

Essential Edge: Integrating Essential Skills into a Rural Labour Market



Pilot Project Evaluation Report January 2012

Prepared by: Jaime Malcolm, The Skills Centre
Project Manager—Essential Edge

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Project Partners:

Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL)
CFDC Boundary
School District #20
School District #51
Selkirk College
The Skills Centre

Advisory Committee:

Allison Alder (Selkirk College)
Mark Cecchini (Teck Metals Ltd.)
Neil Coburn (Selkirk College)
Carol Corbett (The Skills Centre)
Greg Harasemow (Eagle Mountain Custom Metalworks)
Bruna Horcoff (SD #20)
Glenn Olien (BC Construction Assoc.)
Donna Palmer (Leading Concepts International Inc.)
Allan Pusey (BC Construction Assoc.)
Denise Robson (The Skills Centre)
Maxine Ruzika (SD #51)
Sandy Elzinga (CFDC Boundary)
Margaret Sutherland (CBAL)
Pam Tetarenko (Douglas College)

Report Writer: Jaime Malcolm, Essential Edge Project Manager

Editing: Christy Luke and Janet Morton



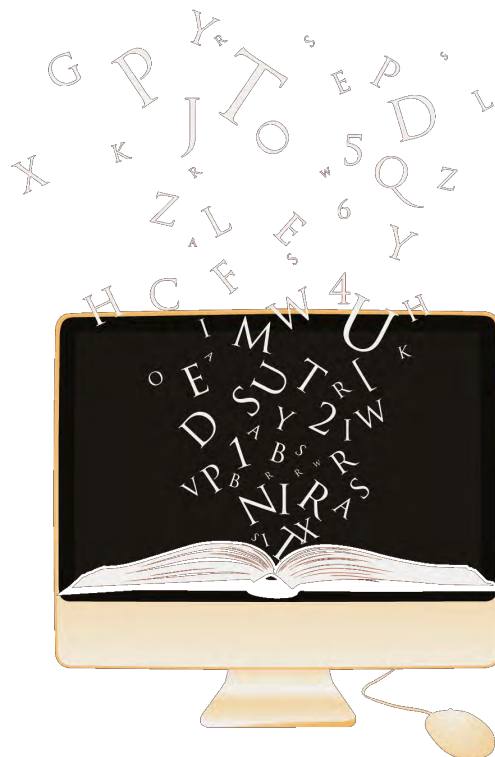
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Essential Edge project was developed to increase the understanding and awareness of the Essential Skills concept amongst the key stakeholders, as well as introduce the tools and resources available. The key stakeholders were adult and literacy educators, employment service providers, employers and workers or job seekers. The need for this project in the West Kootenay Boundary area of British Columbia was identified for a number of reasons. While Essential Skills is intended to forge a stronger connection between the skills required by employers and the skills available in the workplace, it is a concept and system that, at best, is inconsistently used by employers, educators, employment service providers and individual job seekers in our area. This project was designed to increase Literacy and Essential Skills (referred to herein as LES) levels in workers and job seekers through skill enhancement work with practitioners who would become familiar with LES tools and resources.

The Greater Trail Community Skills Centre (The Skills Centre) partnered with Selkirk College and Community Futures Development Corporation of the Boundary (CFDC Boundary) to deliver this pilot project in the communities of Greater Trail, Castlegar, Grand Forks and the Boundary in the Southern Interior of British Columbia. (For a map of areas, see Appendix A.) Essential Skills workshops were delivered in Trail by The Training Group of Douglas College to familiarize practitioners with the concept and resources of LES. During 2010 and 2011, project team members supported numerous practitioners and employers in a variety of settings to engage workers, learners and job seekers in LES assessment, skill enhancement and the use of tools and resources to prepare them for job search and job retention. Many different strategies were created and procedures developed as different needs became apparent throughout the life of the project.

Creating a network of organizations and practitioners familiar with LES was paramount to the success of the project. Literacy and adult educators needed to be equipped with the knowledge, tools and resources required to work with learners and support them in enhancing their levels of LES. Employment service providers required an understanding of the concept of LES as well as the tools and resources in order to integrate LES into their work with job seekers. Pilot project team members worked with the staff of the following organizations:

- Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (Castlegar, Trail, Grand Forks)
- CFDC Boundary (Grand Forks)
- School District #20 (Online Learning, Castlegar; Co-op Education, Trail)
- School District #51 (Walker Development Centre, Grand Forks; Boundary Central Secondary School, Midway; Grand Forks Secondary School, Grand Forks)
- Selkirk College - Adult Basic Education (Castlegar, Trail, Grand Forks)
- The Skills Centre (Trail)



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Specific objectives of the project:

1. To develop the capacity of at least 10 employment counsellors to assist clients to identify and address gaps in Essential Skills related to individual career and job search goals.
2. To develop the capacity of at least 10 adult literacy and education service providers to deliver programs and resources to address the Essential Skills of workers and job seekers.
3. To develop the capacity of at least 15 employers to use the Essential Skills in their workforce renewal and development strategies.
4. To improve the Essential Skills of at least 50 individual employed workers or job seekers, focusing on the skills of reading, document use, numeracy and computer skills.

Project highlights included:

- Increasing the knowledge of the LES concept as well as LES tools and resources in 100% of the stakeholders from literacy/education and employment service communities (those who attended workshops and continued engagement with the project);
 - 8 educators are using LES assessment and/or tools and resources regularly, and 8 are using LES assessment and/or tools and resources when the opportunity presents itself.
 - 7 employment service providers are using LES assessment and/or tools and resources regularly, and 9 are using LES assessment and/or tools and resources when the opportunity presents itself. A further 9 are continuing to explore the tools and resources.
- Engaging 14 employers in using LES tools and resources for employee recruitment, retention and/or employee skill development;
- Engaging Teck Metals Ltd. (Trail's largest employer and one of the world's biggest fully-integrated zinc and lead smelting and refining complexes) in integrating LES assessment into their recruitment process;
- Creating an LES network in our communities to strengthen relationships between members of a variety of organizations in order to better support workers, learners and job seekers in engaging in LES assessment and enhancement;
- Increasing the levels of LES in reading, document use, numeracy and/or computer use in 72 workers, learners or job seekers.

Further information regarding pilot project results, successes, challenges and solutions follow in the main report.



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PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Greater Trail Community Skills Centre (The Skills Centre), along with partners Selkirk College and Community Futures Development Corporation of the Boundary (CFDC Boundary), conducted a two year pilot project in the West Kootenay/ Boundary region of British Columbia's Southern Interior including the

communities of Trail, Castlegar, Grand Forks and the Boundary to support rural labour market development by creating a common, system-wide practice and understanding of the concept and resources of Essential Skills to improve the capacity of workers to attain and retain employment. The key stakeholders included employed and unemployed individuals, employers, employment service providers and adult educators providing basic skills upgrading. The project ran from February 2010 to January 2012 and was funded by the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES).

The Essential Edge Project aimed to identify the skills gap that some individuals are facing and increase skill levels through individual training plans using Literacy and Essential Skills (LES) resources and tools. The process included working with employment counsellors, employers, educators and employed or unemployed individuals. Partners of the Essential Edge project included Selkirk College, CFDC Boundary, School Districts #20 and #51, Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL) and various employers. Douglas College (The Training Group) became a strong resource over and above its role on the advisory committee and the LES workshops they were contracted to deliver. The overarching goal of the project was to increase awareness and use of LES in order to create a shared language and practice supporting workforce retention, development and renewal in a rural region where close connections already exist between employers, educators, service providers and workers.

As a region heavily dependent on forestry, mining and smelting, our communities dramatically felt the impact of the economic downturn in 2008. The Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, conducted by the U.S. National Centre for Education Statistics in 2003, discovered that individuals who have sufficient levels of LES in reading, document use and numeracy are able to exit unemployment more quickly than low skilled individuals. By integrating LES tools and resources into our work with job seekers, our goal was to help prepare them for the economic recovery and a return to demographically- driven skill and labour shortages.

To begin creating an understanding of the LES concept, tools and resources, the project offered a variety of workshops to project team members, adult educators, employment service providers and



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literacy service providers. Workshops brought to Trail, B.C. from The Training Group at Douglas College in Coquitlam, B.C. were *Introduction to Essential Skills; Essential Skills Assessment, Interpretation, and Application; Bridging the Gap; and Developing your Essential Skills Portfolio*. Following these courses, team members worked to support practitioners and facilitators in using LES tools and resources in the following areas: adult basic education, school districts, employment service organizations, community literacy groups and the business community.

Major activities:

1. Delivery of Essential Skills training by Douglas College for employment counsellors, adult educators and literacy facilitators.
2. Support to adult educators to integrate Essential Skills into their curriculum.
3. Support to employers to recognize the Essential Skills required in their workforce and to develop the skills of their employees through on-the-job and community training.
4. Assessment of the reading, document use, numeracy and computer skills of job seekers and employed workers and support to address identified gaps.
5. Project evaluation that monitors growth in the use of Essential Skills by key stakeholders and improvements in the Essential Skills of job seekers and workers.

Who will benefit from the project and how:

1. Employment counsellors will be better able to assess their clients' Essential Skills, to make more effective referrals to employers and to have access to better remediation programs to address identified gaps in Essential Skills.
2. Adult education instructors and literacy facilitators will be better able to identify gaps in Essential Skills required by employers and will have enhanced Essential Skills strategies and resources integrated into their curriculum and programs.
3. Employers will be better able to integrate Essential Skills into their workforce recruitment and development strategies.
4. Workers and job seekers will improve their numeracy, reading, document use and/or computer skills.

Expected results of the project:

1. Employment counsellors will have the capacity to assess the Essential Skills of their clients and to support those individuals through action plans that include Essential Skills development. The employment counsellors will also be better able to assist employers with their workforce recruitment and development needs.



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2. Employers will have greater capacity to identify and screen for the Essential Skills required in their workplace as well as to develop the skills of their existing workforce.
3. Adult educators and literacy facilitators will have increased knowledge of resources to support Essential Skills development which will then be integrated into their curriculum and programs.
4. Workers and job seekers will have improved reading, document use, numeracy and/or computer skills.

PROCESS



Integrating the Concept of Essential Skills into Multiple Communities

Once project staff was in place, we began delivering a series of training sessions for employment service providers and educators in Adult basic Education (ABE). Training (delivered by Douglas College – The Training Group) included the following workshops:

- *Introduction to Essential Skills* (February 18-19, 2010) delivered to 25 employment service providers and adult educators.
- *Essential Skills Assessments, Interpretation, and Practical Application* (April 26-28, 2010) delivered to 24 employment service providers and adult educators.
- *Bridging the Gap* (June 21-23, 2010) delivered to 19 adult educators and employment service providers.
- *Developing Your Essential Skills Portfolio* (September 22, 2010) delivered to 18 employment service providers and adult educators.
- *Approaching Employers* (October 28, 2010) delivered to two project team members.
- *Essential Skills Methodology and Task Analysis* (February 8-11, 2011) delivered to two project team members and one employment service provider.
- Enough interest was shown by members of the education and employment service communities to hold another session of *Introduction to Essential Skills* (September 28- 29, 2011) delivered to 18 participants.



