thinking skills
working with others
document use   writing
oral communication   computer use
numeracy
reading text
continuous learning

Essential Skills for Literacy Practitioners

A Guide and Three Workshops

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Purpose

This guide provides a foundation for literacy practitioners to learn more about the nine Essential Skills and the Essential Skills Profiles. A brief history of the development of the Essential Skills and the Essential Skills Profiles through the Essential Skills Research Project has been included. Current best practices for integrating the Essential Skills into Literacy and Basic Skills programming have been identified in the case studies.

Project History

This guide was developed as part of a project titled, *The Meaning of Essential Skills for Literacy Practitioners*, and was funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Literacy practitioners from across the province were surveyed to determine their current level of Essential Skills knowledge and to gain an understanding of supports that could be developed to help practitioners understand the role of the Essential Skills in task-based training delivery. Forty-eight literacy practitioners, representing community-based, school board and college Literacy and Basic Skills programs, answered the following questions:

- Please rate your understanding of the Essential Skills as they relate to Literacy and Basic Skills programming.
- How well do you think you are currently integrating the Essential Skills into program delivery?
- In what ways are you currently integrating the Essential Skills into your program?
- Has your program been directly involved in any projects or initiatives related to the Essential Skills?
- What are your top five challenges related to the Essential Skills?
- What emerging issues related to the Essential Skills do you see for service delivery and support?

- What supports do you think you need in order to more fully integrate the Essential Skills into your program?
- Please list any useful resources related to the Essential Skills (print or online) that you are aware of.
- Please list organizations or people that you are aware of that have done work on some aspect of the Essential Skills (e.g., assessment, curriculum development, learning resources, promotional materials).
- As part of this project, online workshops along with PowerPoint presentations on the Essential Skills will be developed. Please list topics that you feel would be most helpful.

The data collected through this survey informed the development of this guide and three workshops.

The three workshops were developed to support practitioners with the implementation of the Essential Skills into Literacy and Basic Skills programming. The workshops are titled:

- The Plain Goods on Essential Skills
- Integrating Essential Skills
- Essential Skills and the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum

Each workshop includes a PowerPoint presentation, handouts and a facilitation guide. Facilitators across the province will be able to utilize the materials and deliver the workshops, as required. The workshops can be delivered face-to-face or online. The workshops, workshop facilitation guides, handouts and handout answer keys have been appended to this guide.

Part 1: Essential Skills

Essential Skills Overview

Essential Skills are the skills needed for work, learning and life. They are the skills people use to perform a wide variety of tasks in the workplace and in everyday activities. Essential Skills are found in almost all occupations but they are not the technical skills required by specific jobs. Instead, they are the underlying skills that have applicability across almost all occupations. [i]

Essential Skills provide the foundation for employability but they are also used in the pursuit of further education and training, and to enhance personal independence. There are nine Essential Skills:

1. Reading Text
2. Document Use
3. Writing
4. Numeracy
5. Oral Communication
6. Thinking Skills
7. Working with Others
8. Computer Use
9. Continuous Learning

Essential Skills are enabling and transferable skills that help people perform the tasks required by their jobs and other activities in their daily lives. Essential Skills also provide a foundation for learning other skills and they enhance the ability of people to adapt to change.

Most of the Essential Skills have a unique complexity rating scale. Four-level or five-level scales are used depending on the Essential Skill. The complexity rating scales for Reading Text and Document Use are compatible with the scales used in the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS). The complexity rating scale for Oral Communication is compatible with the Canadian Language Benchmarks. There is a wide range of complexity within each level and this is particularly important for complexity level 1. The scope of level 1 is large, covering roughly 50 per cent of the entire scale.[ii]

Essential Skills can help literacy practitioners understand the complexity of tasks and help ensure that learners are focused on using their skills in the ways that they will need to use them outside of a literacy program environment. Essential Skills help practitioners and learners to see the connections between the tasks that they do in a program and the tasks that they do at work, home or in the community.

The Essential Skills provide:

- A transparent way to understand task complexity
- A direct connection to careers and everyday life
- A common language amongst employers and educators

Essential Skills are "dormant" until there is a task. The key to understanding the Essential Skills is to understand what a task is.

> A **task** is something that a person does at home, at work or in the community.
>
> A **task** must employ a skill or set of skills, describe what is being produced or acted upon and include a purpose.

A task is something individuals are likely to do outside the learning environment: at home, at work, or in the community.

A task always:

- Employs a skill or skills
- Describes what is being produced or acted upon
- Includes a purpose

Here is an example of a task: "Writes a report to summarize a recent event." In this example, the skill is "writes". It is "a report" that is being produced. The purpose is to "summarize" a recent event.

The following examples show the difference between a non-task and a task:

Non-Task	Task
Measure.	Measure ingredients to prepare a recipe.
Read a novel.	Read a novel to learn about a different culture.
Count from 1 to 20.	Count the number of bus stops between your home and a new destination.

Any task that contains all three elements can be assessed using the Essential Skills complexity rating scales.

A literacy practitioner can ask the following questions to determine if something is a task:

1. What is the learner being asked to do?
2. What is the purpose of the activity?
3. Is this something individuals would do outside of a literacy program environment?

Tasks are important because they can be rated for complexity. Tasks are a way of understanding what the skill requirements are, regardless of the context. Addressing tasks in literacy programs ensures that we are helping learners build skills in ways that the skills will be used outside of the program.

Tasks offer adult learners the same skill development opportunities but in a more meaningful way. Compare the two examples, below.

1. Complete a page of word problems to practice converting measurements.	2. Convert measurements in a recipe to units you can measure using available tools.

Learners are being taught to convert measurements in both examples. However, in example 2, learners are being taught in a way that allows them to see how the skill is used outside of the program.

Tasks enable practitioners to consider the skills learners need to use and the purpose for which they use them. Tasks offer meaningful ways to teach skills and provide authentic opportunities to use skills. Using a task-based approach in a literacy program helps to make learning activities "real". Essential Skills support skill transfer from one job to another and from one context to another.

Most tasks have one skill as the focus, but tasks often require learners to use skills in combination, in order to complete tasks as they would in real life. Consider the task "re-decorate a room". Several different skills are involved in this one integrated task:

- Measure the room (Numeracy)
- Choose materials from a catalogue (Document Use)
- Purchase supplies (Numeracy)
- Make decisions (Thinking Skills)

The integration of skills through tasks helps to make activities in the program more real for learners. However, skill development is still important because skills provide the building blocks for tasks.

Essential Skills research has helped to explain how skills are used in work, learning and life. We use documents all the time and they are found at work, in the home and in the community. When we read, we usually skim and scan text to choose only the information we need, as opposed to reading entire texts from the top of the first page to the bottom of the last. The use of numeracy is almost always connected to documents. It is unusual for us to perform mathematical functions (e.g., work out fractions) unless they are specifically linked to something else. Very few people, outside of academic environments, have to write extended essay-like texts. The tasks we need to do at work, at home and in the community usually require the integration of more than one skill. For example, using email requires reading, document use, writing, computer use and thinking skills. The purpose is always important when we are using our skills. We always use our skills to achieve our goal or to accomplish a task.

Working with Learners Who Have Lower Level Skills

Learners who may have difficulty with level 1 tasks can still benefit from a task-based approach because this type of approach allows them to engage in tasks that they can apply directly in their lives. Depending on the learner, he/she may need to take more time to develop the skills necessary to complete the tasks independently.

Learners with lower levels of skill could work on tasks such as:

- Signing forms to accept agreements
- Discerning letters for an eye exam
- Reading time to monitor the length of a break or lunch period
- Reading street signs to get to a new destination

Reading Text refers to reading and understanding material that is in the form of sentences or paragraphs (e.g., notes, letters, memos, manuals, specifications, regulations, books, reports, journals).

Reading Text includes:

- forms and labels if they contain at least one paragraph
- print and non-print media (for example, texts on computer screens)
- paragraph-length text in charts, tables and graphs

Reading Text has a five-level complexity scale organized by the *type of text and the purposes for reading*. The five levels of this complexity scale are compatible with the scale used in the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), except that IALS Level 4 has been broken down into Levels 4 and 5 in the Essential Skills complexity scale.

> We use this skill when we read a text to scan for information, to locate information, to skim for overall meaning, to get the gist, to critique or evaluate what we read, and to integrate information from multiple sources.

Workplace Task Examples	Community Task Examples
• Read an employment contract to determine responsibilities.	• Scan a community newspaper to locate a volunteer opportunity.

Document Use refers to tasks that involve a variety of information displays in which words, numbers, icons and other visual characteristics (e.g., line, colour, shape) are given meaning by their spatial arrangement.

A document that includes at least one paragraph of text is also classified as Reading Text. If completing a document requires the entry of words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs, it is also classified as Writing.

> We use this skill when we read signs, labels, or lists, as well as when we interpret graphs, charts or drawings.

Document Use includes:

- print and non-print media (for example, computer screen, equipment gauges, clocks and flags)
- reading/interpreting and writing/completing/ producing of documents - these two uses of documents often occur simultaneously as part of the same task, e.g., completing a form, checking off items on a list of tasks, plotting information on a graph, and entering information on an activity schedule

Document Use has five levels of complexity. Each level of complexity is determined based on three different dimensions of complexity. The first dimension is the structure of the document, number of documents used and the type of document. The second dimension is related to the information search and information entry that needs to take place to complete the task. The final dimension involves the content knowledge required to complete the task and the thinking process involved. The levels of the Document Use complexity scale are compatible with those used in the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), except that IALS Level 4 has been broken down into Levels 4 and 5 in the Essential Skills complexity scale.

The Document Use complexity rating scale applies to the interpretation of documents and the entry of information in documents. It does not apply to the creation of documents (e.g., drawing architectural plans).

To understand the complexity of a Document Use task, you can ask yourself some questions:

- What does the task require the document user to do?
- How long is the document? What is the format of the document?
- How familiar is the content and context?
- Is the document user required to draw on background knowledge?

Workplace Task Examples	Community Task Examples
• Locate the price of an item on a retail price list. • Complete a vehicle circle safety check at the beginning of a shift.	• Locate a departure time on a bus schedule. • Complete an online application for a replacement Social Insurance Number card.

Numeracy refers to the ability to use numbers and the requirement to think in quantitative terms. Numeracy involves four different settings where calculations take place:

- money math;
- scheduling or budgeting and accounting math;
- measurement and calculation math; and
- data analysis.

Numeracy has two complexity rating scales: Numerical Calculation and Numerical Estimation. The Numerical Calculation complexity rating scale has five levels based on two dimensions. The two dimensions are "operations required" and "translation". Operations required refers to the actual math operation used (e.g., addition, division). Translation refers to the turning of the problem into a set of operations so that the math can be applied to determine the answer. The Numerical Estimation complexity rating scale is a four-level scale that applies to any task involving estimation that results in a number. The rating scale for Numerical Estimation involves five dimensions:

> We use this skill when we estimate with numbers, use money, budget or schedule, measure things, or analyse data.

- whether there is a set procedure;
- the number of factors comprising the item being estimated;
- the amount of information available;
- the consequence of error; and
- the degree of precision required.

It is also important to note that there is a difference between simply using numbers (e.g., recording a number on a chart) and actually understanding the underlying concepts (e.g., making a calculation). The different dimensions of the rating scale in numeracy help distinguish these differences.

To understand the complexity of a numeracy task, you can ask yourself some questions:

- How many operations does the task require?

- How complex are the required operations?

- How many steps of calculation are required?

Workplace Task Examples	Community Task Examples
- Count and record inventory at work. - Estimate the amount of food needed for a company luncheon. - Schedule employees based on production forecasts.	- Act as a scorekeeper at your child's soccer game. - Calculate the amount of paint to buy for a home decorating project. - Calculate deductions on a personal tax form.
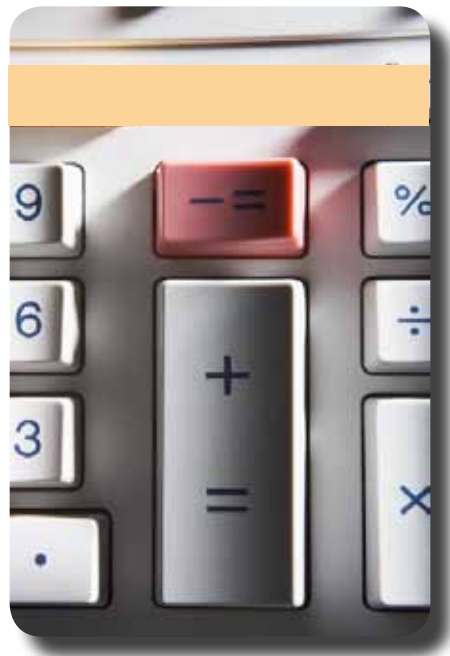
Writing includes writing continuous text and writing in documents, such as filling in forms. It also includes non-paper based writing such as typing using a computer.

