

Skills for Success

GET STARTED GUIDE FOR PRACTITIONERS

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SkillPlan

Canada

SRDC 25 SRSA

SOCIAL RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION CORPORATION
SOCIÉTÉ DE RECHERCHE SOCIALE APPLIQUÉE

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Welcome to the Get Started Guide!

Take your training programs to the next level with the *Skills for Success Get Started Guide for Practitioners.* This resource will help you design and deliver training programs using the new Skills for Success model.

Whether you are new to Skills for Success, looking to transition from the original Essential Skills framework or seeking guidance on implementing the new skills,

This guide was made for you!



Purpose

The Skills for Success Get Started Guide aims to increase practitioners' knowledge, ability and confidence in designing and delivering Skills for Success training programs and to facilitate a smooth transition from Essential Skills to the new Skills for Success framework.

The guide presents guidelines, tips and recommendations applicable to multiple training contexts to support rapid adaptation and alignment with Skills for Success, including updating existing Essential Skills resources to the new framework.

You'll also learn how to contextualize training programs for sector-specific training contexts in order to maximize relevancy, engagement and learning transfer to the workplace.

What type of Skills for Success Practitioner are you?

This guide is intended to support both new and experienced practitioners in a variety of roles, including instructors, curriculum developers, instructional designers and program managers.

The *Skills for Success Get Started Guide for Practitioners* is for you if:



You have experience working with adult learners, but you are entirely new to the Skills for Success model. You want background knowledge to get started on the right foot.

Quick Links for Adult Educators:

Section 1: Introduction to Skills for Success (p. 9)

Section 2: Overarching Approaches to Skills for Success Training (p. 23)

Section 4: Lesson Plans (p. 115)



You have experience working with the original Essential Skills framework, but you want to learn how to transition to the new Skills for Success model.

Quick Links for Essential Skills Specialists:

Section 1: Overview of Skills for Success (p. 10)

Section 1: Shifting to Skills for Success (p. 17)

Section 3: Skill-specific Instructional Strategies (p. 45)

You are looking for tips and ideas on how to implement the new skills (Creativity & Innovation, Adaptability) in your programming.

Quick Links for Social Emotional Skills (SES):

Section 1: Overview of Skills for Success (p. 10)

Section 1: Shifting to Skills for Success (p. 17)

Section 2: Approach #6 Social Emotional Skills (p. 40)

Section 3: Adaptability (p. 99)

Section 3: Creativity & Innovation (p. 106)

You are looking for guidance and ideas on how to contextualize Skills for Success for a specific sector, such as Construction, Manufacturing, Tourism or other fields.

Quick Links for Sector-Specific Contextualization:

Welcome: Transferable and Sector-Specific Resources (p. 6)

Section 2: Approach #2 Contextualized (p. 26)

Section 3: Skill-specific Instructional Strategies (See Grab and Go) (p. 45)

Section 4: Lesson Plans (p. 115)

Navigation

Use the Table of Contents or Quick Links above to jump to the section that is most relevant to your needs. The guide can be navigated in any order.

Transferable and Sector-Specific Resources

Most of the guide focuses on approaches that can be used in any sector. It also introduces sector-specific considerations for three major sectors of the economy: Construction, Manufacturing and Tourism. Other sectors are also included to show how these approaches can be applied across a variety of contexts.

- Look for these icons:

 Construction	 Manufacturing
 Tourism	 Bioeconomy
 Food Processing	 Healthcare
 Forestry	 Education

Meeting the Needs of Underrepresented Groups

Skills for Success are for everyone, including participants from groups that are underrepresented in the labour market and underserved by the traditional educational system (i.e., Indigenous people, racialized Canadians, members of the LGBTQ2+ community, newcomers, neurodiverse learners, and people with disabilities).

> Ensuring training and assessments meet the needs of underrepresented groups is key to the success of the Skills for Success framework.
>
> *Implementation Guidance (p. 6)*

Where possible, the guide highlights considerations and instructional strategies for meeting the needs of diverse learners in the training environment.

Look for this icon:



Underrepresented Groups

SRDC's Skills for Success Implementation Guidance (2022) is an excellent resource to learn more about the training needs of underrepresented groups.

SRDC. (2022). *Skills for success implementation guidance. Final report.*
https://www.srdc.org/media/1945054/skills-for-success-implementation-guidance-final-report.pdf

Key Resources

You'll learn more about the key resources of the Skills for Success field in Section 1.

The guide is designed to help you become more familiar with these key resources, so you know where to turn for more information.

Look for these boxes to connect to key resources:

Adaptability Components

1. Demonstrate responsibility
2. Persist and persevere
3. Regulate your emotions when appropriate
4. Set or adjust your goals and expectations
5. Plan and prioritize
6. Seek self-improvement

Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success (p. 29)

Engagement

Create safe learning spaces by leveraging the social emotional Skills for Success to build learners' self-efficacy, autonomy and confidence.

Implementation Guidance (p. 109)



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 2.9 Applies a learner-centred approach to Skills for Success training
- DELIVER 1.2 Creates an atmosphere that addresses the social-emotional needs of participants
- DELIVER 1.3 Builds participants' confidence and ownership of learning process
- DELIVER 2.2 Recognizes and builds upon participants' prior learning, knowledge and experience

The boxes provide excerpts from the key resources that are relevant to the content in the guide. Check out the page numbers in the key resources to learn more.

Section 1

Introduction to Skills for Success

This section introduces the Skills for Success framework. You'll learn the basics of the Skills for Success model and how it relates to the original Essential Skills framework, including proficiency levels and important updates. Key resources to the field are introduced to support your professional development.



Overview of Skills for Success

Skills for Success are the skills needed to participate and thrive in learning, work and life.

Skills for Success include skills that are foundational for building other skills and knowledge and are important for effective social interaction. These skills overlap and interact with each other, and with other technical and life skills. They are inclusive and can be adapted to different contexts.

Skills for Success are for everyone – employers, workers, training providers, governments, and communities.

(Government of Canada, 2021)



Skills for Success

In May 2021, the Government of Canada launched the Skills for Success model to reflect the evolving skill needs of the modern workforce. Skills for Success are the foundational, transferrable skills used in all aspects of work, learning and life.

Like the Essential Skills framework before it, the Skills for Success model addresses the core literacy skills – Reading, Writing, and Numeracy. It expands on Digital and Problem-Solving skills, which are increasingly important in modern life. The model broadens the scope of two existing social-emotional skills, Communication and Collaboration, and introduces two new ones: Adaptability, and Creativity & Innovation.

These skills are essential to people in all aspects of their lives. In the workplace, the skills are used to varying degrees and levels of complexity. For example, some occupations require a lot of reading while others require little, but all jobs require at least some reading. It may be quite basic or highly complex. For all occupations, having strong skills allows people to learn, remember and be confident in their jobs.

THE 9 SKILLS FOR SUCCESS	
Adaptability	Your ability to achieve or adjust goals and behaviours when expected or unexpected change occurs, by planning, staying focused, persisting, and overcoming setbacks. For example, we use this skill to change work plans to meet new deadlines, learn how to work with new tools and improve our skills through feedback.
Collaboration	Your ability to contribute and support others to achieve a common goal. For example, at work we use this skill to provide meaningful support to team members while completing a project.
Communication	Your ability to receive, understand, consider, and share information and ideas through speaking, listening, and interacting with others. For example, we use this skill to listen to instructions, serve customers and discuss ideas.
Creativity & Innovation	Your ability to imagine, develop, express, encourage, and apply ideas in ways that are novel, unexpected, or challenge existing methods and norms. For example, we use this skill to discover better ways of doing things, develop new products, and deliver services in a new way.
Digital	Your ability to use digital technology and tools to find, manage, apply, create and share information and content. For example, we use this skill to create spreadsheets, safely use social media, and securely make online purchases.
Numeracy	Your ability to find, understand, use, and report mathematical information presented through words, numbers, symbols, and graphics. For example, we use this skill to perform calculations, manage budgets, analyze and model data and make estimations.
Problem Solving	Your ability to identify, analyze, propose solutions, and make decisions. Problem solving helps you to address issues, monitor success, and learn from the experience. For example, we use this skill to make hiring decisions, select courses of action and troubleshoot technical failures.
Reading	Your ability to find, understand, and use information presented through words, symbols, and images. For example, we use this skill to locate information on forms and drawings, and to read items such as emails, reports, news articles, blog posts and instructions.
Writing	Your ability to share information using written words, symbols, and images. For example, we use this skill to fill out forms and applications, and write emails, reports and social media posts.

Government of Canada. (2021). *Skills for Success.*
https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/initiatives/skills-success.html

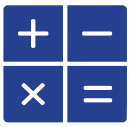
Essential Skills Background

Knowing about the Essential Skills (ES) framework will help you better understand and implement the Skills for Success framework because a significant body of research underpins both models. The ES framework is also tied to existing Essential Skills Profiles for hundreds of occupations currently found on the National Job Bank website. The ES Profiles help practitioners develop contextualized training programs by listing specific applications of skills and their complexity levels. Until equivalent profiles are developed to reflect the Skills for Success model, the ES Profiles are the go-to resource to learn how different occupations apply skills on the job.

The Essential Skills Framework

The nine original Essential Skills were identified through extensive research done by the Government of Canada, national and international agencies in the 1980s and 1990s.

These nine Essential Skills are used in all occupations, at different levels of complexity. They are foundational skills needed for learning all other skills. They enable Canadians to evolve with their jobs and adapt to changes at work.

 Reading	 Document Use	 Writing
 Numeracy	 Oral Communication	 Thinking Skills
 Digital Technology	 Working with Others	 Continuous Learning

Research into Essential Skills and their use in occupations began in the mid 1990s. Here are some key dates in the development of the ES framework:

- 1993 – 1994 Government of Canada launched the Essential Skills Research Project
- 1995 – 1997 Pilots and data collection for the Essential Skills Profiles
- 1998 Writing of the Essential Skills Profiles commenced

The Essential Skills framework was developed to respond to the findings of a series of international studies on adult skill assessments:

- 1994 International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS)
- 2003 International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALSS) and
- 2011 Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)

Proficiency levels in the Essential Skills model

The research studies provided detailed profiles of social distribution of literacy and numeracy skills, conceptualized along a 500-point continuum. The 500-point scale was developed for the *International Adult Literacy Survey* (1994) and used in all three studies.

The core literacy skills assessed in the studies – Reading, Document Use, and Numeracy – had five proficiency levels, as in *Figure 1: Distribution of Literacy Skills Among Canadian Adults*. As we see in the figure, about 42% of Canadian adults are able to perform literacy tasks at Level 1 and Level 2 proficiency in Reading, Document Use and Numeracy.

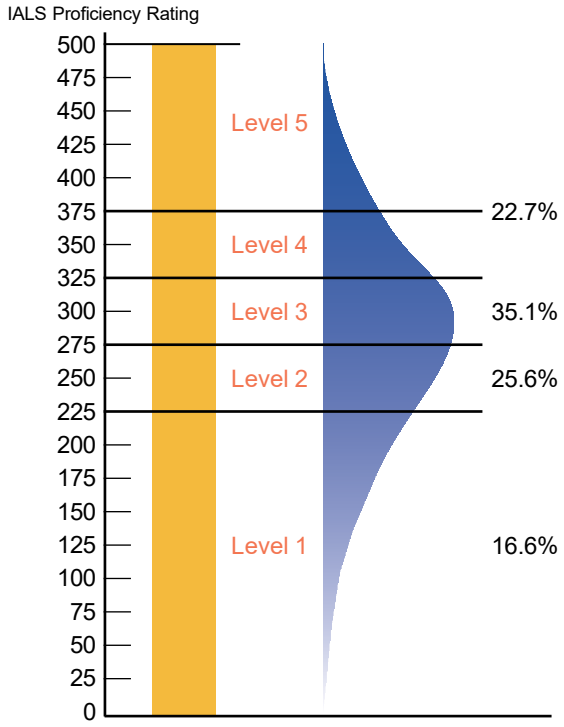


Figure 1: Distribution of Literacy Skills

Among Canadian Adults 16 - 65 years old

These basic literacy skills are also tied to other skills such as problem solving and critical thinking as those skills require higher level reading skills. That means that more than 40% of Canadian adults do not read, write, do mathematics or solve problems at the level required to fully participate and succeed in today's economy.

> **!** This skill shortage significantly impacts our economy, especially as it becomes increasingly knowledge-based and technology driven. In fact, "increasing the literacy and essential skills in the workforce by an average of 1% would, over time, lead to a 3% increase in GDP, or $54 billion per year, every year, and a 5% increase in productivity" (Lane & Murray, 2018).

Proficiency levels are crucial to understanding your learners and designing curriculum for their particular needs. Common program goals include achievement of Level 3 skills to reflect a key finding of adult literacy research: At Level 3, a switch occurs from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn', as indicated in *Figure 2: IALS Complexity Scale.*

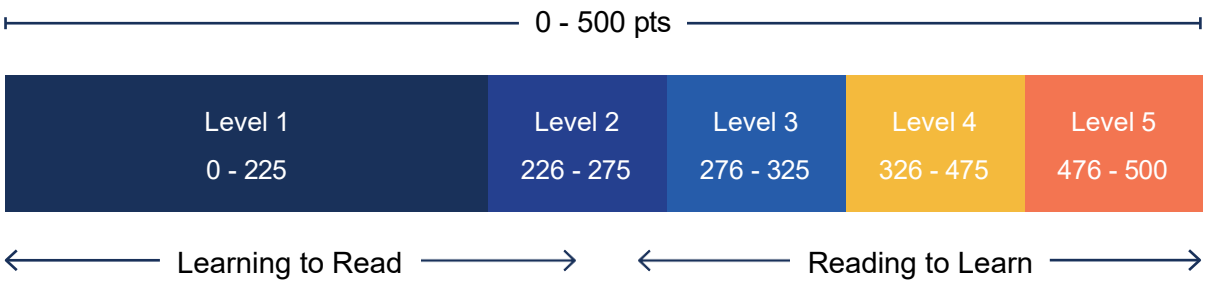


Figure 2: IALS Complexity Scale

The essential role of practitioners is to help participants sequentially build their skills and knowledge and move up to the level required for success. The publication *Controlling Complexity*, which is based on the work of Peter Mosenthal and Michael Hardt, can provide practitioners with the skills to do this. Find out more about this book in the Key Resources at the end of this section.

Summary of Skills and Challenges at Each Level

Level 1

Individuals with Level 1 skills have many challenges to overcome. They may have difficulty decoding words due to a learning disability or because they are English language learners. They may need to read something over and over but don't understand what they read. They don't see connections between things.

Level 2

Learners who can complete Level 2 tasks are beginning to understand and apply foundational skills. They require extra support to make connections. When reading, they often don't get the main idea or overall meaning because they place equal importance on everything they read. They need help navigating documents and learning how to transfer skills to new situations.

Level 3

The ability to perform Level 3 tasks is the minimum level required to be successful in many training programs. These learners have the ability to learn and make connections, work independently, adapt to changes in the workplace, think critically and can deal with coworkers and clients more effectively. They are more independent, but still need support learning to analyze, evaluate and create.



Proficiency Levels in the Essential Skills Model

Based on the levels of the international literacy surveys, the Essential Skills framework used two scales for measuring proficiency, depending on the skill:

Proficiency Levels	Essential Skills
Levels 1 – 5	• Reading • Document Use • Writing • Numeracy • Digital Technology/Computer Use
Levels 1 – 4	• Oral Communication • Working with Others • Thinking • Continuous Learning

You can read more about these levels and their criteria in the *Reader's Guide to Essential Skills Profiles* (2010), which is described in the Key Resources at the end of this section.

Shifting to Skills for Success

The Skills for Success framework update required a realigning of some skills and the addition of new social-emotional skills. The new model updates the definitions and constructs of core literacy skills, embedding Document Use into Reading, Writing and Numeracy. The approach for all the skills, whether core literacy skills or soft skills, has been to consider them learnable, teachable and repeatable through targeted interventions.

The Launch of the Skills for Success Framework

The Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES) became The Office of Skills for Success (OSS) and launched the updated framework in May 2021.

Skills for Success has been revamped to match the changing nature of workplaces and the evolving Canadian labour market - brought about by automation, artificial intelligence and other technological advancements.

These changes have resulted in a decreased need for routine work, physical and manual skills, and a greater demand for social-emotional skills that are not easily replaced by technology. Workers also need skills to navigate and advance in this new labour market – skills like:

- resilience
- adaptability
- planning and organization
- stress management
- openness to learning



In addition to social-emotional skills, numeracy skills continue to play a key role in an estimated 70 per cent of job openings, especially with the growth of data-driven processes and analytics (RBC, 2018).

While employers face challenges to find workers with the right combination of social-emotional, digital and literacy skills, jobseekers and workers struggle to keep up with the changing skill demands of the modern labour market. Skills for Success is designed to bridge this gap.

Which Skills Have Changed?

Some skills have changed in the move from the Essential Skills framework to the new Skills for Success model. See *Figure 3: ES to SFS.*

- Document use is integrated into **Reading, Writing** and **Numeracy.**
- Computer use has broadened in scope as **Digital.** It now includes the use of different digital devices and platforms.
- Thinking, which included critical thinking and decision-making, is now **Problem Solving.**
- Oral Communication is now **Communication.** It is broadened to include concepts such as non-verbal communication.
- Working with others is now **Collaboration** to reflect a broader scope. It now contains inclusivity and respect for diversity.
- Continuous learning evolved into one of the two new social-emotional skills, **Adaptability.**
- The other new social-emotional skill is C**reativity & Innovation.**

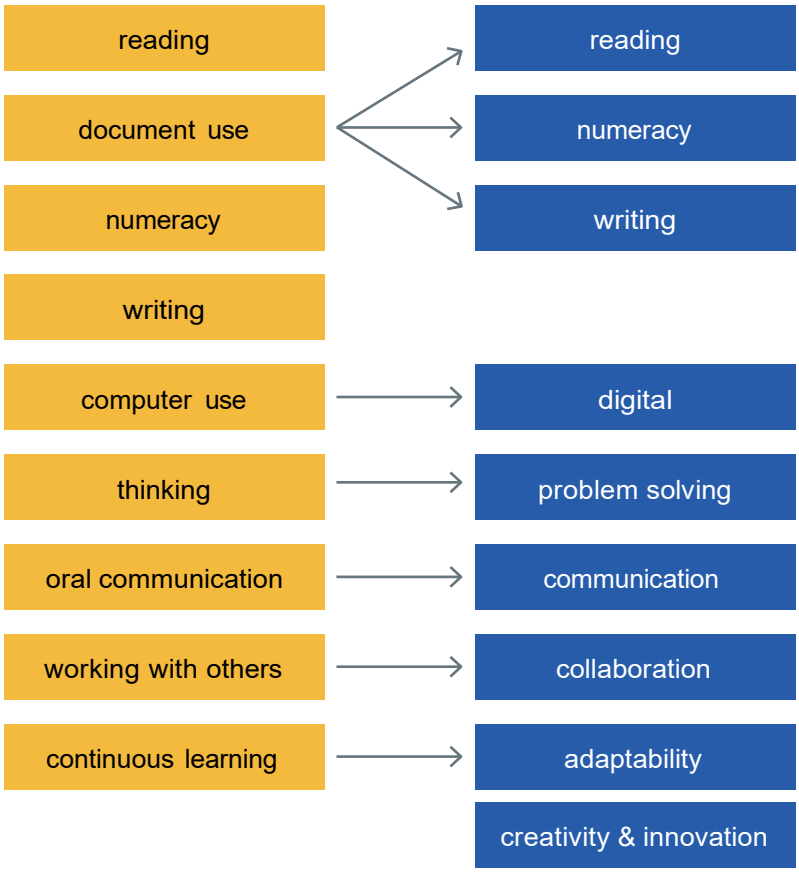


Figure 3: ES to SFS

Special Note: Document Use

It is important to note that Document Use has not been removed from the new framework. It's been relocated and is now embedded in the skills of Reading, Writing and Numeracy. This update reflects the frequently integrated nature of these skills in work, learning and life contexts.

The specific Document Use components that have been integrated into the Reading, Writing and Numeracy are highlighted for you within Section 3 of the guide. Practitioners can use these cues to plan where to integrate existing Document Use materials into their Skills for Success instruction.

Proficiency Levels in the Skills for Success Model

The proficiency levels for Skills for Success are still **preliminary**. More work will be done to refine the levels and align them with the new skills and supporting international research. The preliminary proficiency levels for each skill are listed in Section 3 of this guide.

The Skills for Success framework currently uses two scales for measuring proficiency:

Proficiency Levels	Skills For Success	
Levels 1 – 5	• Reading • Writing • Numeracy	Reading, Writing, and Numeracy use the same Levels 1 to 5 as the Essential Skills framework, as these are backed by a large body of national and international research. They will be updated over time to reflect the integration of document use and to increase alignment with the updated skill components in the new model.
Entry, Intermediate, Advanced	• Digital • Problem Solving • Communication • Collaboration • Adaptability • Creativity & Innovation	As a starting point, there are three levels of proficiency - entry, intermediate, and advanced - for the other skills, which have a less established history of assessment and curriculum development. These proficiency descriptors for each skill are based on the new skill components, the *Reader's Guide* (2010), international technical guides, and stakeholder feedback.

These are **preliminary levels** that will undergo more design, pilot testing, and research work to fully develop the proficiency scales of all Skills for Success. The proficiency gradations are not intended to be definitive or restrictive at this point. They are intended to facilitate further discussion. The OSS will refine the proficiency levels over time.

Key Resources

The following resources are foundational to the field of Skills for Success, and you'll find them referenced throughout the guide. Check out the resources to learn more about engagement, learning transfer, research and best practices of Skills for Success training.

Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success



This SRDC report supports the launch and roll-out of Skills for Success by providing detailed definitions and components of each skill. It also provides recommendations to support the implementation and roll-out of the new model.

Use this resource to:

- Learn more about the research and consultation process that led to the new Skills for Success model.
- Access definitions, components and subcomponents for each of the nine skills.
- Find preliminary proficiency levels and considerations for further development of valid and reliable assessment models.

SRDC. (2021). *Research report to support the launch of skills for success: Structure, evidence and recommendations. Final report.* https://srdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/sfs-srdc-final-report-en.pdf

Skills for Success Implementation Guidance



This report provides a set of overarching principles and emerging practices to inform the design, development, delivery and evaluation of Skills for Success training programs that address both learner and industry needs.

It describes the specific roles key stakeholders, including practitioners, can play to improve training accessibility, learner engagement, skill assessment and workplace application of newly acquired skills.

Use this resource to:

- Learn about best practices across four stages of training: entry, engagement, assessment and learning transfer.
- Design programs that meet the needs of key learner groups and sectors.
- Find out about the promising practices that have proven successful for training organizations from across Canada.

SRDC. (2022). *Skills for success implementation guidance. Final report.* https://www.srdc.org/media/1945054/skills-for-success-implementation-guidance-final-report.pdf

Skills for Success Practitioner Competency Framework



Access this online hub of tools and resources to support your professional development as a Skills for Success practitioner.

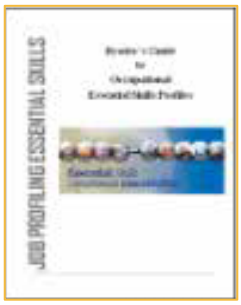
The centerpiece of the website is the Competency Framework, which defines the skills and knowledge of an effective Skills for Success practitioner.

Use this resource to:

- Self-assess your competencies as a Skills for Success practitioner.
- Learn about best practices in design, delivery and assessment of training programs.
- Create a growth plan for next steps in your career.
- Develop professional development resources and workshops for your team.
- Access and download the Get Started Guide.

