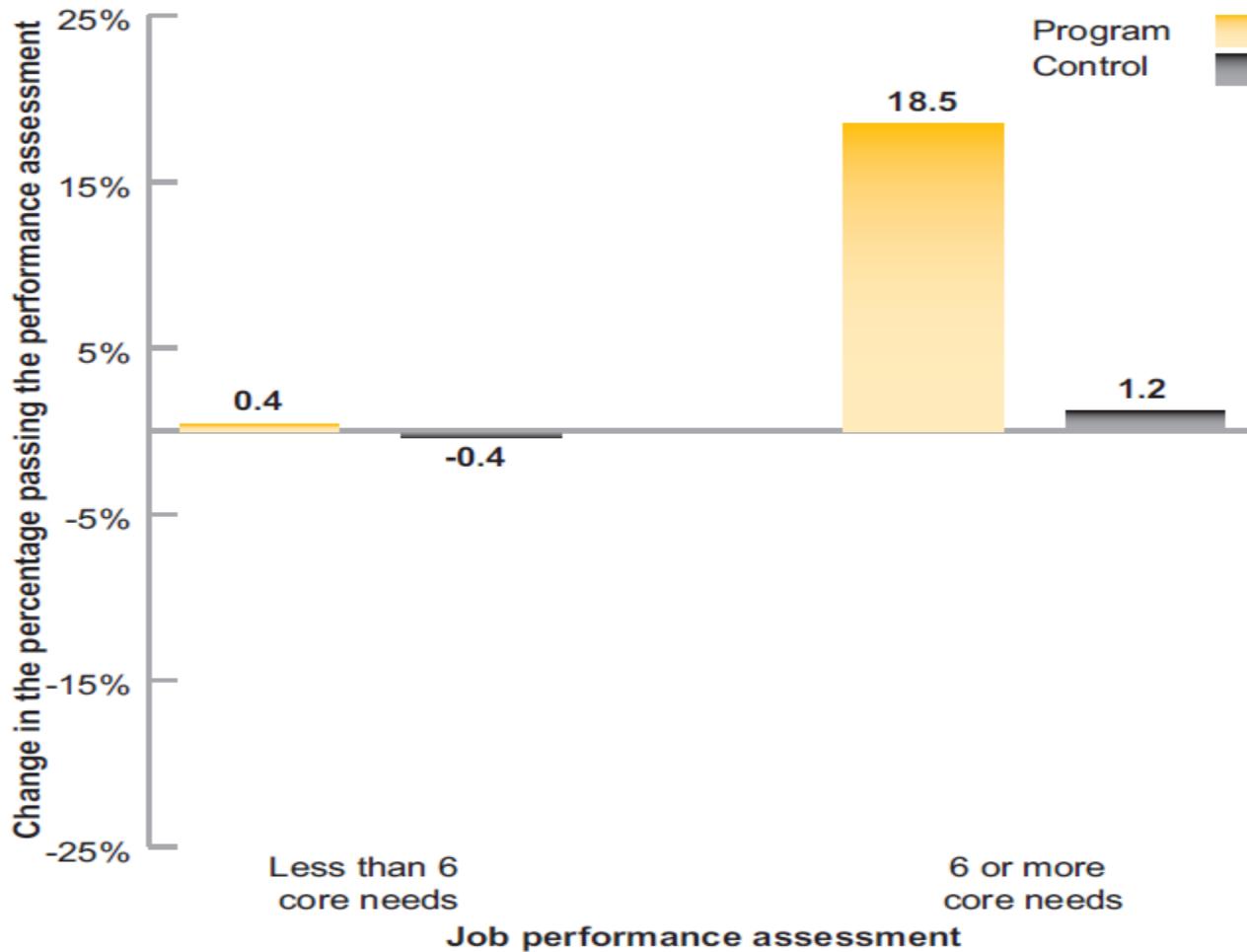
Subgroup Impacts, by Breadth of Needs



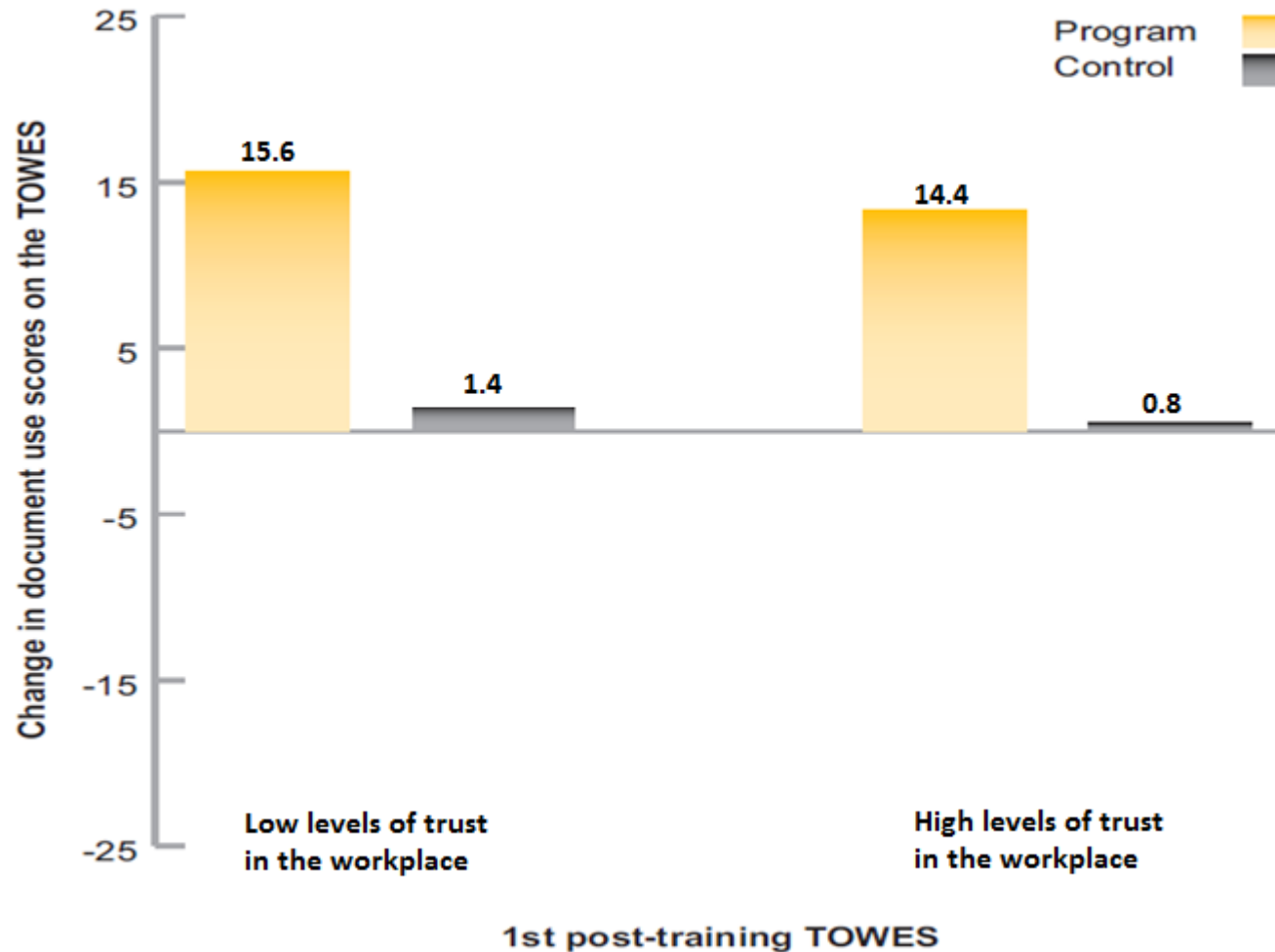
Subgroup Impacts, by Breadth of Needs



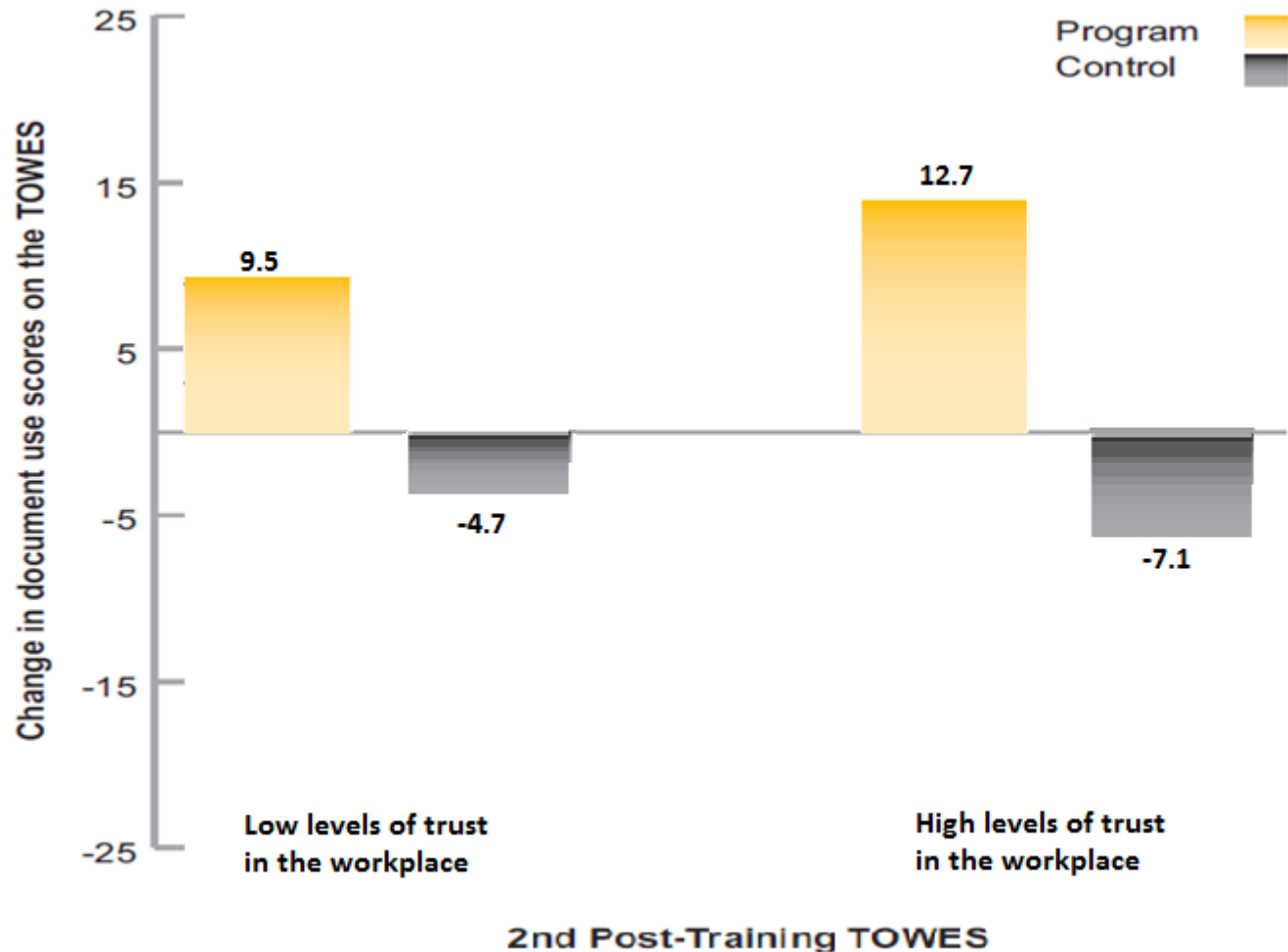
Subgroup Impacts, by Breadth of Needs



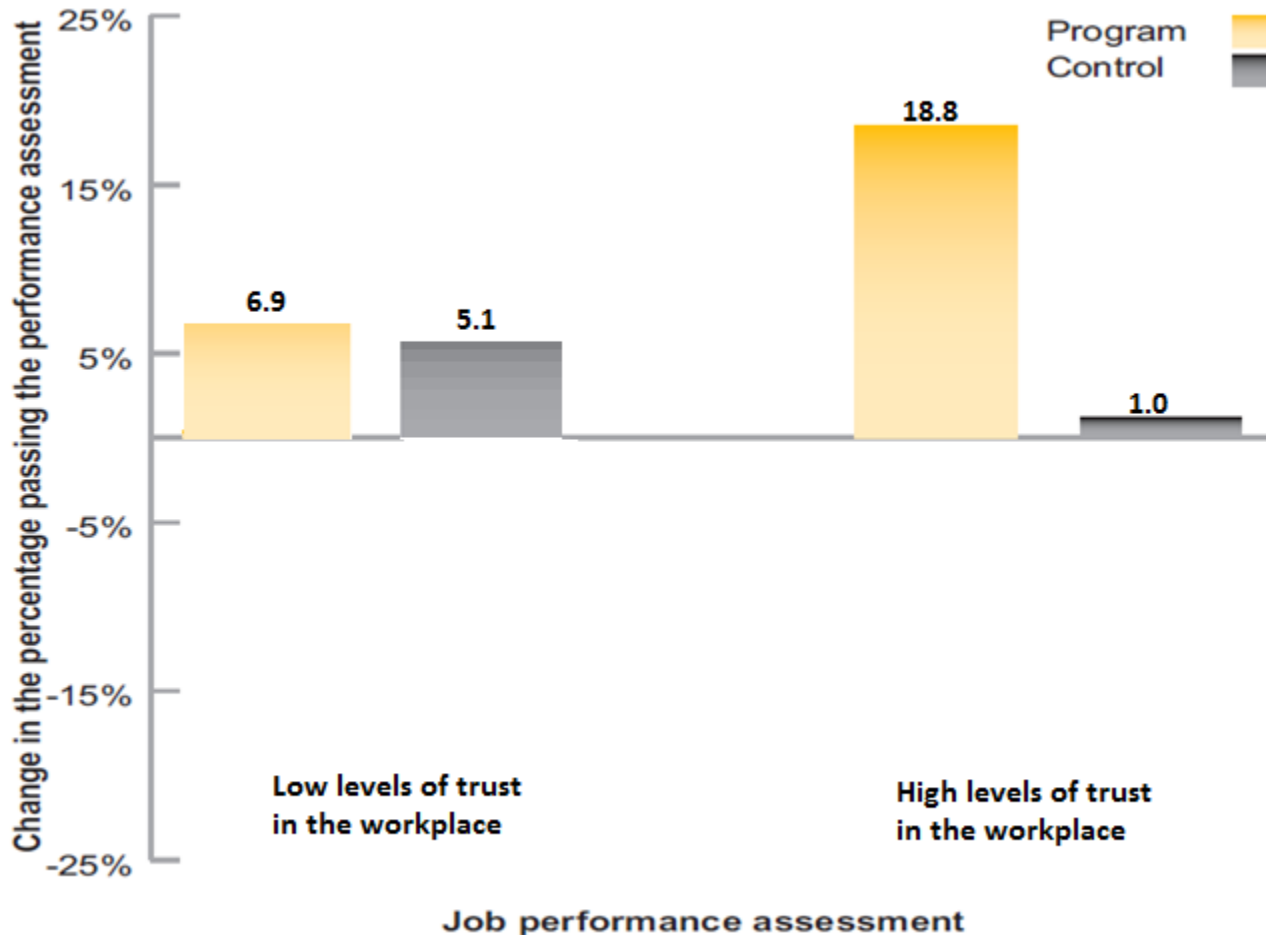
Subgroup Impacts, by Differences in Context



Subgroup Impacts, by Differences in Context



Subgroup Impacts, by Differences in Context



Innovative Training Models

What does it mean then for training to be innovative?

- There are many contexts that make it difficult for even the best trainers to achieve alignment with a traditional training model
- Constraints can include, among other issues
 - Lack of clarity in skill requirements
 - Lack of occupational specificity, limited performance structure for embedding learning exercises
 - Little availability of authentic workplace materials
 - Lack of capacity to support traditional delivery models
- **Innovative training models can thus be viewed as any approaches that help overcome *delivery constraints and ensure quality and equitable access to well aligned training***

Innovative Training Models

Highlight two recent training innovations that each respond to particular kinds of constraints on quality and access

1. Training models for the skilled trades

The Construction sector relies on mentorship for skills development. The traditional workplace training model is currently inconsistent with this channel. Is there an alternative?

2. Training models for very small businesses

Very small businesses lack the capacity to support traditional on-site training, both in terms of infrastructure and class sizes. Are there suitable models that can accommodate them?