Writing tasks are rated on a five-level scale of complexity. The complexity of writing is determined based on the length and purpose; style and structure; and the content of the writing.

To understand the complexity of a writing task, you can ask yourself some questions:

- What does the task require the writer to do?
- How long is the written text expected to be?
- Does the writing have to follow a format? How formal is the writing?
- How familiar is the writing content and context?

We use this skill to organize, record, document and provide information. We also use it to provide information to persuade others, to request information and to present analyses or comparisons.

Workplace Task Examples	Community Task Examples
• Write a telephone message for a co-worker. • Write a letter of introduction to a customer, explaining a new product	• Write a note to a teacher, explaining a child's absence from school. • Write a letter to a friend inviting him/her to visit.

Oral Communication is the ability to use speech to give or exchange thoughts or information.

Oral Communication has four levels of complexity based on four dimensions:

- the range and complexity of communication functions, i.e., why and how one communicates;
- the range and complexity of the information about which one communicates;
- the range and complexity of the communication context, i.e., to whom and in what circumstances one communicates; and
- the risk level in failing communication intent, i.e., how serious are the consequences if communication fails.

We use this skill when we greet people, take messages, reassure or comfort others, seek information from others, resolve conflicts or facilitate discussions.

Each level of the Oral Communication scale includes all four dimensions. However, tasks that are more difficult on one dimension of the complexity rating scale may be more or less difficult on the other dimensions. For example, the complexity of "range and complexity of information" may fit in Level 2, while the complexity of "risk levels in failing communication intent" fits in Level 3. The complexity rating assigned to a task is the best summary description of its level of complexity.

The levels of the Oral Communication scale are compatible with the levels in *Canadian Language Benchmarks, English as a Second Language for Adults, 1996*.

Workplace Task Examples	Community Task Examples
• Ask a supervisor how to operate a piece of equipment. • Greet customers when they walk in the front door.	• Make a presentation during a community planning meeting about a zoning change. • Explain a food allergy to a server in a restaurant.

Thinking is the ability to engage in the process of evaluating ideas or information to reach a rational decision. The Thinking Skills are currently broken down into five different cognitive skills. However, all of the Thinking Skills are interconnected.

- *Problem Solving* involves problems that require solutions. Most problems concern mechanical challenges, people or situations. Complexity is rated on a four-level scale based on four dimensions:
    - the complexity of the problem;
    - the complexity of identifying the problem;
    - the complexity of identifying the solution steps; and
    - the complexity of assessing the solution.

We use these skills when we solve problems, make decisions, plan and organize tasks, memorize information, find information and think critically.

- *Decision Making* refers to making a choice among options. Problem solving tasks usually include some decision making, but not all decision making is part of problem solving. Complexity is ranged on a four-level scale based on six dimensions:
    - the consequence of error;
    - the reversibility of the decision;
    - the adequacy of the information available;
    - whether there is a set procedure or decision tree to follow;
    - whether there is a body of similar, past decisions to compare to; and
    - the extent to which judgment is required to make an appropriate decision.

- *Job Task Planning and Organizing* refers to what extent workers are required to plan and organize their job tasks. Complexity is rated on a four-level scale based on seven dimensions:
    - o the extent of variety in work activities;
    - o whether the task sequence is provided to the worker or determined by the worker;
    - o whether priorities are provided to the worker or determined by the worker;
    - o the extent to which the day's work plan is disrupted;
    - o the extent to which the worker's own work plan must be integrated with the work plans of others;
    - o the number of sources for work assignments; and
    - o the extent to which the order of those tasks sequenced by the worker makes a difference to total efficiency.

- *Significant Use of Memory* includes any significant or unusual use of memory for workers in a specific occupational group. It does not include normal memory that is a requirement of every occupation. There is no complexity rating scale for Significant Use of Memory.

- *Finding Information* involves using any variety of sources including text, people or computerized databases or information systems. Complexity is rated on a four-level scale based on two dimensions:
    - o the complexity of locating the desired information; and
    - o the complexity of extracting and processing the information.

Workplace Task Examples	Community Task Examples
• Start a medical intervention based on data in a chart and observations.	• Research and select a recreational program that is appropriate for your child.

Working with Others refers to the ability to work with others to carry out tasks. It includes the ability to work cooperatively with others and having the self-discipline to meet work targets while working alone. It includes both direct interactions (e.g., face-to-face, voice) and indirect or delayed interactions (e.g., emails, memos, phone messages) with people.

We use this skill when we work with a partner, as a member of a team, or when we act as a supervisor or leader.

There is no formal complexity rating scale available for Working with Others. Instead the skill is described in two parts:

- Description of Work Context
- Supervisory or Leadership Activities

The description of work context describes four different contexts: whether workers work alone, independently, with partners, or as team members. The supervisory or leadership activities section lists ten activities where the skill of working with others would be utilized. The activities are:

- participate in formal discussions about work processes or product improvement;
- have opportunities to make suggestions on improving work processes;
- monitor the work performance of others;
- inform other workers or demonstrate to them how tasks are to be performed;
- orient new employees;
- make hiring recommendations;
- make hiring decisions;
- select contractors and suppliers;
- assign routine tasks to other workers; and
- assign new or unusual tasks to other workers.

Workplace Task Examples	Community Task Examples
• Work with a group of co-workers to develop a project plan. • Explain to a co-worker what tasks have been assigned for the shift.	• Work with other members from a school parent council to plan a fun fair.

Continuous Learning is the ability to participate in an ongoing process of acquiring skills and knowledge. Continuous Learning tests the hypothesis that more and more jobs require continuous upgrading, and that all workers must continue to learn in order to keep or to grow with their jobs. Continuous Learning involves:

- knowing how to learn;
- understanding one's own learning style; and
- knowing how to gain access to a variety of materials, resources and learning opportunities.

There is no formal complexity rating scale available for Continuous Learning. Instead the skill is described in two main categories:

1. Description of Learning
2. How Learning Occurs

We use this skill when we learn as part of regular work activity, learn from co-workers or access other training opportunities. These opportunities may take place in the workplace or elsewhere.

The Description of Learning outlines the type of continuous learning that might be required for a particular occupational group. How Learning Occurs includes five different settings where the learning might take place:

- as part of regular work activity;
- from co-workers;
- through training offered in the workplace;
- through reading or other forms of self-study; and:
- through off-site training.

Workplace Task Examples	Community Task Examples
• Attend a workplace Health and Safety Workshop. • Use a guide to understand how to use a new software program at work.	• Take a first aid course at your local community centre. • Attend a product demonstration for a new appliance you have purchased.

Computer Use refers to the use of computers and other forms of technology. Computer Use is rated on a five-level scale of complexity. In addition, there is a list of nine different applications that relate to Computer Use. The applications are:

- use word processing;
- use graphics software;
- use a database;
- use a spreadsheet;
- use financial software;
- use statistical analysis software;
- do programming and systems and software design;
- use computer-assisted design, manufacturing and machining; and:
- use communications software

We use this skill when we operate electronic equipment such as cash registers, and use computer software to do a variety of tasks.

Workplace Task Examples	Community Task Examples
• Scan an online database for customer contact information. • Forward an attachment to a co-worker using a Smartphone. • Set up an online video conference.	• Deposit a pay cheque at an automatic teller (ATM). • Use a GPS to find a store. • Watch a television show on the Internet.

Part 2: Essential Skills Profiles

Essential Skills Profiles Overview

Essential Skills Profiles are a database of occupational requirements. The profiles describe requirements for the Essential Skills on an occupation-by-occupation basis. They share the same coding system as the National Occupational Classification (NOC) and reflect the overall requirements associated with the broad NOC category. Essential Skills Profiles are companion pieces and complement the NOC data. To fully interpret an Essential Skills Profile, the complementary NOC description should be reviewed.

Essential Skills Profiles identify the Essential Skills that workers require to perform successfully at their job. An Essential Skills Profile may need to be customized based on the level of technology used, size of a firm, and management practices in a particular workplace. Essential Skills are always used to do something – that is, to perform a task. In Essential Skills Profiles, the main duties of a job provide the context for subsequent analyses on how Essential Skills are used to perform tasks on the job. The use of the complexity rating scales is the defining feature of this methodology. The complexity rating scales are used to identify the occupational requirements instead of the level of education required for a job. An Essential Skills Profile includes information to illustrate how all nine Essential Skills are used in an occupation.

The Essential Skills Profiles represent the mastery level of an occupation. Therefore, they describe the skills standards required by workers who demonstrate satisfactory performance and who have had the opportunity to experience the full range of required job tasks.
For each Essential Skill, a Profile generally contains:

- complexity ratings that indicate the level of difficulty of the tasks related to that skill;
- examples that illustrate how that skill is actually used;
- a standardized description of how that skill is used so comparisons can be made between or across occupations; and
- information presented in a standard format to make the information easy to find.

Although tasks that are associated with the Essential Skills Profiles are connected to the workplace, tasks can be performed in many different contexts. For example:

Work	Home	Community
Read a notice from the payroll department to learn about changes to deductions.	Read a notice from a utilities provider to identify upcoming rate changes.	Read a notice from the school principal to learn about changes to staffing for following year.

In all three examples, the task is similar. However, the context is different. Essential Skills apply to all aspects of life, and tasks often have applicability in more than one context. Calculating the amount of paint required for a project could have applicability in both a work context and a home context. Some other examples include:

- Performing a search using a database to locate a book.
- Writing instructions to explain what someone should do in your absence.
- Scheduling two appointments and ensuring there is enough time to attend each one.
- Sending and receiving email messages to arrange a meeting.

How an Essential Skills Profile Is Developed: [iv]

Step 1: **A business is contacted**

- Consent for research is obtained

- Employees who are competent in their jobs are identified

Step 2: **Workers are interviewed**

- For each job, two different researchers each interview three workers in two-hour interviews

- Authentic workplace materials are collected

- The interviewers use the data collected to write example tasks and assign complexity ratings

Step 3: **An Essential Skills Profile is prepared**

- Quality control review of interview data is conducted

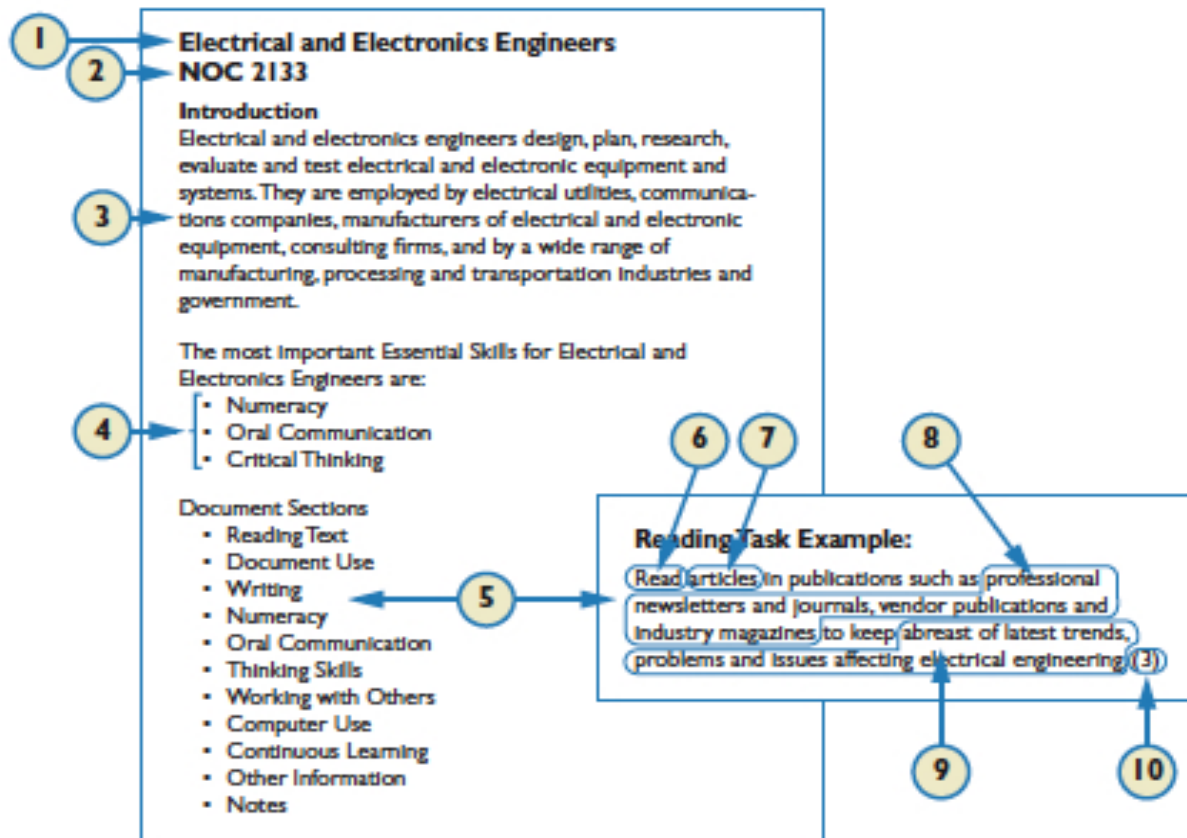- The profile writer conducts three additional interviews

- Profile is written

Step 4: **Essential Skills Profile is validated**

- An industry expert reviews profile

- The profile is edited and translated

Step 5: **Essential Skills Profile is posted on the website:**

- www.rhdcc-hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/essential_skills/general/home.shtml

Electrical and Electronics Engineers
NOC 2133

Introduction
Electrical and electronics engineers design, plan, research, evaluate and test electrical and electronic equipment and systems. They are employed by electrical utilities, communications companies, manufacturers of electrical and electronic equipment, consulting firms, and by a wide range of manufacturing, processing and transportation industries and government.

