



Essentially Yours: Training in the Essential Skills

The Essential Skills Website Taking a Look Through the Literacy Lens

To date, CLO's *Essentially Yours: Training in the Essential Skills* project has produced two online training sessions on Centra, three bulletins (www.nald.ca/litweb/province/on/clo/newslet.htm), and a self-study module on CLO's Literacy Basics website (www.nald.ca/literacybasics/essentl/intro/01.htm).

We have designed this fourth and final project bulletin to be your personal "tour guide" for exploring the Essential Skills website. The excellent response to a guided introductory tour of the Essential Skills website during the Centra training sessions highlighted a need for more comprehensive information about the Essential Skills website. We will introduce you to useful links, effective tools and resources, important supplementary resources, and ideas to help make Essential Skills (ES) easier to understand and use. CLO will provide additional information – and hopefully inspiration. Set aside a block of time, fire up your computer and use this bulletin to discover what the ES website has to offer. To help keep you on track, we have *italicized* and/or **bolded** key links, and we have associated consecutive links with their pages of origin. When you are ready... let the tour begin!

An important part of the Essential Skills website is the Essential Skills Profiles link. The ES profiles were developed using NOC codes, and practitioners who know their codes can use them to effectively search the profiles for occupational information and other Essential Skills materials. Therefore, we decided to include a section about the NOC in this bulletin – about deciphering the codes and exploring the NOC website – to help practitioners forge an even greater understanding of Essentials Skills.

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Mapping Out the ES Website

Getting a Feel for Where to Go and What to Do

The Essential Skills website <http://srv108.services.gc.ca> is a comprehensive resource, and exploring its contents can be very rewarding. HRSDC updates the ES website on a regular basis, and recent updates have led to a number of significant changes. For example, menus have been reconfigured and some of the headings reworded. We suggest you bookmark favourite pages for continued ease of access, and so you can visit often to discover new profiles, ES tools, and supplementary resources.

Honing In on the Home Page

Français	Contact Us	Help	Search	Canada Site
Home	About this Site	Site Map	Who Is HRP?	Related Links



- Understanding Essential Skills
- Essential Skills Profiles
- Authentic Workplace Materials
- Essential Skills Toolkit
- Publications & Research
- Office of Literacy and Essential Skills
- How Can I Use This Site?
- FAQs



Becoming familiar with the home page of the Essential Skills website is the first step towards being able to take advantage of its plethora of ES tools and resources. The design is clean and repetitive so that key navigation tools are present on every linked page, with the exception of PDF files or related offsite links. Getting to know the content of each link on the home page will help you uncover helpful shortcuts and improve your comfort level, navigation speed, and understanding of how the site works.

There are two menus that appear on the home page – the black and blue bar menu at the top and the bulleted list menu on the left. The bar menu is primarily informational, with the exception of *Search*, which provides quick access to navigational links for both the ES Profiles and the Authentic Workplace Materials databases. Once you are more familiar with the site, you may prefer to use the *Search* link as a shortcut to access the databases directly. The list menu leads to key links, including the ES Profiles, Authentic Workplace Materials, and the ES Toolkit. The list menu is updated regularly, so it would be prudent to keep track of favourite links or those you use most often.

Getting a Feel for Where to Go and What to Do - Continued...

The Office of Literacy and Essential Skills oversees the Essential Skills website, promoting its use and providing support through the distribution of a variety of ES materials. Follow the *Publications & Research* link on the list menu for a direct connection to the Enquiries Centre and its publications warehouse. From here, you can arrange for delivery of a variety of FREE glossy ES tools (fact sheets and booklets) that can be bundled and placed in special Essential Skills toolkit folders.

The *Site Map* link on the bar menu is a useful tool when you are looking for a general link or for specific information about some aspect of the ES site. For example, follow the *How others are using Essential Skills* link (near the bottom of the *Site Map* page) and you will discover additional links to sample tools for assessment (formal and self), as well as information about resources, professional development, and curriculum that has been developed using the ES profiles. Following *Help* directs users to a General Help link (scroll about half way down the page) that provides further information about conducting searches, as well as a direct link to the *Readers' Guide (to Essential Skills Profiles)*, which is considered the ES "rules" book. We will be reviewing the guide later in this bulletin.