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- The project provided LES training to 43 individuals in employment and education services.

Once training was underway, we assembled an advisory committee with representation from employers, educators, employment service providers and subject area experts. This committee, which met every six months, provided the project team with feedback and suggestions for next steps throughout the life of Essential Edge. Advisory meeting topics included an introduction to LES and the project in general, a presentation from Donna Palmer on building Essential Skills in the workplace of Diavik Diamond Mines, and presentations from project team members on “Building Relationships through Networking,” “Engaging Employers” and “Integrating LES into Prescribed Learning Outcomes in Alternate Education.”

To track awareness and understanding of LES, we prepared pre- and post-assessments of LES knowledge and use for employers, employment counsellors and educators. Assessments were administered as an online survey, as appropriate, to practitioners prior to either *Introduction to Essential Skills* or *Essential Skills Assessments* training sessions. Post-assessments were administered in December 2011. In every case where we worked with an employer, there was no awareness of LES prior to our engagement. Post-assessments for employers were administered as we completed our work with each employer partner. (For practitioner and employer assessment results, see Appendix B & C.)

As a final approach to creating a system-wide understanding and practice of LES, we planned and facilitated a number of Essential Skills networking meetings in order to create an “Essential Skills Networking Framework” (Appendix D). The first meetings took place in Trail (January 27, 2011) and Grand Forks (March 17, 2011), and included administrators from employment and education services. The purpose of the framework document is to create a strong foundation for our Essential Skills initiative to continue after the project’s end date by establishing a clear referral system. A networking meeting for frontline workers took place in Castlegar (May 11, 2011), with 23 attendees (educators, employment service providers and administrators). The objective of this meeting was to provide employment service providers and educators with the opportunity to share the successes and challenges they had experienced while working with clients and learners using LES tools and resources. Attendees shared ideas and solutions around LES integration into work with clients/learners.



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Educators

Our partners in this area included School Districts #20 (Kootenay-Columbia) and #51 (Boundary), Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL) and Selkirk College Adult Basic Education (ABE). Twenty-one educators in Castlegar, Grand Forks and Trail received the Essential Skills training provided by the project through Douglas College. Educators attended the following courses: *Introduction to Essential Skills*, *Essential Skills Assessments*, and *Bridging the Gap: Enhancing Essential Skills*. Some also attended *Building your Essential Skills*

Portfolio as well as *Methodology and Task Analysis*. These courses, along with ongoing support from team members, prepared adult literacy and education service providers to deliver programs and resources to address the LES needs of workers and job seekers. Ongoing support from team members included compiling, sharing and demonstrating use of LES resources suitable for adult and literacy educators in the form of website links, downloaded materials, OLES Essential Skills publications and tools, as well as resources created or modified by project team members. Eventually the project team created a resources and publications directory (Appendix E).

Resources and Integration:

At project's end:

- 38 % of educators who received training were reporting regular integration of LES tools and resources into their work with learners, job seekers and workers.
- 38% were reporting use of LES tools and resources when an opportunity was presented.
- 24% have the skills to deliver programs and resources but did not report any integration.

Resources being used by educators include the *Measure Up* website, *Signposts*, Skill Plan resources, Construction Sector Council Essential Skills resources, ITA Essential Skills Online Tool, TOWES, OLES Essential Skills Online Indicators, OLES Essential Skills Job Profiles, lessons from Ontario Skills Passport, Workplace Education Manitoba Resources and Project Read Waterloo Essential Skills resources.

To address concerns around using LES tools and resources with secondary school students, the project team compiled an LES unit, using resources from OLES and Ontario Skills Passport, and shared it with school districts in the region. Although this was technically outside of the age range we were working with, we saw it as vital to take every opportunity available to introduce LES tools and resources into education in our communities. At least three educators reported use of the unit with students. Other resources created by the project include three Essential Study Skills Workshops developed by our Learning Resource Facilitator for use with ABE students:



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- *Skim and Scan* – to support learners in the processes of skimming and scanning when reading text by applying these skills using a variety of real life texts.
- *Question Structure* – to support learners in answering questions consistently and correctly whether it is a question in a book, on a test or on the job.
- *Document Use* – covers why document use is important, how lists and tables are constructed, the process for quickly finding information, and practice using a variety of documents.

These workshops are approximately 75 minutes long and can be customized for specific jobs and skill levels. In addition, our Learning Resource Facilitator created an LES career unit and has demonstrated its use to adult educators at Selkirk College. This unit is designed for students with a specific career in mind and can be completed in 5 – 10 hours (Appendix F).

A number of programs and procedures to address the LES needs of job seekers and workers were created and/or LES tools and resources were integrated into existing programs:

- CBAL offered weekly drop-in learning centers in Castlegar, Grand Forks and Trail.
- Selkirk ABE created an *Essential Skills and Student Success* course and LES tools and resources were actively integrated into work with students at two centers.
- ABE educators in Grand Forks used LES assessment and resources to prepare carpentry students for success in their program.
- Employment Services in both Trail and Grand Forks created a process for referrals to ABE for workers and job-seekers who required skill enhancement.
- School District #51 explored the option of integrating TOWES into Communications 11/12, and recognizing LES learning resources and assessments as equivalent learning outcome credit.
- Educators in SD #51 and SD #20 integrated LES resources into their work with students enrolled in a variety of programs.
- Educators at Selkirk College created an Essential Skills/math course matrix to identify which learning outcomes address numeracy skill enhancement and where further skill enhancement can be integrated.
- An educator from SD #51 developed a comparison chart matching TOWES questions with the prescribed learning outcomes (PLOs) for Communications 11/12 and Essentials of Math 11 in order to tailor instruction and/or grant credit or partial credit based on TOWES results.
- A literacy educator with CBAL in Grand Forks facilitated a 10 week program for 9 women who were re-entering the workforce using the Project Read Waterloo resource, *Spotlight on Change*.

LES Assessment:

Some of the educators we worked with used LES assessment, while others focused more on LES tools and resources. Eleven adult and literacy educators completed the Test of Workplace Essential



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Skills (TOWES) test administrator certification. Other assessments used were informal, such as the OLES online indicators and Essential Skills self-assessments or the Measure Up website assessments.

Both School Districts #51 and #20 researched and discussed the possibility of integrating the TOWES as a portion of equivalency for the Communications 11/12 course. They have also researched and discussed the possibility of integrating Essential Skills tools and resources to reflect the prescribed learning outcomes in a variety of courses. A baseline study with Selkirk College's Plant Operator Program consisted of administering the TOWES at the beginning and end of the program to ascertain the degree to which the program was addressing LES and LES development. Over 90% of the students in this program improved their levels of LES.

Educator Highlights

The highest level of engagement with educators came from those who recognized using LES as benefiting their students. An educator in School District #51 used the prescribed learning outcomes (PLOs) from a home economics course that covered textiles and cooking, and matched those PLOs to various LES assessments and resources. She was able to weave LES into the course curriculum to enhance the students' skills as well as their experience in the course. Another educator in SD #51 connected with a resource called *Signposts: Workforce Literacy and Essential Skills Curriculum Guidelines* (a PTP Adult Learning and Employment Programs publication), and used it with her special education students on average about 10 hours per month. A literacy educator from CBAL connected with a resource that already had LES elements integrated into it called *Spotlight on Change* (a Project Read Waterloo publication) for women entering or re-entering the workforce. She used this resource to create a 10 week long program for women in Grand Forks that focused on job readiness. All educators who viewed using LES as a way to fulfill intended learning outcomes, rather than as going outside of course curriculum, reported success with students. Students experienced enhanced learning as well as recognition of the relevancy of the activities.



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Employment Services

Our partners in this area included The Skills Centre and CFDC Boundary. Twenty-six regional career facilitators as well as representatives of Targeted Wage Subsidy and social enterprise programs received the Essential Skills training provided by the project through Douglas College. Career facilitators and employment service administrators attended the following courses:

Introduction to Essential Skills, Essential Skills Assessments, and Building your Essential Skills Portfolio. Two also attended *Methodology and Task Analysis.* Further support was provided by project team members in the form of

compiling, sharing and demonstrating LES tools and resources such as website links, downloaded materials and OLES publications.



Resources and Integration:

At project's end:

- 28 % of employment service providers who received training were reporting regular integration of LES tools and resources into their work with job seekers and workers.
- 36% were reporting use of LES tools and resources when an opportunity was presented.
- 36% have received some training but are still exploring avenues for integration into their work with clients.

Both The Skills Centre and CFDC Boundary engaged in strategic planning for implementing Essential Skills into their service offering with the overarching goal of employment counsellors being able to identify job seekers and workers who would benefit from assessment and from completing an LES learning plan. LES tools and resources were integrated into workshops, resume building and skills assessments. Resources used by employment service providers include the *Measure Up* website, TOWES, OLES Online Indicators, OLES Job Profiles and other OLES tools and resources (particularly trades tools and resources).

LES Assessment:

Employment service providers have used LES assessments with their clients (either TOWES or a hardcopy version of the OLES Online Indicators) for a variety of reasons. Most identified a need for assessment when a client was entering training or making a career change. In many cases assessments were used to confirm skill levels and acted as a confidence boost for the client, allowing them to move forward in their training or job search with a firm belief that they had the required



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skills. In some cases, employment counsellors used the occupations listed on the TOWES Results Report as a part of career exploration work with clients who were assessed. Eight employment counsellors became certified TOWES administrators.

Programs that used LES assessments included the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TIOW) program and Boundary Youth Success (BYS) Program, both facilitated through CFDC Boundary. Pre- and post-assessments were administered and skill enhancement facilitation was delivered. The Wage Subsidy programs in both Trail and Grand Forks also used LES assessments in their work with employers, which led to skill enhancement work with Selkirk ABE for several newly hired employees.

LES Transitioning into a New Model for Employment Services in British Columbia:

Following the signing of the Labour Market Development Agreement between B.C. and Canada, the Province is on the brink of implementing the new Employment Program of British Columbia (EPBC), which will begin in April 2012. The Skills Centre and CFDC Boundary have worked together to determine how the new model can best integrate LES into their service delivery approach. Our work on Essential Edge has given us a strong foundation for envisioning possibilities within the framework designed by the Province. Project team members created strategies for incorporating LES tools and resources into the new model of employment services including recommendations for use with clients in one-on-one appointments (Appendix G), as well as recommendations for integration of LES tools and resources into workshops.

Employment Services Highlights

The major successes in employment services came through assessment. Once employment counsellors recognized the usefulness of formally or informally assessing the LES levels of their clients, they began to take a deeper interest in using LES resources. Reasons for assessment included job change, entering training, or career exploration. Employment counsellors often found that assessment could lead to a boost in self confidence when they were able to confirm that clients had the required skill levels. In other cases, employment counsellors were able to integrate useful LES resources into workshops with clients. These resources included assessment (TOWES, OLES Computer Use Self-Assessment and OLES Online Indicators), practice exercises from the *Measure Up* website and job profiles.