SkillPlan. (2023). *Skills for success practitioner competency framework*. https://sfs-tools.ca/

Essential Skills Profiles and The Reader's Guide



Essential Skills Profiles describe the frequency and complexity of the use of essential skills in different occupations. Hundreds of ES profiles are available online. The *Reader's Guide to Essential Skills Profiles* (often shortened to *Reader's Guide*) helps practitioners understand and interpret the information in these profiles.

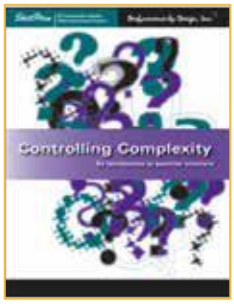
Use these resources to:

- Develop task-based training activities that are relevant to participants' intended occupations.
- Learn about the constructs that influence the complexity of tasks in the original nine Essential Skills.
- Gain awareness of sector and occupation-specific skills and knowledge.
- Develop assessments at a variety of complexity levels.

Government of Canada. (2023). *Essential skills profiles*. Job Bank. https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/essentialskillsprofilelist/A

Human Resources and Social Development Canada. (2010). *Reader's guide to essential skills profiles*. Government of Canada. http://en.copian.ca/library/learning/hrsdc/guide/guide.pdf

Controlling Complexity



Controlling Complexity provides an introduction to question structure theory with practical applications for practitioners. You'll learn about the constructs that affect the complexity level of questions and how to teach a question-answering strategy to participants.

Use this resource to:

- Increase your understanding of question structure and complexity.
- Develop assessments that accurately assess participants' proficiency levels.
- Pinpoint where participants are struggling to offer effective support.

Lew, J., & Hardt, M. D. (2011). *Controlling complexity: An introduction to question structure.* SkillPlan. https://skillplan.ca/learn/product/controlling-complexity/

Look for these boxes to connect to key resources:

Adaptability Components

1. Demonstrate responsibility
2. Persist and persevere
3. Regulate your emotions when appropriate
4. Set or adjust your goals and expectations
5. Plan and prioritize
6. Seek self-improvement

Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success (p. 29)

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Create safe learning spaces by leveraging the social emotional Skills for Success to build learners' self-efficacy, autonomy and confidence.

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The boxes provide excerpts from the key resources that are relevant to the content in the guide. Check out the page numbers in the key resources to learn more.

Section 2

Overarching Approaches to Skills for Success Training

In this section, you'll learn six key approaches to teaching Skills for Success. These overarching best practices apply to the instruction of all Skills for Success. They are evidence-based, validated in practice and aligned to the key resources you learned about in Section 1. Each approach and its key terms are defined and applied to training room examples.



Approach #1: Learner-Centred

Skills for Success training is learner-centred, which means the needs, interests and goals of the learner are prioritized. This approach developed in response to traditional teacher-centred education, where the teacher was the primary source of knowledge and controlled the learning process. In learner-centred training, the learner is an active participant in the learning process and is encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.

Impact: Why use this approach?

This approach increases participants' engagement and motivation in Skills for Success training programs. It helps create a more inclusive and diverse learning environment that is responsive to the needs and backgrounds of all training participants.

Learner-centred training can lead to better retention of information and increased success in achieving learning goals (Freeman et al., 2014). Overall, a learner-centred approach can help participants develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed on-the-job, while also fostering a sense of agency and autonomy in their own learning process.

Key Terms Defined

Accommodations: Changes to the training environment or materials that are made to support participants with learning differences, disabilities or other special needs.

Autonomy: The ability of participants to take responsibility for their own learning, set goals and make decisions about how they will learn. A participant-driven learning process is also known as *self-directed learning.*

Constructivism: A learning theory that emphasizes the importance of participants actively constructing their own knowledge through their experiences.

Culturally responsive: An instructional approach that acknowledges and values the cultural backgrounds and experiences of participants and seeks to create a learning environment that is inclusive and affirming of all cultures.

Differentiated instruction: An instructional approach that adapts instruction to meet the individual needs, interests and abilities of each participant.

Trauma-informed: An instructional approach that recognizes the impact of trauma on participants and seeks to create a safe and supportive learning environment that is responsive to their needs.

Training Applications: What does this look like in the training room?

Practitioners can apply a learner-centred approach to Skills for Success training by incorporating the following practices:

- Spending time getting to know participants, building relationships and trust and creating a welcoming learning environment.
- Involving participants in decisions about learning content, process and assessment where possible.
- Offering opportunities for learners to explore topics that interest them and pursue their own lines of inquiry.
- Incorporating participants' diverse identities, experiences, background knowledge, skills, abilities, interests, cultures and values into training activities and materials.
- Assessing participants' individual needs and abilities and then creating individual learning plans to tailor instruction.
- Creating engaging training activities that are meaningful and relevant to participants' interests and career goals.
- Providing opportunities for participants to collaborate and work together on learning tasks, helping participants get to know each other and build community.
- Fostering a safe and supportive learning environment that provides opportunities for participants to take risks and share their feelings, perspectives and experiences.

Engagement

Create safe learning spaces by leveraging the social emotional Skills for Success to build learners' self-efficacy, autonomy and confidence.

Implementation Guidance (p. 109)



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RESOURCES:

- Lawless, C. (n.d.). *Learner-centered approaches: Why they matter and how to implement them.* LearnUpon Blog. https://www.learnupon.com/blog/learner-centered/
- Ontario Tech University. (n.d.). *Learner-centered instruction.* Teaching and Learning Centre. https://tlc.ontariotechu.ca/teaching/learner-centred-teaching/index.php

Approach #2: Contextualized

Contextualized training is one of the hallmarks of Skills for Success. This approach ensures learning is relevant to participants' work, learning and life goals. In Skills for Success programs, contextualization often focuses on participants' intended occupations. The focus is on building practical skills and knowledge that can be applied in real-world, on-the-job situations. Training activities incorporate authentic materials, tasks and scenarios to maximize transfer of learning to the workplace.

Impact: Why use this approach?

A contextualized approach can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of training, enhancing the relevance of the learning experience to participants' career and life goals. This, in turn, increases their motivation and engagement, resulting in greater skill gains. By centering the learning around workplace-based tasks, participants feel better prepared to apply their new knowledge and skills on the job, leading to improved job performance and career prospects.

Key Terms Defined

Authentic materials: Learning materials that replicate real-world situations, tasks and scenarios that participants may encounter in the workplace, training or daily life.

Competency-based training: A training approach that emphasizes the development of specific competencies, or sets of knowledge, skills and abilities that are required to perform a job or task effectively.

Occupational and industry standards: Established criteria for the knowledge, skills and abilities required to perform specific jobs or tasks, often developed and maintained by industry organizations or government agencies.

Transfer of learning: The extent to which participants are able to apply the knowledge and skills learned in the training to their work or life context.

Workplace-based tasks: Training activities that are designed to replicate or simulate tasks that participants are likely to encounter in their workplace. Also called *performance-based* tasks when they are used for participants to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

Training Applications: What does this look like in the training room?

Practitioners can apply a contextualized approach to Skills for Success training by incorporating the following practices:

- Conducting a needs assessment to identify the specific learning needs and goals of the participants and their relevance to their work or intended occupation.
- Incorporating workplace-based tasks, scenarios and materials into the training to help participants develop practical skills and knowledge that can be applied on-the-job.
- Aligning the training content and objectives with industry and occupational standards to ensure that participants are learning skills and knowledge that are relevant and necessary for their field.
- Providing opportunities for participants to reflect on their progress and make connections between the training and their career goals.
- Incorporating role plays, simulations or case studies that replicate real-world situations and challenges participants may encounter on the job.
- Helping participants access networking opportunities to connect with other professionals in their field, such as through mentorship programs or industry events.

Engagement



Coordinate with sectoral organizations and employers to align training with skill needs in the workplace.

Implementation Guidance (p. 107)



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 2.2 Contextualizes Skills for Success training to make learning relevant and practical
- SFS 2.3 Applies a competency-based approach to Skills for Success training
- DESIGN 1.3 Conducts needs analysis with various training partners to inform Skills for Success design
- DELIVER 2.1 Makes learning relevant to participants
- ASSESS 4.3 Evaluates transfer of learning from training to workplace

Special Note: Authentic Materials

Authentic or workplace documents are the emails, standard operating procedures (SOPs), entry forms, schedules, diagrams, codes, regulations, schematics tables, reports and graphs that workers use on the job. Workplace documents may consist of continuous text, a mix of text and graphics, or just graphics.

Using authentic documents allows practitioners to target and contextualize instruction. Participants are more engaged when materials are contextualized to the workplace they are in or to the occupation they are interested in.

Here are some tips to help you find and gather workplace materials for your training programs:

- **Engage with Subject Matter Experts:** Connect with professionals working in the field relevant to your training. They can provide insights into the types of documents commonly used and share resources or contacts that might have access to authentic materials. Leverage your network and training partnerships.
- **Professional Associations and Organizations:** Many industries have associations and organizations that publish reports, guidelines, training materials and other relevant documents. Scan their websites to see what is available. Follow up directly for specific material requests. Organizations may be willing to share their resources for training purposes.
- **Government and Regulatory Bodies:** Government agencies often publish official documents related to regulations, standards and safety practices.
- **Company Websites:** Companies often publish reports, case studies, research findings and policies on their websites. Look for the “Resources,” “Publications,” or “Research” sections on company websites.
- **Industry Journals and Magazines:** Trade publications, industry journals and magazines often feature articles, case studies and real-world examples that can serve as valuable authentic materials.
- **Social Media and Online Communities:** Join online forums, groups and social media platforms related to the industry. Engaging with professionals in these communities can lead to the discovery of valuable resources.
- **Networking:** Attend conferences, workshops, seminars and networking events relevant to the industry. These events provide opportunities to connect with practitioners and obtain authentic materials.
- **Collaborate with Employers:** Build relationships with employers in the industry you’re targeting. They might be willing to share internal documents, case studies, or training materials for educational purposes.
- **Request Permissions:** If you come across relevant documents that are copyrighted or not publicly available, consider reaching out to the authors or organizations for permission to use them in your training materials.
- **Academic Partnerships:** Collaborate with universities, research institutions, or educational organizations that focus on the relevant industry. They might have access to valuable documents through their research networks.

RESOURCES:

Use these resources to help you contextualize training programs for a wide variety of occupations (Transferable), sector-specific contexts (Construction, Manufacturing, Tourism) and underrepresented groups (Indigenous people, racialized Canadians, members of the LGBTQ2+ community, newcomers, neurodiverse learners, and people with disabilities).

Transferable

- Employment and Social Development Canada. (n.d.). *Welcome to the occupational and skills information system (OaSIS).* https://noc.esdc.gc.ca/Oasis/OasisWelcome?GoCTemplateCulture=en-CA
- Government of Canada. (2023). *Essential skills profiles.* Job Bank. https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/essentialskillsprofilelist/A
- National Center for ONET Development. (n.d.). *ONET OnLine.* https://www.onetonline.org/

Construction Sector

- Build Force Canada. (n.d.). *Build force Canada.* https://www.buildforce.ca/en
- Canada's Building Trades Unions. (n.d.). *Canada's building trades unions.* https://buildingtrades.ca/
- Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship. (n.d.). *Red seal program.* https://www.red-seal.ca/
- SkillPlan. (2023). *Learning hub.* https://skillplan.ca/learn/

Manufacturing Sector

- Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (n.d.). *Canadian manufacturers & exporters.* https://cme-mec.ca/
- Canadian Manufacturing (n.d.). *Canadian manufacturing.* https://www.canadianmanufacturing.com/
- Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium (n.d.). *Excellence in manufacturing consortium.* https://emccanada.org/
- Government of Canada. (2021). *Canadian manufacturing sector gateway.* https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/canadian-manufacturing-sector-gateway/en

Tourism Sector

- Destination Canada. (n.d.). *Destination Canada.* https://www.destinationcanada.com/en
- Government of Canada. (2023). *The Canadian tourism sector.* https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/canadian-tourism-sector/en
- Tourism HR Canada. (n.d.). *Tourism HR Canada.* https://tourismhr.ca/
- Tourism Industry Association of Canada. (n.d.). *Discover tourism.* https://discovertourism.ca/

Underrepresented Groups

General underrepresented groups

- Frkovic, R. (2022). *Empowering unique learners for college success.* Fanshawe College Pressbooks. https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/empoweringuniquelearnersforcollegesuccess/
- SRDC. (2022). *Skills for success implementation guidance.* Final report. https://www.srdc.org/media/1945054/skills-for-success-implementation-guidance-final-report.pdf

Indigenous learners

- Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortium. (2018). *Weaving Ways: Indigenous Ways of Knowing in Classrooms and Schools.* https://empoweringthespirit.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Weaving-Ways-Introductory-Document-10-09.pdf
- Antoine, A., Mason, R., Mason, R., Palahicky, S., & France, C. R. de. (2018). Pulling together: A guide for Indigenization of post-secondary institutions. https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationcurriculumdevelopers/
- Queen's University Library. (2023). *Resources for Decolonizing your Teaching.* https://guides.library.queensu.ca/decolonizing-resources

Members of the LGBTQ2+ community

- ABC Literacy. (2023). *How to make an inclusive classroom for 2SLGBTQI+ learners.* https://abclifeliteracy.ca/blog-posts/how-to-make-an-inclusive-classroom-for-2slgbtqi-learners/
- Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health. (2022). *Invisible intersections: Supporting 2SLGBTQ+ students on campus.* Canadian Mental Health Association. https://campusmentalhealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/CICMH-2SLGBTQToolkit_v2.pdf
- Government of Manitoba. (2017). Supporting transgender and gender diverse students in manitoba schools. Manitoba Education and Training. https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/support/transgender/full_doc.pdf
- University of British Columbia. (2020). Towards more trans-inclusive classrooms: An introduction. https://ctlt-inclusiveteaching.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2020/01/trans-inclusive-classrooms_v2.pdf

Neurodiverse learners and people with disabilities

- CAST. (2018). Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 2.2. https://udlguidelines.cast.org
- LD OnLine | All About Learning Disabilities and ADHD. (n.d.). https://www.ldonline.org
- Neurodiversity Hub - Resources for Universities. (n.d.). https://www.neurodiversityhub.org/resources-for-universities
- Takacs, D. S., Zhang, J., Lee, H., Truong, L., & Smulders, D. (2021). A Comprehensive Guide to Applying Universal Design for Learning. In opentextbooks.uregina.ca. BCcampus. https://opentextbooks.uregina.ca/jibcudl/

Newcomers and racialized Canadians

- ABC Life Literacy. (2023). How To Support Black Learners In Your Literacy Program I ABC Life Literacy. ABC Life Literacy Canada. https://abclifeliteracy.ca/blog-posts/how-to-support-black-learners-in-your-literacy-program/
- Ho, J. (2022). Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence: Recommendations for Teaching and Learning. UBC Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology. https://ctlt.ubc.ca/2022/10/18/edubytes-anti-racism-and-inclusive-excellence-recommendations-for-teaching-and-learning
- Shaibah, A. (2022). Building a Race-Conscious Institution: Enacting Anti-Racist Organizational Change Universities Canada -1. https://www.univcan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/UC-2022-Report_Building-a-Race-Conscious-Institution_EN_FINAL.pdf
- Stewart, J., Martin, L. (2018). Bridging Two Worlds: Supporting Newcomer and Refugee Youth. CERIC. https://ceric.ca/publications/bridging-two-worlds-supporting-newcomer-and-refugee-youth/

Approach #3: Complexity

In Skills for Success training, the complexity or difficulty of learning tasks and materials are aligned to participants' needs and goals. Through needs analysis, including job task analysis and pre-assessment, data is gathered and used to identify differences between participants' starting levels and required levels of their intended occupations. Practitioners guide participants through progressively more complex tasks to help them reach the target skill level.

Impact: Why use this approach?

Creating learning materials and activities at the appropriate complexity level provides participants with a level of challenge that is motivating but not overwhelming. This approach increases participants' confidence by providing instructional support and strategies that address their specific learning needs. Participants feel more engaged and supported throughout the training process, resulting in step-by-step progress towards their learning and occupational goals.

Key Terms Defined

Complexity: A task's level of difficulty. Skills for Success are necessary for every job, but the skills are used at different levels of complexity depending on the demands of the job.

Closing skill gaps: Reducing the difference between a participant's current skill level and the required skill level for a particular goal or occupation.

Job task analysis: Using data to determine the appropriate complexity level of skills required for specific occupations.

Mastery: the ability to perform a task or skill at a consistently high level of proficiency.

Needs analysis: A systematic process of identifying the specific needs of an individual, group or organization, often by gathering data through surveys, interviews and observations.

Pre-assessment: An assessment that is administered at the beginning of a learning experience to measure learners' starting level of knowledge, skills and abilities and identify any gaps or areas of need.

Scaffolding: Providing instructional support and interventions to help participants progress through progressively more complex tasks.

Training Applications: What does this look like in the training room?

Practitioners can align complexity to participants' needs by using the following practices:

- Conducting job task analysis to identify the appropriate complexity level of skills required for specific occupations.
- Gathering pre-assessment and needs analysis data to identify the gaps between the participants' starting levels and required levels of skill.
- Becoming familiar with the complexity levels of the Skills for Success and Essential Skills Frameworks, gaining awareness of the gradations between each level.
- Creating learning activities and materials at a variety of complexity levels to accommodate individual participants' needs and abilities.
- Gradually increasing the complexity level of learning activities and materials to help participants progress towards mastery.
- Pinpointing where participants are struggling in the learning process and offering appropriate supports, feedback and guidance.
- Continuously monitoring participants' progress and adjusting instruction accordingly to ensure that the complexity level remains appropriately challenging but not overwhelming.
- Helping participants gain awareness of the language and criteria of relevant proficiency levels, including those used in the Skills for Success and Essential Skills frameworks.
- Encouraging participants to reflect on their learning and progress and providing opportunities for self-assessment and self-reflection.
- Offering timely and constructive feedback to help participants improve their skills and build confidence.
- Helping participants develop mastery by providing opportunities for practice, reinforcement and application of their skills in real-world contexts.

Engagement



Clearly link assessments to learning goals and activities, and prioritize collecting participant information in a directed, purposeful manner.

Implementation Guidance (p. 124)



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 2.3 Applies a competency-based approach to Skills for Success training
- SFS 2.4 Varies complexity of learning tasks and materials to align to participants' Skills for Success needs and goals
- SFS 2.5 Applies instructional scaffolds to help participants progress
- DESIGN 1.3 Conducts needs analysis with various training partners to inform Skills for Success design
- ASSESS 1.1 Bases assessment framework on program goals, industry standards, learning outcomes and participant needs

RESOURCES:

- Human Resources and Social Development Canada. (2010). *Reader's guide to essential skills profiles.* Government of Canada. http://en.copian.ca/library/learning/hrsdc/guide/guide.pdf
- Lew, J., & Hardt, M. D. (2011). *Controlling complexity: An introduction to question structure.* SkillPlan. https://skillplan.ca/learn/product/controlling-complexity/
- SRDC. (2021). *Research report to support the launch of skills for success: structure, evidence and recommendations. Final report.* https://srdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/sfs-srdc-final-report-en.pdf



Approach #4:
Direct Instruction

Direct instruction is a clear and explicit approach to teaching that breaks down concepts into smaller parts and steps. Instruction is delivered through demonstration and guided practice, gradually moving towards more independent learning and application. Learning is carefully sequenced, giving participants time to develop mastery of foundational skills and knowledge.

Impact: Why use this approach?

Direct instruction makes the learning process clear and manageable. By ensuring participants understand what to do and reducing misinterpretations, instruction and learning is more efficient. Breaking up learning into smaller steps can also help lighten the cognitive load, freeing up working memory to better understand and retain new knowledge and skills. Participants with learning differences and disabilities may particularly benefit from this approach.

Key Terms Defined

Chunking: Breaking down complex information into smaller, more manageable parts to aid in processing and retention.

Cognitive load: The amount of mental effort required to process information.

Guided practice: Providing opportunities for participants to practice the skill or concept with structure, support and feedback.

Learning outcomes: Clear and specific statements that describe what learners are expected to know or be able to do as a result of the learning experience.

Mastery: The ability to perform a task or skill at a consistently high level of proficiency.

Scaffolding: Providing instructional support and interventions to help participants progress through progressively more complex tasks.

Sequencing: The process of organizing instruction, concepts or skills in a logical order to facilitate learning.

Training Applications: What does this look like in the training room?

Practitioners can apply a direct instructional approach by incorporating the following practices:

- Identifying the information, skills and knowledge that are critical for participants to learn.
- Planning a logical sequence of lessons by considering the necessary prerequisite skills and knowledge and progression of difficulty.
- Looking for ways to break down complex information and processes into smaller chunks and steps that participants will be able to understand and follow.
- Structuring the learning process by giving models, scripts, templates and step-by-step processes for participants to follow.
- Beginning lessons by clearly stating the lesson's goals and expectations and making sure the content of the lesson stays aligned to these goals.
- Reviewing instructions before an activity and asking questions afterwards to check for understanding.
- Using demonstrations to provide instruction and verbalizing the thinking process through each step.
- Providing ample opportunity for participants to practice using new skills in a structured way, gradually reducing the amount of guidance and support.
- Giving immediate feedback during learning activities so that participants don't practice the wrong way.



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 2.5 Applies instructional scaffolds to help participants progress
- SFS 2.6 Provides direct instruction to structure and guide Skills for Success learning
- DELIVER 3.2 Structures and scaffolds delivery to maximize learning

RESOURCES:

- Archer, A., & Hughes, C. (2011). *Explicit instruction: Effective and efficient teaching.* Guilford Press.
- Calvin, S. (2019). *Planning & teaching explicit instruction.* LD@school. https://www.ldatschool.ca/planning-teaching-explicit-instruction/
- Hughes, C. A., Morris, J. R., Therrien, W. J., & Benson, S. K. (2017). *Explicit instruction: Historical and contemporary contexts: Learning disabilities research.* Learning Disabilities Research & Practice. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318176128_Explicit_Instruction_Historical_and_Contemporary_Contexts_LEARNING_DISABILITIES_RESEARCH

Approach #5: Assessment

Skills for Success training programs include a mix of formative and summative approaches to assessment. Assessment is used to measure specific learning outcomes, provide feedback to participants and guide instructional decisions. A pre-assessment is typically used before training begins to identify participant needs and a post-assessment is administered after training to measure results. Transfer of learning is another measurement that is used to evaluate the overall effectiveness of Skills for Success training.

Impact: Why use this approach?

Out of all the instructional approaches, assessment has the greatest impact on learning. Assessment provides opportunities for participants to receive feedback on their progress and to identify areas where they need further development. Practitioners can use assessment to monitor participants' progress and adjust instruction to meet their needs. Evaluating training effectiveness can help training organizations improve the quality of future training programs. Overall, effective assessment practices lead to improved learning outcomes, increased skill gains and a stronger workforce.

Key Terms Defined

Authentic assessment: Assessment that requires learners to demonstrate their understanding and skills in real-world or meaningful contexts.

Formative assessment: Ongoing monitoring of participant learning and feedback that can inform both instructors and participants on how to improve. Typically used throughout the training program and doesn't include formal grades.

Learning outcomes: Clear and specific statements that describe what learners are expected to know or be able to do as a result of the learning experience.

Post-assessment: An assessment that is administered at the end of a learning experience to measure learners' understanding and skills after they have completed a course or program.

Pre-assessment: An assessment that is administered at the beginning of a learning experience to measure learners' starting level of knowledge, skills and abilities and identify any gaps or areas of need.