Related Links on the bar menu directs you to a number of supplementary websites and ES tools that provide background information (i.e., International Adult Literacy Survey), current and future occupational trends (i.e., Jobs, Workers, Training and Careers), and interactive databases that practitioners and learners can access to help determine appropriate career goals (i.e., Job Futures 2000). Take note of the date stamp for the most recent update at the bottom, left-hand side of the page, under the blue line, as some links may have expired.



In the following pages of this bulletin, you will be introduced to some of the favourite links we are sure will satisfy the needs of both beginners and ES experts. Keep an eye on the *What's New* box on the home page, to keep abreast of the most recent tools and resources that have been added to the website. Finally, if you ever find during your journey into the ES website, that you have buried yourself too deep and do not know how to get back, the *Home* link on the bar menu will always bring you back to the main page.

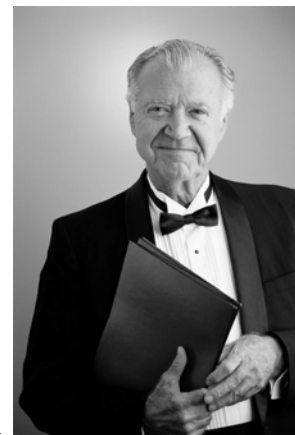
KEY: Bold, italicized titles indicate main links on the bar menu. Italicized titles indicate subsequent links.

May We Suggest...?

A Fine Selection of ES Links to Whet Your Appetite

In the previous section we recommended that you set aside some time to cozy up to your computer – bulletin (and perhaps a cup of tea) in hand – to explore the ES website. The site is expansive; therefore, it is not realistic to try to browse it all in one sitting. If you select one link at a time and fully explore it, you will be amazed at what you will discover. Drawing your attention to the list menu, let's explore a few links individually...

Understanding Essential Skills (A) is the first link on the list, and it is great for first-time users. The broad definition of Essential Skills is provided, and what follows includes other essentials (no pun intended) to help get the gist of Essential Skills methodology. Blue hyperlinks to each of the *nine Essential Skills (A-1)* deliver brief definitions, as well as further explanations and examples for some of the Skills. The definition for Document Use, for example, is pulled directly from the Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles. We highly recommend that you do not read past the Section Overview until later on in the tutorial.



Also included on the ***Understanding Essential Skills*** page, is a link to *levels of complexity (A-1)* at the end of the second paragraph. ES complexity levels are the rating tools used to measure how complicated a task is. This link clearly and effectively compares occupational use of Writing to show how the Skill is used to differing degrees – an often complex concept.

If you return to ***Understanding Essential Skills*** and scroll down, you will find a link to *The Equalizer (A-1)*, which is an interactive tool developed by HRSDC to support Essential Skills understanding. *The Equalizer* offers ES definitions, and allows users to set ES complexity levels for each Essential Skill. For example, set the Document Use slider to 2 and click on the green Document Use icon to reveal ES Level 2 definitions (similar language to LBS performance indicators), as well as examples of Document Use Level 2 tasks. Use the *Select an Occupation* option at the bottom of the page to choose a specific occupation or group, and the required Essential Skills. It should be noted that task examples given are not occupation specific.

KEY: Single letter (A) indicates a list menu link. (A-1) indicates any first level links off (A). (A-2) indicates any second level links, etc. Bold, italicized titles indicate main links off the list menu. Italicized titles indicate subsequent links.

A Fine Selection of ES Links - Continued...

Moving back to *Understanding Essential Skills*, you will note that the two links at the bottom of the page include information on the history of the *Essential Skills Research Project (A-1)* and the *Readers' Guide (A-1)*.

About halfway down the list menu is a recent addition to the ES website. The *Essential Skills Toolkit (B)* link brings together all the specialized ES tools that have been created to get people thinking about and working with Essential Skills. The tools are available in PDF (downloadable from the website), or they can be ordered through the publications warehouse. Click *Essential Skills Toolkit* and choose one of two options to customize tool selection.