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Employers

We began attempting to engage employers in the West Kootenay and Boundary by approaching and briefing them on the use and benefits of LES. These employers represented local industrial manufacturing, trades education, social enterprise, silviculture, agribusiness, janitorial and hospitality industry workplaces. In addition, some key employers were members of the project advisory committee and served as vital connections to the business community and other local employers.



In the first year of the project we lacked the sufficient knowledge and experience to effectively approach and engage employers. By the beginning of the second year, we had the knowledge to see where LES assessment, tools and resources could fit into our work with employers and we were able to understand employer needs and recommend useful LES intervention for their businesses and employees. Because it would have been a detriment to our project to engage an employer in LES intervention and integration only to be unsuccessful, we needed to make sure that the steps we took with the employers we engaged were worthwhile before we approached new ones.

Another important piece of learning was around the methods of employer engagement. Originally we had considered cold calling employers, but later realized that targeted marketing through our Wage Subsidy programs or The Skills Centre's Workforce Solutions division was far more effective. Over time, work with employers focused on assisting them in using OLES job profiles to write more thorough job postings reflecting LES, developing interview questions, and using LES assessments to screen applicants for positions. In some cases, employers chose applicants who met the criteria for a position but would benefit from some skill enhancement. When this occurred, we worked with the employer and employee to access skill enhancement services or to use LES resources and tools in the new employee's training process, usually by referring them to Selkirk College's ABE program.

By project's end we had engaged:

- 3 employers in having existing members of their staff participate in skill development (14 employees total);
- 2 employers in using LES assessment as part of their recruitment process and having new employees engage in skill development (total of 2 employees);
- 4 employers in using LES assessment for recruitment (total of 68 applicants assessed);
- 5 employers in learning about LES and the skills used in their workplaces through having our project team members write job postings that address LES; and
- 2 employers in having job postings that address LES written for them, but not in participating in an LES information session.

Employer Case Studies

The Right Stuff, (Trail, B.C.)

The Right Stuff is a social enterprise that provides the collating and delivery service of the daily newspaper to the Greater Trail community. The enterprise provides paid employment in a supportive environment to individuals with barriers to employment. The Skills Centre provides the facility and the supervision for the Right Stuff program.

The Right Stuff was our first employer engagement. We recognized the importance of beginning our work with an employer who understood the LES concept and who was able to see the benefits for employees. The Right Stuff supervisor had attended three Douglas College ES workshops (*Introduction to Essential Skills, Essential Skills Assessments* and *Building your Essential Skills Portfolio*) and valued seeking learning and growth opportunities for her employees. Essential Edge provided an overview of LES for the staff, administered TOWES assessments with five staff members, and developed learning plans for two. We also provided LES tools and resources for supervisors to use with staff during staff meetings (OLES “Problem Solved” booklet) and facilitated ASPECT’s Online Essential Skills Resource (in its pilot phase) with eight staff members. This resource covered oral communication, thinking, continuous learning and working with others. Staff felt these workshops were useful to their current work and would also be beneficial in preparing them for future work.



Employer Case Studies

Teck Metals Ltd. Trail Operations, (Trail, B.C.)



Teck Trail Operations, Trail's largest employer, is one of the world's biggest fully-integrated zinc and lead smelting and refining complexes. We began to introduce LES to Teck Trail Operations through their Superintendent of Manpower, Planning and Development, who was also a member of the project's advisory committee. During

our first conversations, it became clear that Teck administration wanted to focus on strengthening the pool of candidates from which they hire (as opposed to focusing on their existing workforce). They were interested in seeking a means to provide candidates who lack the required skill levels with a mechanism for addressing those gaps. At our second advisory meeting, following a presentation by Donna Palmer on how Diavik Mines integrate LES in their training department, we discussed the opportunity to integrate LES assessment tools into their application process for plant operators. In addition to their existing testing for industrial reading and numerical reasoning, they agreed to have us administer the TOWES Manufacturing (MFG) assessments to applicants to assess their reading, numeracy and document use. Teck uses a number of other tools for their screening and short-listing process.

Collaboration between our project, Selkirk College and Teck Trail Operations led to incorporation of LES assessment into the Plant Operator Program (POP) at Selkirk College's Silver King Campus in Nelson. Teck's Superintendent of Manpower, Planning and Development suggested to the college that the TOWES MFG be administered to all students taking the POP to establish their current skill levels in comparison to the levels required by Teck. With this knowledge, students could work towards improving their levels of LES in addition to completing their coursework.

We began by assessing 13 POP students using the TOWES MFG in April 2011. Ten of these students completed a post-test during their application process with Teck in September 2011. We have since tested a total of 50 applicants for plant operator positions at Teck. In their screening process, Teck used their regular aptitude testing alongside the TOWES MFG and found the results very



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comparable, but Teck Human Resources preferred the TOWES MFG in some areas (especially numeracy) to their other aptitude tests in industrial reading and numerical reasoning. Using the current testing model, applicants who do not meet the required LES levels will be given the opportunity to engage in skill enhancement through The Skills Centre and Selkirk ABE before reapplication to Teck Trail Operations. Plans are also underway to use the TOWES MFG with future apprenticeship applicants to Teck.

Employer Highlights

Job Postings and LES Assessment: As we worked on building awareness of LES tools and resources among employers in our region, it became clear that using LES job profiles to create job postings was a practical way to engage and educate employers on the relevance of LES in their recruitment and retention of employees. This process began in Grand Forks with *Just Imagine Flooring Solutions*. CFDC Boundary began working with this employer through the Boundary Wage Subsidy program by using LES job profiles to first create a thorough job posting and then develop interview questions. The final LES integration into the hiring process was a numeracy assessment for short-listed candidates. An applicant was chosen who required some minor skill enhancement and was then referred to ABE in Grand Forks. This model of working with employers led to successful engagement of three employers in Grand Forks: GF Reno, Tomkat Automotive, Boundary Electric (Boundary Electric created a new position for one of the candidates based on his LES assessment results), and one employer in Trail: Kootenay Columbia Financial. A further five employers worked with the project using LES job profiles to create thorough job postings but did not engage in LES assessment for applicants.

Other Modes of Working with Employers: Our partners at CBAL began work with employees of Castlegar Library on computer use skill enhancement. Employees were pre- and post-assessed using the OLES Computer Use Self-Assessment. After working with CBAL using computer use enhancement curriculum created by the CBAL Regional Program Manager, all five employees showed improvement in this skill.

A connection was made with The Royal Theatre in Trail through the Skills Centre's Workforce Solutions specialist. The Essential Edge Project Manager created a problem solving and customer service assessment (Appendix H) and began work with an employee who had recently been promoted from cashier to manager. To improve problem solving skills, the employee used the OLES "Problem Solved" resource which project staff modified to reflect the types of problems this employee would be dealing with in his new role. Enhancement was completed through a number of one hour sessions over the course of December 2010 and January 2011.



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Workers and Job Seekers

A major project goal was to assist individual workers and job seekers to participate in pre- and post-tests to assess LES levels and to offer on-the-job training, or community-based remediation to address individual needs. Adult educators became familiar with LES tools and resources and procedures were set in place for skill enhancement through our literacy and adult education partners. LES materials from various sources were reviewed, referenced, compiled and provided to community employers, adult educators and employment service providers to assist training of individual learners. Workers and job seekers completed pre-assessments for a variety of reasons including preparation for training, confirmation of required skills levels for a desired occupation, confidence building, aptitude

testing for employment, career exploration, job readiness workshops and as a first step before engaging in skill enhancement.

Individuals were assessed using one or more of the following assessments: the TOWES G1; the TOWES G2; the TOWES MFG (Manufacturing); the OLES Computer Use Self-Assessment (with physical demonstration of skills before and after); and/or a hardcopy assessment put together by project team members using the OLES Online Indicators that assesses reading, document use and numeracy at levels one to two or levels one to three.

LES Assessment:

At project's end, 270 individuals had been pre-assessed.

Of these individuals:

- 72 completed skill enhancement and post-assessments showing improvement in LES;
- 8 completed skill enhancement and post-assessments and did not show improvement in LES;
- 8 were post-tested with a different pre- and post-assessment and, therefore, their results are not sufficiently reliable to count;



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- **16** did not require skill enhancement and **19** were very close to a level 3 in all areas assessed and chose to forgo skill enhancement;
- **26** individuals had extenuating circumstances keeping them from completing skill enhancement or did not wish to complete skill enhancement;
- **28** engaged in skill enhancement but did not complete a post-test for a variety of reasons including withdrawal from program, or working with another agency that did not wish to post-test;
- **68** completed a pre-test as a part of an employer's recruitment process and therefore did not post-test as they were not involved in a formal intervention to improve their skills. However, all who could benefit from skill development support were offered it; and
- **25** were engaged in skill enhancement at the time this report was written.

Skill Intervention:

Interventions for workers/job seekers requiring or interested in skill enhancement have included the following:

- One-on-one learning support using a variety of LES resources on reading, numeracy, document use and/or computer use (ranging from 1 to 25 hours);
- Facilitated group instruction on computer use (ranging from 1 to 25 hours);
- Facilitated group instruction on reading, document use and numeracy using resources from SkillPlan (ranging from three to five hours);
- Group workshops on skimming and scanning to strengthen skills in reading, document use and numeracy (one to two hours);
- Group workshops on document use (one to two hours); and
- Group workshops on oral communication, working with others, thinking and continuous learning (ranging from 6 to 20 hours).

Worker/Job Seeker Highlights

In many cases, whether through one-on-one intervention or participation in a program, we were able to see job seekers improve their computer use skills in a relatively short amount of time. This improvement was often accompanied by a renewed self confidence in moving forward in today's technologically fast-paced job market. Older clients (over 50) were most likely to experience this boost, and in some cases it gave them the confidence to take on a job they had previously felt unqualified for. Other cases of success with job seekers involved using focused practice exercises (predominantly from the *Measure Up* website: <http://www.skillplan.ca/measureup/default.asp>) not only to enhance skill levels, but also to attain a level of familiarity with work tasks specific to their desired job. This gave them the confidence in their ability to do the tasks required of the job and also gave them an edge when participating in a job interview.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS



Integrating LES in our communities was a challenging process. As project team members worked to find solutions with educators, employment service providers, employers and workers/job seekers, the main difficulty identified was in changing a culture. In many cases, practitioners and clients were resistant to integrating or accepting the LES framework into their processes, regardless of the merit of a new concept, because they were comfortable with their familiar processes. There were, however, many individuals who were open to engaging in the LES framework from the beginning.

Educators

Challenge: A common concern is the perceived lack of time to integrate LES tools and resources into existing curriculum. Although ready-made resources exist, it still takes time to develop familiarity with them. Additionally, it is difficult to change past practices and integrate new resources for some educators who are already teaching multiple courses with full classes.

Solution: We concentrated on a targeted integration of LES tools and resources by working with members of education organizations who were already engaged and saw the benefit of using LES tools and resources. Once a member of a particular organization had bought-in, he or she was willing to pass this work onto their colleagues, making it easier for other educators to integrate. We focused on natural leaders in LES in our educational communities and supported them so that they, in turn, could support others.