MENTORSHIP TRAINING MODELS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION TRADES

Background

- In BC, **~39,500 workers** in the construction industry are **expected to retire** between 2016 and 2025.
- As a result, the number of **younger, less experienced workers** as a percentage of the workforce **is increasing**.
- This is placing significant pressure on the **training capacity** of various actors in the construction sector responsible for skills development
- Not simply a challenge for the apprenticeship system
- Employers and journeymen are under increasing pressure to support rapid skills development

Rationale

The challenge – skills development requires quality mentorship

- 85% of skills development happens on the job through mentorship
- However, employers report that the quality of mentorship varies dramatically – in its approach and its quality (Buildforce, 2012)
- Many tradesworkers and apprentices are simply not prepared for the mentoring relationship with gaps in essential skills – oral communication, working with others
- Furthermore, a traditional workplace essential skills training model will not work for this sector
- Few tools exist that effectively integrate LES in a mentoring context

Integrating LES training within mentorship

Develop a mentorship training model that integrates essential skills in a way that will not only makes better mentors – but is also fully aligned with the needs and context of construction sector trades and their employers

- **Requires an innovative approach to gathering sector Labour Market Information (LMI) – not only demand and supply but also gap analysis**
- Identify which skills and performance gaps are most critical to business
- Identify which gaps are likely to be most responsive to mentorship training
- Build training and assessment tools specifically targeting these areas

Integrating LES training within mentorship

Example: Sector LMI study for British Columbia's Electrical Trade

- Partnered with International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)'s Electrical Joint Training Committee (EJTC) and SkillPlan
- Support from the Sector Labour Market Partnerships (SLMP) program from the BC Ministry of Jobs Tourism and Skills Training
- Undertaking a comprehensive LMI study to understand the nature of skills and performance gaps within the **Electrical Trade**

Integrating LES training within mentorship

Methodology for a pre-design LMI study

- **Build a Performance framework**
 - Linking occupational standards to Essentials Skills
 - Linking occupational standards to Business Outcomes
 - Constructing suitable performance metrics
- **Sector needs analysis: employer consultations**
 - Validating the framework and performance metrics
 - Identifying most critical gaps to business
 - Identifying which are most responsive to mentorship
- **Province-wide survey of electrical contractors**
 - Validating the framework and metrics
 - Quantifying the gaps

CLUSTER TRAINING MODELS FOR VERY SMALL BUSINESSES

Background

- Small business drives private sector employment with nearly 70 per cent of all Canadian workers employed in small firms of less than 100
- A lesser known fact, is the importance of “very small” businesses – defined as firms with fewer than 20 employees
- These firms account for nearly 25 per cent of all Canadian employment
- Even more significant in some regions and sectors
- In Atlantic Canada, “small operators” account for over 80 per cent of all businesses and up to 45 per cent of all workers in sectors such as Tourism

Rationale

The challenge – workers in very small businesses have limited access to high quality well-aligned training

- Comparatively low rates of training among small businesses are well documented
- Very small businesses rely almost exclusively on informal methods
- Traditional workplace training is not an option due largely to constraints on capacity
 - Limited budgets
 - Lack of infrastructure to support on-site training
 - Inability to support group training options and get economies of scale
- The current alternatives for LES training?
 - Informal training, or short-term courses **lacking business alignment**

A cluster-based approach to training

Exploring cluster-based training models that “pool” training resources and trainees from across local businesses – yet aim to balance the need for alignment and customization to each business

- **Group-based learning environments:** Pooling learners across multiple businesses can address cost-related barriers, facilitate economies of scale and leverage peer-based learning and network effects;
- **Alignment through customization:** Customizing curricula to individual learner and businesses needs to achieve tight alignment will help maximize skills, performance, and business gains
- These features often involve competing goals – striking the right balance of homogeneity within a cluster while accommodating diverse needs
- Requires a different kind of model for assessment and training delivery

A cluster-based approach to training

Example: Cluster Training model for NB Tourism Small Businesses

- Support from the New Brunswick Government's Department of Post-secondary Education Training and Labour (PETL)
- Partnered with Tourism Industry Association of New Brunswick
- Objectives
 - Document existing approaches to Cluster-based training in other jurisdictions such as Nova Scotia and Manitoba
 - Develop new assessment tools to facilitate cluster-based delivery
 - Augment existing LES training curricula for the Tourism small business
 - Pilot the cluster-based approach with up to 15 businesses in New Brunswick