Selecting the *I am an employer or practitioner (B-1)* link will reveal a list of benefits for investing in ES development, as well as a list of tools that help assess and collect information about learner/employee skill development (B-2). Select *I am an employee or learner (B-1)* for *ES Indicator (B-2)* tools that will help learners assess their own skill strengths. The last three indicator tools are paper and pencil exercises that evaluate skill strength using ES Level 1 and 2 assessment questions. The first is an interactive pilot tool that includes a series of short quizzes for assessing Numeracy and Document Use. Practitioners can use all four of the *Indicators* for professional development to gain a better understanding of ES complexity levels. Learners will be well served by the tool, as it provides instant feedback and supports skill strength awareness.

Related topics at the bottom of the *I am an employee or learner (B-1)* page include three other tools that will help learners see how they can use ES for work, learning, and life:

- The *Defining Essential Skills (B-2)* Fact Sheet is a handy two-page brochure that provides simplified definitions, typical applications, and examples of how ES are used in a variety of workplace settings. Learners can highlight the applications they have mastered. Recognizing skill strengths is affirming, and improved self-esteem can lead to clearer goals.
- *How are Essential Skills used in various occupations?(B-2)*
- *Living and Learning – Essential Skills Success Stories (B-2)* is a tool that could also be shared with learners in a group setting. Individual stories about people who have overcome barriers by developing their Essential Skills could support a number of learning opportunities, including reading and writing, goal setting, and group discussion. Both personal and professional references are included.

A Fine Selection of ES Links - Continued...

Back on the list menu, *How Can I Use This Site? (C)* is a page that was developed for a wide range of users. Potential browsers, including workers, parents, and curriculum developers, to name a few, will find ideas about how to use Essential Skills that are specific to their needs. Learners who are employment focused would follow the *I am a... Student (C-1)* link to find ideas for working with both ES and NOC occupational profiles. Under Ideas for Using the Occupational Profiles, practitioners can use the list of questions to promote discussion around ES development, as a lead-in to filling out a skills inventory list, or to create a “dream job” profile. Other *I am a...* links that offer other practical ideas are *Teacher, Cooperative Education or Work Experience Supervisor, Workplace Trainer, Employer, and Adult Literacy Instructors (C-1)*.

Key headings to investigate are *Using the profiles to get help for your learners in setting their skill development targets under Adult Literacy Instructors (C-2), Using Essential Skills Profiles for deciding what skills to look for when hiring under Employer (C-2), and Ideas for Using the Occupational Profiles under Career Counsellor (C-2)*.



No site is complete without a *FAQ (D)* link and the ES website is no exception. Seven questions are answered—briefly but effectively—providing foundational information regarding what Essential Skills are, how they can help, ongoing additions to the website, as well as where to go for additional ES information and resources.

A common result of website browsing is the treasures that are naturally unearthed as you drill down layer by layer. One such gem that was discovered on this researcher’s dig is the *Introduction to Occupational Profiles* link. There are two ways to get there. The shortcut is to select *Site Map* from the bar menu and then scroll down and select *Introduction* under ‘Essential Skills Occupational Profiles.’ The longer route provides one extra stop that introduces an interesting selection of ES tools that were developed across the country. Go back to *Home* and select *Essential Skills Profiles (E)* from the list menu, and then scroll down to the bottom of the page and click *How others are using the profiles (E-1)*. You may recall that your attention was already drawn to this particular link. You will now be at a page that offers a link to resources that were developed for the *Adult Education Sphere (E -2)*.

A Fine Selection of ES Links - Continued...

We highly recommend that you review the link that includes formal and informal assessment tools (TOWES and How Do You Measure Up?) and resources for teachers, some of which are available for purchase. How Do You Measure Up? and ESPORT are FREE online tools to help learners assess the skills they have and recognize the skills they need to strengthen.

Once you have familiarized yourself with the ES tools, use the back button to return to the *How Others Are Using Essential Skills* page, and follow the site tour link (E-2). Again, follow the *Introduction* link (E-3) and you will find yourself at a page that offers an excellent introductory page to the ES Profiles. Basic questions are addressed, and the nine Essential Skills are redefined under the heading, *Which Essential Skills will I find here?* Note that Thinking Skills does not include Critical Thinking as one of the applications, despite the fact that it has been added to the definition. The best part about this link, is the compact presentation of the guide to occupational profiles formatting that is found under *What information is in an occupational profile?*

Thinking back to the suggestion made for bookmarking favourite links, we would be remiss to ignore an excellent link, **10 Myths We Shouldn't Believe About Essential Skills**. This link can be located by following http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/Myths_e.shtml. Myth#1 clears up any confusion about the simple fact that all of us have Essential Skills to varying degrees. Other revealing myths include associating poor basic skills with Canada's large immigrant population, assuming college and university graduates have well developed Essential Skills, and thinking that Essential Skills are the same as employability skills. If you have any concerns about what Essential Skills are or are not, this link could set your thinking straight.