We focused on supporting Selkirk ABE by conducting initial assessments and collecting and organizing results as well as compiling learning resources for their trial cohort in the *Essential Skills and Student Success* program. To further enhance integration, we concentrated on creating a better line of communication between project team members and ABE educators through regular follow-



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ups with educators on their use of LES tools and resources and by responding to any needs they had around this. The project's Learning Resource Facilitator, along with the School Chair of the Academic and Upgrading Department of Selkirk College, held a meeting of ABE educators and administrators to discuss possible ways to move forward with LES integration in the future. This meeting resulted in a number of mini-pilot projects including the integration of LES assessment into the Plant Operator Program.

With all adult literacy and education service providers, we continually shared tools and resources as we became aware of them and also compiled an LES unit for secondary school and adult educators, as well as a resource and publication directory (Appendix E). As we began to share resources with educators, we realized a need for a “way in” to teaching LES. To address this need, our Learning Resource Facilitator created three workshops for educators, as well as a career driven LES unit (Appendix F). These workshops are *Skimming and Scanning*, *Question Structure* and *Document Use*.

Challenge: A number of educators felt that students were primarily attending their learning facilities to obtain recognized prerequisites for other programs and that these prerequisite courses automatically addressed LES needs. Because of this, there was a lack of assessment and focused use of specific LES resources and tools by these educators.

Solutions: Project team members recognized this challenge as a valid point. In the case of the Plant Operator Program at Selkirk College, where students were pre- and post-assessed using the TOWES MFG, but did not engage in any specific LES intervention, almost all of the students showed improvement in their LES levels, proving this point in this specific case. However, we still encouraged integration of LES tools and resources into existing curricula. In some cases this was successful and in some cases it was not.

Employment Services

Challenge: One of the major concerns for employment service providers was the perceived lack of time – both their own time and time that clients were willing to take to address LES needs. Many employment service providers found that clients made appointments only to build resumes and they were not interested in taking the time to engage in skills assessment or skill enhancement.

Solution: We attempted to create more seamless ways for employment counsellors to use tools and resources with clients when they are working on resume building or interview preparation (Appendix I). We also held in-house workshops to demonstrate how employment counsellors could use the LES job profiles to design better resumes and/or assist clients in articulating their transferable skills or the job tasks they performed in previous employment.

Challenge: Employment service providers lacked sufficient time to explore and integrate LES tools and resources into their day-to-day process with clients. Because of this, we saw very limited use of



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LES job profiles (the tool we had identified as most useful) and other LES tools and assessments at the beginning of our project.

Solution: We communicated that a stronger use of LES job profiles could assist career facilitators in their work with clients in terms of career exploration, resume building and interview preparation. The use of job profiles could also lead to more LES assessment which would benefit workers and job seekers who may have an LES skills gap. To encourage a deeper use of LES tools and resources, we held an Essential Skills “open house.” Career facilitators reviewed existing LES resources and identified those most useful for work with clients. We then chose two of those resources (assessments and job profiles) and held in-house workshops so that the career facilitators could dedicate some time to familiarize themselves with the tools. This led to a deeper understanding of how they could use LES resources with their clients and a renewed commitment to integrating the concept into their work with job seekers.

Employers

Challenge: Working with employers and LES is notoriously challenging. When we first began our project, we approached employers armed with LES literature and information. This approach was largely unsuccessful as employers do not have time to sit down and read about LES even if they think the concept is interesting, and they often feel that there is not sufficient time to spend on skill development for existing employees.

Solution: To learn more about working with employers and their LES needs, we met with an educator at the Douglas College Training Group. Through this meeting we realized that we needed to broaden our LES scope when working with employers to include all nine Essential Skills so that we could focus on addressing the employers’ LES needs (as they see them) rather than on filtering those needs through the four Essential Skills meant to be addressed by this project. As an outcome of the meeting, we also created a brochure (Appendix J) that highlighted our services and abilities to deal with skills gaps rather than focusing on the language of LES, which tends to alienate employers.

We tried a number of approaches: not mentioning LES at all, mentioning LES but not elaborating, and fully focusing on the LES concept. We found the most useful approach was to focus on what we could do for them. In most cases this was to assist them with the hiring process by working with job profiles to create job postings and then using LES assessments with shortlisted candidates. In the process of working with employers, we began to introduce them to the concept of LES, job profiles and LES assessment. This sometimes led to interest in the skill development of existing employees, but at the very least, it introduced employers to the concept of LES. The LES job profiles are highly relevant to employers. Employers are often surprised by how succinct and accurate the job profiles are exclaiming, “Yes, this is exactly what we do!” When we can compare the skill levels required for



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the job against the skill levels of a job seeker or prospective employee, there are many positive outcomes.

Challenge: Many employers are not interested in skill enhancement for their employees in the categories of reading, document use or numeracy and are most interested in thinking, oral communication and working with others.

Solution: Project team members began engaging employers through a wider range of Essential Skills tools and resources and offering on-the-job training in problem solving, oral communication and working with others. In order to meet our deliverable of engaging employers in understanding and using LES tools and resources, we planned a series of employer focus groups in Trail. These focus groups invited employers to The Skills Centre to discuss their biggest staffing and workplace challenges. We then introduced them to our services, including using LES tools and resources.

Workers and Job Seekers

Challenge: Many workers or job seekers have barriers other than skill levels that keep them from obtaining and retaining satisfactory employment. These barriers can also keep them from participating in skill enhancement or completing a skill enhancement plan, particularly in an individualized, self-paced learning environment.

Solution: We offered a variety of skill enhancement options to workers and job seekers who demonstrated a skills gap or a desire for skill enhancement. These options included enrolment in Adult Basic Education programs which offer both daytime and nighttime options; online learning; self-study; one-on-one work with project team members; integration of Essential Skills tools and resources into the curriculum of prerequisite courses through Cooperative Education and Alternate Education in SD #20 and SD #51; drop-in learning sessions offered by CBAL; and integration of Essential Skills tools and resources into on-the-job training. We also observed that those who were working in discreet cohorts (school, literacy or job readiness programs) were more likely to complete a skill enhancement plan, so we focused on supporting educators and career facilitators who were working with learners at Selkirk ABE, Trail Co-op Education, Castlegar Online learning, Boundary Youth Success and the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers program. When working with clients who were not a part of a cohort, we practiced regular follow-up and offered continued support and LES enhancement suggestions and rationale.

Challenge: Workers or job seekers are intimidated by assessments and/or do not wish to be identified as lacking skills.

Solution: Project team members realized and acknowledged the need for a variety of assessment options. Some clients are not able to complete and/or are intimidated by the length and formality of



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the TOWES and require a shorter and less formal assessment. To provide this, we compiled an assessment using the OLES Online Indicators for reading, document use and numeracy.

As we learned of the need for a variety of assessment options, we also acquired some important learning around debriefing procedures, particularly when a client's results are low. It is imperative that each client fully understands the reason for skill assessment and is prepared to learn the status of their LES levels. We shared best practices for this on an ongoing basis with team members, employment counsellors and educators who were administering assessments; this ensured that we were supporting, rather than damaging, the self-esteem of workers or job seekers who participated in LES assessment. We also recognized that there are times when assessment will not benefit an individual, and in those cases we recommended simply beginning a skill enhancement plan without assessment. This was particularly important when working with younger learners.

EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Project Evaluation

We managed the process of project evaluation including collection and analysis of data by analyzing the results of pre- and post-assessments of Essential Skills knowledge administered to key stakeholders. Assessments were administered to practitioners in the region (i.e. employment counsellors and adult educators) through an online survey and were compiled for analysis. The assessment consisted of the following four questions and practitioners rated themselves on a scale:

- Where do you place yourself on this scale as you reflect on your current KNOWLEDGE of Essential Skills and Essential Skills profiles?
- Where do you place yourself on this scale as you reflect on your current USE of Essential Skills and Essential Skills profiles?
- Where do you place yourself on this scale as you reflect on your current KNOWLEDGE/USE of Essential Skills resources (i.e., learning resources, tools for employers in the workplace, websites, videos, etc.)?
- Where do you place yourself on this scale as you reflect on your current UNDERSTANDING/USE of Essential Skills assessment tools (TOWES, self assessment, etc.)?



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Overall, most practitioners improved their LES knowledge by at least two levels (see Appendix B for results).

Other project evaluation included LES knowledge assessments for employers, pre- and post-tests of workers/job seekers through monthly contact with adult and literacy educators and employment counsellors, and regular reporting regarding project deliverables.

To date:

- 39 employment service providers and adult educators have completed pre-assessments of LES knowledge.
- 28 employment service providers and adult educators have completed post-assessments.
- 9 employers have completed assessments of LES knowledge.
- 270 workers/job seekers have completed pre-assessments of LES levels.
- 80 workers/job seekers have completed post-assessments of LES levels with 72 showing improvement in LES levels.

Recommendations

Create a community wide LES network:

To successfully integrate the LES framework into multiple communities, it became clear that a strong network would be required. A significant part of our work focused on creating a stronger LES network amongst our partner organizations. Our goal was to develop a set of procedures for working with individuals who present skills gaps. Our aim was to be able to assist these individuals in identifying and addressing their LES gaps, regardless of their entry point into the network. The organizations that were involved in strengthening the LES network in our communities were The Skills Centre, CFDC Boundary, Selkirk College, CBAL, School District #20 and School District #51.

The first two network meetings took place in Trail and Grand Forks. The initial meetings involved the leaders/supervisors of each organization discussing ways to have clear communication and processes regarding individuals presenting skills gaps. A meeting of frontline workers soon followed to discuss network connections and meeting the LES needs of learners, job seekers and workers. A document was developed that lists each organization, LES services they offer, hours of operation and a contact person knowledgeable about LES (Appendix D). These measures provided clarity and connection between partner organizations that allowed practitioners to seek out support and gain necessary knowledge for referring clients and learners to appropriate organizations.

The partnerships and networks in our communities were already strong, but it was a goal of the project to further strengthen these bonds. Towards the project's end date, we held two meetings (one in Grand Forks and one in Castlegar) to discuss continued LES integration after Essential Edge



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had wrapped up. In both of these meetings, members reported experiencing stronger connections with fellow community organizations as a result of the project.

Facilitation of LES material vs. self study:

When working with clients or learners within the scope of our project, group facilitation and one-on-one facilitation have been the most beneficial modes of skill development. Learners who can benefit from LES enhancement are generally low skill (lower than level three when assessed in reading, document use and numeracy). Some important practices when working with learners include the following: building self-esteem into the learning process is key because when people are feeling exposed they will often shut down; being in a group sharing a common goal boosts morale and creates a safe community if facilitated well; and getting past learning barriers requires patience and guidance. All of these practices require facilitation.

Learners benefit from having a facilitator present who can guide them through the skill development process by scaffolding their learning, answering questions and giving positive reinforcement. Without this, there is a tendency to drift away from skill enhancement, especially because with LES there is no specific certification or end point they are working towards. In almost every case where we worked with someone who wished to address a skills gap through self-study, motivation waned and sufficient skill development did not occur. An individual must be highly motivated to complete skill enhancement this way, and often, learning barriers are an obstacle that require support to surmount.