The most important Essential Skills for Electrical and Electronics Engineers are:
- Numeracy
- Oral Communication
- Critical Thinking

Document Sections
- Reading Text
- Document Use
- Writing
- Numeracy
- Oral Communication
- Thinking Skills
- Working with Others
- Computer Use
- Continuous Learning
- Other Information
- Notes

Reading Task Example:
Read articles in publications such as professional newsletters and journals, vendor publications and industry magazines to keep abreast of latest trends, problems and issues affecting electrical engineering (3)

1. Occupational title

2. National Occupational Classification (NOC) code

3. Occupational description from NOC

4. Three skills considered critical to carrying out tasks in this occupation

5. Task examples for nine Essential Skills

6. Verb that denotes skill

7. What is being acted upon

8. Examples

9. Purpose for carrying out task

10. Essential Skills complexity level

Source: Language for Work: CLB and Essential Skills for Job Analysts, Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2009. http://itsessential.ca/itsessential/display_page.asp?page_id=411

1970's: Arthur de W. Smith worked extensively on identifying generic skills related to occupational training. This work was documented in <u>Generic Skills for Occupational Training</u>[vi].

1971-1993: The Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations (CCDO) was developed and used in Canada.

1990's: A growing body of international research linked labour market success to a set of teachable, transferable and measurable skills.[vii]

1993: The National Occupational Classification (NOC) replaced the CCDO. The NOC is a system for describing the occupations of Canadians. It is a tool that classifies occupations by Skill Type and Skill Level.

1993-1994: The Government of Canada funded and launched the Essential Skills Research Project (ESRP). The initial goal of the Essential Skills Research Project was to support curriculum development and training for the current workforce in occupations in the National Occupational Code and to develop a methodology to update this work. The first step was to draft a methodological framework. This included the list of nine Essential Skills (reading text, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communication, working with others, thinking skills, computer use and continuous learning), Complexity Rating Scales, and the approach to data collection. Smith's work on Generic Skills was used as a starting point. An extensive literature review involved projects and publications from around the world. Integration with the International Adult Literacy Survey was also built into the work.

1994: An advisory committee of experts, workplace literacy practitioners and potential end users of the Essential Skills information was consulted to provide feedback on the draft.

1995: Five regional pilot studies were conducted that involved 800 interviews with job incumbents. Firms with seasoned practitioners in the field were given research contracts and acted as the advisory committee. A reliability study was also conducted. The information and feedback gathered in this effort was used to refine the methodology prior to it being used.

1996-1997: Main data collection period for occupations at NOC Skill Levels C and D. This involved interviews with 3,000 workers. Note: The process to collect data to write an Essential Skills Profile involves open interviews conducted with workers to gather information on how they use Essential Skills on the job. At least nine workers in an occupation are interviewed to provide a sample representing different industries, occupational specializations, business sizes and geographic locations. Researchers then analyse the data to identify common tasks and rate their complexity. [viii]

1998: The writing of Essential Skills Profiles commenced.

1999: Consultations took place with Ministries of Education across Canada to determine needs related to an Essential Skills database. In January 1999, the Essential Skills Product Development Committee was formed and focused on the development of tools and resources.

April 2003: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada launched the Essential Skills and Workplace Literacy Initiative – this was the first dedicated budget to move the research into practice.

1997-2005: The Essential Skills Research Project used a dynamic model of continuous improvement. Changes that occurred included adding Critical Thinking to the list of Thinking Skills, updating the complexity rating scales for Document Use, Writing and Computer Use, and developing new scales for Oral Communication, Working with Others and Continuous Learning.

Currently: Data collection for technical and professional occupations with priority given to occupations in high demand, such as engineers, doctors, nurses, pilots, technicians and skilled trades.

Part 3: Case Studies

Case Study A: Delivering an Essential Skills-Based Training Module

Agency Profile

Agency A is a community-based program that has been funded for 15 years to deliver Literacy and Basic Skills programming. Agency A has one full-time executive director and two part-time small group instructors. The client base has doubled in the past year and the agency currently serves 120 clients. Most of the new clients (approximately 60) have recently been laid off from long-term manufacturing positions and they want to upgrade their skills to seek re-employment. The agency has developed a partnership with the local Action Centre to support the delivery of training to the new group of clients.

Practices that Support the Integration of Essential Skills

- The program uses the Essential Skills-based Employment Track Express[ix] curriculum to deliver modular training to the new clients who have employment goals.

- Training is delivered at the local Action Centre by a practitioner from Agency A. This environment is comfortable for clients and they are able to access a variety of additional employment related services there.

- The 60-hour Employment Track Express course is delivered over 4 weeks. This allows clients to access the upgrading they need and still have time to participate in other job search related activities.

- The course helps clients understand Workplace Essential Skills, learn more about the labour market, identify occupational areas of interest, assess skills gaps, and improve computer skills.

Agency Profile

Agency B is a community-based literacy program that has been funded for 12 years to deliver Literacy and Basic Skills programming. Agency B has one full-time instructor who conducts assessments, and delivers small group programming. In addition, the agency has a volunteer co-ordinator who manages a group of volunteer tutors. Agency B currently serves 60 clients. Twenty clients access small-group instruction. The remaining 40 clients receive one-on-one programming with volunteer tutors.

The client base is varied. Approximately half of the clients are seeking employment. One quarter of the clients are upgrading to move on to further education or training opportunities. The remaining clients have enhanced personal independence goals.

Practices that Support the Integration of the Essential Skills

- When clients enter the program, the initial assessment involves the introduction of the Essential Skills via the use of the three Indicator tools developed by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). The indicators used are:
    o The Reading Indicator
    o Document Use Indicator
    o Numeracy Indicator
- An integrated Essential Skills section has been added to the learner training plans. This section documents the results of the Essential Skills Indicator tools used at assessment.
- All tutors receive training to increase their knowledge of the Essential Skills and how to integrate them into training delivery.
- If a client has a specific employment goal, the Essential Skills Profile is downloaded and discussed with the client. The required Essential Skill levels indicated in the particular job profile are incorporated into the learner training plan.

- Clients who have goals in other pathways discuss the relationship of the Essential Skills to their pathway with the instructor or tutor.

- Program delivery makes ongoing connections to the nine Essential Skills.

- All learner demonstrations of progress are cross-referenced to the nine Essential Skills.

- Clients are introduced to the self-assessment tools available in the HRSDC tool kit. Clients are encouraged to use these tools as appropriate to their goals.

- Clients complete the three indicators again, either at a point where the instructor/ tutor and client feel they have made a significant amount of progress or at exit.

Agency Profile

Agency C is a school board program that has been funded for 10 years to deliver Literacy and Basic Skills programming. Agency C has one part-time program manager, one full-time instructor and one part-time instructor. The agency currently serves 85 clients. Half of the clients are preparing to move to credit programming. The remaining clients are evenly distributed on the employment and independence pathways. Most of the clients attend the program on a part-time basis (10-20 hours per week).

Practices that Support the Integration of the Essential Skills

- The agency has dedicated time to researching and evaluating the Essential Skills-based curriculum resources (both provincial and federal) that have been developed over the past five years. Resources that have been deemed valuable to the client base have been acquired.

- An in-house database of the resources has been developed so that practitioners can access them easily.

- Client goals are matched to the available resources and the resources are then used to help support the integration of Essential Skills into the training delivery.

- In addition, monthly one-day workshops on Essential Skills have been introduced, and are offered to all clients attending the program.

Agency Profile

Agency D is a college program that has been funded for the past 15 years to deliver Literacy and Basic Skills programming. Agency D has a part-time program manager, two full-time instructors and a part-time assessor. The agency currently serves 150 clients. Most of the clients are preparing to move to post-secondary programming.

Practices that Support the Integration of the Essential Skills

- Over the past few years, the program manager has researched available workshops on Essential Skills. When possible, staff have been released to participate in these workshops to help increase their understanding and knowledge of the Essential Skills.

- One staff member has been designated as the Essential Skills subject matter expert. This staff member has taken the Essential Skills analyst course and accesses as much ongoing training as possible. This person is the "go-to" person for Essential Skills questions and issues.

- The agency has started to modify aspects of the in-house communications curriculum to be more Essential Skills oriented.

- The agency has also developed a self-paced Essential Skills introductory unit (including a self-assessment) for its continuous intake program.

Endnotes

[i] Source: www.rhdcc-hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/essential_skills/general/readers_guide_whole.shtml Last accessed August 20, 2010.

[ii] Source: C. McLeod Presentation

[iii] Source: all definitions from www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/essential_skills/general/readers_guide_whole.shtml, last accessed August 20, 2010.

[iv] Source: What is the Essential Skills Research Project? Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HIP-025-11-04)

[v] Source: C. McLeod Presentation

[vi] Arthur de W. Smith (1973) Generic Skills for Occupational Training. Prince Albert, SK: Saskatchewan NewStart for the Training Research and Development Station, Department of Manpower and Immigration.

[vii] Source: What is the Essential Skills Research Project? Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HIP-025-11-04)

[viii] Source: What is the Essential Skills Research Project? Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HIP-025-11-04)

[ix] Source: www.collegeupgradingon.ca/employmenton/ete/studentmanual/etestudentmanual.pdf, last accessed October 18, 2010

Appendix A

The Plain Goods on Essential Skills

Workshop #1: The Plain Goods on Essential Skills

The Plain Goods on Essential Skills Facilitation Guide

The Plain Goods on Essential Skills Handouts

The Plain Goods on Essential Skills Handouts Answer Key

The Plain Goods on Essential Skills Power Point Presentation

The Plain Goods on Essential Skills

1. To provide an overview of the ES

2. To communicate the relevance of ES to adult literacy practitioners, regardless of their learners' goals (i.e. independence, employment, further education/training)

3. To familiarize participants with ES tools and resources

Topic	Presenter's Notes	Materials needed
PART 1 (60-75 minutes)		
Workshop introduction	Communicate learning objectives	PPT slides 1-3
What's essential about ES	Explain that there is more to ES than the list of nine skills Outline key activities and outcomes of HRSDC's ES research project Describe what we can learn from ESPs (anatomy of an ESP; complexity ratings; differences and similarities between jobs)	PPT slides 4-6
Going beyond the ESP examples	Outline distinction between ESPs and ES (ESPs are research products with specific goals, ES are transferable skills) Explain why ES should matter to literacy practitioners (e.g., can help us understand the complexity of tasks, can help us make sure we are teaching learners to use their skills in the ways in which they will need to use them)	PPT slides 7-10
Unlocking the essentials	Point out that the key to unlocking the essentials from ESPs is tasks Explain what a task is Describe how a practitioner figures out whether an activity is a task Present four tasks. Work as a group to determine which are tasks and which are not tasks: - A: task - B: Not a task - C: Task - D: Not a task *Activity 1 – Task or not?* *Provide list of activities and have participants determine whether or not they are tasks. Correct answers are indicated in grey.* *Debrief by discussing:* • *Which are tasks and which aren't using the criteria presented earlier in the session*	PPT slides 11-17 Activity #1 handout