**Essential Skills are the skills
that people need for work,
learning, and life.**

Worth the Read

The Quint-Essential Guide to Understanding Essential Skills

The *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles* is considered the “rule book” for Essential Skills users. This comprehensive document is packed full of useful information, including definitions, complexity levels, and a detailed outline of the ES profile format. In order to develop a comfortable relationship with the guide, you may want to print it, put it in a binder, and keep it nearby for in-depth reference.

The quickest way to access the *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles* is from the *Site Map* link on the bar menu. Scroll down to Essential Skills Occupational Profiles and select the last link under that heading. Once linked to the *Readers' Guide* page, scroll down to discover a brief introduction that explains the broad definition of Essential Skills, followed by a paragraph or two about the profiles, using and understanding the profiles, as well as a breakdown of what each profile entails. Keeping scrolling for helpful descriptions including, List of the most important Essential Skills, Definition of “Complexity Rating,” and Use of Symbols.

We highly recommend that you take time to thoroughly read Section 5: Using this Guide. Here, detailed descriptions of how each of the Essential Skills appears in an ES profile are presented, including examples of levelled tasks, rating scales, and recommended readings. Not all Essential Skills are evaluated equally, so it is important to reference the *Readers' Guide* when unsure of how to evaluate a task.



For example, the Reading Text section of each profile examines four major components, and includes a table that lists types of text and purpose for reading, and example tasks that are rated on a five-level complexity scale.

In comparison, Document Use has three components, and considers complexity according to three dimensions of use: the complexity of the document itself, how difficult it is to find or enter information, and how easily the reader can interpret what is written. It will be useful to keep the *Readers' Guide* handy when you start accessing ES profiles, so you can reference it while learning how to interpret the tables, symbols, and examples given.

How “Hard” Can They Be?

Understanding ES Complexity Levels

Literacy practitioners should note that the ES complexity levels do not match directly to the LBS levels. As mentioned in other bulletins, the complexity levels are likely the most challenging part of understanding Essential Skills; however, the website has several links that will help to make the levels clearer. You can follow links on the ES site to pages that reference the topic directly, or you can follow links that illustrate task complexity levels through activities.

A well written introduction to the levels of complexity is linked from the *Understanding Essential Skills (A)* page. You may recall from page five of this bulletin that this explanation uses examples from ES profiles to illustrate how Essentials Skills are transferable and expandable, and that different occupations require basic to more complex use of the skills. It is important to remember that the demands of the task, and not the Essential Skills themselves, are rated, and that complexity can be influenced by a number of variables, including the length and purpose of the task (Writing), the length and type of text (Reading Text), and the risk level in failing (Oral Communications).

The *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles* provides the most detailed information about levels of complexity, covering concepts such as range of complexity and types of ratings. Once into the actual Essential Skills section, you will find levelled task examples, complexity rating tables, and explanations of exactly what aspect of the task is rated (e.g., the Document Use complexity rating scale applies to interpretation and entry of information in documents, not the creation of documents themselves).

Theory is great, and multiple intelligences theory suggests that learning occurs best when it happens over a wider range of pathways; therefore we suggest the following links that provide opportunities to learn about levels of complexity in ways that appeal to spatial and kinaesthetic learners.

Access the *User Guide: Authentic Workplace Materials (F-1)* by following the *Authentic Workplace Materials (F)* link on the list menu, and scroll down to the heading Theoretical Framework. *Complexity Rating Scales (F-2)* have been created for Reading Text, Document Use, and Writing to provide easy-to-read examples of what each level means in terms of demands of the task.

Understanding ES Complexity Levels - Continued...

The terminology used is similar to that which is used in the “Level Descriptions Manual,” a popular LBS assessment tool. Each subsection under Theoretical Framework is prefaced by a guide to *Understanding the Complexity (F-2)* link that provides task examples that clearly illustrate the skills that are being challenged, and the factors that contribute to complexity. This is an important section for practitioners who are looking for more in-depth explanations that are supported by effective use of tables and scales.