Build LES enhancement into existing curricula:

Building LES enhancement into a program or existing curricula is often an excellent way to use the tools and resources. Teachers can embed the learning into a range of courses or topics, or use LES strategies such as skimming and scanning and question structure to demonstrate how students can find and use information. This can enhance performance on tests and assignments across all subjects. Building LES tools and resources into workshops or job readiness programs is also very successful as it lends itself best to work related pursuits.

Programs that run for two to four months seem to have the strongest uptake from staff and learners and a weaker uptake has been observed in organizations where educators are being driven by non-LES credentials such as Grade 12 or prerequisites to specific programs. LES credentials are not recognized, so the aforementioned types of goals are viewed as more important. It takes time and effort to make major change to a system. This is beyond the scope of a two year project.

Introduce employers to LES assessment for employee recruitment:

LES assessment can be used in a variety of ways and for a range of purposes. In our project, we have found that using assessment is an excellent way to begin to work with employers and to introduce



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them to the ES concept and framework. By assessing an employer's shortlisted job candidates and then comparing their skill levels to those required for the job (through job profiles), we were able to give the employer tangible proof that LES is useful in the hiring process. This opens up their minds to the possibility of expanded use of LES tools and resources with their existing staff.

BEST PRACTICES

After almost two years of working with the Essential Skills framework, we have identified the following as best practices:



- **Integrate LES tools and resources into existing workshops, courses, or programs.** The tools and resources lend themselves particularly well to program integration. You can integrate assessment and use of occupational profiles into a career exploration or resume building workshop, or integrate them into existing course work in adult education or existing job readiness programs.
- **Use LES tools and resources with clients who are motivated:** Clients who are motivated to change their work position or build on their existing skills will benefit the most from LES. Because there is no official certification to show an employer, the client must be motivated by a desire to strengthen existing skills.
- **Be creative and modify LES resources, or use your own resources with the intention of developing learners' Essential Skill levels:** If a resource doesn't quite fit your organization or your purposes, change it by shortening it, modifying it, or only using the part that will most benefit clients.



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- **Show employers how you can benefit them:** When working with employers, show them which tasks you can take off of their hands or simplify by using LES tools and resources for workforce recruitment and retention.
- **Avoid becoming overwhelmed by resources:** The volume of LES resources available is so huge that choosing the right one, or even beginning to wade through them, can seem daunting. Talk to others who have used LES tools and resources to find out what worked best for them, or stick to SkillPlan and the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills websites for free, easy to use options.
- **Start small:** Choose just one or two resources to begin using in your organization (e.g. job profiles and online assessments) and build from there.
- **Build relationships:** Clients/learners/partners are more willing to take a risk in using LES tools and resources if a strong, trusting relationship is established first. Solid relationships are the key to successful collaboration.
- **Co-facilitate:** Share facilitation when delivering skill enhancement, especially in a community setting, to dispel the isolation and to offer more variety to clients/learners.

CONCLUSION

The Essential Edge pilot project was successful on a number of levels. During the two year project, all the key stakeholders learned a great deal and existing relationships were deepened between organizations in our communities. Education and employment service providers learned about the LES concept and recognized the usefulness of integrating the tools and resources into their work with learners and clients. A number of employers also benefited from increasing their knowledge of the LES concept as it assisted them in finding employees with the required skill levels, as well as in developing the skill levels of existing employees. Workers and job seekers also saw the benefit of LES through their contact with a variety of programs that practitioners had infused with LES tools and resources.

Towards the end of our project, we held two LES integration meetings with interested parties from education and employment service organizations to discuss how we would continue to use LES as we move forward without the support of the project. During the LES integration meetings, procedures were developed to ensure that LES information and practice would be continually shared as a part of our communities' regular literacy meetings. Multiple meeting participants commented that although our community partnerships were initially strong, this project raised the level of connection between partners significantly. As our project comes to a close, we have full confidence that the LES concept, framework, as well as the tools and resources will continue to be used in our communities in a variety of ways.

APPENDIX A

Map of Communities that Essential Edge focused on

This map shows the communities of Castlegar, Trail, Grand Forks and the Boundary area of the southern interior of British Columbia.

(This map was originally published in the West Kootenay/Boundary BetterBook.)



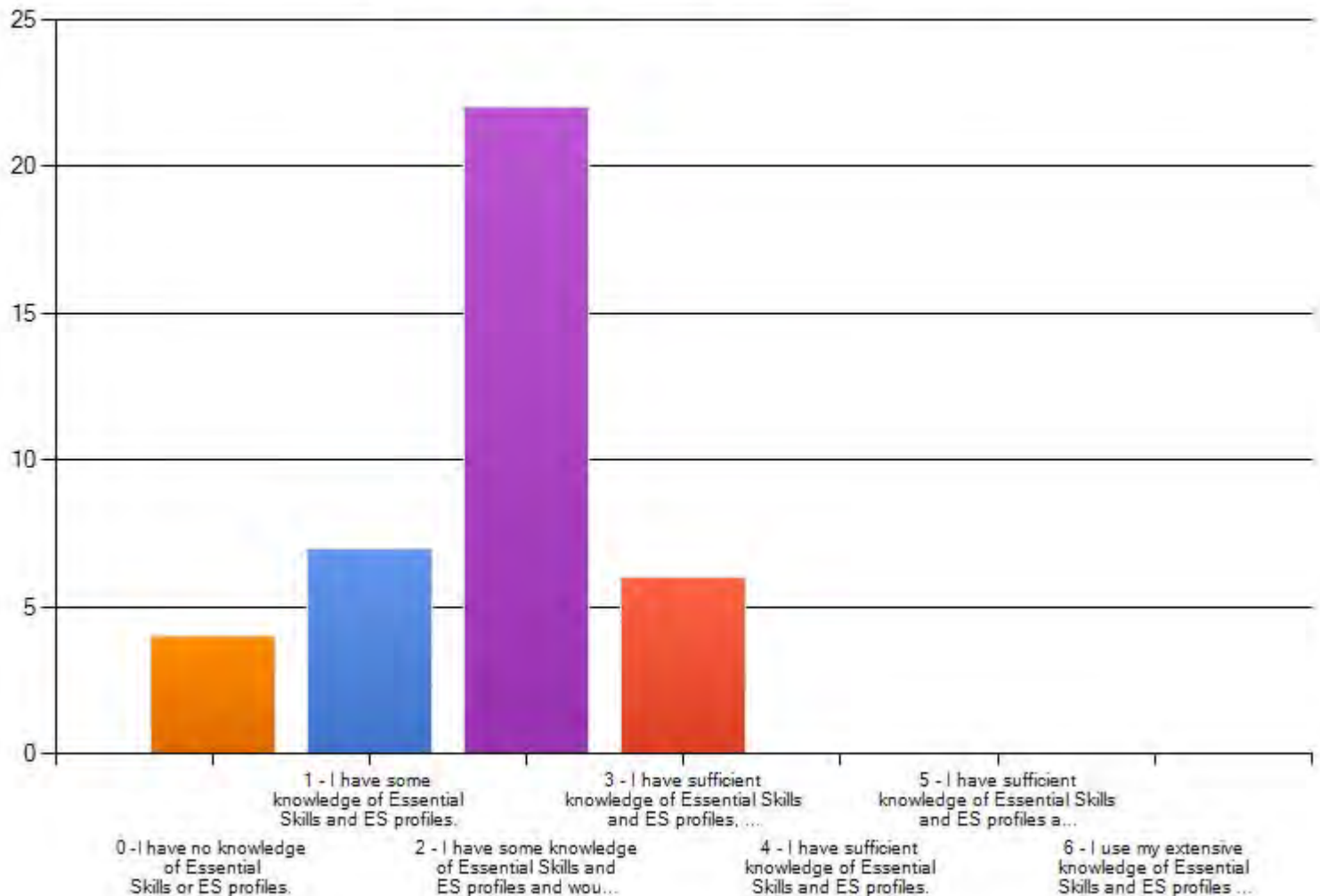
APPENDIX B

Results of LES Knowledge Pre-Assessments (educators and employment service providers)

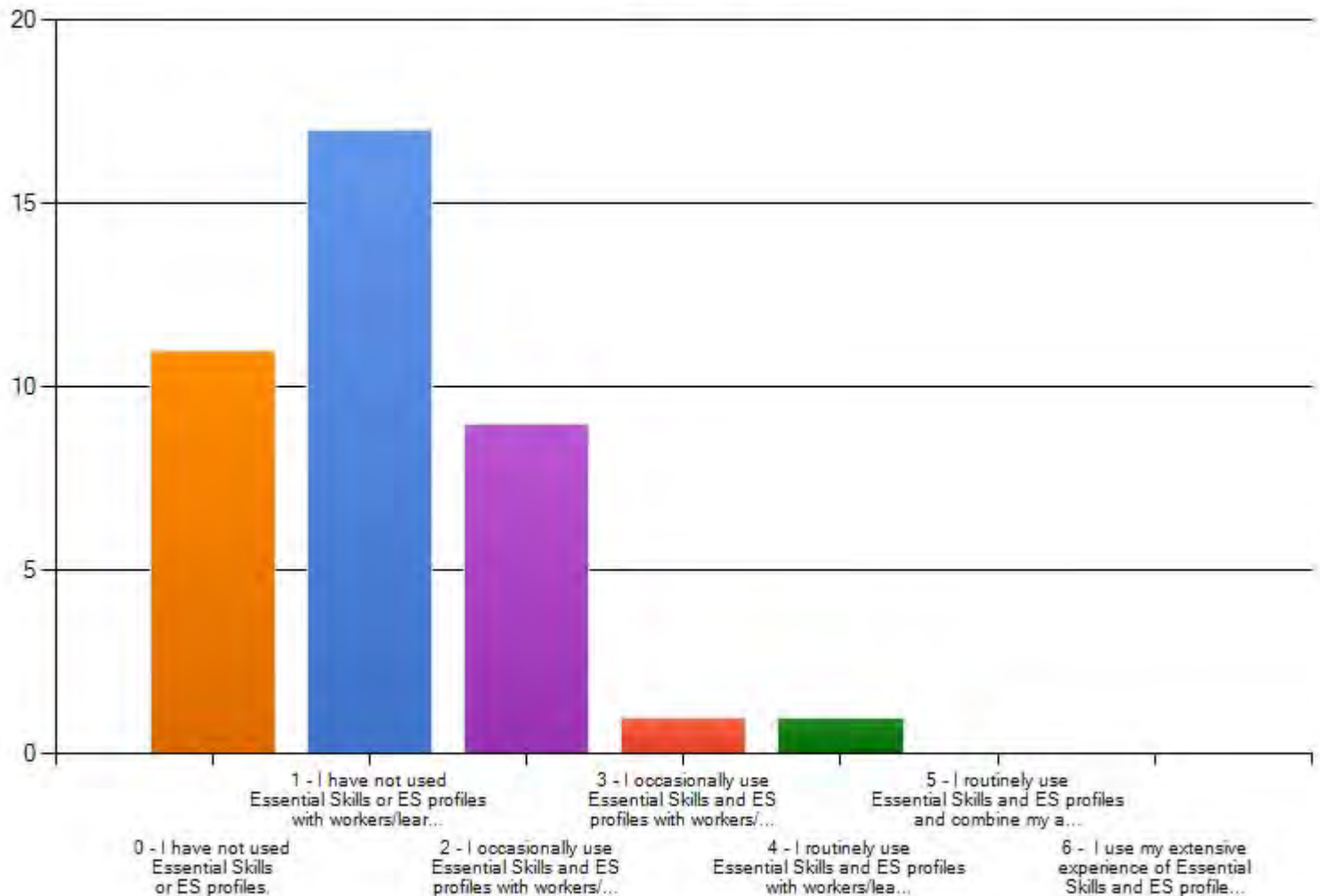
Thirty-nine employment service providers and adult/literacy educators completed a **pre-assessment** at the beginning of the Essential Edge project to provide a baseline for knowledge, understanding and use of the LES concept, tools and resources in our communities.