Skill gains: The progress that learners make in acquiring new knowledge and skills as a result of participating in a learning experience, which can be measured through assessment.

Summative assessment: Used to measure participant learning at the end of a training program or significant learning period. Summative assessment is used to evaluate participants' achievement of learning outcomes and determine formal marks or grades.

Training Applications: What does this look like in the training room?

Practitioners can integrate effective assessment in Skills for Success training by applying the following practices:

- Establishing clear and measurable learning outcomes and aligning assessments with them.
- Using a mix of formative and summative assessments to measure progress and performance.
- Providing timely and constructive feedback to learners to reinforce positive performance and identify areas for improvement, focusing on the areas that are most critical for success.
- Administering pre- and post-assessments to measure the effectiveness of the training program and identify areas for improvement.
- Incorporating authentic assessments that require participants to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in real-world or workplace-based contexts.
- Offering opportunities for self-assessment and reflection to encourage participants to take ownership of their learning and identify areas for growth.
- Incorporating a variety of assessment methods (e.g., quizzes, role-playing, projects) and modes (e.g., written or oral) to engage learners and accommodate different learning needs.
- Ensuring assessments are fair, valid and reliable, and that they measure what they are intended to measure.
- Collecting and evaluating post-training feedback from participants, employers and other training partners, using data to make program improvements.



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 2.7 Incorporates ongoing formative assessment and feedback to track progress of Skills for Success outcomes
- ASSESS 1.1 Bases assessment framework on program goals, industry standards, learning outcomes and participant needs
- ASSESS 1.2 Incorporates a variety of assessment types into assessment framework
- ASSESS 2.1 Uses pre-assessment results to adapt instruction and curriculum
- ASSESS 2.2 Uses formative assessment to inform instruction
- ASSESS 3.2 Encourages participants to self-reflect on their own progress and achievement
- ASSESS 4.3 Evaluates transfer of learning from training to workplace

RESOURCES:

- Center for Educational Research and Innovation. (n.d.) *Assessment for learning formative assessment.* OECD. https://www.oecd.org/site/educeri21st/40600533.pdf

- Bin Mubayrik, H. F. (2020). New trends in formative-summative evaluations for adult education. *SAGE Open 10(3).* https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020941006

- Davies, N. (2021). *What learning evaluation model should you really be using?.* https://thinqi.com/resources/blogs/what-learning-evaluation-model-should-you-really-be-using

- SRDC. (2023). COMSA Survey Builder. https://measurement.srdc.org/

Approach #6:
Social-Emotional Skills

The Skills for Success framework includes the social-emotional and soft skills of Problem Solving, Communication, Collaboration, Adaptability and Creativity & Innovation. These skills also play an important role in learning the core literacy skills of Reading, Writing and Numeracy, as well as Digital skills. Whereas Section 3 provides skill-specific instructional strategies, this section provides guidance on how to approach Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) as a whole, including how it can be integrated into any skills training.

As opposed to fixed personality traits, the Skills for Success framework defines social-emotional skills as teachable, learnable skills that can be improved through targeted training interventions.

Impact: Why use this approach?

Social-emotional skills play a critical role in the success of training participants, impacting their performance in work, learning and life. As the Canadian workplace evolves and becomes increasingly automated, social-emotional skills are especially important and support job transferability and employment resiliency. Defining social-emotional skills as teachable and learnable helps empower participants to develop and enhance these skills, rather than feeling confined to a fixed pre-disposition. Strong social-emotional skills also facilitate the acquisition of other skills, such as literacy in a training context and technical skills on the job. Ultimately, social-emotional skills equip individuals to effectively respond to challenges and address issues in a constructive manner, fostering resilience and perseverance rather than giving up easily. Incorporating SES into the instruction of other skills allows participants to practice the complex and integrated nature of workplace tasks.

Key Terms Defined

Emotional intelligence (EQ): The ability to identify, understand, manage and effectively use both one's own emotions and those of others to navigate social interactions and build positive relationships.

Growth mindset: The belief that abilities and intelligence can be developed and improved through effort, learning and perseverance, rather than being fixed traits.

Self-reflection: The practice of examining one's thoughts, feelings and actions to gain insight into one's behavior, motivations and values, aiding in personal development.

Self-regulation: The ability to manage and control one's emotional responses and reactions in a way that promotes constructive and adaptive behavior.

Self-validation: A mindset where individuals seek to validate their existing skills and abilities rather than focusing on self-improvement or change.

Social-emotional learning (SEL): The process through which people acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships and make responsible and caring decisions (CASEL, 2023).

Training Applications: What does this look like in the training room?

Practitioners can apply effective social-emotional and soft skills instruction in Skills for Success training by incorporating the following practices:

- Pre-assessing participants' current social-emotional skills and needs and using that information to tailor the program effectively.
- Clearly defining the social-emotional and other skills that are the focus of the training and establishing specific goals that are both attainable and challenging.
- Motivating participants by involving them in setting their own goals, fostering commitment and promoting ownership of learning.
- Helping participants see the value in social-emotional training by ensuring they understand the connection between social-emotional skills and broader educational, organizational and personal goals.
- Providing frequent opportunity for participants to practice using social-emotional skills in training activities that replicate real-world conditions as closely as possible. Where possible, incorporate practice and observation of behaviours outside of the training room in an authentic context.
- Incorporating enough repetition of contextualized practice to help participants develop and strengthen their skills and improve transfer to the workplace.

- Balancing favorable and unfavorable feedback, without favoring positive feedback to the extent that learners do not receive critical feedback needed for improvement.
- Offering mentorship and coaching opportunities to provide personalized guidance and feedback.
- Fostering a self-improvement or growth mindset in participants by teaching them to respond adaptively to constructive feedback, persist and make efforts to change and improve their performance.
- Offering support and guidance to individuals who may withdraw from challenging tasks due to negative self-perception or fear of failure.
- Creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment where learners feel safe to take risks, make mistakes and learn from them.
- Modeling of effective social-emotional skills by the practitioner, demonstrating positive behaviours for participants to emulate, both inside and outside of the training room (e.g., in the hallway, lunchroom, etc.).
- Providing opportunities for participants to engage in self-reflection and recognize their strengths and areas for growth in their social-emotional skills.
- Integrating social-emotional skills into other skills training, such as providing explicit instruction on effective collaboration to support interactive activities in reading or numeracy training.

Engagement

Facilitate safe learning spaces, while building key social emotional skills to support resilience.

Implementation Guidance (p. 110)



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 2.1.4 Integrates multiple Skills for Success into learning tasks to reflect the integrated nature of workplace tasks
- SFS 2.8 Supports social-emotional well-being to develop self-regulation skills
- DELIVER 1.2 Creates an atmosphere that addresses the social-emotional needs of participants
- DELIVER 1.3 Builds participants' confidence and ownership of learning process
- ASSESS 2.3 Encourages participants to self-reflect on their own progress and achievement

Special Note: Evergreen Section

The content on social-emotional skills training and instruction is subject to ongoing updates as the Office of Skills for Success refines skill components and assessment criteria to align with the evolving research in this field.

RESOURCES:

- CASEL. (2023). Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. CASEL. https://casel.org
- Conference Board of Canada. (2023). *Can social and emotional skills be taught?* Conference Board of Canada. https://www.conferenceboard.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/can-social-and-emotional-skills-be-taught.pdf
- Futureworx.(2024). ESAT Employability Skills Assessment Tool. https://futureworx.ca/employability-skills-assessment-tool/
- Gibb, Stephen. (2014). Soft skills assessment: theory development and the research agenda. *International Journal of Lifelong Education.* 33. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263702987_Soft_skills_assessment_theory_development_and_the_research_agenda
- Learner Variability Navigator. (n.d) *Adult Learner Strategies.* Digital Promise. https://lvp.digitalpromiseglobal.org/content-area/adult-learner/strategies

Section 3

Skill-Specific Instructional Strategies

This section focuses on specific instructional strategies for each of the nine Skills for Success. Read an overview of each skill and its components, learn how to implement the top evidence-based instructional strategies for the skills and consider factors for assessment. Some grab-and-go suggestions are offered to help you get started in adapting or designing training materials.



Reading

Reading is the ability to find, understand and use information presented through words, symbols and images.

Why are Reading Skills Important?

The changing labour market and advances in technology require reading skills for learning and work. Strong reading skills allow you to do your job and to work safely and efficiently. You use reading skills to learn other skills, for example, by reading online learning resources. Reading is also important in day-to-day activities, for example, to understand road signs or to follow the instructions on a medicine bottle.

Reading Components

1. Identify the task that requires you to read
2. Identify the information contained in the document(s)
3. Make connections between different parts of the document(s)
4. Understand and apply the information
5. Evaluate the document(s)
6. Reflect on the document(s)

Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success (p. 15)

Sector	Workplace Examples
Construction	Ironworkers read their organizations' health and safety policies to be familiar with safety standards and job task procedures.
Manufacturing	Machine Operators synthesize information from a measuring machine manual and a laser cutter manual to learn how to complete a job.
Tourism	Floor Managers read e-mails from customers, co-workers and managers. For example, they read customer requests for changes to event schedules and supplier responses to enquiries about equipment rentals.
Health Care	Health Care Assistants read short reports from nurses and other health care assistants to learn about incidents that occurred during earlier shifts.

Transitioning from Essential Skills to Skills for Success

The most significant change to Reading in the Skills for Success framework is that it now includes elements of Document Use, which was considered a separate skill in the Essential Skills model.

Document Use has been relocated and is now embedded in the skills of Reading, Writing and Numeracy. This update reflects the frequently integrated nature of these skills in work, learning and life contexts. Recent international literacy and skill surveys, such as the 2012 PIACC framework, have similarly grouped Document Use and Reading together as "literacy skills".

The following table shows how Document Use has been integrated within Reading. The Skills for Success column on the left identifies the components and subcomponents of Reading that include elements of Document Use (identified in red within the *Research Report*). The Essential Skills column on the right lists the Document Use tasks from the original model that are relevant to Reading. Practitioners can use these cues to plan where to integrate existing Document Use materials into Reading instruction.

Document Use Integration	
Skills for Success *Reading components and subcomponents that include some Document Use elements*	**Essential Skills** *Reading-related Document Use tasks from the original model*
2. Identify the information contained in the document(s) • Locate key information in various types of documents (e.g., tables, charts, maps, articles, magazines, and books) • Use methods such as scanning, skimming to identify key information • Look through multiple pieces of information contained in documents • Pull out relevant information from documents 3. Make connections between different parts of the document(s) • Connect different parts of the document(s), including continuous and non-continuous texts 4. Understand and apply the information • Understand the information in the context of the whole document(s) • Make inferences to obtain the correct information • Compare and contrast information • Sort information • Understand the purpose of the document(s) *Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success (p. 15)*	• read signs, labels or lists • read completed forms containing check boxes, numerical entries, phrases, addresses, sentences or texts of a paragraph or more • read tables, schedules and other table-like text (e.g., read work shift schedules) • obtain specific information from graphs or charts • interpret information on graphs or charts • interpret scale drawings (e.g., blueprints or maps) • read assembly drawings (e.g., those found in service and parts manuals) • read schematic drawings (e.g., electrical schematics) • obtain information from sketches, pictures or icons (e.g., computer toolbars) • interpret X-rays *Reader's Guide to Essential Skills Profiles (p. 25)*

Practitioners can also use the reading components to guide and structure how they deliver instruction. The reading components are process-oriented, identifying the key skills and steps required to complete a reading task. This is a helpful update since the Essential Skills framework did not provide processes for a learner or practitioner to follow.

Evidence-Based Instructional Strategies

The following instructional strategies have been selected to highlight established or promising practices within the Skills for Success field and/or significant research that supports the instruction of reading skills.

1 Authentic Documents

Authentic documents are real-world documents that exist outside of the training room. They are workplace materials that workers use on the job and practitioners incorporate in training to contextualize learning and engage participants.

Authentic documents include the emails, standard operating procedures (SOPs), entry forms, schedules, diagrams, codes, regulations, schematics, tables, reports and graphs that workers use on the job. Workers navigate documents to locate information to complete a task, learn something new, follow a procedure and so on.

Given the work-oriented nature of the Skills for Success framework, the incorporation of authentic documents has been a mainstay of reading instruction.

Instructional Strategies:

- Choose authentic documents that relate to participants' career goals. Participants are more engaged and motivated when materials are contextualized to the workplace they are in or to the occupation they are interested in.
- Use authentic documents to replicate worker tasks. Identify how a worker would use the document on the job. Then guide participants through the reading components and processes, tackling the reading task as a worker would. Use the document as an opportunity to incorporate other Skills for Success, such as writing, numeracy and communication, helping participants to build multiple skills and apply them to authentic tasks.
- Include a variety of document types (e.g., entry forms, log books, schedules, health and safety information, diagrams, graphs and charts, etc.) with a variety of document structure features (e.g., headings, subheadings, bolding, colour, etc.). Teach participants about the role of these features and how to navigate different types of documents.

Engagement



Integrate multiple Skills for Success into programming model to reflect the interactive nature of skills.

Implementation Guidance (p. 105)

Note: See Approach #2 in Section 2 to learn more about contextualizing instruction across skills, sectors and audiences.



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 2.2 Contextualizes Skills for Success training to make learning relevant and practical
- SFS 3.1.4 Integrates authentic documents into reading activities, including culturally and contextually relevant documents
- SFS 3.1.5 Provides instruction on structures, features and purposes of different types of documents
- SFS 3.1.6 Provides instruction on strategies for navigating documents through the use of features and structures

2 Foundational Reading Skills

Participants in Skills for Success training programs have a wide variety of educational backgrounds, skill levels and learning needs. Practitioners should avoid assuming that participants have the foundational reading skills they need to complete reading tasks in training and on the job.

Foundational reading skills include the four components of alphabetics (including phonemic awareness and word analysis), fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

Instructional Strategies:

- Use diagnostic tools to pinpoint participants' abilities in alphabetics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. It is important to assess participants' abilities in each of these areas in order to identify what they already know as well as what they need to work on during training. These profiles give practitioners valuable information to prioritize instruction and address individual needs.
- Provide explicit instruction on each of the foundational components as needed. For alphabetics, teach the relationship between letters and sounds. Fluency can be increased by reading the same text multiple times, including orally. Improve vocabulary by providing participants with the opportunity to use new words many times and to process them deeply. Research shows that improving alphabetics, fluency and vocabulary will ultimately lead to increased comprehension (Kruidenier et al., 2010, pp. 8-9).

- Adapt your instruction of foundational reading skills for English language learners (ELL). Generally, participants who are ELL benefit from the same instruction as native speakers, but differentiating your approach can help maximize skill gains. For example, using bilingual instruction and cooperative learning are proven techniques. Consider similarities and differences between English and participants' native language(s) in the way you approach foundational reading skills (Kruidenier et al., 2010, pp. 8-9).

Under represented Groups

Engagement

Align learning content and delivery modes with unique learner needs, objectives, skill levels and contexts.

Implementation Guidance (p.104)



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 3.1.1 Provides instruction on foundational reading skills and knowledge as required
- SFS 3.1.3 Integrates context-specific language and vocabulary-building activities into reading instruction

3 Systematic Reading Strategies

Systematic reading strategies are step-by-step models participants can follow to successfully find and interpret information in text. Research shows that participants' reading skills improve when they are taught explicit strategies on how to approach reading tasks and are provided with frequent opportunities to practice these strategies.

Instructional Strategies:

- Use guided instruction to build learner autonomy, moving from direct teaching to increasingly independent learning. Duke and Pearson (2002) recommend a "gradual release of responsibility" with five components (p. 210):

1. An explicit description of the strategy and when and how it should be used.
2. Teacher and/or student modeling of the strategy in action.
3. Collaborative use of the strategy in action.
4. Guided practice using the strategy with gradual release of responsibility.
5. Independent use of the strategy.

- Teach participants how to skim and scan while reading. Participants with low reading skills may get stuck on carefully reading each word. Instead, provide instruction on how to skim read for the gist and how to scan texts to locate specific information. Discuss and model how these strategies can be applied to reading tasks at work and in training.

Engagement

Create safe learning spaces by leveraging the social emotional Skills for Success to build learners' self-efficacy, autonomy and confidence.

Implementation Guidance (p. 109)

and accurately by providing instruction on question structure. For instance, teach participants about question words and identifying the type of requested information. Teach question answering strategies that incorporate the four constructs of question complexity: type of requested information, type of match, type of processing and competing information (Lew & Hardt, 2011).



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 2.6.3 Guides the learning process with step-by-step processes, templates, demonstrations and/or models for participants to follow
- SFS 3.1.2 Provides instruction on reading strategies to help participants respond systematically to comprehension questions
- SFS 3.1.7 Provides instruction on question structure and determining requested information
- DELIVER 1.3.3 Fosters independence by reducing the amount of support provided as participants gain ability, confidence and readiness to become independent

Assessment Considerations

Reading assessments typically require participants to complete a series of reading tasks of varying complexity. Correct and incorrect answers can be scored objectively. There is a rich body of national and international research to support the creation of reading assessments with demonstrated reliability and validity (e.g., PIACC and TOWES).

Suggested approaches:

- Use diagnostic assessments to determine reading levels and instructional priorities.
- Incorporate authentic documents into assessment, just as you would for instruction. Participants are more likely to see the value of an assessment when they can see how it relates to the skills they need on the job.
- Consider the impact of low digital skills in the administration and scoring of online reading assessments. Take steps to support participants with online assessments or use paper-based assessments where possible.
- Incorporate a range of complexity levels so that you can capture the upper and lower ranges of performance. Where possible, use adaptive assessments to adjust complexity level of questions based on performance, ensuring an appropriate level of challenge.

Proficiency Levels:

Proficiency levels are the level at which a person demonstrates a particular skill. These levels help practitioners build assessment tools to measure participants' skills. The Office of Skills for Success will refine the proficiency levels over time.

The following descriptors summarize the original 1-to-5 level divisions of the *Reader's Guide to Essential Skills Profiles* (2010). These descriptors are not aligned with the updated definitions and constructs of Skills for Success. More work is needed to tighten the alignment.

Preliminary Proficiency Levels

Level 1: Read relatively short texts so you can locate a single piece of information; follow simple written directions.

Level 2: Read more complex texts so you can locate a single piece of information or read simpler texts to locate multiple pieces of information; make low-level inferences.

Level 3: Choose and integrate information from various sources or from several parts of a single text; make low-level inferences from multiple sources.

Level 4: Integrate and synthesize information from multiple sources or from complex and lengthy texts; make complex inferences and use general background knowledge; evaluate quality of text.

Level 5: Interpret dense and complex texts; make high-level inferences and use specialized knowledge.

Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success (p. 44)

RESOURCES:

- Curtis M. E., & Kruidenier J. R. (2005). *Teaching adults to read: A summary of scientifically based principles.* National Institute for Literacy. https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/teach_adults.pdf

- Degener, S., Purcell-gates, V., & Jacobson, E. (2003). *Creating authentic materials and activities for the adult literacy classroom: A Handbook for practitioners.* National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/234717345_Creating_Authentic_Materials_and_Activities_for_the_Adult_Literacy_Classroom_A_Handbook_for_Practitioners

- Evetts, J., & Fownes, L. (1999). *Document use at work.* SkillPlan. https://skillplan.ca/learn/product/document-use-at-work/

- Government of Canada. (n.d.). *Reading indicator: A guide for employers*. https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/initiatives/skills-success/tools/reading-indicator.html

- Learner Variability Navigator. (n.d) *Foundational reading skills.* Digital Promise. https://lvp.digitalpromiseglobal.org/content-area/adult-learner/factors/foundational-reading-skills-adult-learner/summary

- Lew, J., & Hardt, M. D. (2011). *Controlling complexity: An introduction to question structure.* SkillPlan. https://skillplan.ca/learn/product/controlling-complexity/

- PBS Learning Media. (n.d.) *Reading instructional strategies: Resources for adult educators.* https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/ristrat/



GRAB AND GO TRAINING IDEAS

Activity	Reading Components	Instructional Tips	Sector-Specific
Provide small groups with a variety of documents of a particular type (e.g. tables, lists, signs, entry forms, diagrams, manuals, etc.) Focus on structure and features: How is the information organized? What are the common features of this document type? Which features make it easier/ harder to find information? Then focus on purpose: Who is the intended audience? How would you use this document on the job? Each group presents their findings to the class.	4. Understand and apply the information • *Comprehend the main theme of the document(s)* 5. Evaluate the document(s) • *Evaluate the purpose, tone, and structure of the document* 6. Reflect on the document(s) • *Determine the intended audience of the document* • *Where relevant, reflect on how the author is using evidence and/ or language to achieve a particular purpose*	Use authentic documents related to participants' career and learning goals. Option: give each group the same documents OR assign a different document type to each group so they are tasked with teaching the class. Provide instruction on strategies for navigating documents through the use of features and structures (SFS 3.1.6).	Gather a variety of sector-specific workplace documents and sort them by type. Sample Electrician Documents: WHMIS labels, shift schedules, worksite procedures, accident report forms, parts lists, assembling drawings, blueprints, electrical code manual, safety notices and manuals, material safety data sheets, etc.
Provide participants with a manual or standard operating procedure and task-based questions to answer: "The equipment won't start. What should you do?", "How do you clean up the spill?", etc. Talk through the answers together, drawing attention to how participants used reading strategies, question structure and document features.	1. Identify the task that requires you to read • *Identify the goals and purposes of the reading activity* 2. Identify the information contained in the document(s) • *Use methods such as scanning, skimming to identify key information*	Provide explicit instruction and step-by-step strategies on how to approach reading tasks. Ask participants to talk you through their process so you can identify where they are struggling. Model metacognition using think aloud step-by-step processes (SFS 2.5.6).	Contextualize manuals, standard operating procedures (SOPs) and other documents to the sector. e.g., Furniture assemblers use SOPs to carry out edge-banding and measure and mark out materials within acceptable tolerances.
Task participants with a scenario that requires them to decide between two or three options, such as which equipment to purchase, which procedure to follow, etc. Provide them with the documents needed to compare and evaluate the options. Participants share their decision and rationale with the class.	2. Identify the information contained in the document(s) • *Look through multiple pieces of information contained in documents* • *Pull out relevant information from documents* 4. Understand and apply the information • *Compare and contrast information*	Use authentic tasks and documents related to the decisions participants will need to make on the job. Discuss communication skills needed to effectively explain a decision (e.g., clarity, using examples and facts, considering audience, etc.).	Contextualize the decision scenario depending on the sector and role. Sample scenario for Cleaners and Housekeeping Staff: You come across a greasy spill in the carpeted hallway. Compare the cleaning labels to determine which product and procedure is best suited for the task.

Writing

Writing is the ability to share information using written words, symbols and images.

Why are Writing Skills Important?

The changing labour market and advances in technology require writing skills that are suitable for different situations and digital platforms. At work, we use writing skills to write memos, emails, or reports. Writing skills are also needed in daily life to fill out a credit card or job application. Knowing what to write, how much to write and in which style to write is important. Writing skills ensure your writing is suitable for your purpose, the intended reader and the context.

Writing Components

1. Identify the task that requires you to write
2. Plan the writing task
3. Use written words and phrases so you can achieve the purpose of the writing task
4. Choose the appropriate language and style for the writing task
5. Choose the appropriate format for the writing task
6. Review and revise your writing

Research Report to Support the Launch for Skills for Success (p. 17)

Sector	Workplace Examples
 Construction	Boilermakers complete hazard or near-miss report forms to record information about occurrences. Since these documents could be used in a court of law, clarity, detail and accuracy are important.
 Manufacturing	Mechanical Assemblers and Inspectors complete a variety of forms, such as time tickets, work orders, inspection sheets and defect forms, to record information about quality control and the use of material and human resources in assembling mechanical products.
 Tourism	Travel Agents write emails to clients and travel companies to provide information, itineraries and explain problems.
 Education	Early Childhood Educators write notes and emails to co-workers and parents, e.g. write notes to parents informing them about forms to be completed.