The *Essential Skills Indicators (B-2)* are accessed through the *Essential Skills Toolkit (B)* link on the list menu. Both *I am a...* links (B-1) will lead to a page that contains the same four indicator tools. Focusing on Level 1–3 tasks, the indicator tools are effective for guided learning around complexity levels. Practitioners who complete the indicator tests on their own will gain greater understanding about what individuals require to be successful at the presented levels. The Online Indicator is an interactive tool that provides immediate feedback and satisfies the needs of those who prefer to learn by doing.

The ES Equalizer (A-1) is another tool that will help you understand complexity levels. The definitions are more detailed, including specific references that are similar to LBS performance indicators as found in the Level Descriptions Manual.

A number of off-site assessment tools are available to enhance learning about the complexity levels. Follow *How others are using Essential Skills* via the Site Map link on the bar menu, and choose Adult Education Sphere. “How Do You Measure Up?” is a self-assessment tool developed by the people who made TOWES. It is free and provides a range of activities for Reading Text, Document Use, and Numeracy. As well as providing examples of levelled tasks, questions can be used to develop learning activities or demonstrations. It is an easy website to navigate, the instructions are clear, and it also offers a number of supplementary resources.

Writing Complexity Rating Scale



An excerpt from the Companion to the Authentic Workplace Materials User Guide on the ES Website

Dimension: 1. Length and Purpose of the Writing				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
- Less than a paragraph - Intended to organize, remind or inform	- Brief text that is a paragraph or longer intended to serve a variety of purposes	- Either long or shorter pieces of writing intended to inform, explain, request information, express opinions or	- Longer pieces of writing which present considerable information and which may feature a comparison	- Longer pieces of writing which present an evaluation or critique usually accompanied by recommendations

Job Descriptions

The NOC-ES Profiles Connection

The connection between the National Occupational Classification (NOC) and the Essential Skills is that the ES profiles were developed using NOC codes. There are currently more than 250 NOC-coded profiles on the ES website, and the number is growing. To find out more about the NOC, select *Essential Skills Profiles (E)* off the list menu, and then click the *National Occupational Classification (E-1)* link to take you to their home page. Recently revamped, the NOC site provides important labour market information that can enlighten learners about the types of duties that typify occupations that might match their skills.

The NOC uses a four-digit code to classify occupations according to their skill level and type. Skill level refers to the education or training required to enter the field, and skill type refers to the occupational field itself. It is helpful to understand the NOC coding system so you can search both the NOC and ES sites for jobs or job categories. A great Essential Skill challenger in itself, the NOC website can be investigated by learners in ways that will help them develop Computer Use, Document Use, Reading Text, and other Essential Skills. To further explore the NOC website, select *Matrix* from the NOC menu (it's down the left-hand side of the page).

DECIPHERING THE NOC CODE

6611 – Cashiers

- ⇒ The first digit represents the skill type or type of work performed
(skill types are organized by numbers 0 through 9)
- ⇒ The second digit represents the skill levels A, B, C, D
(skill levels are assigned numbers 1 through 6 for coding purposes)
- ⇒ The first two digits combined represent the major occupational group
- ⇒ The first three digits combined represent the minor occupational group
(Major and Minor groups are identified on the Matrix)
- ⇒ The fourth digit is added to further identify the occupation in the group

The matrix identifies all major and minor occupational groups according to their skill type and level. Click on “Order our products” to order a free NOC 2006 wall chart. Follow the *Tutorial* link (directly below the Matrix link) for more detailed information, including the history, applications, and NOC codes. Take note that Skill Level C and D occupations were the first to be profiled on the ES website because they represent 65 per cent of all the jobs in Canada.

NOC-ES Profiles Connection - Continued...

The ES website also has an excellent NOC tutorial link. Follow the *Site Map* link from the bar menu and choose the second *User Guide* link under the Authentic Workplace Materials heading. Scroll down to Appendices and select the second option – *NOC Coding System* – for a superb explanation of all aspects of the coding system.