The results of this assessment are below.

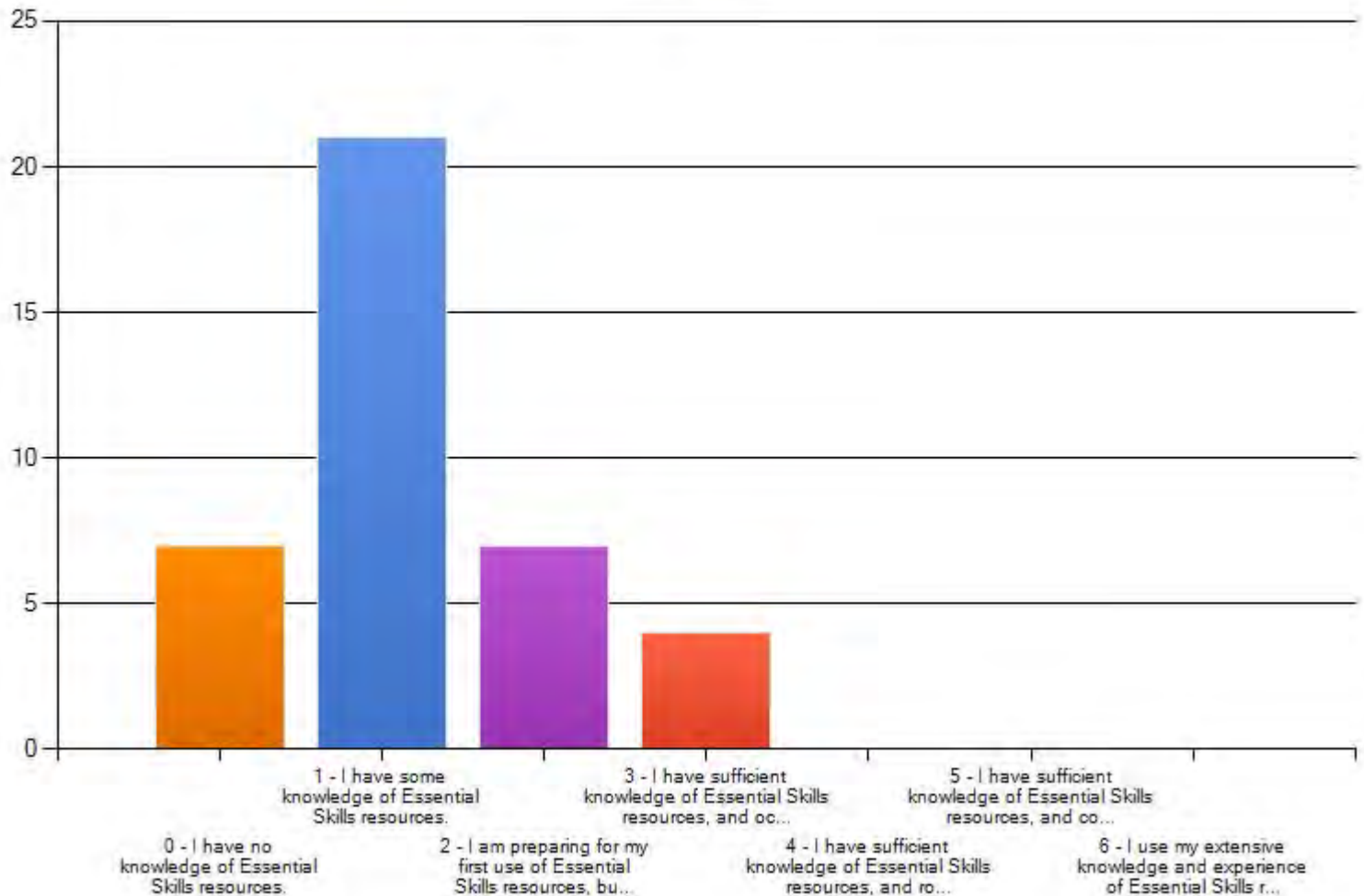
Where do you place yourself on this scale as you reflect on your current KNOWLEDGE of Essential Skills and Essential Skills profiles?



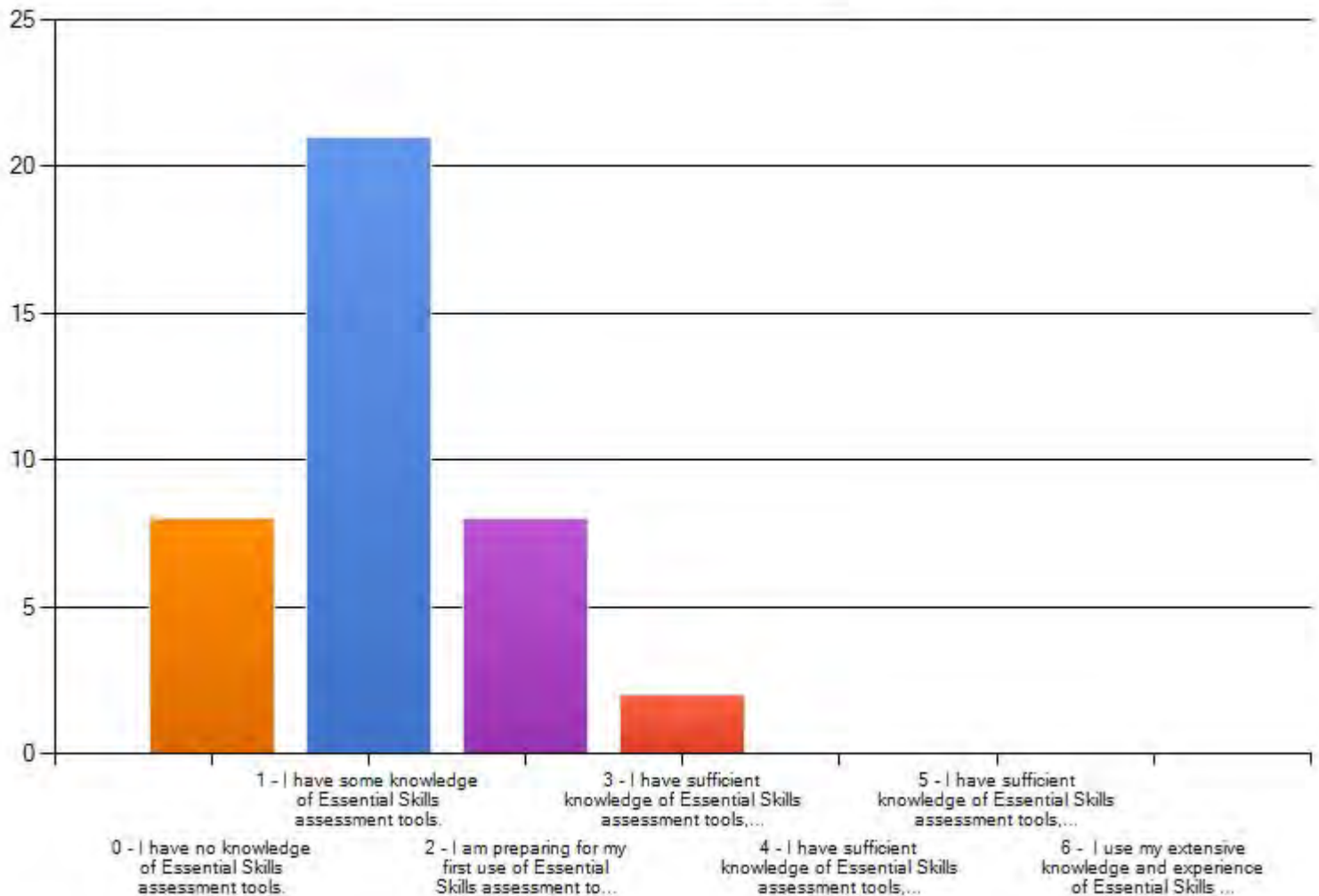
Where do you place yourself on this scale as you reflect on your current USE of Essential Skills and Essential Skills profiles?



Where do you place yourself on this scale as you reflect on your current KNOWLEDGE/USE of Essential Skills resources (ie, learning resources, tools for employers in the workplace, websites, videos, etc.)?



Where do you place yourself on this scale as you reflect on your current UNDERSTANDING/USE of Essential Skills assessment tools (TOWES, self assessment, etc.)?