Transitioning from Essential Skills to Skills for Success

The most significant change to Writing in the Skills for Success framework is that it now includes elements of Document Use, which was considered a separate skill in the Essential Skills model.

Document Use has been relocated and is now embedded in the skills of Writing, Reading and Numeracy. This update reflects the frequently integrated nature of these skills in work, learning and life contexts.

The following table shows how Document Use has been integrated within Writing. The Skills for Success column on the left identifies the components and subcomponents of Writing that include elements of Document Use (identified in red within the *Research Report*). The Essential Skills column on the right lists the Document Use tasks from the original model that are relevant to Writing. Practitioners can use these cues to plan where to integrate existing Document Use materials into Writing instruction.

Document Use Integration	
Skills for Success *Writing components and subcomponents that include some Document Use elements*	**Essential Skills** *Writing-related Document Use tasks from the original model*
2. Plan the writing task • Identify the information to include in the writing task • Determine how much you need to write and the level of details to include • Gather information 3. Use written words and phrases so you can achieve the purpose of the writing task • Produce legible handwritten text when needed (Note: handwritten text may become obsolete over time) 5. Choose the appropriate format for the writing task • To enhance the presentation of information or ideas use charts, tables, graphs, etc. • Use pre-determined or pre-formatted workplace documents (e.g., accident report forms, timesheets, memo boards) *Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success (p. 17)*	• complete forms by marking check boxes, recording numerical information or entering words, phrases, sentences or texts of a paragraph or more • create tables, schedules and other table-like text • enter information on tables, schedules or other table-like text • create assembly drawings. • create schematic drawings • make sketches *Reader's Guide to Essential Skills Profiles (p. 25)*

Practitioners can also use the writing components to guide and structure how they deliver instruction. The writing components are process-oriented, identifying the key skills and steps required to complete a writing task. This is a helpful update since the Essential Skills framework did not provide processes for a learner or practitioner to follow.

Evidence-Based Instructional Strategies

The following instructional strategies have been selected to highlight established or promising practices within the Skills for Success field and/or significant research that supports the instruction of writing skills.

1 Integrated Grammar

Compared to academic and language learning contexts, the importance of writing mechanics (e.g., grammar, sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation) is generally de-emphasized in Skills for Success training. These components are still important in that they help writers communicate a clear message and enable them to achieve the greater purpose of the writing task. However, grammar instruction is not typically the focus of Skills for Success training. This is supported by research that has shown that teaching grammar alone can decrease the quality of participants' writing (American Institute for Research [AIR], 2012).

Instructional Strategies:

- Focus first on meaningful, real-world writing tasks then integrate instruction of grammar, sentence structure, spelling and punctuation on an as-needed basis. Some writing tasks will lend themselves to specific grammar points more than others, just as some participants will need more support with mechanics than others.
- Ask participants to consider the importance of correct spelling, grammar and punctuation relative to the audience and context of the writing task. For instance, more formal higher-stakes writing tasks (e.g. published materials) require greater accuracy than informal day-to-day tasks (e.g. emails between coworkers).

Learning Transfer



Align learning content and delivery modes with unique learner needs, skill levels, objectives and contexts.

Implementation Guidance (p. 104)

- Provide participants with strategies and tools to proofread and correct their writing. Use checklists and templates to guide self and peer review.



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 3.3.1 Provides instruction on elements of writing
- SFS 3.3.2 Provides instruction on the relationship between audience, tone and formality
- SFS 3.3.6 Provides instruction on strategies for editing, revising and proofreading

2 Context-Driven

Writing tasks are context-driven, in that the language, tone and style will vary greatly depending on the audience and purpose for writing. To improve their ability to employ an appropriate writing style, participants need practice responding to a variety of writing contexts (Bazerman, 2015).

Instructional Strategies:

- Relate writing activities to participants' intended career goals. Identify the kinds of writing that workers do on the job then replicate these writing tasks in training. Guide participants through the writing components and processes, tackling the writing task as a worker would, including choosing an appropriate language and style.
- Incorporate other Skills for Success as relevant, such as communication, collaboration and digital skills, helping participants to build multiple skills and apply them to authentic tasks.
- Use collaborative writing strategies to help participants gain greater understanding of the social dynamics at play in writing tasks. For example, ask participants to share their writing choices related to formality, tone, language, persuasive techniques, etc. Peer-feedback also provides participants with valuable information about how the audience has received and interpreted their message.

Engagement



Integrate multiple Skills for Success into programming model to reflect the interactive nature of skills.

Implementation Guidance (p. 105)



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 2.2 Contextualizes Skills for Success training to make learning relevant and practical
- SFS 3.3.12 Integrates collaboration, communication and digital skills into writing tasks to help participants generate ideas, peer edit, revise writing and share knowledge

3 Writing Process

The components in the *Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success* (2021) take a process-based approach to writing. Though not entirely sequential, the components identify the key skills and steps required to complete a writing task.

Practitioners need to provide explicit instruction on each step and give participants lots of practice and support through the writing process.

Instructional Strategies:

- Explicitly teach a set of steps for participants to follow each time they approach a writing task. Consistently reinforce the steps throughout the training program so that participants internalize them over time.
- Provide participants with ample opportunities to practice their writing. Reduce the marking load by using checklists, peer-feedback and targeted approaches to feedback (e.g., only commenting on select aspects of the writing).
- Provide models and templates for participants to follow. For instance, give participants a completed entry form and a blank form to fill out for a different context. Peer-created models of writing can be particularly effective for illuminating different approaches to a writing task.

Note: See Approach #4 Section 2 for more information about Direct Instruction.



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 2.6.3 Guides the learning process with step-by-step processes, templates, demonstrations and/or models for participants to follow
- SFS 3.3.3 Provides instruction on organizational strategies to help participants approach writing tasks systematically
- SFS 3.3.6 Provides instruction on strategies for editing, revising and proofreading

Assessment Considerations

The assessment of writing skills most commonly involves the scoring of a writing sample against various criteria.

Suggested approaches:

- Use scoring rubrics with detailed dimensions and criteria
  - Checklist ratings may allow for better standardization
  - Holistic ratings capture overall feeling and nuance
- Ensure marking is reliable through consensus and/or consistency approaches
- Allow participants to handwrite or type depending on their preferences
- Incorporate frequent formative assessments to provide constructive, timely feedback and enable participants to learn from their mistakes

Proficiency Levels:

Proficiency levels are the level at which a person demonstrates a particular skill. These levels help practitioners build assessment tools to measure participants' skills. The Office of Skills for Success will refine the proficiency levels over time.

The following descriptors summarize the original 1-to-5 level divisions of the *Reader's Guide to Essential Skills Profiles* (2010). These descriptors are not aligned with the updated definitions and constructs of Skills for Success. More work is needed to tighten the alignment.

Preliminary Proficiency Levels

Level 1: Write less than a paragraph to organize, remind, or inform.

Level 2: Write brief text that is a paragraph or longer, to serve a variety of purposes. Content of writing is routine, with little variation from one instance to the next.

Level 3: Write either longer or shorter pieces to inform, explain, request information, express opinions or give directions.

Level 4: Write longer pieces, which present considerable information and which may feature a comparison or analysis.

Level 5: Write pieces of any length which demand originality and effectiveness. This includes creative writing. Appropriate tone and mood may be as important as the content.

Research Report to Support the Launch for Skills for Success (p. 45)

RESOURCES:

- ABC Literacy (2023). *Writing.* UP Skills for Work. https://upskillsforwork.ca/wp-content/uploads/ABC-UP-Writing.pdf
- U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. (2011). *Just Write! Guide.* https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/TEAL_JustWriteGuide.pdf
- Bow Valley College. (2016). *Writeforward.* http://www.writeforward.ca/
- MacArthur, C. A., Graham, S., & Fitzgerald, J. (Eds.). (2015). *Handbook of writing research* (pp. 11-23). Guilford Press.
- McLean, E., & Griffiths, K. (2022). *Writing and writing instruction.* Australian Education Research Organization. https://www.edresearch.edu.au/resources/writing-and-writing-instruction

GRAB AND GO TRAINING IDEAS

Activity	Writing Components	Instructional Tips	Sector-Specific
Scaffold participants' email writing skills by providing a model to analyze and follow. Label the parts of the email. Discuss word choice and tone in relation to the audience. Have participants correct an example of an email that is too formal or informal. Now participants are ready to write their own emails in response to workplace scenarios.	1. Identify the task that requires you to write Identify the goals and purposes of the writing task • *Identify the audience* 4. Choose the appropriate language and style for the writing task • *Use formal and informal tone and language appropriate for audience and context*	Determine if participants need more practice on formal or informal styles and teach to that. Provide opportunities for peer review to enable participants to learn from each other's writing choices.	Generate sector-specific scenarios based on the typical occupational email writing tasks.  e.g., Spa managers write emails to staff to communicate schedule changes, to clients to answer service-related questions, and to manufactures to express concerns about products.
Teach participants how to summarize an event to complete an incident report form. Discuss strategies for summarizing (e.g., using the 5 Ws). Participants can summarize an incident or accident they have observed or report about a video simulation (see provincial OH&S websites). Integrate problem solving by discussing ways to prevent future incidents.	2. Plan the writing task • *Identify the information to include in the writing task* • *Determine how much you need to write and the level of details to include* 5. Choose the appropriate format for the writing task • *Use pre-determined or pre-formatted workplace documents*	Define purpose and explain the purpose of different types of entry forms. Define primary and secondary information. Demonstrate how to respond to a variety of response modes (checkboxes, words, phrases, sentences) found in entry forms.	Use authentic incident report forms from sector-specific companies or occupational health and safety (OH&S) organizations.  Gather written case studies or video simulations of accidents or near misses in the construction industry for participants to summarize.
After reviewing several health and safety or standard operating procedures (SOPs), ask participants to write their own procedural document. Provide clear criteria: e.g., present tense, plain language, bullet points, visuals, etc. Extend the activity by integrating communication skills: participants take on the role of supervisor to explain a new procedure to their team.	5. Choose the appropriate format for the writing task • *To organize information or ideas, use paragraphs, bullet points, numbered list, sub-headings, etc.* • *Use pre-determined or pre-formatted workplace documents* 6. Review and revise your writing • *Proofread and revise your writing for accuracy, meaning and tone*	Define process and procedure and the role they play in the workplace. Analyze workplace documents with participants to identify common elements of a process/procedure, such as present tense, plain language, bullet points, visuals, etc.	Contextualize the health and safety or standard operating procedures (SOPs) depending on the sector and role.  e.g., Manufacturing technicians use SOPs to operate equipment, calibrate equipment, dispose of hazardous waste, conduct quality testing and perform maintenance.

Numeracy

Numeracy is the ability to find, understand, use and report mathematical information presented through words, numbers, symbols and graphics.

Why are Numeracy Skills Important?

The modern economy requires numeracy skills that go beyond basic arithmetic, and understanding numbers remains critical to functioning in today's society. Many jobs require the ability to work with numbers and math. For example, we use numeracy skills to measure materials or count inventory at work. Numeracy skills are also needed in a wide variety of daily contexts. For example, you use numeracy skills to manage your finances or to make sense of statistics in the news.

Numeracy Components

1. Identify the task that requires you to use numeracy
2. Identify the mathematical information
3. Make connections between related pieces of mathematical information
4. Apply mathematical operations and tools you will need to answer the question
5. Interpret and evaluate the information
6. Share the mathematical information, results and implications

Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success (p. 19)

Sector	Workplace Examples
Construction	Electricians calculate offsets to allow for bends around obstacles by using indirect measurement, solving square roots or by using trigonometric constants to construct standard bends in conduit.
Manufacturing	Machine Operators in mineral processing use a tape measure to measure hot and cold bars to determine shrinkage. They have to be aware of the correct "hot" dimensions which will shrink to the correct cold measure.
Food Processing	Fish plant workers calculate the weight of fish to send down the production line so the end of the line receives the correct weights, considering percentages of waste.
Health Care	Dental hygienists estimate the time required to complete dental procedures, based on patient needs and their own experience conducting similar procedure.

Transitioning from Essential Skills to Skills for Success

The most significant change to Numeracy in the Skills for Success framework is that it now includes elements of Document Use, which was considered a separate skill in the Essential Skills model.

Document Use has been relocated and is now embedded in the skills of Reading, Writing and Numeracy. This update reflects the frequently integrated nature of these skills in work, learning and life contexts.

The following table shows how Document Use has been integrated within Numeracy. The Skills for Success column on the left identifies the components and subcomponents of Numeracy that include elements of Document Use (identified in red within the *Research Report*). The Essential Skills column on the right lists the Document Use tasks from the original model that are relevant to Numeracy. Practitioners can use these cues to plan where to integrate existing Document Use materials into Numeracy instruction.

Document Use Integration	
Skills for Success *Numeracy components and subcomponents that include some Document Use elements*	**Essential Skills** *Numeracy-related Document Use tasks from the original model*
2. Identify the mathematical information • Locate key details, concepts, and other mathematical information • Use methods such as scanning and skimming to identify relevant information 3. Make connections between related pieces of mathematical information • Make connections between known and unknown in the mathematical problem • Make connections between different parts of the information presented 4. Apply mathematical operations and tools you will need to answer the question • Order or sort 6. Apply mathematical operations and tools you will need to answer the question • Use different means and methods to share the information, its results, and implications, such as in a presentation, in writing, through a diagram, map or graph. *Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success (p. 19)*	• complete forms by marking check boxes, recording numerical information or entering words, phrases, sentences or texts of a paragraph or more • read completed forms containing check boxes, numerical entries, phrases, addresses, sentences or texts of a paragraph or more • read tables, schedules and other table-like text • plot information on graphs (e.g., line, pie, bar) • obtain specific information from graphs or charts • interpret information on graphs or charts • construct or draw graphs or charts. • recognize common angles such as 15˚, 30˚, 45˚ and 90 • draw, sketch or form common shapes such as circles, triangles, spheres, rectangles, squares, etc. • take measurements from scale drawings • draw to scale *Reader's Guide to Essential Skills Profiles (p. 25)*

Practitioners can also use the numeracy components to guide and structure how they deliver instruction. The numeracy components are process-oriented, identifying the key skills and steps required to complete a numeracy task. This is a helpful update since the Essential Skills framework did not provide processes for a learner or practitioner to follow.

Evidence-Based Instructional Strategies

The following instructional strategies have been selected to highlight established or promising practices within the Skills for Success field and/or significant research that supports the instruction of numeracy skills.

1 Learner Attitudes and Emotions Relating to Numeracy

Negative beliefs about ability and emotions about math can interfere with success in adult numeracy instruction. Adult learners who have had challenges with math need support to develop a sense of competence and confidence in learning mathematics and numeracy. Facilitate safe learning spaces to allow learners to focus on learning, develop skills and relationships, and build the confidence necessary to succeed.

Instructional Strategies:

- Create instructional environments where math anxiety can be openly discussed. Build on prior knowledge and strengths, and pair with opportunities for success to allow learners to reflect on their growth throughout a program.
- Help learners build reading skills that support acquisition of mathematical language and notation. Model the creation of glossaries for math terminology so they can translate tasks into numeracy operations with confidence.
- Scaffold learning in numeracy; build and emphasize success in the foundational skills to support the learning of more complex concepts and skills.
- Adjust teaching styles and implement the principles of Universal Design for Learning to address learning differences that may influence accessibility and anxiety about numeracy instruction.



Under represented Groups

Engagement



Create safe learning spaces by leveraging the social emotional Skills for Success to build learners' self-efficacy, autonomy, and confidence.

Implementation Guidance (p. 109)



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 2.8 Supports social-emotional well-being to develop self-regulation skills
- SFS 2.9 Applies a learner-centred approach to Skills for Success training
- SFS 3.2.4 Provides instruction on the language of numeracy
- SFS 3.2.7 Recognizes, assesses and addresses participants' diverse and potentially negative experiences, beliefs and emotions towards numeracy that may interfere with learning

2 Contextualized Numeracy Instruction

Participants in Skills for Success training programs are motivated to learn new skills when math problem-solving is connected to their interests as well as goal-oriented contexts. With a wide variety of educational backgrounds and experience, learners may not have the foundational numeracy skills they need to complete numeracy tasks in training and on the job. Therefore, teach (or reteach) foundational skills in contextualized, realistic applications that connect to what they already know and what they want to know. Contextualization promotes conceptual understanding and facilitates the scaffolding of learning up to new, abstract concepts.

Instructional Strategies:

- Learn about your participants and connect instruction back to their interests and prior life experiences to engage interest, as well as tie it forward to their goals (Ginsburg et al., 2011, p. 31). By working with pre-existing knowledge, skills and strategies, new knowledge and skills are more easily learned, understood and applied (Dingwall, 2000, pp. 20-22).
- Situate math instruction in the real world. Use everyday or training-related manipulatives and activities to transfer learning between math in theory and math in practice (Ginsburg & Gal, 2000). Use calculators and digital technology that will also be used in further training and the workplace (Ginsburg et al., 2011). Improve numeracy skills by providing participants with the opportunity to practice many times with new workplace scenarios. Research shows that using a range of contexts in math instruction was most effective in improving skills in new problem-solving applications (Ginsburg et al., 2011, p. 31).
- Pace instruction to the skill level of your learners and guide their reflection of personal skill development within the framework of the training program. Offer frequent opportunities for self-assessment and reflection on effort and results. Point out their individual achievement in reaching milestones in overall training goals.

Engagement



Align learning content and delivery modes with unique learner needs, objectives, skill levels and contexts.

Implementation Guidance (p. 104)

Note: See Approach #2 in Section 2 to learn more about contextualizing instruction across skills, sectors and audiences.



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 3.2.5 incorporates concrete, visual and hands-on activities to develop participants' understanding of numeracy concepts
- SFS 3.2.6 Provides participants with opportunities to reflect on their prior learning in numeracy and connect it to new concepts
- SFS 3.2.8 Integrates authentic documents into numeracy activities, including culturally and contextually relevant documents

3 Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning refers to interactive instructional strategies, which can involve formal and more casual approaches. It can positively influence mathematics performance and be of significant benefit to marginalized students such as those from low-income backgrounds (Ginsburg et al., 2011).

Instructional Strategies:

- Implement various learner grouping strategies (homogenous skill level, peer tutor, student choice, interest, etc.) to enhance learning through communication and collaboration (Coben et al., 2003). Encourage students in peer learning groups to offer their perspectives on how they visualize or break down math problems. Teaching each other can also help learners process their skills in a deeper manner.
- Provide a clear structure of strategies and activities for successful collaborative learning, whether with an instructor or with learner groups. Collaborative learning helps prepare adults for communication demands in the workplace and allows for learning between learners from diverse cultural backgrounds (Ginsburg et al., 2011).
- Tie in instruction on Communication skills. Research identifies that communication plays a critical role in numeracy learning. It helps learners develop problem-solving skills, integrate new information into previous knowledge, and develop and expand on their own thinking and the ideas of others by engaging in discussion (AIR, 2014). Aspects of language acquisition may also develop when supplemented with conceptual tasks and activities that focus on mathematics (Coben et al., 2003).

Engagement

Integrate multiple Skills for Success into programming model to reflect the interactive nature of skills.

Implementation Guidance (p. 105)



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 3.2.3 Provides participants with opportunities to use different numeracy approaches and strategies and to explain their reasoning
- SFS 3.6.10 Integrates discussion, brainstorming and collaboration into problem-solving activities
- SFS 3.8.7 Creates learning tasks that require participants to consider their own and others' perspectives, biases, purposes and intentions

Assessment Considerations

Numeracy assessments typically require participants to complete mathematics tasks of varying complexity. Correct and incorrect answers can be scored objectively. There is a rich body of national and international research to support the creation of numeracy assessments with demonstrated reliability and validity (e.g., PIACC and TOWES).

Instruction of numeracy skills should include formative assessment with constructive feedback which is descriptive, specific, timely and measured. This allows learners to understand their mistakes and adjust their thinking and processes so they can reach appropriate solutions (AIR, 2014). A balance of both formative and summative assessments is important for gathering information about learners' knowledge and understanding of numeracy concepts (Ginsburg et al., 2011).

Suggested approaches:

- Use diagnostic assessments to determine numeracy levels and instructional priorities.
- Incorporate authentic tasks into assessment, just as you would for instruction. Participants are more likely to see the value of an assessment when they can see how it relates to the skills they need on the job.
- Consider the impact of low digital skills in the administration and scoring of online numeracy assessments. Take steps to support participants with online assessments or use paper-based assessments where possible.
- Incorporate a range of complexity levels so that you can capture the upper and lower ranges of performance. Where possible, use adaptive assessments to adjust complexity level of questions based on performance, ensuring an appropriate level of challenge.
- Build persistence and confidence by involving learners in assessment and recognizing their progress towards goals (Ginsburg et al., 2011).
- Research recommends that practitioners approach assessment in a way that is cognizant of their learners' math anxieties and that helps learners understand and correct their mistakes. Apply the principles of Universal Design for Learning to address learning differences and offer alternate modes of assessment to demonstrate learning.
- Offer opportunities to retake formative assessments to measure mastery and also highlight individual progress.

Proficiency Levels:

Proficiency levels are the level at which a person demonstrates a particular skill. These levels help practitioners build assessment tools to measure participants' skills. The Office of Skills for Success will refine the proficiency levels over time.

The following descriptors summarize the original 1-to-5 level divisions of the *Reader's Guide to Essential Skills Profiles* (2010). These descriptors are not aligned with the updated definitions and constructs of Skills for Success. More work is needed to tighten the alignment.

Preliminary Proficiency Levels

Level 1:

- *Operations Required*: Only the simplest operations are required and the operations to be used are clearly specified. Only one type of mathematical operation is used in a task.
- *Translation*: Only minimal translation is required to turn the task into a mathematical operation. All information required is provided.

Level 2:

- *Operations Required*: Only relatively simple operations are required. The specific operations to be performed may not be clearly specified. Tasks involve one or two types of mathematical operation. Few steps of calculations are required.
- *Translation*: Some translation may be required or the numbers needed for the solution may need to be collected from several sources. Simple formulae may be used.

Level 3:

- *Operations Required*: Tasks may require a combination of operations or multiple applications of a single operation. Several steps of calculation are required.
- *Translation*: Some translation is required but the problem is well defined. Combinations of formulae may be used.

Level 4:

- *Operations Required*: Tasks involved multiple steps of calculation.
- *Translation*: Considerable translation is required.

Level 5:

- *Operations Required*: Tasks involve multiple steps of calculation. Advanced mathematical techniques may be required.
- *Translation*: Numbers needed for calculations may need to be derived or estimated; approximations may need to be created in cases of uncertainty and ambiguity. Complex formulae, equations or functions may be used.

Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success (p. 45)

RESOURCES:

- ABC Literacy. (2023). Numeracy. UP Skills for Work. https://upskillsforwork.ca/wp-content/uploads/ABC-UP-Numeracy.pdf
- U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education. (2014). *Math Works! Guide.* https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/Teal_Math_Works_Guide_508.pdf
- SkillPlan. (2023). *Learning hub.* https://skillplan.ca/learn/
- Skills/Compétences Canada. (2022). Workbook: Numeracy. Skills for Success. https://yourskillsforsuccess.com/workbook/numeracy/



GRAB AND GO TRAINING IDEAS

Activity	Numeracy Components	Instructional Tips	Sector-Specific
Provide pairs with an imperial tape measure, and a list of trade and classroom items to measure in inches and fractions of an inch. The items should vary and challenge the learners to figure out how to use the tool. Focus on strategies for reading with precision. Debrief on the measurements, strategies and working together.	2. Identify the mathematical information • *Make connections between known and unknown in the mathematical problem* 4. Apply mathematical operations and tools you will need to answer the question • *Measure* • *Apply a combination of operations and tools to complete a task*	Teach math foundations related to fractions, lowest common denominator, simplifying, reading a small ruler first. This is a good activity for collaborative learning. Encourage a growth mindset by praising and commenting on participants' efforts and processes rather than only doing things one way (SFS 3.7.5).	Gather a variety of sector-specific items to measure. Sample Piping items: lengths of pipe and tube, fittings with different diameters, ladders, workbench, classroom ceiling height and floor dimensions, students' heights, inside window dimensions, diagonal doorway dimension, etc. .
Provide a variety of contextualized materials and typical dimensions for the occupation. Ask learners to calculate the volume and the weight of simple shapes of items. Discuss answers, drawing attention to how participants used a strategy to break down each question.	2. Identify the mathematical information • *Make connections between known and unknown in the mathematical problem* 5. Interpret and evaluate the information • *Evaluate the information or results within the context and whether they make sense*	Model metacognition using think aloud step-by-step processes (SFS 2.5.6) and how to approach numeracy tasks. Build complexity from rectangular items with whole-number dimensions up to complex shapes. Ask participants to talk you through their process so you can identify where they are struggling.	Contextualized list of items with typical dimensions. e.g., Truck drivers calculate weights of building materials such as masonry units, lumber, drums of oil, drywall sheets, steel pipes. Loads can be of mixed materials.
Provide a table of data with item subsets that can be grouped and compared. Provide a scenario that requires presenting information in a pie chart or bar graph. Participants must calculate percentages and decide how to display the percentages on a graph.	1. Identify the task that will require you to use numeracy • Identify the form of the response expected 6. Share the mathematical information, results, and implications • *Use different means and methods to share the information, its results, and implications, such as in a presentation, in writing, through a diagram, map or graph*	Model the reading skills required to gather data for each demographic. Model alternate methods for calculating percents, step-by-step. Encourage learners to try both methods. Building bar graphs may be easier than pie charts. Provide the gradation for the y-axis. Use graph paper. This activity can integrate Digital skills: you can teach how to use common software (Word, Excel) to create graphic displays.	Contextualize the data analysis depending on the sector and role. Sample scenario for Heritage Interpreters: Create a graph showing the percentage breakdown of attendance by demographic groups in the previous month.

Digital

Digital is your ability to use digital technology and tools to find, manage, apply, create and share information and content.

Why are Digital Skills Important?

Digital technology has changed the way you find and share information, solve problems, and communicate with others. Most jobs now use digital skills, and you need them when you apply other skills such as reading, writing and numeracy.

Digital skills help you keep up with changing demands in the modern workplace. In daily life, you need digital skills to connect safely socially and to make use of online resources and services.

Digital Components

1. Use digital devices including computers, tablets, smart phones and other handheld devices
2. Use common digital tools to complete tasks
3. Use digital information
4. Use online tools and platforms
5. Apply safe and responsible practices online
6. Update and upgrade digital skills

Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success (p. 21)

Sector	Workplace Examples
Construction	Sheet Metal Workers use computer-assisted design (CAD) programs to create elevation, plan and sectional views of sheet metal fabrications. They may use augmented reality (AR) to see how their work overlaps with the work of other trades.
Manufacturing	Shippers and Receivers use digital devices to access and record shipment information, enter load weights, print orders and co-ordinate unloading schedules.
Tourism	Special Events Coordinators use graphic design applications to prepare advertising layouts, notices and programs. They may use event planning software and critical path software.
Health Care	Health Care Assistants use databases to retrieve and update patient information. For example, they use databases to enter data and search patient records for information about test results, treatments and medical conditions.

Transitioning from Essential Skills to Skills for Success

The Essential Skills Framework included the skill of Computer Use. In Skills for Success, it has been broadened to Digital, which includes the use of computers as well as other digital devices and platforms.

Digital has been updated to incorporate new technology and applications in the labour market. It now reflects a wide range of basic and advanced digital skills needed in today's world of work, including the ability to apply safe and responsible practices online.

Practitioners can update their existing Essential Skills training materials by incorporating current digital devices and tools and adding online safety components. To reflect the increasingly digital workplace, practitioners should integrate digital skills into their instruction of all Skills for Success.

Evidence-Based Instructional Strategies

The following instructional strategies have been selected to highlight established or promising practices within the Skills for Success field and/or significant research that supports the instruction of digital skills.

1 Needs Assessment

Conducting a needs assessment is a good starting point for any training program, and the research shows this practice may be particularly important for digital skills. Participants in digital literacy courses often lack common backgrounds and may have diverse learning needs (Delfino et al., 2008). A thorough needs assessment is critical for addressing participants' diverse needs, skills and abilities.



Under represented Groups

Instructional Strategies:

- Use diagnostic tools to identify participants' backgrounds, goals, interests, skills and abilities. Be mindful to provide a supportive environment as some participants come with a lack of experience and confidence in their digital skills.
- Take a flexible approach when designing and delivering training to help ensure appropriate starting points are established for each participant. Where possible, involve participants in the instructional planning process to ensure programming meets their needs.
- Incorporate participants' prior experience, interests and intended career goals into course design to maximize relevance and engagement.

Assessment



Use Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition (PLAR) to document Skills for Success developed in other contexts

Implementation Guidance (p. 123)



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 3.9.2 Differentiates instruction and curriculum to address participants' different learning needs and starting points
- DESIGN 2.2.1 Develops flexible curriculum materials and activities that can be adjusted to individual needs
- DELIVER 2.2 Recognizes and builds upon participants' prior learning, knowledge and experience
- ASSESS 1.2.1 Administers a pre-assessment to measure participants' levels, skills, abilities, goals, background knowledge and pre-requisites

2 Addressing Confidence

Research shows that lack of confidence is a significant barrier to improving digital skills. Older participants and participants from marginalized groups may be particularly affected (Moss, 2021; see also McGillivray et al., 2017). The following strategies can be used to help shape a supportive learning environment and build participant confidence in their digital skills.

Under represented Groups

Instructional Strategies:

- Build relationships with your participants, taking a friendly and informal approach. Provide opportunities for participants to get to know each other to cultivate a sense of community in the training room.
- Provide one-to-one support. Where possible, have volunteers or tutors monitor the computer lab and provide "just-in-time" coaching when a participant encounters a challenge.
- Start with simple activities then build up the complexity of digital tasks. Vary your instruction depending on participants' abilities and needs. Taking a gradual approach to new concepts helps avoid cognitive overload.

Engagement

Use a relationship-centred approach to engage learners.

Implementation Guidance (p. 109)



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 2.5.2 Guides participants through progressively more complex learning tasks
- SFS 3.9.3 Addresses the needs of participants with low confidence in their digital skills
- DELIVER 1.2 Creates an atmosphere that addresses the social-emotional needs of participants

3 Problem-Based Approach

In problem-based learning, practitioners provide participants with tasks, scenarios, or challenges to solve. This approach has been found to be an effective way to deliver digital skills instruction. Participants learn by doing and seeing how their digital skills relate to real world tasks.

Instructional Strategies:

- Contextualize problem-based tasks to participants' career goals and interests. Participants are more motivated to learn digital skills when they can see real-world applicability. Increase transfer of learning to new digital technologies by helping participants to see the big picture context of a digital task – the "when" and "why" – not just the technical "how".
- Provide explicit instruction to support problem-based learning. A purely trial and error approach can be frustrating for participants. Instead, explain and model the process for solving technology-based problems.
- Develop participant autonomy by offering self-directed learning models. Provide opportunities for participants to move through material at different rates. Cultivating the ability to learn independently is critical to future-proofing participants' digital skills in the face of constant change in digital technologies.

Learning Transfer

Develop teaching tools and resources that support continued application of Skills for Success in new learning and working contexts.

Implementation Guidance (p. 133)



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 2.2.2 Creates task-based learning activities based on real-world, workplace applications
- SFS 3.6.2 Uses problem-solving models that provide systematic processes for participants to follow
- SFS 3.9.1 Provides instruction on the technical "how to" of digital tasks and the contextual "when" and "why" to foster participant transfer of learning to new digital technologies

Assessment Considerations

Digital skills are often assessed based on people's perception of their own skills, rather than systematic or standardized assessments that are more objective in nature. The Research Report to *Support the Launch of Skills for Success* (2021) outlines the pros and cons of several methods, such as task-based assessments, situational judgement tests, and subjective reports (see Table 2, p. 62).

Suggested approaches:

- Provide frequent formative feedback as your monitor participants working on a digital tasks.
- Incorporate structured peer feedback. Guide the feedback process by providing a process to follow.
- Create rubrics to help participants self-assess and monitor their learning.

Proficiency Levels:

Proficiency levels are the level at which a person demonstrates a particular skill. These levels help practitioners build assessment tools to measure participant's skills. The Office of Skills for Success will refine the proficiency levels over time.

Preliminary Proficiency Levels

Entry: You can use basic functions of familiar digital devices. You need guidance to find and evaluate the relevance and reliability of online information, and to engage in safe online practices.

Intermediate: You can use a wider range of functions of familiar and unfamiliar digital devices, including customizing devices for specific purposes (e.g., download and use an app, set up macros to automate tasks). You can find and use relevant and reliable online information and engage in safe online practices.

Advanced: You have in-depth knowledge of digital device operations and information technology systems. You can find and use relevant and reliable online information to improve digital processes, including enhancing your own online safety. You can assess future digital needs and keep your own digital skills up to date.

Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success (p. 46)

RESOURCES:

- ABC Literacy. (2023). *Digital.* UP Skills for Work. https://upskillsforwork.ca/wp-content/uploads/ABC-UP-Digital-1-1.pdf
- Besharat Mann, R. (2021). *How to support digital literacy in adult learners.* Digital Promise. https://digitalpromise.org/2021/02/08/how-to-support-digital-literacy-in-adult-learners/
- European Union. (n.d.) *Test your digital skills.* Digital Skills and Jobs Platform. https://digital-skills-jobs.europa.eu/en/digital-skills-assessment
- Google. (n.d.). *Teach and learn practical digital skills.* Google Education. https://applieddigitalskills.withgoogle.com/
- Moss, M. (2021). *Effective practice in teaching essential digital skill: An account of a rapid literature review.* The Education and Training Foundation. https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/edtech/effective-practice-in-teaching-essential-digital-skills-an-account-of-a-rapid-literature-review/
- *Teaching skills that matter digital literacy.* (2022). LINCS. https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/teaching-skills-matter-adult-education/digital-literacy



GRAB AND GO TRAINING IDEAS

Activity	Digital Components	Instructional Tips	Sector-Specific
Present participants with a variety of digital devices (e.g., laptop, desktop, tablet, smartphone) or platforms (e.g., Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Twitter). Ask participants to identify their common functions and features, teaching appropriate terminology as required. Then provide examples of workplace tasks and have groups select the digital tool that is best suited to the task and present their rationale.	1. Use digital devices including computers, tablets, smart phones, and other handheld devices • *Identify and use the basic functions common to most devices* • *Know the basic terminology common to most digital devices* 2. Use common digital tools to complete tasks • *Select appropriate digital tools based on your goals and purposes of tasks*	Incorporate digital devices and platforms that align to participants' interests, needs and career goals. Comparing tools of a similar type (e.g. different social media platforms or presentation software) will help develop transferable skills and familiarity with the tools of a particular field.	Select digital devices, platforms and tools that are used within the sector. Taking on the role of marketing manager, participants decide which social media would be the most effective advertising platform to reach a target audience.
Discuss the topic of evaluating websites for relevance and reliability and why it's important. Provide participants with criteria for evaluating online information. Then give groups a list of websites to evaluate according to the criteria. Encourage them to discuss their findings and reasoning. Debrief together as a group to check understanding.	3. Use digital information • *Evaluate the relevance and reliability of digital information*	Adapt the activity to include other types of relevant digital information, such as social media, podcasts, etc. Adjust the complexity of the evaluation criteria depending on participant abilities.	Contextualize the sources of online information to the sector. Have participants evaluate a variety of online medical information sources, such as the Ministry of Health, hospitals, charities, private sites, Wikipedia, social media posts, etc.
Ask participants what they know about password security. Elicit the do's and don'ts of creating strong passwords. Provide an informal quiz of sample passwords, asking participants to determine if they are strong or weak passwords. Debrief as a group, encouraging participants to explain their answers. Follow up with strategies to help participants generate and remember strong passwords for their own digital purposes.	5. Apply safe and responsible practices online • *Understand best practices in data storage and sharing* • *Protect personal information and privacy of yourself and others* • *Protect data and devices from online risks and threats* • *Make secure online transactions*	Model the reading skills required to gather data for each demographic. Model alternate methods for calculating percents, step-by-step. Encourage learners to try both methods. Building bar graphs may be easier than pie charts. Provide the gradation for the y-axis. Use graph paper. This activity can integrate Digital skills: you can teach how to use common software (Word, Excel) to create graphic displays.	Integrate safe and responsible practices specific to the sector. Talk to industry SMEs about typical digital safety protocols in manufacturing. What are the risks? What measures are in place to protect personal information and privacy? What are the consequences if digital safety is compromised?

Problem Solving

Problem Solving is the ability to identify, analyze, propose solutions and make decisions.

Why are Problem-Solving Skills Important?

Every day you use information to make decisions, solve problems, and take actions. This can include thinking about different ways to complete a task and choosing the best solution, or deciding what to do first when several activities are competing for your attention. The ability to think, make decisions, and solve problems effectively improves the way you carry out activities, and meet goals and deadlines at work or in other daily life situations.

Problem Solving Components

1. Identify the issue to be addressed
2. Gather information to help you address the issue
3. Analyze the issue
4. Develop multiple routes of action
5. Address the issue
6. Evaluate the effectiveness of the solution or decision

Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success (p. 23)

Sector	Workplace Examples
Construction	Electricians learn how to troubleshoot and repair difficult electrical faults by reading manuals, studying electrical schematics, accessing information on web forums and blogs and by speaking with co-workers, other tradespeople, electrical engineers and manufacturers.
Manufacturing	Manufacturing Technicians experience equipment breakdowns and malfunctions, which shut down or slow production. The technician works with the machine operator to complete troubleshooting procedures on the equipment.
Tourism	Guest Services Representatives encounter problems when appointments have been overbooked or clients have cancelled appointments on short notice. Appointments must be re-scheduled to best fit staff and client needs.
Education	Early Childhood Educators cannot complete planned learning activities when children are unmanageable. They attempt to engage them using other toys and alternative activities. They may isolate misbehaving and aggressive children, explain expected behaviors and assign appropriate consequences.

Transitioning from Essential Skills to Skills for Success

The Essential Skills Framework included the skill of Thinking. In Skills for Success, Thinking has been changed to Problem Solving, incorporating the components of Finding Information, Critical Thinking and Decision Making. This change redefined the skill to resonate better with users.

Practitioners can teach these thinking components within a problem-solving framework. The problem-solving components are process-oriented, identifying the key skills and steps required to complete a problem-solving task. This is a helpful update since the Essential Skills framework did not provide processes for a learner or practitioner to follow.

Evidence-Based Instructional Strategies

The following instructional strategies have been selected to highlight established or promising practices within the Skills for Success field and/or significant research that supports the instruction of problem-solving skills.

1 Problem-Based Learning

Problem-based learning has participants acquire skills and knowledge through solving problems. Research has shown that this method is more effective than a lecture-based approach to teaching problem-solving skills. Problem-based instruction models have also been proven to be better at engaging and motivating students.

Instructional Strategies:

- Have participants solve problems in their workplace. This approach benefits learners as well as employers. Participants can apply problem-solving concepts in a familiar and relevant context and employers get a return on their training investment in the positive results of participant projects.
- Provide guidance and support as the participants problem solve. Use questions to help the students navigate the problem-solving process and reflect on their decisions. Avoid sole reliance on the discovery method as the minimally guided pure discovery approach tends to be ineffective.

Learning Transfer



Find opportunities to engage with employers and community members to prepare for learning transfer.

Implementation Guidance (p. 134)

- To support review and reflection, have students document the problem, the process involved in solving the problem and the solution. This will help them recall the steps they used and remember how to solve similar problems in the future.



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 2.2 Contextualizes Skills for Success training to make learning relevant and practical
- SFS 3.6.5 Provides instruction on thinking strategies to choose the best course of action and evaluate its effectiveness
- SFS 3.6.6 Provides participants with sufficient time to work through problem-solving steps and find their own solutions
- SFS 3.6.7 Intervenes in problem-solving activities to provide structured guidance, feedback and questions, rather than leaving participants solely to the discovery method

2 Use Problem-Solving Models

Successful problem solving requires the use of a problem-solving strategy or model. Participants should be taught structured methods for solving problems that reflect the steps of the problem-solving components: identify the issue to be addressed, gather information to help you address the issue, analyze the issue, develop multiple routes of action, address the issue, and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution or decision. These models should be taught to learners before they engage in problem solving.

Instructional Strategies:

- Break down the problem-solving model into steps. This will help scaffold the learning by breaking the process into manageable steps that are within the range of participant competence. Problem solving can overwhelm learners without this step-by-step approach.
- Provide instruction on various tools that can be used during different steps in the problem-solving process. For example, incorporate fishbone diagrams and the 5 Whys activity to analyze the issue.
- Emphasize the importance of gathering information and analyzing the issue. Inexperienced problem solvers often develop routes of action before completing a proper analysis, leading to incomplete and ineffective solutions.



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 3.6.1 Provides explicit instruction on the basic elements and procedures of problem-solving
- SFS 3.6.2 Uses problem-solving models that provide systematic processes for participants to follow

3 Group Learning

Problem solving in groups allows students to understand their own biases through the exploration of different perspectives. Group learning also helps participants develop other social-emotional Skills for Success like communication and collaboration.

Instructional Strategies:

- Have students practice brainstorming in a group. Go over best practices to ensure all voices in the group are heard. Brainstorming is an important component in workplace problem solving as many workplace issues involve multiple stakeholders.
- Group learning also presents an opportunity for role play. Problem solving in the workplace is often focused on resolving interpersonal conflict. Having two members of a group role play resolving a conflict while another member evaluates their approach is an effective strategy for beginning a discussion on conflict resolution. Problem solving in a team often involves negotiating and compromise and role play can be an effective way to develop these skills.

Engagement

Strategically integrate social-emotional Skills for Success into training to maximize learning and skill gains.

Implementation Guidance (p. 111)

- Explore cognitive bias by having students identify the influences behind their opinions about a problem or solution. Students can then discuss the differences between their perspectives to gain an appreciation for the value of diverse views when approaching a problem.

Under represented Groups



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 3.6.3 Provides instruction on cognitive biases and how they can hamper successful problem solving
- SFS 3.6.9 Provides opportunities for participants to compare each other's work and critique alternative problem-solving strategies
- SFS 3.6.10 Integrates discussion, brainstorming and collaboration into problem-solving activities

Assessment Considerations

Assessment models for Problem Solving are still under development. *The Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success* (2021) outlines the pros and cons of several methods, such as task-based assessments, situational judgement tests, and subjective reports (see Table 2, pp. 55-56). Assessments that are most likely to be used in training programs will need to strike a balance between rigour and usability.

Suggested approaches:

- Use scoring rubrics to assess performance-based tasks
  - Checklist ratings may allow for better standardization
  - Holistic ratings capture overall feeling and nuance
- Develop a self-reporting rubric for participants, coordinating with the instructional scoring rubric. Self-assessment is an important component of efforts to develop problem-solving skills.

Proficiency Levels:

Proficiency levels are the level at which a person demonstrates a particular skill. These levels help practitioners build assessment tools to measure participant's skills. The Office of Skills for Success will refine the proficiency levels over time.

Preliminary Proficiency Levels

Entry: You can make decisions or solve problems when there are limited or familiar variables, all the information is provided, and the stakes are low with few consequences. You can use your general knowledge and skills to process information, do simple or routine troubleshooting if needed, identify the decision or solution, and confirm the issue is resolved.

Intermediate: You can make decisions or solve problems when there are multiple well-defined variables, information is not provided but easily identified, and the stakes are moderate with some consequences. You are able to identify useful information sources, analyze the information, select the best option from multiple choices, and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution or decision based on given or standard criteria.

Advanced: You can make decisions or solve problems when there are many complex unfamiliar variables that can be unpredictable or contradictory, little information is provided or certain, and the stakes are high with significant consequences. You can search for information using diverse unfamiliar sources or conduct your own research, synthesize and analyze complex information to determine multiple options, select the best option, and determine how to assess the effectiveness of the process and solution or decision.

Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success (p. 47)

RESOURCES:

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GRAB AND GO TRAINING IDEAS

Activity	Problem Solving Components	Instructional Tips	Sector-Specific
Create a scenario or have participants brainstorm a problem they could encounter on the job. Have the learners apply the steps of a problem solving strategy to the scenario or problem. The participants should work in groups so they can develop communication and collaboration skills and learn how to compromise, understand diverse perspectives and advocate for their ideas.	1. Identify the issue to be addressed 2. Gather information to help you address the issue 3. Analyze the issue • *Identify possible cause-and-effect linkages* 4. Develop multiple routes of action • *Create multiple options for action* 5. Address the issue 6. Evaluate the effectiveness of the solution or decision	Provide explicit instructions on the problem solving steps at the start of the activity. Have the participants identify the facts and influences that support their view of the problem to help navigate differences and understand cognitive bias. Provide explicit instruction on the basic elements and procedures of problem solving (SFS 3.6.1).	Contextualize the scenario to the sector.  Sample scenario for Welders: A culture of bullying on your crew has led to multiple resignations in the last year. Apply the problem solving strategy to this issue.
Create a scenario or have participants brainstorm sources of interpersonal conflict in their industry. Have the participants generate a list of questions they could ask to understand the different sides of the conflict. Discuss how the different parties might respond to the questions. Brainstorm different ways the conflict could be resolved based on the responses.	4. Develop multiple routes of action • *Create multiple options for action* 5. Address the issue • *Use thinking strategies to choose the best course of action*	Have the participants role play the conflict after the discussion. Discuss active listening skills like paraphrasing, asking questions, eye contact, and not interrupting. Integrate discussion, brainstorming and collaboration into problem-solving activities (SFS 3.6.10).	Contextualize the scenario to the sector.  Sample scenario for Travel Agents: A customer's flight was not booked correctly and now they need to wait an extra day to fly home. They are looking for compensation.
Participants are given a problem that is common in their industry. Have the participants brainstorm how they could measure and quantify the impact of the problem. Then have the participants identify the people in an organization that would be affected by the problem and what questions they could ask them to understand their view of the problem.	2. Gather information to help you address the issue • *Conduct research and collect relevant information* • *Seek help from others if needed*	Discuss the difference between tangible (increased costs) and intangible (reduced employee morale) impacts of a problem. Intervene in problem-solving activities to provide structured guidance, feedback and questions, rather than leaving participants solely to the discovery method (SFS 3.6.7).	Contextualize the scenario to the sector.  Sample scenario for Machine Operators: The members of your team are consistently not following standard operating procedures, which has led to an increase in errors, waste, and injuries. Work with management and human resources to determine trends in hiring for entry positions. Adapt or reconfigure training models to be more effective for the likely new hires.