Why do tasks matter?	Explain that tasks matter for the same reasons that ES matters (tasks help us make sure we are teaching learners to use their skills in the ways in which they will need to use them)	PPT slides 18-19 Activity #2 handout
	Activity 2 – What difference do tasks make? *Provide examples of non-tasks transformed into tasks. Have participants answer questions about the transformed tasks to illustrate the value of a task-based approach for learners. Correct answers are indicated in grey.* *Debrief by asking:* • *Which column lists tasks?* • *Are learners more likely to see the relevance of tasks or non-tasks?* • *Point out that using tasks offers the same skill development opportunities but in a more meaningful way for learners*	
Context of ES tasks	Explain that although ESPs only include examples of the ways workers use ES at work, ES apply equally outside of work	PPT slides 20-25 Activity #3 handout
	Activity 3 – Name that ES task and context! *Provide examples of tasks most of which apply to work and outside work. Have participants identify the skill domain and identify the context to which the task applies. Correct answers are indicated in grey.* *Debrief by asking:* • *Which tasks applied to more than one context?* • *Which tasks only applied to one context? Of these tasks, identify a similar task that applies to another context.* • *Point out that when you look closely at ES tasks, you will see that many apply to different contexts.* Show examples of the tasks from work, home and school to illustrate the relevance of tasks across contexts	

PART 2 (60 minutes)		
Exploring ES tools & resources	Explain that there are free tools on-line to provide an overview of ES; resources that can be used to help learners develop ES; and resources that can help practitioners assess ES.	PPT slides 26-35 Activity #4 handout
	Point out that only a few websites will be explored in this workshop. Additional sites are explored in workshops 2 and 3.	
	Introduce participants to <u>HRSDC website</u> to show ESPs and tools.	
	• Direct them to the list of ESPs. (Note: If this is not available, show participants how to access the same information on OSP site).	
	• Point out how to access self-assessments, indicators and checklists that can be used as informal assessments.	
	Activity 4a – ESP Web Safari	
	Navigate the HRSDC website to answer the questions.	
	Debrief by discussing:	
	• *The ways in which the tools found on the website could be used to plan or deliver upgrading.*	
	Direct participants to the <u>NOC website</u>.	
	• Show them how to find out about different occupations.	
	• Show how the NOC codes organize occupations by educational requirements, which can be useful to know for career planning and job search.	
	• Point out that ESPs are organized by NOC, so it's helpful to understand the NOC.	
	Direct participants to tools on <u>OSP site</u>.	
	Point out the links to Check up Tools (self-assessments on ES and Work Habits); OSP Check-up Tools (workplace activity sets to develop ES); OSP Check-In Tool (informal assessment of ES and work habits); OSP work, learning and life database (for tasks at each ES level for different contexts)	

	Activity 4b – OSP Web Safari *Search the OSP work, learning and life database for life tasks at the range of levels in response to a series of questions.* *Debrief by discussing:* • *Examples of tasks identified from the learning context that are applicable to work* • *Examples of tasks from the everyday life context that are applicable to work or learning settings* Introduce participants to the Measure-up website to show them how to access the skill building activities, assessment and other resources such as tips for developing learning activities. • Navigate through the site to show examples of the types of activities that can be downloaded and printed for classroom use. Orient participants to the information in the comparative framework. • Show them how the Canadian Language Benchmarks and the Essential Skills levels can be understood in relation to each other. • Explain that this is not an alignment, but instead shows the intersections between two very different scales.	
Workshop wrap-up	Provide a summary of the learning objectives achieved during this workshop Offer to answer questions	PPT slide 36-37

Activity 1: **Task or not?**

Read each of the statements below to decide whether they have all the qualities of a task.

Statement	Task? Yes	No	If not, what's missing?
Receive a payment.			
Write answers to test questions.			
Read a biography to learn about a well-known individual's life story.			
Write a note.			
Record hours worked in a timesheet for payroll purposes.			
Read a unit in a textbook.			
Read a graph to identify how many litres of ice cream the average Canadian eats annually.			
Find out who the fastest runner in a marathon is.			
Read the ingredients list in a recipe to determine whether you have all the ingredients on hand			
Calculate the area of a rectangle.			
Read a schedule.			
Complete a personal information form for your employer's file.			

Activity 2: What difference do tasks make?

Compare the following activities then answer the questions that follow.

	Column 1	Column 2
Row A	A1: Complete a page of word problems to practice converting measurements.	A2: Convert measurements in a recipe to units you can measure using available tools.
Row B	B1: Look up the meaning of 10 new words in a paragraph about tigers' eating habits in the wild.	B2: Read a short letter from a child's teacher to identify the action that needs to be taken.
Row C	C1: Count money to show understanding of denominations.	C2: Count money to identify whether you have enough for a purchase.
Row D	D1: Complete a cloze exercise to practice using punctuation.	D2: Write a note to explain why you were absent from class recently.

1. Compare the two entries on Row A.

    • For which activity would learners be taught how to convert measurements?

    • Which activity do you think would be more meaningful for learners? Why?

2. Compare the two entries on Row B.

    • A learner asks: Why am I learning this? Which activity do you think they are referring to?

3. Compare the two entries on Row C.

    • For which activity would learners be taught the value of denominations?

    • For which activity would learners be more likely to be taught strategies for estimating the amount of money on hand?

4. Compare the two entries on Row D.

    • A learner asks: Why am I learning this? Which activity do you think they are referring to?

Activity 3: Name that Essential Skill and Context

Identify which Essential Skill and what context the following tasks address:

Task	Essential Skill(s)	Applicable context
1. Calculate the amount of paint required for a project.		❑ work ❑ outside work
2. Read graphs to compare data over time.		❑ work ❑ outside work
3. Write a suggestion to improve safety.		❑ work ❑ outside work
4. Total money received for a fundraiser.		❑ work ❑ outside work
5. Read instructions to figure out how to use a cleaning product.		❑ work ❑ outside work
6. Send and receive e-mail messages to arrange a business meeting.		❑ work ❑ outside work
7. Send and receive e-mail messages to a friend to co-ordinate a social event.		❑ work ❑ outside work
8. Perform a search using a database to locate a book.		❑ work ❑ outside work
9. Write instructions to explain what someone should do in your absence.		❑ work ❑ outside work
10. Follow troubleshooting flow charts in equipment manuals to repair faults.		❑ work ❑ outside work
11. Schedule appointments to ensure there us enough time to attend each.		❑ work ❑ outside work
12. You decide to offer an upset customer a discount to keep their business.		❑ work ❑ outside work
13. You decide to offer your child a reward for completing their homework early.		❑ work ❑ outside work
14. Estimate the quantity of supplies to purchase for a project.		❑ work ❑ outside work

Activity 4: **Web Safari**

Part A. Use the HRSDC Essential Skills web site to do the following:

1. Find the difference between Reading Text and Document Use in the Understanding Essential Skills definitions.

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. Find the self-assessment checklists under Tools & Resources. Can you see any application for these checklists in your program? If so, describe.

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Go to the Learning section under Tools & Resources. Skim through the products that are listed. Can you see any that you might use in your program? If so, describe.

   _____

   _____

   _____

Part B. Use the Work, Learning and Life section of the Ontario Skills Passport web site to do the following:

1. Watch a video to learn how an individual uses their Essential Skills in the course of an everyday activity. Write a few notes to record your thoughts about the video.

_____

_____

_____

2. Find examples of how document use skills are used in a learning context. (Note: you need to click on 'Search' at the bottom of the screen in order to access the task examples.) Write down a few examples of Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 tasks.

_____

_____

_____

3. Find examples of how data analysis skills are used in everyday life. Write down a few examples of Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 tasks.

_____

_____

_____

Activity 1: **Task or not?**

Read each of the statements below to decide whether they have all the qualities of a task.

Statement	Task? Yes	No	If not, what's missing?
Receive a payment.		✓	Purpose
Write answers to test questions.		✓	Purpose
Read a biography to learn about a well-known individual's life story.	✓		
Write a note.		✓	Purpose
Record hours worked in a timesheet for payroll purposes.	✓		
Read a unit in a textbook.		✓	Purpose
Read a graph to identify how many litres of ice cream the average Canadian eats annually.	✓		
Find out who the fastest runner in a marathon is.		✓	Skill
Read the ingredients list in a recipe to determine whether you have all the ingredients on hand	✓		
Calculate the area of a rectangle.		✓	Purpose
Read a schedule.		✓	Purpose
Complete a personal information form for your employer's file.	✓		

Activity 2: **What difference do tasks make?**

Compare the following activities then answer the questions that follow.

	Column 1	Column 2
Row A	A1: Complete a page of word problems to practice converting measurements.	A2: Convert measurements in a recipe to units you can measure using available tools.
Row B	B1: Look up the meaning of 10 new words in a paragraph about tigers' eating habits in the wild.	B2: Read a short letter from a child's teacher to identify the action that needs to be taken.
Row C	C1: Count money to show understanding of denominations.	C2: Count money to identify whether you have enough for a purchase.
Row D	D1: Complete a cloze exercise to practice using punctuation.	D2: Write a note to explain why you were absent from class recently.

1. Compare the two entries on Row A.

   - For which activity would learners be taught how to convert measurements? **Both**
   - Which activity do you think would be more meaningful for learners? Why? **A2 because they can see how they would use these conversion skills**

2. Compare the two entries on Row B.

   - A learner asks: Why am I learning this? Which activity do you think they are referring to? **B1**

3. Compare the two entries on Row C.

   - For which activity would learners be taught the value of denominations? **Both**
   - For which activity would learners be more likely to be taught strategies for estimating the amount of money on hand? **C2**

4. Compare the two entries on Row D.

   - A learner asks: Why am I learning this? Which activity do you think they are referring to? **D1**

Activity 3: Name that Essential Skill and Context

Identify which Essential Skill and what context the following tasks address:

Task	Essential Skill(s)	Applicable context
1. Calculate the amount of paint required for a project.	Numeracy	❑ work ❑ outside work
2. Read graphs to compare data over time.	Document use	❑ work ❑ outside work
3. Write a suggestion to improve safety.	Writing	❑ work ❒ outside work
4. Total money received for a fundraiser.	Numeracy	❑ work ❑ outside work
5. Read instructions to figure out how to use a cleaning product.	Reading	❑ work ❑ outside work
6. Send and receive e-mail messages to arrange a business meeting.	Computer use Writing	❑ work ❒ outside work
7. Send and receive e-mail messages to a friend to co-ordinate a social event.	Computer use Writing	❒ work ❑ outside work
8. Perform a search using a database to locate a book.	Computer use	❑ work ❑ outside work
9. Write instructions to explain what someone should do in your absence.	Writing	❑ work ❑ outside work
10. Follow troubleshooting flow charts in equipment manuals to repair faults.	Document use	❑ work ❒ outside work
11. Schedule appointments to ensure there us enough time to attend each.	Numeracy	❑ work ❑ outside work
12. You decide to offer an upset customer a discount to keep their business.	Thinking skills	❑ work ❒ outside work
13. You decide to offer your child a reward for completing their homework early.	Thinking skills	❒ work ❑ outside work
14. Estimate the quantity of supplies to purchase for a project.	Numeracy	❑ work ❑ outside work

Activity 4: **Web Safari**

Use the HRSDC Essential Skills web site to do the following:

1. Find the difference between Reading Text and Document Use in the Understanding Essential Skills definitions.

    _____

    _____

    _____

2. Find the self-assessment checklists under Tools & Resources. Can you see any application for these checklists in your program? If so, describe.

    _____

    _____

    _____

3. Go to the Learning section under Tools & Resources. Skim through the products that are listed. Can you see any that you might use in your program? If so, describe.

    _____

    _____

    _____

Part B. Use the Work, Learning and Life section of the Ontario Skills Passport web site to do the following:

1. Watch a video to learn how an individual uses their Essential Skills in the course of an everyday activity. Write a few notes to record your thoughts about the video.

_____

_____

_____

2. Find examples of how document use skills are used in a learning context. (Note: you need to click on 'Search' at the bottom of the screen in order to access the task examples.) Write down a few examples of Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 tasks.

_____

_____

_____

3. Find examples of how data analysis skills are used in everyday life. Write down a few examples of Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 tasks.

_____

_____

_____

The Plain Goods on Essential Skills

Literacy Link South Central

1

- What's so *essential* about the Essential Skills?

- How Essential Skills apply outside the workplace?

- Where to find Essential Skills tools and resources for use in your program?

2

Workshop Objectives

- ✓ To provide an overview of the Essential Skills (ES)

- ✓ To communicate the relevance of ES to adult literacy practitioners, regardless of their learners' goals (i.e. independence, employment, further education/training)

- ✓ To familiarize participants with ES tools and resources

3

More than just 9 skills…

56

What's so *essential* about the Essential Skills?