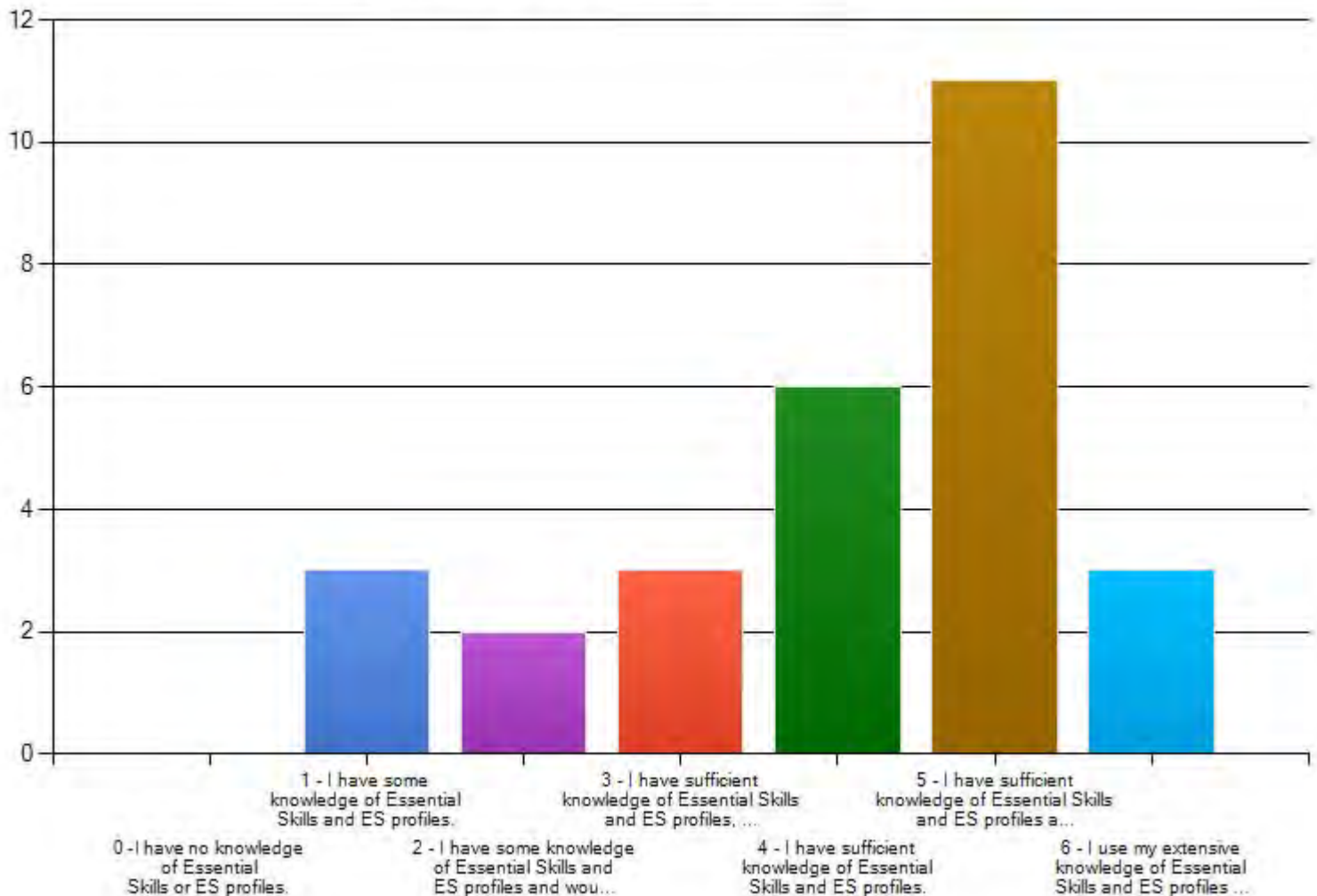
APPENDIX B

Results of LES Knowledge Post-Assessments (educators and employment service providers)

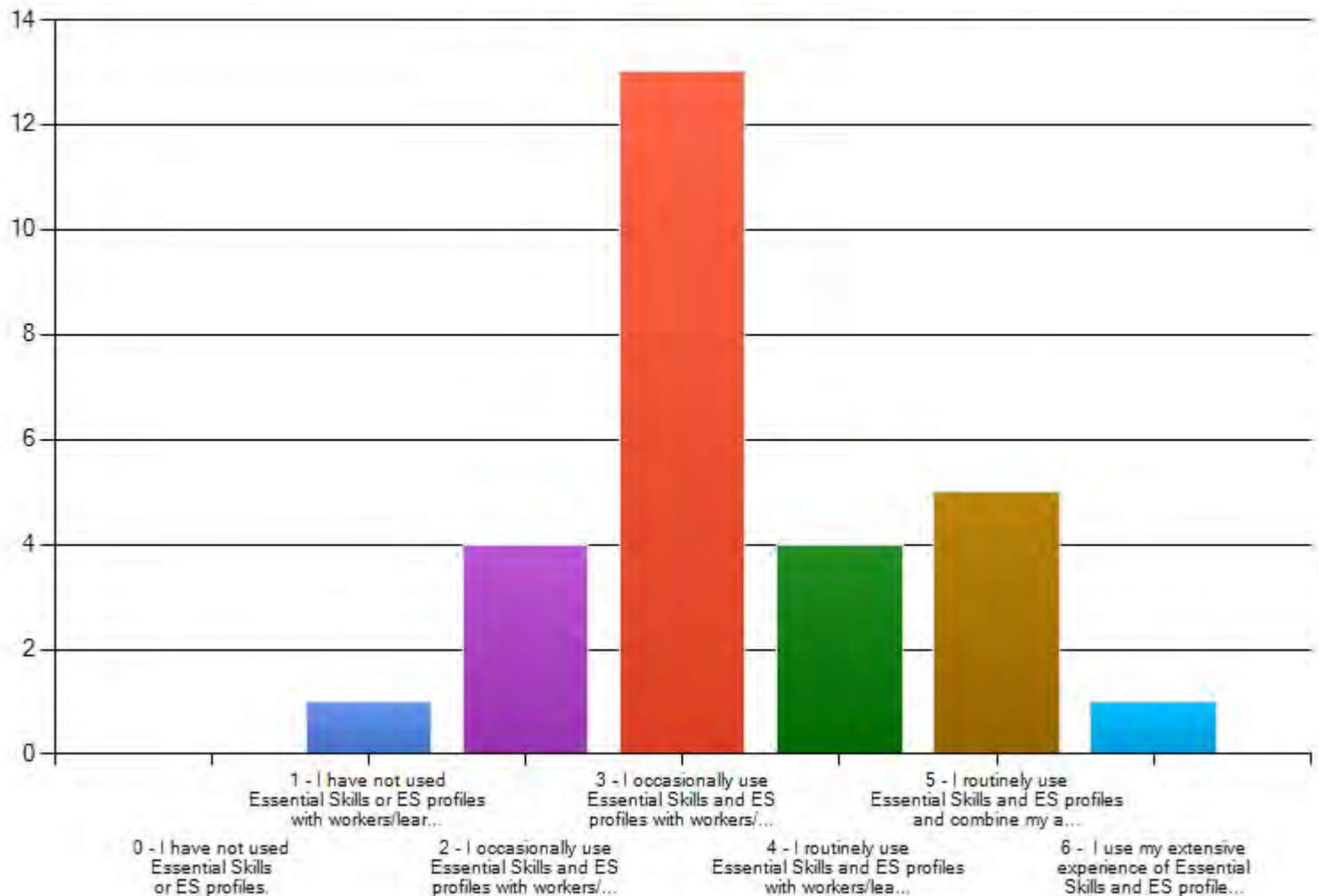
Twenty-eight employment service providers and adult/literacy educators completed a **post-assessment** at the close of the Essential Edge project. Results show a significant increase in knowledge, understanding and use of the LES concept, tools and resources.

The results of this assessment are below.

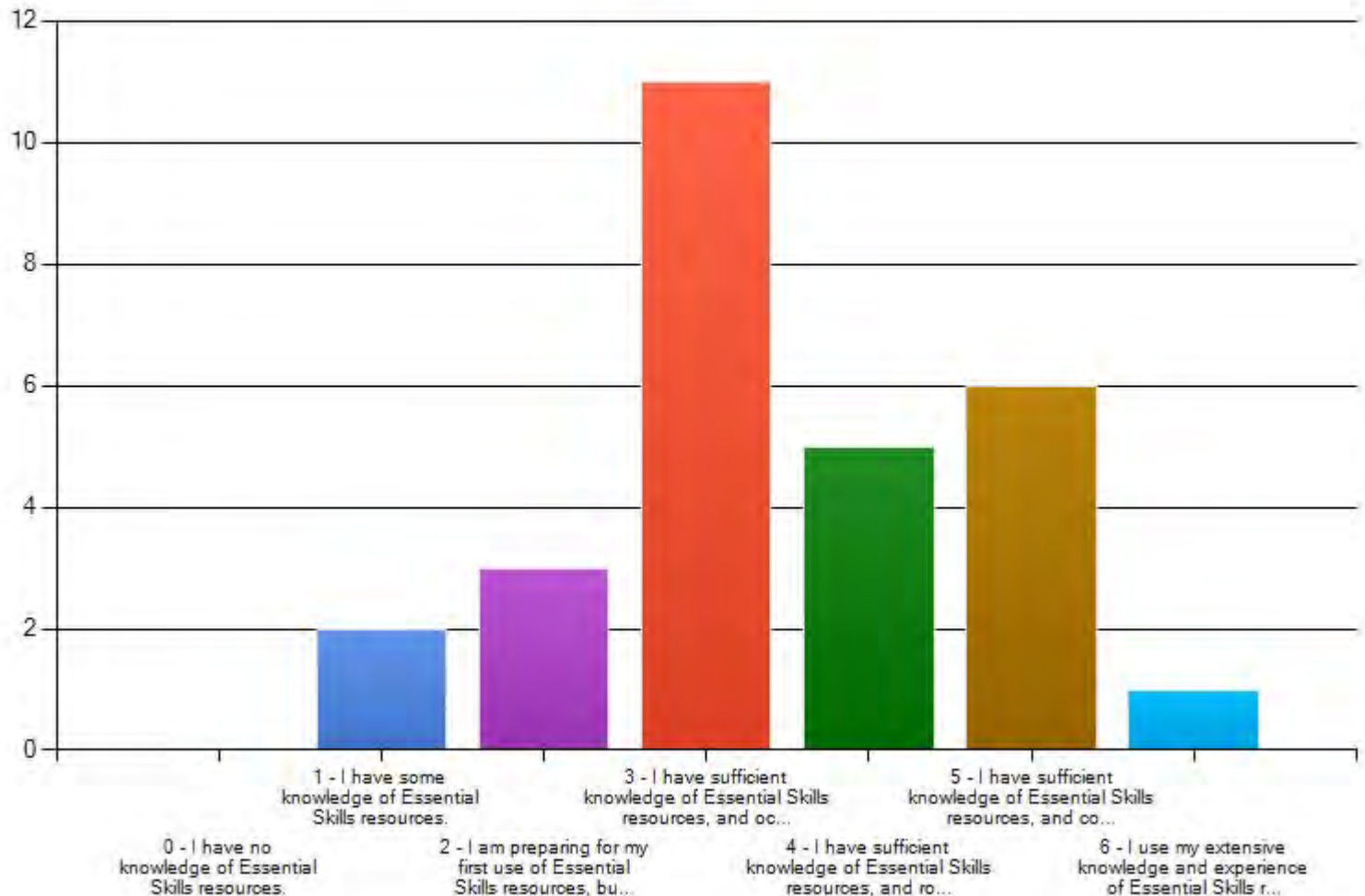
Where do you place yourself on this scale as you reflect on your current KNOWLEDGE of Essential Skills and Essential Skills profiles?