Communication

Communication is the ability to receive, understand, consider, and share information and ideas through speaking, listening and interacting with others.

Why are Communication Skills Important?

Strong communication skills help you share information in a way that others can clearly understand. You also need strong communication skills to listen to, pay attention to and understand others. In all jobs, communication skills are important for developing good working relationships with co-workers and clients, including those from different backgrounds and cultures. You also need these skills to work effectively in a team, understand a variety of viewpoints, and to gather and share information while problem solving – whether at work or in your daily life.

Communication Components

1. Listen with intention
2. Listen to understand
3. Speak with clarity
4. Speak with purpose
5. Adapt to your audience and contexts
6. Adapt to other people's different communication modes and tools

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Sector	Workplace Examples
Construction	Plumbers talk to customers to respond to questions and complaints, gather information about needed repairs, explain plumbing procedures and discuss the results of inspections and repairs.
Manufacturing	Manufacturing Labourers participate in staff meetings to discuss improvements in work processes.
Tourism	Hotel Front Desk Clerks interact with guests to deal with errors, complaints and emergencies. For example, they use tact to calm and negotiate with guests upset over reservation errors.
Food Processing	Quality Control Technicians communicate with the quality manager to provide progress reports and troubleshoot complex problems.

Transitioning from Essential Skills to Skills for Success

The Essential Skills Framework included the skill of Oral Communication. In Skills for Success, it has been changed to Communication to include broader concepts, such as non-verbal communication.

While listening was an element of Oral Communication, the name change and revised description of Communication in Skills for Success allows for greater emphasis on the role of listening and interpreting the communication of others, including intercultural aspects.

Practitioners can update their existing Essential Skills training materials by adding or re-emphasizing non-verbal cues, active listening, and intercultural competency.

Evidence-Based Instructional Strategies

The following instructional strategies have been selected to highlight established or promising practices within the Skills for Success field and/or significant research that supports the instruction of communication skills.

1 Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence is the ability to interact effectively and appropriately with people across different cultures. This ability is increasingly important in Canada's diverse workplaces. In fact, as culture affects every component of communication, practitioners can improve skill gains by providing explicit instruction on the intercultural elements of communication.



Under represented Groups

Instructional Strategies:

- Provide opportunities for training participants to reflect on their own cultural identities and worldviews. Incorporate self-assessment exercises for participants to identify their progress along the continuum of intercultural competence. Cultural self-awareness is an important starting point for understanding other cultures.
- Encourage participants to share their own observations about similarities and differences in communication across cultures, including non-verbal aspects, such as tone of voice, facial expression, body language, etc. Participants can build culture-specific knowledge from the lived experiences of their peers.
- Use discussion, role-plays, and perspective-taking models to analyze miscommunications, unconscious bias, and/or different cultural interpretations. Incorporate workplace scenarios based on participants' career goals to improve learning transfer from the training room to the workplace.

Learning Transfer



Develop teaching tools and resources that support continued application of Skills for Success in new learning and working contexts.

Implementation Guidance (p. 133)



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 3.8.3 Provides instruction on intercultural communication skills
- SFS 3.8.6 Provides instruction on non-verbal aspects of communication
- SFS 3.8.7 Creates learning tasks that require participants to consider their own and others' perspectives, biases, purposes and intentions

2 Active Listening

Active listening incorporates the first two components of communication: listen with intention and listen to understand. Active listening requires making a conscious effort to hear not only the words that are being said but the complete message that is being communicated. Active listeners are engaged and responsive participants in the conversation.

Active listening skills are critical on the job but sometimes overlooked as a communication skill. Workers with strong active listening skills ask questions to clarify information and paraphrase the message to demonstrate understanding.

Instructional Strategies:

- Provide explicit instruction on active listening skills, such as paraphrasing, verbalizing emotions, summarizing, clarifying, prompting and asking questions. Provide or elicit examples of what active listeners say (verbal) and do (non-verbal). For example, active listeners check that they understand (e.g., "Sounds like you are saying… Is that right?") and demonstrate interest (e.g., with nodding, smiling, eye contact, etc.)
- Incorporate mindful listening strategies to help participants become aware of distractions and refocus on the speaker's message. Being fully present, simplifying their surroundings, and using relaxation techniques can help participants concentrate and listen more effectively (Scott, 2010).
- Practice active listening as a practitioner to develop relationships with your training participants. Participants are often keen to share their experiences with their instructors and peers. Where possible, try to integrate what you learn about their backgrounds and experiences into learning activities. Developing the active listening skills of both participants and practitioners helps cultivate a safe, welcoming and inclusive learning environment.

Engagement



Create safe learning spaces by leveraging the social emotional Skills for Success to build learners' self-efficacy, autonomy, and confidence.

Implementation Guidance (p. 109)



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 3.8.2 Provides instruction on techniques to improve active listening skills
- SFS 3.8.6 Provides instruction on non-verbal aspects of communication
- DELIVER 1.2 Creates an atmosphere that addresses the social-emotional needs of participants
- DELIVER 2.3.4 Listens actively to participants by focusing attention, nodding, asking clarification questions and soliciting responses

3 Role-play and Simulations

Role-play and simulation-based approaches are frequently cited as a best practice within the research on communication skill training. These activities allow participants to apply what they have learned in theory to real-world and workplace-based situations within the safety of the training room. Role-plays and simulations are effective approaches to teach any of the communication skill components, as well as other social-emotional Skills for Success (e.g., collaboration, problem solving and adaptability).

Instructional Strategies:

- Focus role-plays and simulation activities on the communication tasks participants are most likely to encounter on the job. Use occupational profiles, interviews with managers and workers, and other research to determine which communication tasks that are most frequent and critical to the job.
- Clearly state the learning objectives for role-plays and simulations so that participants know what they are learning and why. Understanding how training activities relate to career goals is an important source of motivation. Rubrics are effective for clarifying performance and assessment criteria.
- Provide frequent opportunities to practice and receive feedback. Research shows that communication skills increase with multiple exposures to simulation-based activities as compared to one-off sessions (Blackmore et al., 2018). Participants benefit from receiving explicit feedback on their performance both from the instructor and their peers. Recording role-plays is an effective tool for participants to self-assess their skills and identify areas for improvement.

Engagement

Incorporate diverse training activities and approaches linked to learning objectives.

Implementation Guidance (p. 112)



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 2.1.1 Considers job requirements and skill importance and frequency of use to identify the most relevant Skills for Success domains for program design, delivery and assessment
- SFS 3.8.4 Incorporates role-play and simulation-based communication tasks
- SFS 3.8.7 Creates learning tasks that require participants to consider their own and others' perspectives, biases, purposes and intentions

Assessment Considerations

Communication skills are most commonly assessed through observation (live or recorded). The *Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success* (2021) outlines the pros and cons of several other methods, such as task-based assessments, situational judgement tests, and subjective reports (see Table 2, p. 62).

Suggested approaches:

- Use scoring rubrics to assess performance-based tasks
  - Checklist ratings may allow for better standardization
  - Holistic ratings capture overall feeling and nuance
- Use audio recordings and select-response formats to assess listening skills so that scoring is not confounded with writing abilityUse audio recordings and select-response formats to assess listening skills so that scoring is not confounded with writing ability
- Adapt communication assessments from second language training contexts. Ensure that the content, purpose and context of the communication task is included as some language-based assessments may over-emphasize spelling, grammar and pronunciation.

Proficiency Levels:

Proficiency levels are the level at which a person demonstrates a particular skill. These levels help practitioners build assessment tools to measure participant's skills. The Office of Skills for Success will refine the proficiency levels over time.

Preliminary Proficiency Levels

Entry: You can speak and listen to a narrow range of subject matter, using factual and concrete language in predictable and familiar context, interacting one-on-one. You can use and interpret straightforward non-verbal cues (e.g., facial expression, eye contact).

Intermediate: You can speak and listen to a moderate range of subject matter, using both factual and abstract language. You can do this in less predictable contexts, interacting one-on-one or in small groups. You can interpret more complex non-verbal cues, including those with cultural implications, to better understand a speaker's intention and purpose.

Advanced: You can speak and listen to a wide range and depth of subject matter, using both factual and abstract or conceptual language. You can do this in a variety of contexts shifting from routine to unpredictable, and by interacting with familiar and unfamiliar audiences of various sizes. You can interpret complex and subtle non-verbal cues and use them to adapt their own communication styles.

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RESOURCES:

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GRAB AND GO TRAINING IDEAS

Activity	Communication Components	Instructional Tips	Sector-Specific
Ask participants to think of a time they had a miscommunication with someone on the job. Use a perspective-taking model, such as the DAE model, to analyze what happened from different angles and discuss different interpretations. The DAE MODEL: Describe what happened, Analyze what happened, and Evaluate what happened.	5. Adapt to your audience and contexts • *Identify and understand the needs, preferences, and interest of your audience, including differences in communication and interaction styles (e.g., culture, abilities)* • *Identify and understand contexts*	Encourage participants to brainstorm alternate points of view and challenge their own and their peers' assumptions. Provide a model or template to guide thinking processes and assist participants with skill acquisition (SFS 2.5.4). Model metacognition using think aloud step-by-step processes (SFS 2.5.6).	Generate sector-specific scenarios, based on miscommunications that commonly happen within the field.  Conduct interviews with trades workers to generate scenarios about cultural expectations surrounding speaking up and taking initiative on the jobsite.
As a group, brainstorm contexts at work that require strong listening skills. What are the consequences if listening is ineffective? Make a list of the characteristics of 'good' and 'bad' listening. How does it look, sound and feel? Follow-up with role-plays to practice demonstrating active listening skills.	1. Listen with intention (e.g., pay attention) • *Use appropriate body language to show that you are paying attention (e.g., do not fidget, maintain focus on the speaker), show support, or convey emotion* • *Ask questions to confirm your understanding*	Provide opportunities for participants to practice paraphrasing. Build intercultural competence by discussing how active listening may vary across cultures.	Contextualize listening skills to the sector.  Discuss strategies to overcome environmental noise on the jobsite. Link listening skills to safety, productivity and quality of work.
Provide small groups with sample scripts of instructions that a supervisor may provide to a worker. Participants take turns acting as the supervisor who gives the instructions and the worker who paraphrases what they heard to confirm understanding. Debrief strategies and challenges as a group. Discuss ways that supervisors can provide clear instructions.	1. Listen with intention (e.g., pay attention) • *Be able to summarize and paraphrase key points when needed* 2. Listen to understand • *Detect the speaker's purpose and intention* 4. Speak with purpose • *Convey a message such that the listener understands the purpose*	Provide explicit instruction on the definition, techniques and purposes of paraphrasing. Provide examples of paraphrased speech to serve as a model.	Contextualize the supervisor's instructions depending on the sector and role.  Sample script for Hotel Front Desk Clerk: *I've emailed you the VIP guest list. Please update it with the guests who are arriving this week. Make sure we have complete information for each guest. Sort the list by check-in time then save and share the file with me on SharePoint.e.g., Restaurant servers need to deal with customer demands and complaints. A common difficult interaction is when a customer is not satisfied with their meal and sends the food back or expects a refund.*

Collaboration

Collaboration is your ability to contribute and support others to achieve a common goal.

Why are Collaboration Skills Important?

Today people are more connected within communities, across the country, and around the world. Modern workplaces are more diverse, and many jobs require you to work with others from different backgrounds and cultures to complete tasks and solve problems. It is important to be able to work respectfully with people who have different professions, experiences, cultures, and backgrounds. Collaboration skills help you perform better in a team by understanding how to support and value others, manage difficult interactions, and contribute to the team's work. Strong collaboration skills help you build and maintain positive relationships with others at work, in school, and in other parts of your life.

Collaboration Components

1. Work well with other people
2. Value diversity and inclusivity of others
3. Manage difficult interactions with other people
4. Facilitate an environment where you can collaborate with others
5. Achieve a common goal with others
6. Reflect and improve on how well the team works together

Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success (p. 27)

Sector	Workplace Examples
Construction	Sheet Metal Workers coordinate job tasks and share workspace and equipment with small groups of co-workers and larger project teams. They may coordinate activities with other tradespeople, to ensure the efficient use of workspaces, materials and time.
Manufacturing	Supervisors in motor vehicle assembling lead teams of production workers. They provide guidance and oversee activities to ensure quality control standards and production targets are met. They lead diverse teams of workers from different cultures, backgrounds and abilities.
Tourism	Retail Sales Associates work with co-workers to receive shipments, restock and prepare displays and customer orders. They attend staff meetings to share ideas and to solve specific issues, such as health and safety breaches, low sales and theft.
Forestry	Primary Production Labourers often work with partners or helpers to carry out tasks for which strength is required or which require one worker to monitor the safety of another. They may work and interact with co-workers who speak languages other than their own.

Transitioning from Essential Skills to Skills for Success

The Essential Skills Framework included the skill of Working with Others. In Skills for Success, it has been expanded to Collaboration, which includes inclusivity and respect for diversity.

Working with Others focused on coordination of tasks and recognition of roles and responsibilities. These elements are still included in Collaboration but with less emphasis. The new components highlight the social-emotional nature of interactions with coworkers and supporting others to achieve a common goal.

Practitioners can update their existing Essential Skills training materials by adding or re-emphasizing how diversity and inclusion and social-emotional skills impact working with others.

Evidence-Based Instructional Strategies

The following instructional strategies have been selected to highlight established or promising practices within the Skills for Success field and/or significant research that supports the instruction of collaboration skills.

1 Building Relationships

Research suggests that strong relationships are foundational to effective collaboration. Participants are more likely to make gains in their collaboration skills (and other skills) when they know each other, trust each other, work together and share information, ideas and goals (Crosnoe et al., 2004; see also Hughes & Kwok, 2007; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; as cited in OECD, 2017). Practitioners can use the following strategies to foster a relationship-centered learning environment.

Instructional Strategies:

- Start training programs with icebreaker activities to help participants get to know each other and build relationships. This can be something as simple as sharing their names and something interesting about themselves or a more complex activity involving problem-solving or teamwork.
- Model collaborative, respectful and inclusive interactions with participants and other staff. The practitioner and the wider training community help set the tone and provide a model for participants to follow.

Engagement



Use a relationship-centred approach to engage learners.

Implementation Guidance (p. 109)

- Incorporate cooperative learning and group work throughout the training program. When participants work together on meaningful tasks, they have the opportunity to form stronger bonds.



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 3.5.5 Incorporates activities to develop trust and psychological safety in team environments
- DELIVER 1.2.8 Helps participants to get to know each other, develop trust and build community

2 Explicit Instruction (Direct Instruction)

Collaboration skills do not tend to develop without explicit instruction. In other words, simply including a lot of cooperative learning and group work activities will not result in significant skill gains. Collaboration skills need to be explicitly taught.

Instructional Strategies:

- Spend time in class directly teaching collaboration skills, including strategies for interacting productively with others, resolving conflicts and managing taskwork. Use the components and subcomponents listed in the *Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success* (2021) to guide your instruction (p. 25).
- Although collaboration skills are frequently used to learn other skills and knowledge, it is important to help participants develop collaboration skills as an end in themselves, not simply as a teaching method by which to learn other skills.
- Show and explain what good collaboration looks like. Collaboration includes elements of interpersonal communication, conflict resolution and task management. Design activities that require participants to use multiple elements of collaboration but provide feedback on each element individually.

Engagement



Strategically integrate social-emotional Skills for Success into training to maximize learning and skill gains.

Implementation Guidance (p. 111)

Note: See Approach #4 in Section 2 for more information about Direct Instruction.



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 2.6 Provides direct instruction to structure and guide Skills for Success learning
- SFS 3.5.1 Provides explicit instruction on collaboration skills

3 Structured Guidance and Roles

Groups collaborate more effectively when they are provided with structured guidance. Just as participants need explicit instruction on collaboration skills, groups also need specific direction on how to work together. Practitioners can use the following strategies to help guide and structure collaborative tasks.

Instructional Strategies:

- Assign roles so that each member of the group has a specific job: e.g., facilitator, recorder, spokesperson, strategy analyst, etc. Roles can help increase awareness of task-coordination and lead to more equitable participation. Where possible, mimic the authentic roles of the workplace.
- Employ a variety of group formations to give participants experience in different collaborative settings. There is no magic group size, but smaller groups appear less prone to "social loafing" (Lai, 2017). Also, exposure to diversity in the training room is associated with better collaboration skills (OECD, 2017).
- Monitor collaboration tasks and intervene with guidance and feedback. Practitioner involvement encourages positive interaction and supports groups to stay on-task.



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 2.6 Provides direct instruction to structure and guide Skills for Success learning
- SFS 3.5.4 Structures group interactions to encourage participation and individual accountability
- DELIVER 2.3.7 Incorporates a variety of small and large group discussion strategies

Assessment Considerations

Collaboration skills can be assessed in a variety of ways. The Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success (2021) outlines the pros and cons of several methods, including task-based assessments, situational judgement tests and subjective reports (see Table 2, p. 62).

Suggested approaches:

- Assessment tasks need to be sufficiently complex and challenging, open-ended and context-based in order to encourage meaningful collaborative activity (Evans, 2020).
- To measure collaboration skills specifically, the assessment should focus on the quality of participant interactions, as opposed to the quality or quantity of the product(s) produced by the group (Lai, 2011).
- Recognize that in self-reporting and peer evaluations, participants are more likely to be honest in identifying what they could improve upon, if they know the information is only going to be used for formative rather than grading purposes (Evans, 2020).

Proficiency Levels:

Proficiency levels are the level at which a person demonstrates a particular skill. These levels help practitioners build assessment tools to measure participant's skills. The Office of Skills for Success will refine the proficiency levels over time.

Preliminary Proficiency Levels

Entry: You can interact with familiar people or a small number of diverse unfamiliar people to share information to complete routine independent tasks. You can maintain cooperative respectful behaviours toward others and minimize conflict.

Intermediate: You can work with familiar and diverse unfamiliar groups of people to coordinate tasks or work together to achieve simple or well-defined goals. You can support and adapt to others when appropriate and manage conflicts when needed.

Advanced: You can work in large teams of diverse people to achieve complex goals that might involve unpredictable situations. You can take on responsibility for integrating work, coaching and motivating others, managing conflicts, and evaluating and improving teamwork.

Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success (p. 48)

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GRAB AND GO TRAINING IDEAS

Activity	Collaboration Components	Instructional Tips	Sector-Specific
Provide teams with a collaborative icebreaker task, such as a competition or problem-solving task. Do not pre-teach collaboration skills. Following the activity, ask teams to self-assess their team performance. What went well and what didn't? Provide components or criteria to assess themselves against. Identify strengths and areas for improvement as a team and as individuals.	5. Achieve a common goal with others • *Take responsibility to make contributions and complete tasks* • *Ensure opportunities for others to contribute* 6. Reflect and improve on how well the team works together • *Reflect on team performance* • *Make constructive suggestions for improvement*	Help participants recognize their natural inclinations in collaborative tasks and how these may help or hinder success. Ask participants to identify the contributions of their teammates. Focus on positive feedback initially. As trust develops, guide participants to provide constructive feedback to their peers.	Contextualize the collaborative icebreaker task to the sector. e.g., Groups of electrical apprentices work together to wire a circuit based on a schematic diagram or try to troubleshoot a faulty circuit.
Focus on social and organizational rules by giving each group the same or different jobs to analyze. Ask: What rules do workers need to follow? Next, participants identify which rules are workplace-specific and which would apply to all workplaces. Then ask participants to identify their experiences, strengths and areas for growth in adhering to these rules. Debrief together.	1. Work well with other people • *Adhere to social and organizational rules (e.g., be on time)* • *Assess strengths and weaknesses of yourself and others* 4. Facilitate an environment where you can collaborate with others • *Acknowledge roles of yourself and others*	Incorporate authentic workplace documents and materials where possible, such as employee handbooks. Build participants' intercultural competency by discussing similarities and differences in workplace rules in Canada and other countries.	Gather sector-specific workplace documents from employers. Build partnerships with training coordinators at sector-based unions, companies and other organizations. They may be willing to share employee handbooks, health and safety policies, etc. for training purposes. Some of these resources may be posted online.
Analyze effective conflict resolution. Ask participants to identify what specific behaviours they would see and hear during a conflict that was being handled effectively. Then provide a scenario involving a conflict or difficult interaction. Identify effective and ineffective behaviours. Ask participants to share how they would respond and why.	3. Manage difficult interactions with other people • *Engage in productive discussions* • *Anticipate and address interpersonal barriers* • *Discuss, negotiate, and resolve difficult interactions in a sensitive and helpful manner*	Teach strategies to stay calm and regulate emotions during conflict (SFS 2.8.4). Provide processes and models participants can use to resolve conflict (e.g., steps to follow, questions to ask themselves, etc.)	Contextualize the scenario to the sector and role. e.g., Restaurant servers need to deal with customer demands and complaints. A common difficult interaction is when a customer is not satisfied with their meal and sends the food back or expects a refund.

Adaptability

Adaptability is your ability to achieve or adjust goals and behaviours when expected or unexpected change occurs. Adaptability is shown by planning, staying focused, persisting and overcoming setbacks.

Why are Adaptability Skills Important?

Major changes in society affect how you work, live, and learn and require you to constantly adapt. Strong adaptability skills will help you deal effectively with change, and to learn new skills and behaviours when needed. They help you stay focused on your responsibilities and goals, and not give up when situations are difficult. Being adaptable helps you stay positive and manage the stress that can come from change in the workplace, community and your life at home.

Adaptability Components

1. Demonstrate responsibility
2. Persist and persevere
3. Regulate your emotions when appropriate
4. Set or adjust your goals and expectations
5. Plan and prioritize
6. Seek self-improvement

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Sector	Workplace Examples
Construction	Crane Operators adapt to new computerized crane control and monitoring systems that increase safety and efficiency.
Manufacturing	Industrial Mechanics (millwrights) must learn new skills as the scope of their work moves toward environmentally conscious hydroelectric construction projects such as “run of the river” that minimize human footprint.
Tourism	Flight Attendants respond to in-flight emergency situations. For instance, they deal with non-compliant passengers that violate safety policies such as those for reducing transmission of airborne viruses.
Bioeconomy	Biological Technologists learn about new technologies, products and equipment. They take short courses organized by their employer pertaining to OH&S, equipment operation or computer applications.

Transitioning from Essential Skills to Skills for Success

The Essential Skills Framework included the skill of Continuous Learning. While the concept of Adaptability was not explicitly stated in the Essential Skills framework, it was integrated within activities involving troubleshooting, adapting, dealing with challenging communication situations as well as learning new skills. In Skills for Success, Continuous Learning has been embedded into Adaptability.

In the Skills for Success model, Adaptability responds to the growing importance of soft and social-emotional skills in the labour market. It is interwoven with other skill competencies as people with good collaboration, communication and problem-solving skills are more adaptive to changing work and life situations. Adaptability is a foundational skill to success in training and employment.

Evidence-Based Instructional Strategies

The following instructional strategies have been selected to highlight established or promising practices within the Skills for Success field and/or significant research that supports the instruction of adaptability skills.

Teaching for adaptability can encompass a wide range of instructional methods. An integrated approach to instruction may be more efficient than a modular approach in order to tie together the major components, the considerable psychological component of emotional regulation, and account for personality traits and environmental factors.

1 Build a Growth Mindset

A mindset of self-improvement and growth is a key element of adaptability skills. Participants should be encouraged to believe in their capacity to improve their knowledge, abilities and intelligence.