- Research project undertaken by Human Resources Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)

- Goal to understand on-the-job skill demands

- Result is hundreds of Essential Skills Profiles

5

Essential Skills Profile
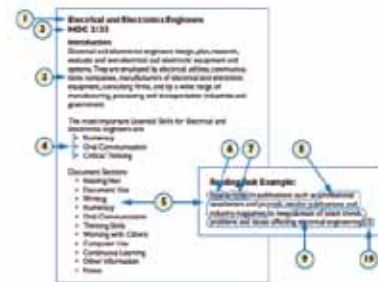
1. Occupational title
2. National Occupational Classification (NOC) code
3. Occupational description from NOC
4. Three skills considered critical to carrying out tasks in this occupation
5. Task examples for 9 Essential Skills
6. Verb that denotes skill
7. What is being acted upon
8. Examples
9. Purpose for carrying out task
10. ES complexity level

Language for Work: CLB and Essential Skills for Job Analysts, Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2009. http://itsessential.ca/itsessential/display_page.asp?page_id=411

6

What's so *essential* about the Essential Skills?

- While often connected to the Essential Skills Profiles, the skills and complexity ratings apply outside the workplace, too

7

What's so *essential* about the Essential Skills?

- Help educators understand task complexity and see connections between tasks at work, at home and in educational settings

8

What's so *essential* about the Essential Skills?

- Help educators focus on skill development that connects to how learners use their skills outside of adult education

9

What's so *essential* about the Essential Skills?

- The Essential Skills provide A transparent way to understand task complexity

- A direct connection to careers and everyday life

- A common language amongst employers and educators

10

It's all about the task…

What's a task?

A task is something individuals are likely to do outside the learning environment: at home, at work, in the community.

12

What's a task?

An activity considered complete in itself that:

- Employs a skill or skills

- Describes what is being produced or acted upon

- Includes a purpose

What's a task?

Writes a report to summarize a recent event.

Reads a bulletin to find out about changes with a utilities provider.

Is it a task?

To decide, ask yourself:

1. What is the student asked to do?

2. What is the purpose of the activity?

3. Is this something individuals would do outside a classroom?

15

Is it a task?

A. Write a note to explain why you must leave early

B. Read a short story

C. Complete a form to register for a swimming class

D. Count money

16

Activity #1

Task or not?

17

Why do tasks matter?

- Any task can be rated for complexity

- Tasks are way of understanding what the skill requirements are, regardless of context

- Addressing tasks in educational settings ensures we're helping learners build skills in ways they will use them in non-educational settings

18

Activity #2

What difference do tasks make?

19

One task, many contexts…

Although tasks associated with the Essential Skills Profiles are connected to the workplace, we perform tasks in other contexts, too.

20

Name that ES task!

21

One task, many contexts…

Reading text:

Read a notice from payroll department to learn about changes to deductions	Read a notice from utilities provider to identify upcoming rate changes	Read a notice from school principal to learn about changes to staffing for following year

22

Interpret schedules

At school

In the community

23

Verify costs

At home

At work

24

Read a notice

At school

To: Staff & Students

Please be aware that we will be starting a recycling program at this location, beginning May 1. Please ensure you separate your waste and dispose of items according to instructions on marked disposal bins.

If you have any questions, please ask at the office.

At work

To: All Staff

In response to health concerns, YYC International has developed a Scent-Free Policy. Scented products such as hair spray, perfume, and deodorant can trigger reactions such as respiratory distress and headaches. Staff and visitors are asked to not use these products when reporting to this office.

Thank you,

Management

25

Let's check out some resources

numeracy

document use   writing

oral communication

reading text

continuous learning

HRSDC
Essential Skills

Profiles describe how each of the nine Essential Skills is used by workers within an occupation.

Profiles are developed for occupational groups as defined by the National Occupational Classification (NOC).

http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/noc/english/noc/2006/welcome.aspx

27

Web Safari

28

National Occupational Classification

NOC is a national reference that classifies and describes all occupations in the Canadian economy.

It organizes over 30,000 job titles into 520 occupational group descriptions.

http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC-CNP/app/index.aspx

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Ontario Skills Passport

Click here

Check-up Tools: Workplace activity sets to help develop Essential Skills

Check-in Tool: Informal assessment of Essential Skills and Work Habits

http://skills.edu.gov.on.ca/OSPWeb/jsp/en/introduction.jsp?lang=en

30

Ontario Skills Passport

Web-based tools to explore how ES are used in work, learning and life.

http://skills.edu.gov.on.ca/OSPWeb/jsp/en/WLL/WLL_splash.jsp

31

Ontario Skills Passport

Web-based tools to explore how ES are used in work, learning and life.

http://skills.edu.gov.on.ca/OSPWeb/jsp/en/WLL/WLL_start.jsp

32

Activity #4b

Web Safari

33

Measure Up

Measure Up tasks provide self-assessment and skill building activities on-line.

The web site is a great source of authentic workplace materials.

http://measureup.towes.com/english/index.asp

34

ES/CLB Comparative Framework

Intended for ESL practitioners who want to understand how ES fits into CLB programming

Note: Not a straightforward alignment, but rather a way to show intersections between two very different underlying scales

Canadian Language Benchmarks & Essential Skills Comparative Framework Overview*

www.itsessential.ca

35

Workshop Objectives

✓ To provide an overview of the Essential Skills (ES)

✓ To communicate the relevance of ES to adult literacy practitioners, regardless of their learners' goals (i.e. independence, employment, further education/training)

✓ To familiarize participants with ES tools and resources

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Questions?

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Appendix B

Integrating Essential Skills

Workshop #2: Integrating Essential Skills

Integrating Essential Skills Facilitation Guide

Integrating Essential Skills Handouts

Integrating Essential Skills Answer Key

Integrating Essential Skills Power Point Presentation

Integrating Essential Skills

Learning objectives:

1. To provide manageable ways for practitioners to integrate Essential Skills into their programming, regardless of learners' goals

2. To introduce task-based programming as a way of integrating ES

3. To introduce tools to help practitioners integrate ES

Component	Presenter's Notes	Materials needed
PART 1 (30 minutes)		
Workshop introduction	Communicate learning objectives	PPT slides 1-2
What we mean by integration	Explain that integrating ES isn't necessarily about using the ESPs in the classroom; instead it's about taking the essentials from the ESPs.	PPT slide 3
Integrating by using a task-based approach	Explain that one important step in integrating ES into the classroom is achieved when a task-based approach is used Define task-based Provide the definition of a task and provide examples of tasks and non-tasks Explain why a task-based approach allows practitioners to integrate ES • Tasks enable practitioners to consider the skills individuals need to use and the purpose for which they use them • Tasks offer meaningful ways to teach skills and authentic opportunities to use skills Point out that not all activities in task-based classrooms are tasks *Activity 1 – Distinguishing tasks and skill builders* *Distribute activity 1. Have practitioners identify the activities in the lesson that are tasks.* *Debrief by discussing:* • *The activities that are tasks* • *The role of other activities in a task-based approach* • *The value of contextualizing skills within tasks*	PPT slides 4-12 Activity #1 handout
Making learning activities real	Explain that taking a task-based approach also helps practitioners make learning activities real. Point out that a task-based ES focus supports skills transfer from one job to another, from one context to another. Understanding how and why skills are used in one setting helps learners identify where else they might be used.	PPT slides 13-14 Activity #2 handout

Component	Presenter's Notes	Materials needed
	Activity 2 – Make these activities real	
	Provide participants with brief descriptions of activities and have them make them real for learners by converting them into tasks.	
	Debrief by discussing:	
	• *How participants identified tasks*	
	• *Point out that making activities real involves identifying the real ways that an individual would use the skills, document or text outside a literacy classroom*	
One task, many skills	Point out that most tasks have one skill as the focus, but tasks often require learners to use skills in combination in order to complete tasks – as they would in real life	PPT slides 15-16
	Provide examples of tasks to show the different ES that are used: redecorating a room; writing an e-mail	
	Explain that skill integration through tasks helps make learning activities real for learners	
PART 2 (60-75 minutes)		
Task-based tools available	Explain that there are free resources available on websites that take a task-based approach. The activities on these sites can help learners work towards tasks in the classroom. Skill development activities can be created to accompany these tasks so that learners develop the skills they need to manage these and similar tasks.	PPT slides 17-22
	Introduce participants to the Measure-up website.	
	• Show them how to access the skill building activities.	
	• Provide suggestions on how lessons can be built around these tasks to support learners' skill development.	
	• Point out the resource that helps practitioners build learning activities.	
	• Point out that assessment tools are also available and these are explored in workshop 3.	
	Direct participants to Laubach Literacy Ontario's website.	
	• Point out Linking Laubach with Essential Skills and Making Essential Skills Work for You pages.	

Component	Presenter's Notes	Materials needed
	• Explain that the first project looked at the link between Laubach Literacy resources and Reading Text, Document Use and Writing ES levels. • Point out that the second manual provides a series of activities to help learners develop Oral Communication and Thinking skills at ES levels 1 and 2. *Activity 3 –Which skills should I teach?* *Note: There is no activity sheet for this activity. Participants record responses on their own.* *Participants choose a document or text from the Measure Up web site that would be appropriate for learners at the level(s) they instruct. Have participants work individually or in pairs to identify 3 to 5 skill building activities which would precede or accompany the document or text they have selected.* *Debrief by discussing:* • *How participants identified appropriate activities* • *How they might balance skill-building versus task completion activities* *Point out that introducing skill-building activities within a task context helps learners see the applicability of what they are learning.*	
Integrating by exploring the commonalities between the ways these skills are used in different settings	Point out that although tasks are very specific to either one workplace or one learning or life context, by looking for commonalities, more learners' goals can be addressed. Show how similar tasks are carried out by different workers as well as at school and in the community. Point out that instruction that focuses on the more general (e.g., reading tables) while using specific task examples can help learners transfer their skills to other similar tasks. *Activity 4 – Grouping tasks* *Distribute the list of ES examples from across occupations. Have participants group similar tasks.* *Debrief by discussing:* • *categories the tasks grouped into*	PPT slides 23-26 Activity #4 handout

Component	Presenter's Notes	Materials needed
	• *how you would use this information to plan activities for learners with multiple goals* • *Ask: Which tasks might also be performed outside of work (all except memos)*	
Integrating when the goal is not employment	Explain that ES apply outside the workplace as much as they do inside the workplace Show that document use is everywhere by displaying examples of common documents: bar graph, scale drawings, schedules, circle graphs, maps, lists *Activity 5 – Finding ES tasks in learning environments* *Provide learners with a case study of a student over the course of a day. Have participants underline when the student needs to read text, work with documents and write.* *Debrief by discussing:* • *frequency of tasks typical students perform regularly* • *how participants might use an activity like this to help learners see the relevance of ES* Point out that using tasks from the community and school, even when goals are employment will help learners see the relevance of what they are learning in the literacy classroom	PPT slides 27-34 Activity #5 handout
Integrating when learners are at lower levels	Explain that there aren't learners whose skills are below level 1, even though there are learners who would struggle to complete activities at this level. Provide examples of tasks appropriate for learners with very limited literacy skills. Point out that these learners may need more time to develop the skills to complete the tasks independently, but that they too benefit as much (if not more) from a task-based approach as learners at higher levels.	PPT slides 35-37
PART 2 (30 minutes)		
Integrating for career exploration	Explain that one way that ES can be brought into the classroom is when carrying out career exploration activities. Point out that the profiles themselves can be used to help learners understand what they will need to do on the job. Show participants how they can access	PPT slides 38-41

Component	Presenter's Notes	Materials needed
	these on the HRSDC website or on the OSP website. Explain that they should select Occupations & Tasks then choose a sorting method. Once on the page that opens, clicking a check mark takes you to the ESP examples, you just need to scroll down. Introduce participants to ESPORT (Essential Skills Portfolio), tools intended to help learners prepare for entry-level employment. Includes interests inventory, self-assessment and portfolio builder.	
Additional ES tools & resources	Direct participants to the College Sector Committee website where resources in PDF can be accessed. These include Bare Essentials: An Introduction to Essential Skills, Defining Essential Skills and Employment Track Express Student Manual. Introduce participants to OLC's Essentially Yours bulletins. These are intended to explore topics related to ES. Each bulletin includes ideas for activities to help bring ES into the classroom. Review some of the activities such as: • Bulletin 1 explores the ways in which ES applies across work, learning and life contexts. Activity 1 will help learners see the relevance of the tasks they are learning to other contexts of their lives (work, learning & life) • Bulletin 2 focuses on document use. Activity 2 has learners research profiles to understand the importance of document use. • Bulletin 3 describes thinking skills. Activity 1 has learners analyze a workplace scenario to see thinking skills in action and discuss the implications of not applying thinking skills.	PPT slides 42-43
Workshop wrap-up	Provide a summary of the learning objectives achieved during this workshop Offer to answer questions	PPT slides 44-45

Activity 1: Distinguishing tasks and skill builders

Review the following lesson plan. Identify the activities that are tasks.