Practitioners and employment-oriented learners would be well served by referencing the NOC site. A great learner activity could involve first reviewing the Matrix for potential occupational groups, then searching the NOC site using the occupational group code (you can enter partial codes) to pinpoint specific jobs. Following the job links on the NOC site would provide learners with examples of job titles and main duties that they could categorize according to duties they think they could do, and duties they think they could learn to do.



The *Essential Skill Profiles (E)* link is the flagship of the ES website. The ES profiles were developed by highly trained professionals who identified the skills required to enter into and maintain a particular job type. It is extremely important to understand that the profiles can also be used for non-employment goals, as Essential Skills support the development of skill sets that can be transferred across all areas of our lives. ES profiles can help learners understand what Essential Skills are, so they can identify their own skill strengths as well as skills they would like to develop.

As noted in the Worth the Read section of this bulletin, the profiles follow the same format, making them easier to use. From the home page, pick *Essential Skills Profiles (E)* from the list menu, and note the supplementary information that briefly explains what the profiles include and how they can be used. Scroll down to the bottom and note the offered links. Pick *List of all Profiles (E-1)* if you want to take a look at a list of all the profiles at once. Copy the list, separate the titles, and have learners sort them according to alphabetical order or NOC code.

Interestingly, there are some crossovers of website links. The *How can I use the profiles* link is the same as the *How Can I Use This Site? (C)* link from the list menu. The *How others are using the profiles* link is the same as the *How Others Are Using Essential Skills* link off the *Site Map*.

NOC-ES Profiles Connection - Continued...

To conduct an actual search, select *Search the profiles* (E-1) and decide how you would like to approach the search. If you are working between the NOC and ES sites, select the NOC search link and enter either the full or partial code. Like the NOC site, partial codes will get you a range of occupations, where a single code will get you one. If you are unsure of the code, enter a partial code, as entering a wrong code will not provide results. You can also search the profiles by using key words or job titles.

While most of the search modes are self-explanatory, we would like to draw your attention to *Most Important Skills* (E-2). Each ES profile lists the most important skills required to do the job. A relevant exercise for learners might be to identify their strengths, and then have them search the profiles for jobs they would be able to do. This exercise increases awareness about skill transferability, as similar skills cross over within and between occupation groups. It is interesting to note that Oral Communication and Document Use show up often as most important skills.

Skill Levels (E-2) searches can also help pinpoint areas of strength and increase awareness of the variety of ways certain skills can be applied. Many learners will be surprised at how valuable their skills are, based on how many occupational groups their skill inventories cover. Select Writing and follow the prompts, choosing 'level 1', 'to keep a record,' and 'texts requiring less than one paragraph.' Hit 'next' and see what happens. Don't be surprised that a Level 1 Writing request results in profiles for both Aerospace Engineers and Retail Sales Associates. This shows that similar skill sets cover a wide range of occupations, and that not all "high level" occupations require only a high level of skill in all areas.

For a quick route to searching the ES profiles, click on *Search* from the bar menu, select search by NOC, and type in 68, representing the minor group Other Elemental Service Occupations. Note the number of records found for this partial code. Select (6681, 6682) and view the profile. Read over the job summaries and scroll down to note the most important Essential Skills. Select Document Use from the ES index and read the examples of job skills and assigned levels of complexity. Essential Skills are very action-oriented, so collecting sample tasks could provide appropriate material for developing activities or demonstrations. For the task "may read clothing care labels," clothing labels are easy enough to obtain and would make a great prop for a unit on reading a variety of consumer labels.

Tools You Can Use!

Authentic Workplace Materials in Use

The Authentic Workplace Materials link leads to a collection of 60 examples of forms, charts, and many other work documents that were gleaned from actual workplace environments. While many of the samples engage skills associated with Reading Text, Document Use, and Writing, opportunities are also provided to develop Oral Communication and Numeracy skills. All of the skills illustrated are transferable across work, learning, and life.

Practitioners are encouraged to utilize samples from the site, as well as collect real-world materials from home or office, that support authentic, meaningful learning. Authentic materials can be used in many ways. For example, use specific words or terms from documents for vocabulary-building exercises; use forms to help learners identify key elements, such as headings, subheadings, and layout; and review marketing materials (advertisements) to generate discussion.

