

Essential Skills | Instructors' Bulletin

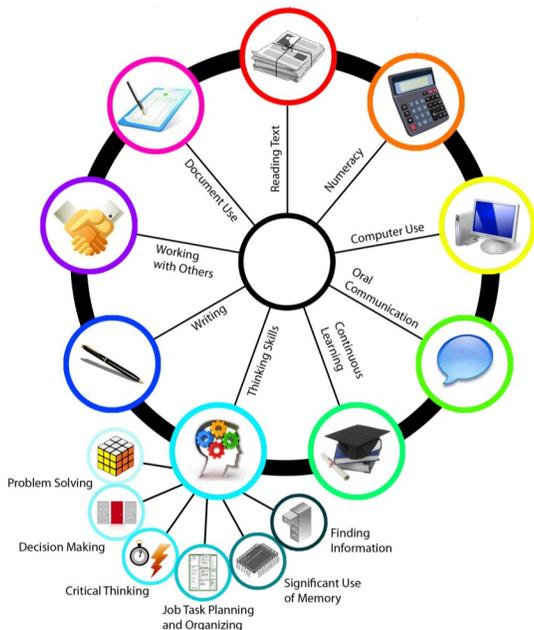
Essential Skills Overview

Essential Skills...

- ◆ are found in ALL occupations
- ◆ underpin everyday life tasks
- ◆ are the foundation for learning new skills, life-long learning, adapting to change

Through extensive research, Employment and Social Development Canada, (ESDC formerly HRSDC) has identified 9 Essential Skills that are the foundation of any occupation, skill, or activity. These skills are used in different ways and at varying levels of complexity.

Complexity is measured using a 500 point scale which is divided into 5 levels. Most Canadian occupations require a minimum of high level 2 skills, or 250 points or higher on the 500 point scale.



PD Opportunity

Essential Skills Courses are available through Douglas College. For details, click [here](#), or search Douglas College's website for 'Essential Skills'.

What are the Essential Skills?

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

Can you give me some examples?

- ◆ Read memos and bulletins (Reading)
- ◆ Fill in application forms (Document Use)
- ◆ Write email messages to co-workers (Writing)
- ◆ Estimate the amount of time needed to complete a task (Numeracy)
- ◆ Chat with customers and participate in meetings (Oral Communication)
- ◆ Decide which tasks need to be completed first at work (Thinking Skills)
- ◆ Use the Internet to search for an address (Digital Technology)
- ◆ Coordinate tasks with co-workers (Working with Others)
- ◆ Read about Essential Skills (Continuous Learning)

*Think about how you accessed this bulletin.
How many Essential Skills did you use?*

Did you know...?

For immigrants, educational attainment does not always translate into proficiency in literacy in the official language of their new country. The most recent data (OECD, PIAAC, 2013) suggest that nearly 27% of immigrants have level 1 literacy skills. For success in most occupations, a minimum of a high level 2 is required. At a high level 2, individuals are able to make low-level inferences and to integrate information; these are key skills for success in work, learning, and life.

Essential Skills in the LINC Classroom

Strategies for Incorporating Essential Skills into Your Lessons

Raise Awareness

Many people are unaware of the skills they have. By raising awareness through activities such as portfolio building or discussions about Essential Skills, students can learn how to identify and articulate their skills in ways that Canadian employers understand. This is also an opportunity to identify skills needed for success in the workplace or in school.

Link Tasks to both the CLBs and ES

To learn how the CLB have been aligned to the Essential Skills complexity scales, see the document developed by the CCLB, *Relating Canadian Language Benchmarks to Essential Skills: A Comparative Framework*. Click [here](#) for the full document, or search the CCLB website.

Set Goals

An Essential Skills approach focuses on creating learning materials that are realistic, relevant, and attainable for learners. This integrates well with what you are already doing as a LINC instructor. Essential Skills Occupational Profiles and the Essential Skills methodology help provide a context for developing materials that meet the needs of your learners.

Explore Job Profiles

Many newcomers to Canada are unsure about the skills Canadian employers are looking for. The Occupational Profiles describe the skills needed for different jobs. By exploring these, your learners can identify the skills they already have, as well as learn about the skills they may need to develop for their target occupation.

A Sample CLB/ES Lesson

Identify CLB Task

Ask for and give personal information (e.g. when registering at a school)

Apply ES Methodology

Ask yourself:

“Where do my students ‘go wrong’ on this type of activity?”

Possible challenges students may have

- ◆ don't know how to turn statements into questions
- ◆ give the wrong answers to questions (don't anticipate the answer needed)

How do these skills transfer to real world applications?

- ◆ requesting information
- ◆ exchanging information
- ◆ communicating with employers, co-workers
- ◆ participating in meetings and interviews

Identify Essential Skills

- ◆ Oral Communication
- ◆ Thinking Skills

Identify ES Lesson Objectives

- ◆ question formation strategies
- ◆ strategies for clarifying information
- ◆ how to predict answers to questions

Useful Resources

To learn more about the 9 Essential Skills, visit the [ESDC website](#). To see how Essential Skills are used in different occupations, see the ESDC's [Occupational Profiles](#).

Special Thanks

LISTN gratefully acknowledges the help of Cat Adler from Douglas College for her contribution to this Instructors' Bulletin.

Funded by:

Financé par :



Citizenship and
Immigration Canada

Citoyenneté et
Immigration Canada