Lesson plan activities	Which of the following activities are tasks?
Introduce the topic • Carrying out inspections	
Engage learners • Ask learners to generate ideas about what types things are inspected (e.g., equipment, tools, washroom facilities, manufactured products). • Using one of the examples generated above, ask learners to identify what an individual might inspect. Group ideas according to things that are inspected visually versus things that are inspected functionally	
Explain the role of inspection forms • To help make sure that all that should be inspected is inspected	
Provide an example of a blank inspection form to orient learners to the parts of inspection forms	
Provide an example of a completed inspection form (of different equipment or a different facility) to orient learners to the way the forms are completed	
Have learners extract information from a completed inspection form to understand the condition of a facility or equipment	
Have learners compare the completed and blank forms to look for similarities and differences in the layout and content of the forms	
Generate ideas on the features of a form that helps us recognize an inspection form from other forms	
Have learners complete a variety of inspection forms to record the results of inspections	
Generate a discussion about why learners think it is important to carry out inspections and complete inspection forms	
Close the lesson • Ask learners to identify the work settings where they think the inspection forms they completed might be used • Ask learners to identify other situations where similar inspection forms might be used	

Activity 2: **Make these activities real**

The following activities help learners develop their skills. Make these activities real by making the activity into a task. The first one has been completed for you.

Non-task	Task
Read a letter to answer reading comprehension questions.	Read a letter to identify the purpose of the letter and any follow-up actions required.
Add the value of bills and coins.	
Read nutritional information on food labels.	
Calculate the area of a room.	
Read a recipe.	
Scan a packing list.	
Calculate volume.	
Read a brochure about a service to answer comprehension questions.	
Organize names into alphabetical order.	
Read a map.	
Write an e-mail.	
Learn how to use an agenda.	

Activity 4: Grouping tasks

Group the following Essential Skills examples into tasks that are similar to one another.

1. Accounting and related clerks read forms, such as collection management forms, cheque request and issue forms, bond indemnity forms and non-sufficient fund forms.

2. Accounting and related clerks write reminder notes.

3. Social workers read training manuals and their organizations" policy and protocol manuals.

4. Aircraft mechanics and aircraft inspectors scan labels on product packaging, equipment and technical drawings to locate data such as dimensions, part identification numbers and operating specifications.

5. Automotive painters check quantities, prices and totals on supplier invoices and approve them for payment.

6. Aircraft mechanics and aircraft inspectors read a wide variety of manuals for operating, repair, maintenance, testing and quality control procedures.

7. Automotive painters read instructions for use and storage on the labels of paints and thinners.

8. Accounting and related clerks refer to computer manuals.

9. Automotive painters write short notes on work orders to explain work that was carried out, note any irregularities or deviations from the estimates and point out additional repairs needed.

10. Bakers read memos and bulletins from within organizations and from agencies such as health departments and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

12. Dry cleaning and laundry occupations read clothing care labels which contain colour-coded icons and phrases to determine what cleaning processes and chemical solutions are appropriate for the fabric.

13. Accounting and related clerks verify the accuracy of bills and adjust them if clients have been overcharged.

14. Automotive painters read memos to learn about work schedules, performance goals and changes to operating procedures.

15. Cashiers read memos about price changes.

16. Dry cleaning and laundry occupations read equipment manuals to operate washing, drying, dry cleaning or pressing machines.

17. Social workers complete reporting forms such as referrals, discharge summaries, confidentiality agreements, timesheets and mileage claim forms.

18. Aircraft mechanics and aircraft inspectors write brief reminders and notes to co-workers. For example, write reminder notes about upcoming deadlines.

Group 1 Forms	Group 2 Write notes	Group 3 Manuals	Group 4 Labels Group	Group 5 Invoice/bills	Group 6 Memos:

Activity 5: Finding ES tasks at school

Identify when this learner is carrying out a reading, document use or writing task over the course of a typical day. Underline the task. Identify which skill is being used.

	Skill used:
Anishka takes the bus to the learning centre everyday. When she gets to the bus stop, she checks the bus schedule to figure out when the next bus is scheduled to arrive. She notices that the next bus takes a different route than the bus she normally takes. She looks at the map of the bus route to figure out whether the bus passes the school's bus stop. While on the bus, Anishka likes to read the free daily newspaper to catch up on current events. While reading, she notices that a text message arrives. She looks at her cell phone display to see who sent the message. It's her classmate Sean. She reads the message and learns that Sean is running late. Anishka responds to the message to let Sean know that she will tell the instructor when she gets to school. Anishka reads the street signs as the bus travels along to make sure that she gets off the bus at the correct stop. When she gets to the learning centre she notices a poster about an event planned for the coming week. She writes a note in her agenda so that she doesn't forget. Before class, she heads to the washroom. It turns out the one she normally uses is out of service according to the sign on the door. She quickly finds another so that she is not late for class. At the lunch break, Anishka decides to go to the local café to get a sandwich. She reads the board to see what's on special that day before ordering. Once she's paid, she checks her receipt to make sure she was charged the correct amount for the correct items…	

Activity 1: Distinguishing tasks and skill builders

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Provide an example of a blank inspection form to orient learners to the parts of inspection forms	
Provide an example of a completed inspection form (of different equipment or a different facility) to orient learners to the way the forms are completed	
Have learners extract information from a completed inspection form to understand the condition of a facility or equipment	✓ task
Have learners compare the completed and blank forms to look for similarities and differences in the layout and content of the forms	
Generate ideas on the features of a form that helps us recognize an inspection form from other forms	
Have learners complete a variety of inspection forms to record the results of inspections	✓ task
Generate a discussion about why learners think it is important to carry out inspections and complete inspection forms	
Close the lesson • Ask learners to identify the work settings where they think the inspection forms they completed might be used • Ask learners to identify other situations where similar inspection forms might be used	

Activity 2: **Make these activities real**

The following activities help learners develop their skills. Make these activities real by making the activity into a task. The first one has been completed for you.

Non-task	Task
Read a letter to answer reading comprehension questions.	Read a letter to identify the purpose of the letter and any follow-up actions required.
Add the value of bills and coins.	Identify the number of bills and coins to provide as change for a purchase.
Read nutritional information on food labels.	Compare nutritional labels for two similar products to identify the healthier choice.
Calculate the area of a room.	Calculate the area of a room to figure out how much carpeting is needed.
Read a recipe.	Read a recipe to make a shopping list of ingredients.
Scan a packing list.	Scan a packing list to identify whether items listed are included in the shipment.
Calculate volume.	Work out the volume of dirt needed for a garden patch.
Read a brochure about a service to answer comprehension questions.	Read a brochure to identify the services offered by a company.
Organize names into alphabetical order.	Organize new vocabulary into alphabetical order to more easily locate words to review.
Read a map.	Read a map to provide directions to a store, school or recreation centre.
Write an e-mail.	Write an e-mail to a classmate to co-ordinate a team project.
Learn how to use an agenda.	Use an agenda to keep track of assignment due dates and events.

Activity 4: **Grouping tasks**

Group the following Essential Skills examples into tasks that are similar to one another.

1. Accounting and related clerks read forms, such as collection management forms, cheque request and issue forms, bond indemnity forms and non-sufficient fund forms.

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Group 1 Forms	Group 2 Write notes	Group 3 Manuals	Group 4 Labels Group	Group 5 Invoice/bills	Group 6 Memos:
1, 11, 17	2, 9, 18	3, 6, 8, 16	4, 7, 12	5, 13	10, 14, 15

Activity 5: Finding ES tasks at school

Identify when this learner is carrying out a reading, document use or writing task over the course of a typical day. Underline the task. Identify which skill is being used.

	Skill used:
Anishka takes the bus to the learning centre everyday. When she gets to the bus stop, she <u>checks the bus schedule to figure out when the next bus is scheduled to arrive</u>. She notices that the next bus takes a different route than the bus she normally takes. She <u>looks at the map of the bus route to figure out whether the bus passes the school's bus stop</u>.	Document use Document use
While on the bus, Anishka likes to <u>read the free daily newspaper to catch up on current events</u>. While reading, she notices that a text message arrives. She <u>looks at her cell phone display to see who sent the message</u>. It's her classmate Sean. She <u>reads the message and learns that Sean is running late</u>. Anishka <u>responds to the message to let Sean know that she will tell the instructor</u> when she gets to school.	Reading text Document use Reading text Writing text
Anishka <u>reads the street signs as the bus travels along to make sure that she gets off the bus at the correct stop</u>. When she gets to the learning centre she <u>notices a poster about an event planned for the coming week</u>. She <u>writes a note in her agenda so that she doesn't forget</u>. Before class, she heads to the washroom. It turns out <u>the one she normally uses is out of service according to the sign on the door</u>. She quickly finds another so that she is not late for class.	Document use Document use/Reading text Writing Document use
At the lunch break, Anishka decides to go to the local café to get a sandwich. She <u>reads the board to see what's on special that day</u> before ordering. Once she's paid, she <u>checks her receipt to make sure she was charged the correct amount</u> for the correct items…	Document use Document use

Integrating Essential Skills

Literacy Link South Central

1

Workshop Objectives

- To provide manageable ways for practitioners to integrate Essential Skills into their programming, regardless of learners' goals
- To introduce task-based programming as a way of integrating ES
- To introduce tools to help practitioners integrate ES

2

Integrating ES means…

Frequent use of documents

Reading as scanning, skimming

Incorporating findings from ES research

Numeracy connected to documents

Less frequent text writing

Purpose matters!

Tasks require multiple skills

3

Tasks are the key

4

What's a task?

A task is something individuals are likely to do outside the learning environment: at home, at work, in the community.

5

What's a task?

An activity considered complete in itself that:

- Employs a skill or skills
- Describes what is being produced or acted upon
- Includes a purpose

Formatting Note: could have individual bulleted points appear in sequence

6

What's a task?

Writes a report to summarize a recent event.

Reads a bulletin to find out about changes with a utilities provider.

Formatting Note: each element of the tasks refers back to items on the previous slide. You could use animation to make visual connections between elements for viewers. We have used coloured font to make connections visible for you.

7

Is it a task?

To decide, ask yourself:

1. What is the student asked to do?

2. What is the purpose of the activity?

3. Is this something individuals would do outside a classroom?

8

Not tasks…

- Measure
- Read a novel
- Count from 1 to 20

9

Tasks…

- Measure ingredients to prepare a recipe
- Read a novel to learn about a different culture
- Count the number of bus stops between your home and a new destination

10

Why use tasks?

- Tasks enable practitioners to consider the skills learners need to use and the purpose for which they use them
- Tasks offer meaningful ways to teach skills and authentic opportunities to use skills

11

ACTIVITY #1

Distinguishing tasks from other classroom

12
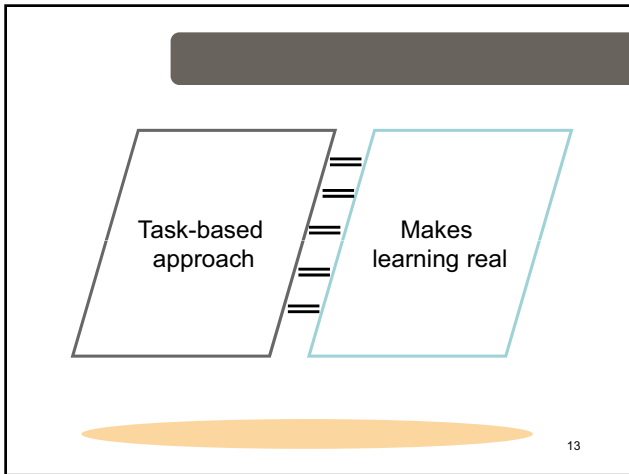
Task-based approach = **Makes learning real**

13

Make these activities real

14

One task, so many skills…

- **Task:** Redecorating a room

- Measure the room (numeracy)

- Choose materials from a catalogue (document use)

- Purchase supplies (numeracy)

- Make decisions (thinking skills)

15

One task, so many skills…

Task: Sending an e-mail

- ✓ Reading
- ✓ Document use
- ✓ Thinking skills
- ✓ Writing
- ✓ Computer Use

16

Measure Up

Measure Up tasks provide self-assessment and skill building activities on-line.