Select *Authentic Workplace Materials (F)* from the list menu and scroll down to the list of hyperlinks. Some of the links are new, while others connect to previously viewed pages. The *User Guide: Authentic Workplace Materials (F-1)* is an excellent resource and a “must see” that provides lots of theoretical references and suggestions for adapting the materials for various learners. For example, *Adapting the User Tips: Learning Disabilities (F-2)* provides a brief overview of what learning disabilities are, and provides ideas for accommodating learners with special needs.

About the Authentic Workplace Materials Collection (F-2) outlines the common format in which the materials are presented. Complexity levels are assigned for Reading Text, Document



Use, and Writing, while other ES are simply identified but not rated. The Theoretical Framework section is worth a sit-down session on its own, as there is a lot of information to digest. For those who want to understand the methodology of Essential Skills, the three *What is...? Links (F-2)* lead to interesting and enlightening descriptions about the actual process that occurs when reading and writing in the classroom/workplace, and how Essential Skills development addresses the gaps.

Authentic Workplace Materials in Use- Continued...

Back on the *Authentic Workplace Materials (F)* page, all links from *Scope of the collection* to *Technical notes (F-1)* lead to the *Introduction to the Collection of Authentic Workplace Materials (F-2)*. Scroll down to 'When to use the different lists and searches' for useful suggestions on how to look for specific information.

Under View the materials: (off the *Authentic Workplace Materials* link) each option provides a list of ALL materials; the only difference is which category comes first. The materials can also be searched by Essential Skill and/or keywords, resulting in a more refined search. Select search *by Essential Skills* and choose Reading Text, Level 1. Click on the *title of material* for the first item on the list.

This particular sample is interesting because it provides more than one example of a checklist or check sheets. For each document, scroll down to the bottom of the page to see if *Analysis* and *User Tips* links are included, as they provide excellent information and ideas to support the use of the specific sample. Click on *Analysis* to see what we mean. This particular analysis explains how and why checklists are commonly used in the workplace, and some of the characteristics that learners need to be prepared to deal with.

User Tips generally provides generic activity ideas, and makes direct connections to good teaching practices. *User Tips* can be applied to similar materials that are collected outside of this specific ES collection.

A good companion to the *ES Authentic Workplace Materials Collection* is found at Applications for Work and Learning (AWAL—www.awal.ca). Much like the Essential Skills Authentic Workplace Materials site, the AWAL database is available online and provides materials for public use. The activities and materials are not specific to adult learning environments, so items must be carefully screened for appropriateness.

The HRSDC's collection of Essential Skills material can also be used in the classroom as excellent, authentic learning tools. The *New Tools* link off the home page offers ten new additions to the collection. The 'Organizational Needs Assessment' is a large document aimed at businesses or agencies; however, it contains easy to interpret checklists that could be adapted for a classroom setting to address issues such as motivation, productivity, or difficulty meeting goals. The three *Tip Sheets* would be well used by practitioners who support solution-oriented, self-directed, hands-on tools that will help learners recognize gaps in their skill development, and take charge in making changes.

Quick Glance Guide to Essential ES Links



Essential Skills
are everyone's
business!

Community Literacy of Ontario

80 Bradford Street
Suite 508
Barrie, Ontario
L4N 6S7

Tel: 705-733-2312
Fax: 705-733-6197

www.nald.ca/clo.htm

clo@bellnet.ca

Research and Writing:
Mary-Ann Stark
with support from
Jette Cosburn

CLO's Top Ten List of "Must See" ES Links

1. Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles

http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/readers_guide_whole.shtml

2. The Companion to the Authentic Workplace Materials User Guide

http://srv108.services.gc.ca/awm/main/c_toc_e.shtml

3. Introduction to the Occupational Profiles

<http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/intro.shtml>

4. Essential Skills Toolkit

<http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/toolkit.shtml>

5. New Tools

http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/casestudies_e.shtml

6. How Others Are Using Essential Skills

http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/Application_e.shtml

7. How Can I Use This Site?

http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/i_am_a_e.shtml

8. Understanding Essential Skills

http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/Understanding_ES_e.shtml

9. 10 Myths We Shouldn't Believe About Essential Skills

http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/Myths_e.shtml

10. The NOC Coding System

http://srv108.services.gc.ca/awm/main/c_ap_noc_e.shtml

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