Instructional Strategies:

- Coach participants why and how to receive feedback in a mentor/mentee dynamic. Feedback should be used to reinforce what they are doing well, and to learn where they've made mistakes and how to fix them. Kivunja (2015) lists a range of feedback strategies that can be used by instructors.
- When you give feedback to participants, focus on hard work and effort as opposed to framing success in terms of personality traits (Yeager & Dweck, 2012).
- Implement the Universal Design for Learning approach to stimulate participant interest and motivation. Participants build self-confidence in their learning abilities when offered appropriate accommodations.

Engagement



Incorporate a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach.

Implementation Guidance (p. 105)

- Build participants' skills in being self-directed learners. Teach goal setting approaches such as SMART. Reframe occasional failures as opportunities to learn what must be done to improve (Kivunja, 2015). If possible, offer assessment re-attempts when participants are ready to try again, even it's only for their own reflection.



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 2.8.2 Encourages a growth mindset by praising and commenting on participants' efforts and processes rather than qualities or traits that reinforce a fixed mindset
- SFS 3.7.4 Provides constructive feedback to encourage adaptability
- SFS 3.7.6 Encourages participants to see errors and mistakes as growth opportunities rather than setbacks or failures

2 Focus and Emotional Regulation

Focus and Emotional Regulation have been a concern for many mentors, service providers and employers. Both personal and training stressors can affect participants to the point where they need immediate and longer-term strategies to deal with challenges. Participants with mental health challenges and test anxiety benefit from learning strategies to deal with stressors.

Instructional Strategies:

- Teach coping mechanisms that can calm stress and anxiety and help students develop adaptability skills to changing and stressful circumstances. Mindfulness-based interventions can reduce students' stress and anxiety, increase optimism and improve social and cognitive skills (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015; see also Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010; Beauchemin et al., 2008; as cited in OECD, 2019).
- Emotional regulation is key to perseverance and adaptability. Teach acceptance-based and perspective-taking approaches to stressful situations (Wojnarowska et al., 2020).

Engagement

Strategically integrate social-emotional Skills for Success into training to maximize learning and skill gains.

Implementation Guidance (p. 111)



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 2.8 Supports social-emotional well-being to develop self-regulation skills
- SFS 2.8.3 Supports participants with anxiety, trauma and other adverse experiences and behaviours
- SFS 2.8.4 Uses interventions to improve participants' ability to focus, minimize distractions and regulate emotions

3 Adaptability Training for Leaders and Work Contexts

Standard training practices emphasize expertise in typical tasks but that is not sufficient to support leaders as work grows in complexity and change. They need to develop skills in "adaptive expertise," the ability to deal with unanticipated, unfamiliar situations (Nelson et al., 2010).

Instructional Strategies:

- Incorporate variety into practice scenarios or training that requires participants to shift their existing strategies to adapt to new circumstances. The variations should help participants conceptualize how different problems require different solutions (Nelson et al., 2010).
- Provide strategic information and guidance to change perspective before, during and after scenarios. Give preparatory instructions to help participants understand relationships and goals for everyone involved, prime them to think about upcoming problems and to regulate emotions better. During and after the scenario, give feedback to help participants improve ways of thinking about/ reframing a problem, and to improve future performance (Nelson et al., 2010).
- Support leaders with instruction in intersectionality, inclusion and diversity.

Under represented Groups

Engagement

Coordinate with sectoral organizations and employers to align training with skill needs in the workplace.

Implementation Guidance (p. 107)

Assessment Considerations

Assessment models for social-emotional skills, including Adaptability, are still under development. Given the multifaceted nature of adaptability, there may be need to develop or use multiple assessments to assess each sub-facet separately (SRDC, 2021). The *Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success* (2021) outlines the pros and cons of several methods, such as situational judgement tests and subjective reports (see Table 2, p. 63). Assessments that are likely to be used in training programs will need to strike a balance between rigour and usability.

Suggested approaches:

- Develop a self-reporting rubric for participants, coordinating with the Skills for Success components of Adaptability. Self-assessment is an important component of efforts to develop thinking skills and self-concepts of adaptability.
- Develop a competency assessment such as The University of Alberta's *Competency Assessment for Demonstrating Adaptability and Flexibility.*

Proficiency Levels:

Proficiency levels are the level at which a person demonstrates a particular skill. These levels help practitioners build assessment tools to measure participant's skills. The Office of Skills for Success will refine the proficiency levels over time.

Preliminary Proficiency Levels

Entry: You can follow direction to adjust and complete plans, tasks, and goals. You can do this in response to expected and unexpected changes requiring minor adjustment or learning that is provided. You can stay positive, persist, and manage emotions in response to minor stress.

Intermediate: You can adjust and complete plans, tasks, and goals with some supervision. You can do this in response to expected and unexpected changes requiring moderate adjustment or learning with some resources provided. You can stay positive, persist, and manage emotions in response to moderate stress.

Advanced: You can adjust plans, tasks, and goals independently. You can do this in response to expected and unexpected complex changes requiring significant adjustment or learning that is self-directed using diverse resources. You can stay positive, persist, and manage emotions in response to high stress.

Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success (p. 49)

RESOURCES:

- ABC Literacy. (2023). *Adaptability.* UP Skills for Work. https://upskillsforwork.ca/wp-content/uploads/ABC-UP-Adaptability.pdf
- Barclays. (2023). *Developing adaptability - adaptability lessons: LifeSkills.* Barclays Life Skills. https://barclayslifeskills.com/help-others/lessons/adaptability/
- FutureLearn. (2021). *How to build adaptability and Emotional Intelligence Skills.* https://www.futurelearn.com/info/blog/adaptability-emotional-intelligence-skills
- Skills/Compétences Canada. (2022). *Workbook: Adaptability. Skills for Success.* https://yourskillsforsuccess.com/workbook/adaptability-creativity/
- University of Alberta. (n.d). *Competency assessment for demonstrating adaptability and flexibility.* https://www.ualberta.ca/human-resources-health-safety-environment/media-library/learning-and-development/pathways-learning-series/adaptandflexassessmentguide2017.pdf



GRAB AND GO TRAINING IDEAS

Activity	Adaptability Components	Instructional Tips	Sector-Specific
At the start of a program or module, teach participants the SMART method to create clear, attainable, and meaningful goals for themselves. To ensure goals are clear and realistic, they should be: • **S**pecific • **M**easurable • **A**chievable • **R**elevant • **T**ime-bound	4. Set or adjust your goals and expectations • *Set goals and expectations based on your skill sets, available resources and supports* • *Define expectations and standards for reaching goals* 5. Plan and prioritize • *Define tasks, milestones, and longer-term strategies to achieve goals* • *Prioritize and choose an order of tasks according to your circumstances*	Ask participants to maintain a learning journal to track their goals and assessment results to keep perspective on effort and achievements. Schedule time for participants to reflect on their goals periodically during the program and adjust goals as their experience increases. Schedule time for a final reflection for their personal journey in continuous learning.	Contextualize goal-setting to the sector.  Guide new pastry chefs training to work in an upscale restaurant to develop goals to master new techniques. Offer support and strategies to help them meet their goals.
Integrate mindfulness training into programs. Teach participants to acknowledge feeling distracted or stressed, and how to recentre themselves using body scans and focus on their breathing.	1. Demonstrate responsibility • *Focus your attention on the current task* • *Minimize distractions* 3. Regulate your emotions when appropriate • *Stay calm when you are facing setbacks* • *Recover when you are not able to stay calm*	Incorporate a few minutes of quiet thought to start the class session, or to prepare for an assessment with positive self-talk. Provide recommendations for mobile apps for mindfulness breaks.	Contextualize emotional regulation skills to the sector.  Discuss potential jobsite stressors with apprentices before they leave training to enter the workforce. Discuss acceptance of the discomfort of being new on the job and being fully present in the learning situation.
Work with leaders to anticipate and develop a training model for workers types they haven't trained before, such as youth or workers with language needs or learning differences. What differences do they expect? What training strategies need to be adapted and how? How can you train, support and retain those workers?	2. Persist and persevere • *Anticipate changes* • *Reflect and evaluate what changes have happened and what is coming* • *If appropriate, modify your plans and approaches to reflect changing circumstances*	Encourage participants to brainstorm alternate points of view and challenge their own and their peers' assumptions. Build intercultural competence by discussing how learning needs may vary across worker demographics.	Contextualize adaptability in leadership training to the sector.  Work with management and human resources to determine trends in hiring for entry positions. Adapt or reconfigure training models to be more effective for the likely new hires.

Creativity & Innovation

Creativity and innovation is your ability to imagine, develop, express, encourage, and apply ideas in ways that are novel, unexpected, or challenge existing methods and norms.

Why are Creativity & Innovation Skills Important?

Creativity and innovation skills help you come up with new, unique, or "outside the box" ideas or to approach something completely differently than in the past. A curious mindset that finds inspiration from a broad range of experiences and perspectives helps develop creativity and innovation skills. Employers are increasingly seeking people who can apply creativity and innovation skills to their work in our increasingly diverse settings, and to come up with new solutions or approaches to tackling challenges. With strong creativity and innovation skills, you can also support and inspire others to develop their own creativity and innovation.

Creativity & Innovation Components

1. Use your imagination and curiosity
2. Identify opportunities for you to innovate
3. Generate ideas that are novel to yourself or others
4. Develop your ideas
5. Apply your ideas
6. Facilitate a creative and innovative environment for yourself and others

Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success (p. 31)

Sector	Workplace Examples
Construction	Insulators decide how to cut materials accurately while also minimizing waste.
Manufacturing	Pulp Mill Machine Operators may deal with false readings on the computer. For example, readings may indicate that stock consistency is fine, but in fact it is too thick and won't go through the pumps and pipes.
Tourism	Cooks respond to market trends and seasonal ingredient availability to create new menu items. They may need to work with dietary limitations and food cost controls.
Forestry	Forestry Technicians work with local communities to determine appropriate measures to mitigate detrimental effects of collapsed riverbanks due to road-building operations, following rainy weather.

Transitioning from Essential Skills to Skills for Success

The Essential Skills Framework included elements of Creativity & Innovation woven into the skills of Communication, Thinking, Working with Others, and Continuous Learning. While the concept of Creativity & Innovation was not explicitly stated, it was integrated within activities involving creation, troubleshooting, adapting, dealing with challenging communication situations as well as learning new skills.

In the Skills for Success model, Creativity & Innovation responds to the growing importance of soft and social-emotional skills in the labour market. It encourages learners from diverse groups to apply skills learned in other contexts to the workplace. Creativity & Innovation may raise awareness and increase respect and valuing of the traditional knowledge and creative skills of Indigenous learners, which are not always formally recognized.

Creativity & Innovation is a skill that interacts and interconnects with other skills in real-world situations.

Evidence-Based Instructional Strategies

The following instructional strategies have been selected to highlight established or promising practices within the Skills for Success field and/or significant research that supports the instruction of creativity and innovation skills. Teaching for creativity and critical thinking can encompass a wide range of instruction methods. It also requires a redefinition of roles, particularly, moving away from the notion that instruction should lead participants' thinking towards a clear and pre-determined path (OECD, 2019).

1 Real World Applications

Training for creativity and innovation should be applied to realistic community, classroom and workplace contexts in order to be most effective. Adults learn more efficiently when they are striving to achieve some goal and can apply what they learned (Janiszewska-Szczepanik, 2020).

Instructional Strategies:

- Generating novel ideas can be the most difficult part for learners as many people think of creativity as a personality attribute, not a learnable skill, and do not see themselves as "creative types." Help participants get over this internal block by facilitating brainstorming sessions on topics that are relevant to the participants. Encourage both practical and silly ideas to boost imaginative thinking. This step can "oil the wheels" for developing ideas further.
- Coach learners to build their creativity skills systematically, moving up in complexity and adding each component of the Creativity & Innovation Skills for Success model. Although different aspects of creativity do not always happen in a definite order, the systematic approach can be an effective strategy to make skill gains accessible by diverse learners.

- Presentation of material in the teaching session should be followed by applied practice to the subject matter you taught. These exercises should be designed to provide students with practice in applying strategies and heuristics in a realistic and more complex context, perhaps aligned with employment and job performance. The applied practice can be a product of some sort (a paper, presentation, performance, model etc,) to make the learning visible and tangible (OECD, 2019).

Engagement

Coordinate with sectoral organizations and employers to align training with skill needs in the workplace.

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Note: See Approach #2 in Section 2 to learn more about contextualizing instruction across skills, sectors and audiences.



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 2.2.2 Creates task-based learning activities based on real-world, workplace applications
- SFS 3.4.3 Integrates discussion, brainstorming and collaboration into creativity and innovation activities
- DELIVER 2.1.3 Incorporates real-world tasks and authentic workplace materials into learning activities, including culturally and contextually relevant materials

2 The Creative Problem-Solving (CPS) Model

Employers highly value their teams' ability to think outside the box with respect to troubleshooting and problem solving. Cognitive models such as the Osborn-Parnes Creative Problem Solving (CPS) model are particularly effective to build divergent thinking and problem solving, and also to generate creative products, attitudes and behavior (Scott et al., 2004).

Instructional Strategies:

- Model and provide explicit instruction in structured problem breakdown using checklists, feature comparisons and steps. Interestingly, training techniques that use such analytic processes are more effective than those that emphasize free exploration to tackle new and ambiguous problems (Scott et al., 2004).
- The Creative Problem Solving process can be applied to solve open-ended problems, in three stages: Understand the problem, generate ideas; and implement ideas. Try to expand on this model, implementing the components in the Skills for Success model (*Research Report*, 2021, p. 31). Start each stage with brainstorming to generate ideas, and then use an evaluation phase to filter those possibilities (Davis, 2006, as cited in Tsai, 2013).
- Implement the use of creative problem-solving models in the instruction of other Skills for Success. For example, thinking creatively can be modelled and implemented in numeracy instruction to break down and evaluate a "plan of attack" for a complex math application. Draw attention to and discuss when learners intuitively applied the model in their learning. Help learners make the connection between learning this abstract skill with their longer-term goals.

Engagement

Strategically integrate social-emotional Skills for Success into training to maximize learning and skill gains.

Implementation Guidance (p. 111)



Practitioner Competency Framework

- SFS 3.4.1 Uses conceptual model(s) to help participants work systematically with information in creativity-based tasks
- SFS 3.4.3 Integrates discussion, brainstorming and collaboration into creativity and innovation activities
- SFS 3.6.1 Provides explicit instruction on the basic elements and procedures of problem solving

3 Engage Underrepresented Groups

Practitioners have stated that the integration of social-emotional skills in the Skills for Success framework provides the opportunity to increase inclusivity by engaging underrepresented groups (Indigenous peoples, racialized people, newcomers, people with disabilities, and members of the LGTBQ2+ community) in training (*Implementation Guidance*, 2022, p.104).



Under represented Groups

Instructional Strategies:

- Create a learning environment where students feel safe to take risks in thinking and expressing their ideas. An open and non-judgmental classroom culture should have participants agreeing to rules for sharing feedback: criticism is not permitted, have respect for the individual and be open to novel ideas of yourself and others.
- Draw on the traditional knowledge and creative skills of Indigenous and newcomer participants. Showing respect to diverse perspectives and making learners feel acknowledged can help participants to challenge their self-perceived limitations and to address internal blocks to creativity (*Research Report*, 2021, pp. 33-34).
- Support multi-barrier youth with a coaching approach that involves self-reflection, encouragement and safety (*Research Report*, 2021, p 37). Provide opportunities to self-reflect on growth and goals.

Engagement



Create safe learning spaces by leveraging the social emotional Skills for Success to build learners' self-efficacy, autonomy, and confidence.

Implementation Guidance (p. 109)

Assessment Considerations

Assessment models for social-emotional skills, including Creativity & Innovation, are still under development. The *Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success* (2021) outlines the pros and cons of several methods, such as task-based assessments, situational judgement tests, and subjective reports (see Table 2, p. 55). Assessments that are most likely to be used in training programs will need to strike a balance between rigour and usability.

Suggested approaches:

- Use scoring rubrics to assess performance-based tasks
  - Checklist ratings may allow for better standardization
  - Holistic ratings capture overall feeling and nuance
- Develop a self-reporting rubric for participants, coordinating with the instructional scoring rubric. Self-assessment is an important component of efforts to develop thinking skills and self-concepts of creative productivity.
- Aim to assess these creative performance measures as per the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking: fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration (Rose & Lin, 1984).

Proficiency Levels:

Proficiency levels are the level at which a person demonstrates a particular skill. These levels help practitioners build assessment tools to measure participant's skills. The Office of Skills for Success will refine the proficiency levels over time.

Preliminary Proficiency Levels

Entry: You can generate a limited number of novel ideas under guidance and support. You are open to applying new ideas, but are quick to revert to norms and habits when the new ideas fail or face uncertainties.

Intermediate: You can generate a larger number of novel ideas on your own. You acknowledge and work with uncertainties, accept failures, and learn from failures to improve your ideas. You are receptive to new ideas from others.

Advanced: You can generate a wider range of novel ideas, with diverse dimensions of originality. You evaluate limitations of novel ideas and find ways to improve them to minimize failures and uncertainties. You facilitate an environment for others to be creative and innovative.

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RESOURCES:

- ABC Literacy. (2023). *Creativity and Innovation.* UP Skills for Work. https://upskillsforwork.ca/wp-content/uploads/ABC-UP-Creativity-Innovation-web.pdf
- Chamorro-Premuzic, T. (2015, February 23). *You can teach someone to be more creative.* Harvard Business Review. https://hbr.org/2015/02/you-can-teach-someone-to-be-more-creative
- Chlup, D. (2019). Cultivating creativity in adult literacy education settings. *International Journal of Literacy, Language, and Numeracy,* Fall 2019. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1246114.pdf
- Skills/Compétences Canada. (2022). *Workbook: Creativity and Innovation.* Skills for Success. https://yourskillsforsuccess.com/workbook/creativity-and-innovation/
- Vincent-Lancrin, S. et al. (2019). *Fostering students' creativity and critical thinking: What it means in school.* Educational Research and Innovation, OECD Publishing. https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/fostering-students-creativity-and-critical-thinking_62212c37-en#page1



GRAB AND GO TRAINING IDEAS

Activity	Creativity Components	Instructional Tips	Sector-Specific
Teach and practice brainstorming. Apply the lesson to an activity that participants have existing experience with. Use lists, mind maps, sketches etc to demonstrate different ways participants can record their own idea generation. Debrief on connections and themes.	3. Generate ideas that are novel to yourself or others • *Deviate from existing processes, thinking and approaches* • *Use an inquisitive approach (e.g., ask questions even when there is no obvious answer)* • *Seek patterns where patterns may not be readily apparent* 4. Develop your ideas • *Expand on ideas and approaches*	Set the rules for brainstorming: No criticism, work for quantity of ideas, build on others' ideas, free thinking is encouraged. Focus on positive feedback to make it safe for participants to push past internal blocks. To encourage novel ideas, what would different characters say (a child, a superhero, a celebrity, a person with different abilities)?	Contextualize topics to the sector.  Carpentry students brainstorm different styles of 5-foot wooden fences that can be custom-built for a standard residential lot.
As a group, brainstorm workplace problems that require creative problem solving as opposed to established procedures. Choose one or two to apply a problem-solving model (CPS, 5 Whys, Lean Six Sigma). Would a diagram such as a mindmap or cause & effect (tree) diagram help organize and elicit creative responses and relationships?	1. Use your imagination and curiosity • *Imagine different situations and possibilities* • *Be open to new ideas without judging and setting limitations* 2. identify opportunities for you to innovate • *Challenge norms, habits, and preconceptions where appropriate*	Provide explicit instruction on the rules of brainstorming (as above) and on the structure of the organizational diagram. Provide opportunities for participants to "think outside the box". Provide templates for checklists, mindmaps and tree diagrams.	Contextualize creativity skills to the sector.  Discuss strategies to increase purchases of a foodie walking tour by implementing social media promotion.
Celebrate creativity and innovation demonstrated by participants as it is interwoven in learning any skills. What did you and participants see as growth in approaching learning or in demonstrating competence? How did participants use strategies and heuristics to deal with complex content? Participants can build a portfolio showing their growth and growth mindset.	5. Apply your ideas • *Expect failures* • *Learn from failures to improve* 6. Facilitate a creative and innovative environment for yourself and others • *Encourage habits and behaviors that facilitate creativity and innovation in yourself and others*	Post examples of creative work done by participants, with their permission. Use self-assessment tools to guide reflection and self-assessment.	Contextualize recognition and self-assessment of growth in creativity.  Submit summaries to local newspapers of experimental work your participants have done to reduce water demands in growing vegetable crops, that home gardeners can utilize.

Section 4

Appendix

This section offers resources to enhance your understanding of concepts presented in the Skills for Success Get Started Guide and facilitate your professional development. It includes three sample lesson plans* contextualized to specific sectors that demonstrate the best practices highlighted in the guide. Additionally, you can access a list of professional development workshops and courses for Skills for Success practitioners, as well as a bibliography of all the references and resources mentioned in the guide.

*More lesson plans coming soon!



Lesson Plan #1:
Reading an Imperial Measuring Tape (Numeracy Focus)



This lesson is intended primarily for the construction sector. An instructor can use this lesson as an experiential learning, hands-on activity to apply learning about fractions and the imperial measuring system.

Time: 1.5 hours

Skill Components

This lesson focuses primarily on Numeracy Components #2 and #4.

Numeracy Components

2. Identify the mathematical information
   - Locate key details, concepts and other mathematical information
4. Apply mathematical operations and tools you will need to answer the question
   - Measure

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Collaboration Components

1. Work well with other people
   - Engage in trust building behaviours
   - Adhere to social and organizational rules
   - Assess strengths and weaknesses of yourself and others
5. Achieve a common goal with others
   - Take responsibility to make contributions and complete tasks
   - Ensure opportunities for others to contribute

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Materials & Resources

Handout

- List of items to measure precisely. Specify the dimensions (length, diameter, thickness, etc.)
- See Handout 1: Measuring in Imperial

Materials

- Standard school imperial rulers, one per participant. Marked in inches and 16ths of an inch.
- Standard Imperial measuring tapes, marked with numbers for whole inches and lines indicating 16ths of an inch. One measuring tape per pair of participants.
- Pencils or pens.
- Trade-specific items. Suggestions: pieces of dimensional lumber, screws, framing hardware, sections of ABS or metal piping, steel structural members, wrenches, conduit, cable, stakes. Include a variety of sizes and weights of materials.

Pre-requisite Knowledge & Skills

Participants need to have learned math foundational skills for working with fractions: equivalent fractions, simplifying fractions. They should have basic skills in reading a small imperial ruler marked in inches and lines indicating fractions of an inch, be able to identify markings for fractional inches, and state fractions of an inch in lowest terms.

The complexity of the numeracy and collaboration tasks can be adapted for a variety of levels.

Virtual Delivery Tips

This lesson can be delivered in-person or virtually. Here are a few ideas to adapt the lesson for a virtual audience:

- Available Materials: Ensure participants have access to measurement tools such as rulers and measuring tapes at their virtual locations. Adapt measurement tasks and handouts to reflect objects commonly available in learner homes.
- Digital Handouts: Convert the handouts into digital formats that can be easily distributed to participants prior to the session.
- Virtual Whiteboard: Utilize a virtual whiteboard or annotation tool to demonstrate how to read whole inches and fractional markings.
- Interactive Polls or Quizzes: Incorporate interactive polls or quizzes to gauge participants' understanding of reading measurements.
- Breakout Rooms: Set up virtual breakout rooms for participants to work together in pairs or small groups.
- Screen Sharing: Encourage participants to use screen sharing to demonstrate their measurement techniques or share their completed handouts with the larger group during the debriefing session.