The web site is a great source of authentic workplace materials.

http://measureup.towes.com/english/index.asp

17

Measure Up

Activities include documents you can build additional activities on

DRIVING DISTANCES
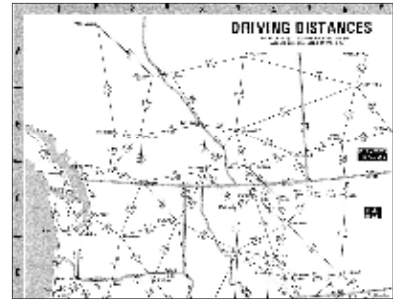
Measure Up

A free resource that helps you build learning activities

Laubach Literacy

Examines links between Laubach Literacy resources and reading, document use and writing

http://www.laubach-on.ca/teach/materials/lles

20

Laubach Literacy

Includes oral communication and thinking skills activities

21

ACTIVITY #3

Which skills should I teach?

22

Workers in different occupations carry out similar tasks at work…

All these workers add prices together:

- **Landscapers** add the cost of materials and labour to prepare invoices

- **Babysitters** add prices of food when shopping for groceries

- **Cashiers** add prices of goods purchased

23

… and outside work

Students and community members:

- Add the cost of supplies to plan a party

- Add the cost of travel, accommodations and food to keep track of vacation expenses

- Add the cost of gifts during the holiday season to keep within budget

- Add monthly expenditures to keep track of household budgets

24

Compare and contrast

- Using one specific authentic example of a school or work policy
  - Learners will know the content and be better prepared to follow the policy
  - Learners may struggle if the policy changes or a new policy is introduced
- Using many similar examples of policies
  - Learners will not learn content of the policies of specific workplaces
  - Learners are more likely to be able to apply their skills to policies in <u>any</u> workplace
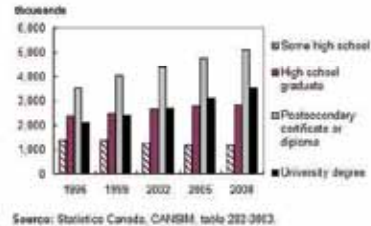
25

ACTIVITY #4

Grouping tasks

26

But isn't ES mostly about the skills workers use?

27

Documents are everywhere!

28

Documents are everywhere!
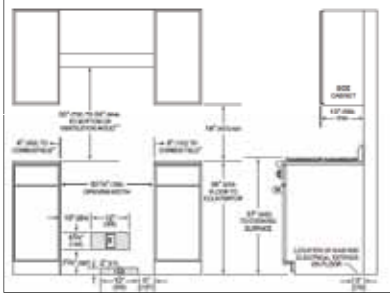
29

Documents are everywhere!

Dressing Rooms for Week 6 Regular Season				
Time	Visiting Team	Rm.	Home Team	Rm.
8:10	Hawks	1	Barons	3
9:05	Canadians	2	Vipers	4
10:05	Lions	1	Tigers	3
11:00	Aces	2	Golds	4
12:00	Maroons	1	Predators	3

30

Documents are everywhere!
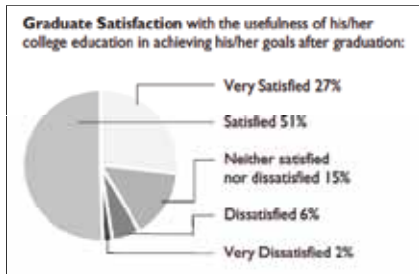
31

Documents are everywhere!

32

Documents are everywhere!

SPECIFICATIONS

|	
Exterior Finish	Stainless Steel
Overall Width	30"
Overall Height (to cooking surface)	37"
Overall Depth	28⅝"
Oven Interior Capacity	4.4 cu ft
Oven Interior Dimensions	24" W x 18⅝" H x 17" D
Opening Width	30¼"
Opening Height (to countertop)	36"
Opening Depth	24"
Electrical Requirements	110/120 V AC 60/60 Hz, 15 amp circuit
Shipping Weight	325 lbs

33

Finding ES tasks In learning environments

34

Below level 1

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
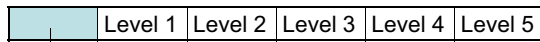
No one is below level 1, even though there are learners who struggle with level 1 tasks

35

Learners at low level 1

- Benefit from a task-based approach because they are able to work on tasks that they can apply directly in their lives

36

Learners at low level 1

Could work on tasks such as:

- Signing forms to accept agreements
- Discerning letters for an eye exam
- Reading time to monitor the length of a break or lunch period
- Reading street signs to get to a new destination

37

HRSDC

Essential Skills

Profiles describe how each of the nine Essential Skills is used by workers within an occupation.

Useful for career exploration activities.

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/essential_skills/general/home.shtml

38

Ontario Skills Passport

Select **Occupations & Tasks** find the Essential Skills Profile.

http://skills.edu.gov.on.ca/OSPWeb/jsp/en/introduction.jsp?lang=en

39

Ontario Skills Passport

ESP examples

http://skills.edu.gov.on.ca/OSPWeb/jsp/en/NOCListing.jsp?sort=D

40

ESPORT

Includes web-based interests inventory, self-assessment and portfolio builders.

http://www.esportfolio.com/PROJECT_SITE/

41

College Sector Committee

Bare Essentials: An Introduction to Essential Skills

Employment Track Express Student Manual

http://www.collegeupgradingon.ca/current.htm

42

OLC's *Essentially Yours*

Bulletins with activities

http://www.on.literacy.ca/tools/essentialskills

43

Workshop Objectives

✓ To provide manageable ways for practitioners to integrate Essential Skills into their programming, regardless of learners' goals

✓ To introduce task-based programming as a way of integrating ES

✓ To introduce tools to help practitioners integrate ES

44

Questions?

45

Appendix C

Essential Skills and the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum

Workshop #3: Essential Skills and the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum

Essential Skills and the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Facilitation Guide

Essential Skills and the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Handouts

Essential Skills and the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Handouts Answer Key

Essential Skills and the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Power Point Presentation

Essential Skills & the OALC

Learning objectives:

1. Explain three levels used in OALC, connection to ES levels

2. To describe process for analyzing tasks for complexity

Component	Presenter's Notes	Materials needed
PART 1 (75-90 minutes)		
Workshop introduction	Communicate learning objectives	PPT slides 1-2
Introduction to the OALC	Describe what the OALC is, its purpose and its foundation	PPT slides 3-7
	Explain that all literacy tasks fit into the framework	
	Point out that it is intended to be used by practitioners to identify the complexity of tasks and to identify tasks that are at an appropriate level of difficulty for learners	
	Explain that it takes a task-based approach	
Task-based nature of OALC	Describe the strengths of a task-based approach	PPT slides 8-11
	Describe the distinction between an academic and skills-based approach and the OALC approach	Activity #1 handout
	Point out some key differences	
	Explain how skill development fits within a task-based approach:	
	• Skills are the building blocks for tasks	
	• Skills are taught with the goal of using the skills to perform the tasks	
	Suggest that LBS learning outcomes can be used to help identify these skill development opportunities.	
	Activity 1 – Building a lesson around an ES task	
	Distribute Activity 1. Have participants identify skill development activities independently. Debrief as a group.	
	Debrief by asking participants to:	
	• *Share answers*	
	• *Explain how they identified the embedded learning that needed to take place*	
Origin of OALC	Explain that the OALC was developed by asking the question: What should literacy learners learn in LBS programs?	PPT slides 12-13

Component	Presenter's Notes	Materials needed
	Point out that it draws on what ES research has taught us abut how skills are used in work, learning and life:	
	• Frequent use of documents – they are everywhere	
	• Reading as scanning, skimming – we don't often read texts from the top of page 1, we pick and choose what we read and how carefully we read it based on why we are reading	
	• Numeracy connected to documents – we don't just sit and work out fractions	
	• Less frequent text writing – few have to write extended essay-like texts	
	• Tasks require multiple skills – for example, e-mail requires reading, document use, writing, computer use and thinking skills	
	• Purpose matters – we always use skills to achieve some other end	
Understanding OALC levels	Explain that the three OALC levels are the same as ES levels, but very different from LBS levels	PPT slides 14-17
	This means that an OALC level 1 task in *Write continuous text* is the same complexity as an ES 1 writing task.	
	Point out that although the levels are the same, the OALC is not organized by ES skills	
	Describe the task groups for one of the competencies, e.g., *Communicate ideas and information*. At the time that this workshop was developed, task groups for this competency were:	
	1. Create lists and tables	
	2. Create visual representations	
	3. Engage in interactions	
	4. Write continuous text	
	5. Express oneself creatively	
	6. Complete documents	
	Point out that task groups 1, 2 and 6 are all related to ES Document Use but allow for a detailed examination of this skill domain. Task group 3 is related to Oral Communication and task group 4 is related to writing. Task group 5 doesn't have a place	

Component	Presenter's Notes	Materials needed
	in the ES skill domains, but fits within the OALC.	
	Not limiting the OALC to the ES skill domains allows practitioners to address skills development in a comprehensive manner. The OALC competencies address all the skills learners need to succeed beyond literacy programming.	
	Point out that understanding complexity helps us answer the question, "Why is this so hard?"	
	Point out that documents and texts are always tied to tasks (through lessons and activities), therefore complexity levels are attached to tasks, not to documents or texts themselves.	
Reading task complexity	Explain that to understand the complexity of a reading task, you can ask yourself some questions: What does the task demand of the reader? How long is the text? How familiar is the content and context? Is the reader required to draw on background knowledge?	PPT slides 18-24 Activity #2 handout
	Show how these factors change as OALC/ES levels increase	
	Provide examples of tasks at the three OALC levels	
	Activity 2 – identifying reading task complexity	
	Distribute activity 2. Ask learners to work independently to identify the ES level. Debrief as a group using the PowerPoint slides.	
	Debrief by discussing:	
	• *The features of the text and tasks that help us determine the ES level*	
Document use task complexity	Explain that to understand the complexity of a document use task, you can ask yourself some questions: What does the task require the document user to do? How long is the document? What is the format of the document? How familiar is the content and context? Is the document user required to draw on background knowledge?	PPT slides 25-28
	Show how these factors change as OALC/ES levels increase	
	Provide examples of tasks at the three OALC levels	
Writing task complexity	Explain that to understand the complexity of a writing task, you can ask yourself some questions: What does the task require the writer user to do?	PPT slides 29-35 Activity #3 handout

Component	Presenter's Notes	Materials needed
	How long is the written text expected to be? Does the writing have to follow a format? How formal is the writing? How familiar is the writing content and context?	
	Show how these factors change as OALC/ES levels increase	
	Provide examples of tasks at the three OALC levels	
	Activity 3 – identifying writing task complexity	
	Provide examples of writing tasks for participants to rate according to the scale provided	
	Debrief by discussing:	
	• *The features of the text and tasks that help us determine the ES level*	
Numeracy task complexity	Explain that to understand the complexity of a numeracy task, you can ask yourself some questions: How many operations does the task require? How complex are the required operations? How many steps of calculation are required?	PPT slides 36-39
	Show how these factors change as OALC/ES levels increase	
	Provide examples of tasks at the three OALC levels	
Complexity in general	Provide examples of tasks (trigonometry, summarizing texts, creative writing) that are beyond the levels to show how we may be asking learners to complete very complex tasks at times. ES levels, and now the OALC levels are a way to have a common understanding of task complexity that is in line with the way people use skills outside of school settings	PPT slide 40
PART 2 (30-40 minutes)		
ES assessment tools	Explain that in addition to offering learning opportunities, practitioners have access to a whole series of on-line informal assessment resources that can help identify the level at which learners are working.	PPT slides 41-47 Activity #4 handout
	Emphasize and explain how these tools are not the same as formal assessments such as TOWES.	
	Direct participants to the assessment tools on OSP site. OSP: Check up Tools (self-assessments on ES and Work Habits); and OSP Check-In Tool (informal assessment of ES and work habits).	

Component	Presenter's Notes	Materials needed
	• Explain that on-line and pen and paper versions are available.	
	• Demonstrate how to obtain a facilitated check-up tool	
	• Show what the learner would see when using the self-assessment check-up tool	
	OSP Check-In Tool:	
	• Display the sample check-in tool page	
	• Explain what the contents are of the PDF document	
	Introduce participants to the <u>Measure-up</u> website.	
	• Show them how to access on-line assessments.	
	• Point out that test questions need to be printed; they cannot be completed electronically.	
	Direct participants to <u>HRSDC's</u> ES self-assessment, indicators and checklist tools.	
	• Orient them to the assessment page	
	• Orient them to the tools for apprenticeship	
	Activity 4 – HRSDC Web Safari	
	Search the HRSDC site for assessments to make notes about each tool and to identify the ones that provide an approximate ES level.	
	Debrief by discussing:	
	• *How participants might use these tools*	
	• *Asking participants to describe what they think they can conclude based on the results from these assessments*	
Workshop wrap-up	Provide a summary of the learning objectives achieved during this workshop Offer to answer questions	PPT slides 48-49

Activity 1: **Building a Lesson**

Identify the skill development activities that would help learners perform these tasks:

Task 1: Send a text message to a friend	Task 2: Prepare a household budget

Activity 2: Identifying Reading Task Complexity

Task 1:
The learner is given this text and is asked to determine what they should do after locking the doors.

❏ Level 1
❏ Level 2
❏ Level 3

We're closing early today.

Lock the doors at 3:00, then finish serving the remaining customers.

Task 2:

The learner is given this text and is asked to compare these two college programs to determine which would be more suitable given the needs outlined in a scenario about a learner.

❏ Level 1
❏ Level 2
❏ Level 3

Hospitality Foundations
College: CONS

About the Program
This one-semester program is designed for students who want to develop the basic knowledge and skills necessary for entry-level positions in the hospitality industry. Students will explore culinary arts through the use of an applied kitchen lab and hospitality service through a dining room service lab. This program will help guide students by providing a pathway to either the culinary or hospitality certificate or diploma programs.

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College: DUR

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Activity 3: Identifying Writing Task Complexity

Task 1: ☐ Level 1 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 3

> You work as the head security guard in a large manufacturing facility. Recently, more and more of the after-hours visitors are surprised, and in some cases upset, when asked to sign in.
>
> Write a memo to distribute to the departments in the building. Be sure to:
> - inform them of what has been happening;
> - describe the consequences for the company; and
> - tell them what they can do to avoid this occuring in future.
>
> Follow standard business memo format. You may write a draft on scrap paper and use the Response Sheet provided for the final version.

Task 2:

☐ Level 1

☐ Level 2

☐ Level 3

> You work as an office clerk. You are going away on vacation and you need to let your co-worker know what to do each morning while you are away. Write out at least five instructions for your co-worker below.

Activity 4: **HRSDC Web Safari**

Go to HRSDC's Essential Skills website. Check out the assessment tools for each of the nine skills.

Essential Skill	Assessment	Provides ES level?
Reading Text	On-line indicator	
	Self-assessment	
Document Use	On-line indicator	
	Self-assessment	
Numeracy	On-line indicator	
	Self-assessment	
Writing	Self-assessment	
Oral Communication	Self-assessment	
Working with Others	Checklist	
	Self-assessment	
Continuous Learning	Checklist	
	Self-assessment	
Thinking Skills	n/a	
Computer Use	Self-assessment	

Activity 1: **Building a Lesson**

Identify the skill development activities that would help learners perform these tasks:

Task 1: Send a text message to a friend	Task 2: Prepare a household budget
Possible answers include activities that address: • Instruction navigating cell phone menus • Finding pre-programmed telephone numbers in address books • Matching abbreviations used in text messages to the full word • Practice activities writing messages	Possible answers include activities that address: • Estimating the costs of household expenses • Working with tables • Adding and subtracting amounts • Multiplying daily costs by number of days

Activity 2: Identifying Reading Task Complexity

Task 1:
The learner is given this text and is asked to determine what they should do after locking the doors.

Task 1:

☐ Level 1

☐ Level 2

☐ Level 3

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☐ Level 2

☐ Level 3

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Write a memo to distribute to the departments in the building. Be sure to:

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Follow standard business memo format. You may write a draft on scrap paper and use the Response Sheet provided for the final version.

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☐ Level 1

☐ Level 2

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Activity 4: HRSDC Web Safari

Go to HRSDC's Essential Skills website. Check out the assessment tools for each of the nine skills.

Essential Skill	Assessment	Provides ES level?
Reading Text	On-line indicator	Yes
	Self-assessment	No
Document Use	On-line indicator	Yes
	Self-assessment	No
Numeracy	On-line indicator	Yes
	Self-assessment	No
Writing	Self-assessment	No
Oral Communication	Self-assessment	No
Working with Others	Checklist	No
	Self-assessment	No
Continuous Learning	Checklist	No
	Self-assessment	No
Thinking Skills	n/a	n/a
Computer Use	Self-assessment	No

Essential Skills & the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum (OALC)

Literacy Link South Central

1

Workshop Objectives

- To understand the three OALC levels

- To understand the relationship between OALC levels and Essential Skills

- To be able to apply a process for analyzing task complexity

2

What is the OALC?

- Answers the question: What should learners learn in literacy programs?

- Provides a common language to describe what learners will learn in literacy programs

- Supports the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes for work, life and learning

3

Who will use the OALC?

Practitioners &

Curriculum writers &

Resources developers &

Assessment developers
[These could appear one at a time]

4

Who will use the OALC?

- Practitioners will use the OALC to:
  – identify the complexity of tasks
  – identify tasks that are at an appropriate level of difficulty for learners

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OALC foundations

Focuses on how learners use skills outside literacy programs

Competency-based

Task -based

6

Competency-based

- Competency-based education attempts to organize learning around meaningful outcomes – often tasks that learners will encounter in everyday life

- Competencies generally comprise the skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours for effective performance of the task or activity

7

Task-based approach

- Eases the transition from skill development in literacy programs to skill use out in the world
- Allows for the integration of thinking and interpersonal skills, as well as the attitudes that help learners apply their skills
- Extends beyond traditional concepts of reading, writing and numeracy development

[These could appear one at a time]

8

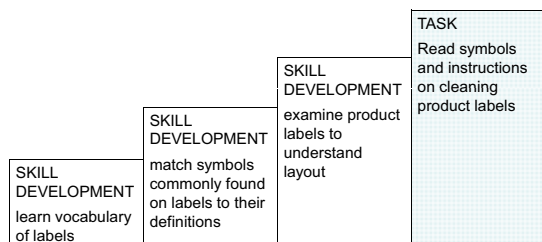## Skills-based vs task-based

Skills-based
- Focus on discrete skill development
- Text reading to identify main ideas and to synthesize
- Paragraph & essay writing is emphasized
- Calculations-based math, often taught in hierarchical manner

Task-based
- Focus on using multiple skills in combination to complete tasks
- Text and document reading for real life purposes
- Writing to communicate is emphasized
- Calculations embedded in numeracy tasks

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Where does skill development fit in?

| SKILL DEVELOPMENT learn vocabulary of labels | SKILL DEVELOPMENT match symbols commonly found on labels to their definitions | SKILL DEVELOPMENT examine product labels to understand layout | TASK Read symbols and instructions on cleaning product labels |

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ACTIVITY #1

Building a lesson

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More OALC foundations

What should literacy learners learn in literacy programs?

Essential Skills

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Findings from ES research

- Frequent use of documents
- Reading as scanning, skimming
- Numeracy connected to documents
- Less frequent text writing
- Tasks require multiple skills
- Purpose matters!

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OALC & Essential Skills

| OALC levels 1, 2, 3 | = | Essential Skills levels 1, 2, 3 |

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OALC & Essential Skills

OALC skills organized into competencies

Essential Skills skills organized by skill domain

ES Complexity

Why is this so hard?

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Identifying Levels

- Levels connected to activities and lesson plans rather than to documents and texts

- Tasks require skills and content knowledge

Reading Text

Ask yourself:
- What does the task demand of the reader?
- How long is the text?
- How familiar is the content and context?
- Is the reader required to draw on background knowledge?

Reading Text

| Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 |

As complexity increases:

•Less obvious connections between what is asked of the reader and how information in the text is presented
•Longer texts
•Less familiar content and context
•More background knowledge required

Reading Text

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Length	One sentence to one paragraph	Several paragraphs	Various sources or several parts of single text	Lengthy text or multiple sources	Lengthy, dense
Complexity of content	No knowledge of content	One part of complex text or several of simpler text	Somewhat complex	Complex & lengthy	Requires expert knowledge
Complexity of finding information	Follow simple directions	Low level inferences	Inference; identify relevant information	Integrate and synthesize	High level inferences

Reading Text

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Read a teacher's note in a child's agenda	Follow instructions in a recipe	Read a magazine article about industry trends

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ACTIVITY #2

Identifying reading task complexity

22

Reading Text Level 1

We're closing early today.

Lock the doors at 9:00, then finish serving the remaining customers.

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Reading Text Level 3

Hospitality Foundations
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Document Use

Ask yourself:
- What does the task require the document user to do?
- How long is the document?
- What is the format of the document?
- How familiar is the content and context?
- Is the document user required to draw on background knowledge?

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Document Use

Level 1   Level 2   Level 3

As complexity increases:

- Less obvious connections between what is asked of the user and how information in the document is presented
- Longer documents
- More complex-looking documents
- Less familiar content and context
- More background knowledge required

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Document Use

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Complexity of document	Simple	Simple	Somewhat complex	Complex	Complex
Complexity of content	No knowledge of content	Limited knowledge of content	Some knowledge of content	Knowledge of content	Knowledge of content
Complexity of finding or entering information	One search, few pieces	Two searches, few pieces	Multiple searches, some pieces	Multiple searches, many pieces	Multiple searches, many pieces

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Document Use

Level 1   Level 2   Level 3

Read a clothing label to identify washing instructions

Locate times and locations of classes on a timetable

Verify accuracy of income and deductions on an income tax form

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Writing

Ask yourself:
- What does the task require the writer user to do?
- How long is the written text expected to be?
- Does the writing have to follow a format?
- How formal is the writing?
- How familiar is the writing content and context?

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Writing

Level 1   Level 2   Level 3

As complexity increases:

- Longer texts
- More likely to require an established format
- More formal writing
- More complex looking documents
- Less familiar content and context

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Writing

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Length & Purpose	Less than paragraph to organize, remind, inform	Brief, longer than a paragraph for a variety of purposes	One+ pages to explain, inform, request, give opinions	Longer writing to compare, recommend, analyze	Lengthy or original text
Style & Structure	Informal	Appropriate tone, spelling, grammar	Established format	Writing modified for audience	Complex, multi-part organization
Content	Concrete	Routine	Non-routine	Abstract, technical	Created for audience

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Writing

Level 1   Level 2   Level 3

Write a reminder note

Write a letter expressing appreciation

Write an incident report

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ACTIVITY #3

Identifying writing task complexity

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Writing Level 3

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Writing Level 2

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Numeracy

Ask yourself:
- How many operations does the task require?
- How complex are the required operations?
- How many steps of calculation are required?
- How complex is it to figure out which operations are required?

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Numeracy

Level 1   **Level 2**   **Level 3**

As complexity increases:

- More operations required
- Increasingly complex operations required
- More steps are required
- Operations required are less obvious
- More complex Less obvious? to figure out which operations are required

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Numeracy

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Operations required	Very simple	Simple	Combination of operations	Combination of operations	Advanced calculations
Steps in task	One step	Few steps	Several steps	Multiple steps	Multiple, complex
Task elements	All information required is provided	May need to collect some numbers required for solution	Problem well defined	Considerable translation required	Complex formulas, equations, functions

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Numeracy

Level 1   **Level 2**   **Level 3**

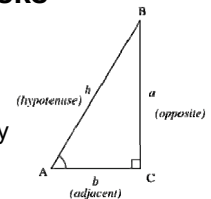| Calculate change from a purchase	Dilute a cleaning product using a ratio	Prepare and monitor a household budget

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Complex tasks

- Trigonometry

- Summarizing a short story

- Creative writing

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Ontario Skills Passport

← **Check-up** Tools
← **Check-in** Tool

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Ontario Skills Passport

Check-up Tools:

(1) Self-assessment of work habits and Essential Skills

(2) Workplace activity sets to help develop Essential Skills

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Ontario Skills Passport

Check-in Tool:
Informal assessment of Essential Skills and Work Habits

Used by assessors

Measure Up

Measure Up tasks provide self-assessment and skill building activities.

- Reading
- Document Use
- Numeracy

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HRSDC
Essential Skills

Free assessment tools

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/essential_skills/general/home.shtml

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HRSDC
Essential Skills

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HRSDC Web Safari

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Learning Objectives

- ✓ To understand the three OALC levels
- ✓ To understand the relationship between OALC levels and Essential Skills
- ✓ To be able to apply a process for analyzing task complexity

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Questions?

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