LESSON ACTIVITIES	
1	*Opening discussion* Ask participants what their experience has been with using measuring tapes in work or home contexts. Did they use imperial or metric measuring tapes?
2	*Activate background knowledge* With participants reading standard school rulers, review how to read whole inches and line markings for fractional inches. Remind participants to state fractional inches in lowest terms.
3	*Handout 1* Provide participants with handouts of the measurements required to be made in and around the classroom. Set up pairs or small groups of participants to work together. Distribute one measuring tape per pair. This is a good activity for peer support as those with some experience can help others. You can be strategic in pairing up participants. This activity is often very successful when run as experiential learning and helps build a collaborative learning culture in the class. Don't pre-teach strategies but let the participants experiment with what to do for irregular items. Customize your handout to the learning space and potentially outdoors or the shop. Start with regular, rectangular rigid shapes such as desks and doors. Increase the complexity by including irregular items that require creative thinking such as: • Flexible items like participants' heights • Over-height items such as the room height • Over-length items such as the hallway, which exceed the length of the tape measure • Round items, where the largest measurement is the diameter • Inside dimensions such as inside windowsills • Small items that are more easily measured starting at the 1-inch mark

LESSON ACTIVITIES	
4	*Discuss* Discuss the assignment and expectations for respectful behaviour in the classroom and surrounding area so as not to disrupt other groups. Discuss behaviours for effective collaboration amongst team members.
5	*Practice* Give groups a time limit of 20 – 30 minutes to take measurements, record them on the handout and bring back the information to the classroom to debrief. Observe participants' collaborative behaviours, such as the different roles that team members take on, their contributions to the task and ability to work together. Make note of how participants apply creativity to problem solve – do they brainstorm different options, expand on each other's ideas, and learn from failures to improve?
6	*Discuss* Collect the measurements for each group without judgement of right or wrong. Ask participants to describe what strategies they used for irregular items and dealing with the tool. Encourage a growth mindset by praising and commenting on participants efforts and creativity in problem-solving. Debrief the collaboration and creativity skills required, asking participants to identify their strengths and areas for growth as individuals and as a team.
7	*Discuss* Extend learning by asking participants to convert some of the measurements that were taken in inches (like their heights) into feet and inches (eg. 64 in = 5 ft and 4 in). Extend learning by asking participants to calculate the difference between two measurements, such as the tallest participant and the instructor, or total distance between two adjacent points.

Follow-up

Follow up with YouTube videos of carpenters' tips on tape measure use.

Conduct a contest to see who can extend their tape measure the furthest before it falls.

Next lesson, ask participants if they can recall or estimate some of the dimensions they measured. Using known dimensions, such as their height or the length of a desk, they can estimate longer distances. That can be very helpful in the field.

The next lesson can apply skills in reading a measurement on a graphic of a tape measure. Participants are asked to add on or subtract inches and fractions of an inch. For example, given a mark at 64 ½ inches, participants are asked to and add on 3 ¾ inch. What is the total measurement?



Handout 1

Measuring in Imperial

Measure the following items in inches.
Measure accurately to the nearest 16th of an inch.

1) Baseboard heater in classroom (length)

2) Classroom door (length, width, thickness)



3) Diagonal length of the TV monitor

4) Perimeter (total distance around the outside) of cement planter at the building entrance

5) Blue pen (length and diameter)



6) Diameter of a lunchroom table (at the widest point)

7) Circumference of (distance around) column in classroom



8) Your heights

9) Your arm span from finger tip to finger tip

10) Width of a regular parking stall in the parking lot, centre-to-centre of the line markings

11) Height of the classroom

12) Length of the hallway at the longest point

Lesson Plan #2:
Root Cause Analysis (Problem Solving Focus)



This root cause analysis lesson for production workers or supervisors in the manufacturing sector is part of a series of lessons where participants will be working in teams to complete a problem-solving project in their workplace.

Time: 1.5 hours

Skill Components

This lesson focuses primarily on Problem Solving Component #3.

Problem Solving Components

3. Analyze the issue
   - Think critically about the issue using the information gathered
   - Break down the issue into smaller parts
   - Seek patterns, make connections across information
   - Identify possible cause-and-effect linkages

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Materials & Resources

Handout

- Handouts: 1. Fishbone Diagram Template,
  2. Five Whys Template

Collaboration Components

2. Value diversity and inclusivity of others
   - Respond without judging people for their different opinions, ideas, and views

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Pre-requisite Knowledge & Skills

At this stage in the problem-solving process, participants will have identified the issue to be addressed and gathered information about the problem. The instructor will have taught brainstorming rules and techniques in a previous lesson, so participants would understand that free thinking is encouraged and criticism should be avoided.

The complexity of the problem-solving and collaboration tasks can be adapted for a variety of levels.

Virtual Delivery Tips

This lesson can be delivered in-person or virtually. Here are a few ideas to adapt the lesson for a virtual audience:

- Available Materials: Ensure participants have access to the necessary handouts digitally. Share the Fishbone Diagram Template and Five Whys Template electronically before the session.
- Virtual Discussions: Use the virtual platform to facilitate opening discussions and activate background knowledge. Ask participants to share their experiences with root cause analysis tools and techniques, utilizing features like chat or raised hands for participation.
- Visual Tools: Utilize screen sharing to present the structure and purpose of the fishbone diagram. Guide participants through the process of identifying categories and demonstrate how to use the diagram effectively.
- Breakout Rooms: Organize virtual breakout rooms for participant teams to collaborate on completing their fishbone diagrams.
- Interactive Activities: Incorporate interactive activities using virtual tools for brainstorming and completing the 5 Whys exercise. Encourage participants to share their screens and collaborate in real-time.
- Virtual Presentations: Allow participant teams to present their fishbone diagrams and 5 Whys analyses to the class using screen sharing. Allocate time for each team to explain their process and discuss their findings.

LESSON ACTIVITIES	
1	*Opening discussion* Ask participant teams to present the information they have collected about their problem since the previous session. This will include the data they feel quantifies the impact of the problem as well as the context they have gathered by speaking with stakeholders that are affected by the problem. Explain that today's session will be about analyzing this data to identify the root cause of the issue.
2	*Activate background knowledge* Ask participants to share their understanding of and experience with root cause analysis. What tools do they know about and what tools do they currently use?

LESSON ACTIVITIES	
3	*Handout 1* Instructor introduces the structure and purpose of the fishbone diagram. A fishbone diagram is a visual tool used in root cause analysis to identify and categorize potential causes of a problem, facilitating structured problem-solving by breaking down complex issues into manageable components. Help participants to identify categories that can be used as headings: equipment, process, people, materials, environment, management, etc. or leave categories blank for participants to decide. Present a fishbone diagram on a similar problem to demonstrate how it can be used. Remind participants of the brainstorming and collaborative strategies that have been previously taught.
4	*Practice* Participant teams brainstorm to complete their fishbone diagram using the data and context they have collected since the previous class. Participant teams then present their fishbone to the class. Ask participants to explain their process and any successes or pit-falls they experienced along the way.
5	*Handout 2* Introduce the 5 Whys tool, which involves asking “why” multiple times (typically five) to dig deeper into the causes of a problem and uncover its underlying root cause, helping to address issues at their source. Explain that it can be used to analyze the problem as a whole or one of the causes that was identified through completing the fishbone diagram.
6	*Practice* Participant teams complete the 5 Whys activity and present to the class.

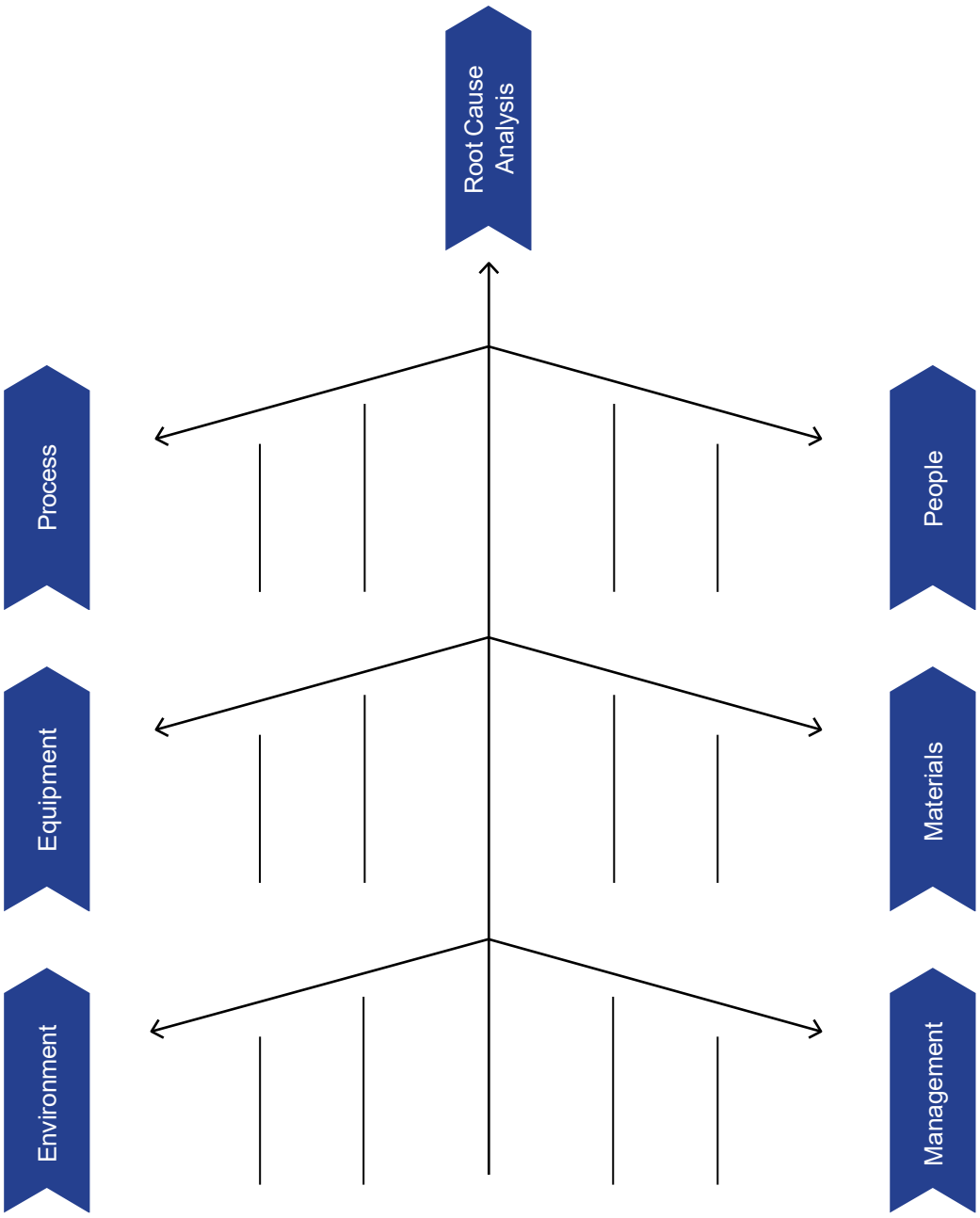
LESSON ACTIVITIES	
7	*Summary* Debrief the activities. Ask participant teams to summarize the root causes they have identified through using the two tools. Which tool was more effective? Was it helpful to look at the issue from different angles? Ask participants to discuss the collaboration skills they used and to identify their strengths and areas for growth as individuals and as a team.

Follow-up

Instructor explains that in the next class they will be using the root causes they identified to develop routes of action to solve the problem, emphasizing that in depth information gathering and root cause analysis ensures that solutions fully address the problem and not just the symptoms.

Handout 1

Fishbone Diagram Template



Handout 2

Five Whys Template

Problem:

Why?

Why?

Why?

Why?

Why?

Root Cause:

Lesson Plan #3:
Effective Workplace Emails (Writing Focus)



This lesson is part of a Tourism Pathways training program, which prepares participants for entry-level roles in the tourism sector. Many of the training participants are newcomers to Canada and English language learners.



Under represented Groups

This lesson is delivered near the beginning of the training to introduce the writing focus for the program: how to write an effective workplace email.

Time: 1.5 hours

Materials & Resources

- Presentation slides: Email Best Practices
- Handouts: 1. Parts of an Email
  2. Sample Email
  3. Formal & Informal Language
- Tech: Digital device with email capabilities

Pre-requisite Knowledge & Skills

Participants need to have a working email address and the ability to use a digital device to send an email, or this instruction must be front-loaded. This lesson can be adapted to a variety of writing abilities (by adjusting the complexity of the email scenarios), but participants need to be able to write basic sentences.

Virtual Delivery Tips

This lesson can be delivered in-person or virtually. Here are a few ideas to adapt the lesson for a virtual audience:

- Digital Materials: Ensure all presentation slides and handouts are available digitally for participants to access during the virtual session. Share the materials via email or through a learning management system before the class.
- Interactive Discussions: Use virtual platforms to facilitate opening discussions about when to write emails in the workplace. Encourage participants to share their ideas through features like chat or audio sharing.

- Small Group Activities: Organize virtual breakout rooms for small group discussions on email best practices.
- Screen Sharing: Utilize screen sharing to present the parts of an email and sample emails. Guide participants through labeling the parts of a sample email and debrief the answers as a whole class.
- Virtual Comparisons: Use a learning management system for participants to post and share their email writing. Participants can provide peer feedback to one another.
- Social-Emotional Learning: Integrate instruction on effective collaboration skills to support participants' social-emotional learning. Discuss how collaboration and teamwork might be similar or different in an online context.

Skill Components

This lesson focuses primarily on Writing Components #4 and #5.

Writing Components

1. Identify the task that requires you to write
   - Identify the goals and purposes of the writing task

4. Choose the appropriate language and style for the writing task
   - Use formal and informal tone and language appropriate for audience and context

5. Choose the appropriate format for the writing task
   - To organize information or ideas, use paragraphs, bullet points, numbered list, subheadings, etc.
   - Use pre-determined or pre-formatted workplace documents

6. Review and revise your writing
   - Proofread and correct your writing for grammar and spelling
   - Proofread and revise your writing for accuracy, meaning, and tone

Research Report to Support the Launch for Skills for Success (p. 17)

Digital Components

2. Use common digital tools to complete tasks
   - Use software, mobile applications, and other digital tools for a purpose
   - Select appropriate digital tools based on your goals and purposes of tasks

5. Apply safe and responsible practices online
   - Protect personal information and privacy of yourself and others
   - Use appropriate language and behaviour online

Research Report to Support the Launch for Skills for Success (p. 21)

LESSON ACTIVITIES	
1	*Opening discussion* In which situations at work would you write an email? (e.g., running late, sick, to switch shifts, when it's best to document something). In which situations would you NOT write an email? (e.g., when you're angry/upset, personal matters, anything unprofessional, things that are difficult to explain) Ask participants to share their ideas.
2	*Activate background knowledge* In small groups, ask participants to make a "Top 10" list of email best practices and tips. Participants discuss then report back to the class. Presentation Slides: Then follow-up with practitioner-led instruction on email best practices, using the earlier discussion to recognize their prior knowledge, highlight new information and emphasize important concepts. (e.g., respond in a timely manner, acknowledge all emails, use email to document important communications, maintain a professional tone, keep it brief, proofread carefully before sending)
3	*Handout 1&2* Provide participants with a handout that defines the parts of an email (e.g., subject line, salutation, purpose, action items, sign-off). Then ask them to label the parts of a sample email. Debrief the answers.
4	*Discuss* What are the differences between formal and informal writing styles? In which situations at work or in life do you use each style? Present different examples of formal and informal writing to compare the two approaches.

LESSON ACTIVITIES	
5	*Handout 3* Provide sample sentences or emails that participants need to change to be more formal or informal depending on the given context.
6	*Practice* Ask participants to send you an email in response to a workplace scenario. Position yourself as their supervisor so that there is an element of authority and formality to consider (e.g., they are emailing their supervisor because they're sick and can't come to work). Remind participants to include the typical parts of an email and to pay attention to appropriate tone. Ask participants for permission to share their emails and give feedback next class.

Follow-up

Next lesson, debrief the email writing activity. Create a slide deck to present examples from some of the participant emails you received. Try to pull out examples of best practices and a few examples of what to avoid. Compare different approaches and ask participants to choose which subject line, greeting, closing, etc. is most effective and why.

Continue to provide practice opportunities throughout the training program. Consider asking participants to write emails in small groups, which encourages idea sharing and fosters teamwork and mentorship opportunities between stronger and weaker writers. Provide instruction on effective collaboration skills to support their social-emotional learning.



Handout 1

Parts of an Email

Use the following guidelines to write emails in your training and career.

Emails typically include the following eight parts:	
1. Recipient's email address	This is the email address of the person you are writing to. *Tip*: Wait to type the recipient's email address until you are finished writing and proofreading your email. This avoids accidentally sending an incomplete email.
2. Subject line	The subject line tells the reader what the email is about. A specific subject line lets the recipient quickly prioritize and find emails. Example: "Vacation request: August 5 to 9" or "Last minute client cancellation."
3. Salutation	Start by addressing the person you are writing to. Use a formal or informal style depending on your relationship with the recipient. For example: "Dear Mr. Peters:" or "Hello Joanna,"
4. Pleasantry	Open your email with a quick greeting or friendly remark. For example: "It was good to meet you at [event]," "Thank you for sending me the files," or "I trust your week is off to a good start."
5. Purpose	State the reason you are writing in the first paragraph. The purpose of your email should be immediately clear. Example: "I am writing to submit my application for the full-time housekeeping position" or "I would like to update my phone number on file."
6. Action items	Put any questions, requests, or instructions in a separate paragraph so that the recipient does not miss them. For several items, consider using a bulleted or numbered list.
7. Closing message	Finish your email with a polite closing, such as "Thank you for all your help with this," "Please let me know if you have any questions," or "I'm looking forward to hearing from you."
8. Sign-off	Choose an appropriate formal or informal sign-off to your email: "Best wishes," "Kind regards," or "Thanks,". Follow your sign-off with your name.



Handout 2

Sample Email

Label the eight parts in the email below.

New Message
To: pkwan@hotelmountainview.ca
Subject: Job offer for part-time housekeeping
Dear Ms. Kwan: It is nice to hear from you. I would like to accept the offer of a part-time housekeeping position at Hotel Mountainview. I am excited to join the team and begin working in my new career. Would you kindly let me know the next steps in terms of paperwork and training? I am available to start as soon as possible. Thank you for this opportunity. I look forward to working with you. Sincerely, Alice Phagoora
Send



Handout 3

Formal and Informal Language

When you write an email, you need to decide whether to use a formal or informal style. Your decision depends on your purpose for writing and the relationship you have with the person who receives your message.

For example, an email to apply for a job will be more formal than an email to arrange a coffee date.
Likewise, an email to your friend will be more casual than an email to your boss.

Formal - serious and proper
Informal - relaxed and casual

Formal language is less personal than informal language. It emphasizes respect and politeness. Informal language is friendly and familiar. The table below compares examples of the two styles.

	Formal	Informal
Context	Business, legal, academic, professional	Personal, casual
Salutation	Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. Wong: Dear Human Resources Manager: To Whom it May Concern:	Dear Sophia, Hi Mohammad, Hey Dad!
Contractions	I am writing to ask if you have… (Write words out in full)	I'm writing to ask if you've… (Contractions are okay)
Requests	Would you be able to complete it by Friday? Could you see if the parts have been ordered? Would you happen to know…?	Can you have it done by Friday? Have the parts been ordered? Do you know…?
Vocabulary	I would like to request some assistance. Once I have received the information from our suppliers, I will respond to your email. Unfortunately, I will not be able to… I would like to apologize for any inconvenience caused.	I'd like to ask for some help. After I hear back from the suppliers, I'll get back to you. I can't… Sorry for any trouble I caused.
Sign-off	Sincerely, Regards,	Thanks, Bye for now,

Practice

Rewrite the sentences below to be more formal and appropriate for the given context.

1) **An email job application with your résumé attached:** Here is my résumé.

2) **An email to a potential employer:** Actually, I am busy at 2pm now. Can we change the interview to 3pm instead?

3) **An email to follow-up an interview:** It's been a week. Did you hire someone?

4) **An email to your supervisor:** I'm sick. I can't work today.

5) **An email to your co-worker:** Hey, I can't work this Friday. Can you switch shifts with me? Thx.

6) **An email to a client:** Sorry, I messed up the schedule. It won't happen again!

Professional Development Opportunities

This is a list of courses and workshops from across Canada that are relevant to Skills for Success practitioners.

Note: The links provided here are for informational purposes only and do not constitute endorsement or recommendation. Please contact training organizations directly for more information.

1. Alberta Workforce Essential Skills: Practitioner Training

https://awes.ca/what-we-offer/training/

The essential skills framework can be challenging to learn on your own. AWES teaches you what it all means and how to use it to support your learners and clients. Workshops are designed for developing a comprehensive applied knowledge of workplace essential skills. We can customize workshops to meet the specific needs of your organization and the clients you serve. The following are some examples of the training AWES has developed.

- Foundations in Workplace Essential Skills
- WES for Specific Groups
- Advanced Practitioner Training – Working Effectively with Employers
- Advanced Practitioner Training – Conducting Needs Assessments.

2. Bow Valley College: The Test of Workplace Essential Skills (TOWES)

http://www.towes.com/en/products-and-services/professional-development--administrator-certification/professional-development--administrator-training-overview

TOWES offers a variety of presentations, professional development workshops and administrator certification programs for instructors, trainers, recruiters or those who just want to learn more about literacy and essential skills.

Programs are offered in-house at Bow Valley College, onsite at your organization, or at conference and training facilities located across the country. Many of our professional development programs and certification programs can be completed online or delivered remotely using web-based technology.

3. Douglas College: Aboriginal Essential Skills Journey Planting the Seeds for Growth

https://www.douglascollege.ca/programs-courses/training-group/skills-successessential-skills/practitioner-training-certificate-0

Introducing an Aboriginal Essential Skills workshop resource designed to introduce Essential Skills to front line workers, educators and trainers. This two day workshop toolkit includes a Facilitator's Guide and Participant Workbook.

4. Douglas College: Essential Skills Practitioner Training Certificate

https://www.douglascollege.ca/programs-courses/training-group/skills-successessential-skills/practitioner-training-certificate

The Essential Skills Practitioner Training (ESPT) Certificate Program is a unique six course program offered through online and face-to-face or hybrid formats.

The ESPT program is designed to assist individuals to integrate HRSDC's task based Essential Skills into the work that they do with learners. The courses help workers to understand and interpret Essential Skills Assessments and how to design activities that take a construct approach to build on learners existing skills.

5. SkillPlan: Customized Practitioner Workshops

https://skillplan.ca/services/

Educators will develop Skills for Success expertise with our in-depth workshops. These on-site or off-site workshops are ideal for workplace educators, adult educators, curriculum developers and project managers. Available by request, these workshops are offered as individual courses, combined courses and modified courses that focus on specific topics of interest.

A combination of these workshops may be used for customization:

- Controlling Complexity
- Document Use at the Workplace
- Skills for Success in the Workplace
- Essential Skills Job Profiling
- Needs Analysis
- Workplace Materials Development

6. Workplace Education Manitoba: Skills for Success Workplace Practitioner Certificate

https://workplaceconnections.ca/certification/

The Skills for Success Workplace Practitioner Certification Program is specifically designed to highlight the foundational and functional skills and abilities required to best serve the educational needs of learners, to support optimal learning, and to enhance organizations overall.

Skills for Success Practitioners are encouraged to engage in professional growth by also considering the strategic competencies needed to make an impact beyond the learning environment.

As part of the Practitioner Certification Program, Practitioners also achieve a Certificate in Relational Skills and have the ability to deliver customized relational skills to organizations across Canada.

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