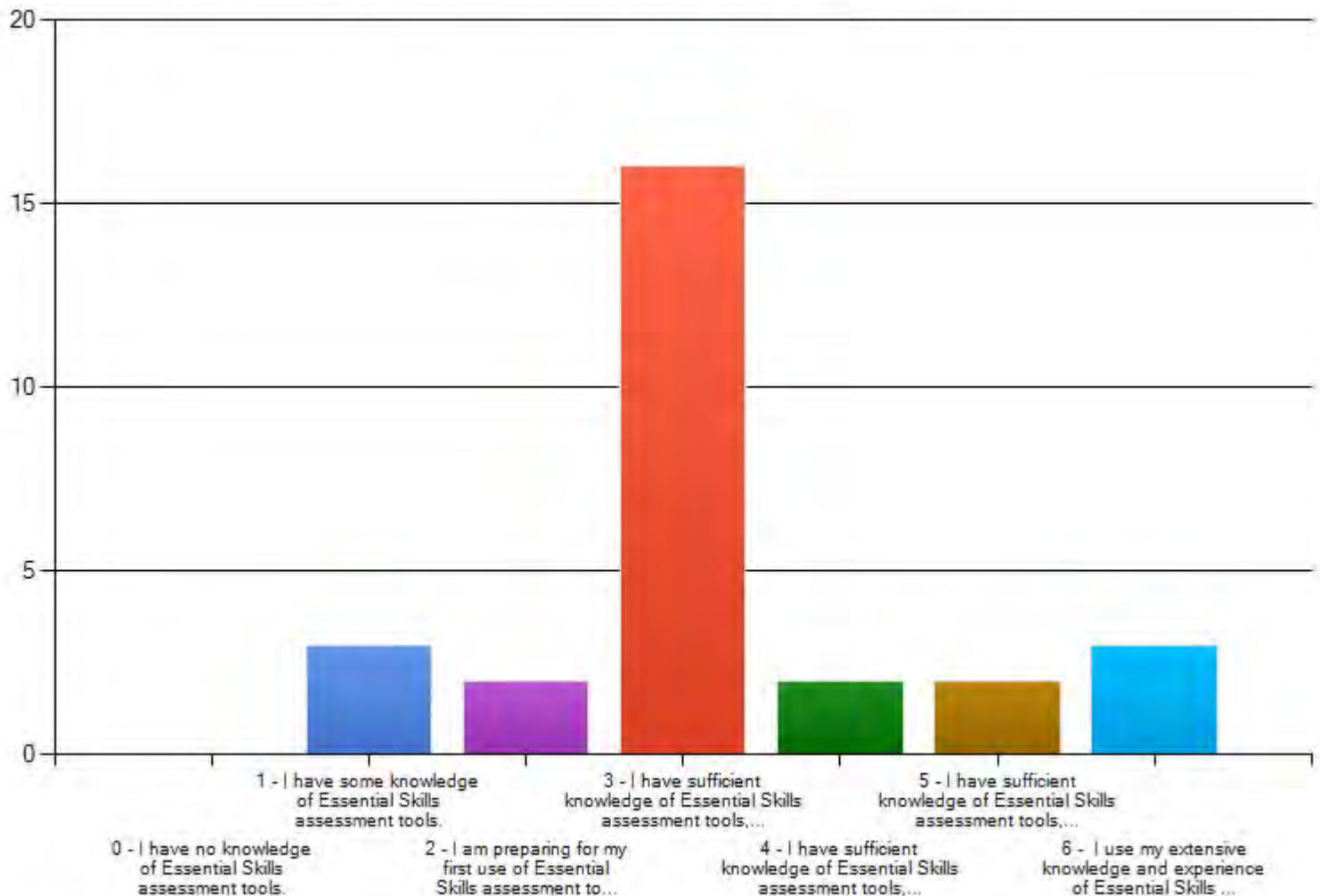
Where do you place yourself on this scale as you reflect on your current USE of Essential Skills and Essential Skills profiles?



Where do you place yourself on this scale as you reflect on your current KNOWLEDGE/USE of Essential Skills resources (ie, learning resources, tools for employers in the workplace, websites, videos, etc.)?



Where do you place yourself on this scale as you reflect on your current UNDERSTANDING/USE of Essential Skills assessment tools (TOWES, self assessment, etc.)?



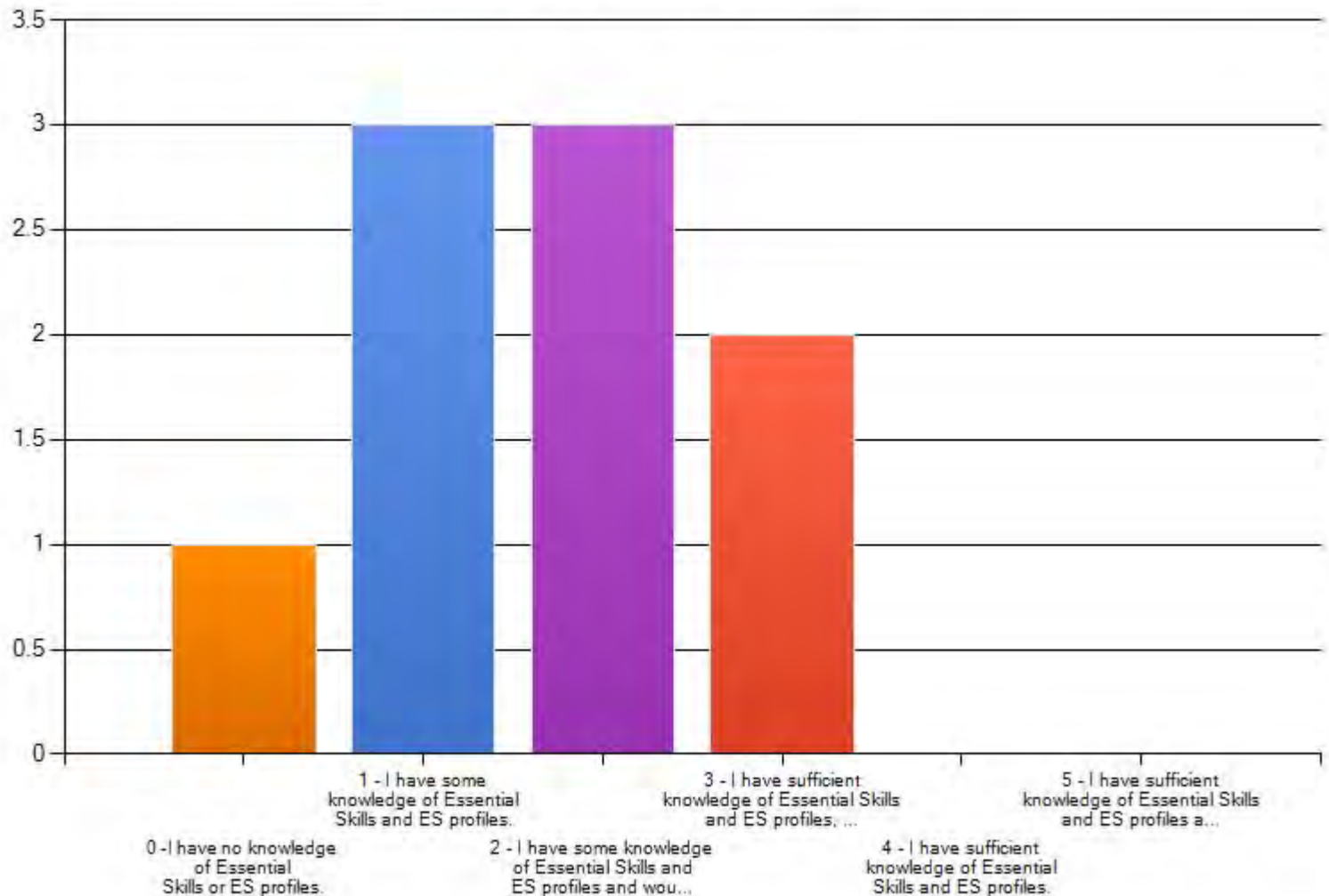
APPENDIX C

Results of LES Knowledge Assessments (employers)

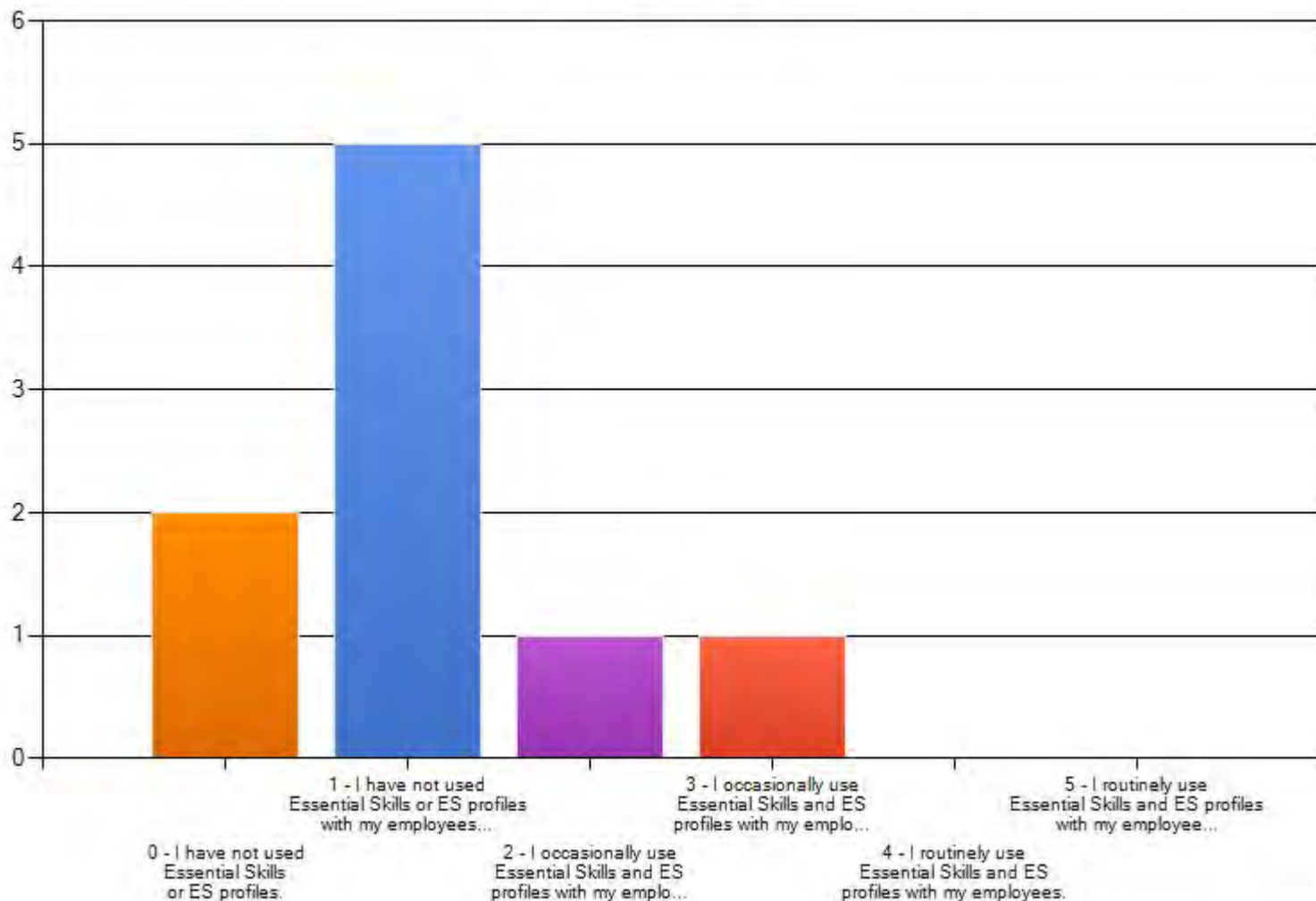
Eight employers completed an LES Knowledge Assessment after working with the Essential Edge project. None of the employers had any knowledge of the LES concept, tools or resources prior to engaging with the project.

The results of this assessment are below.

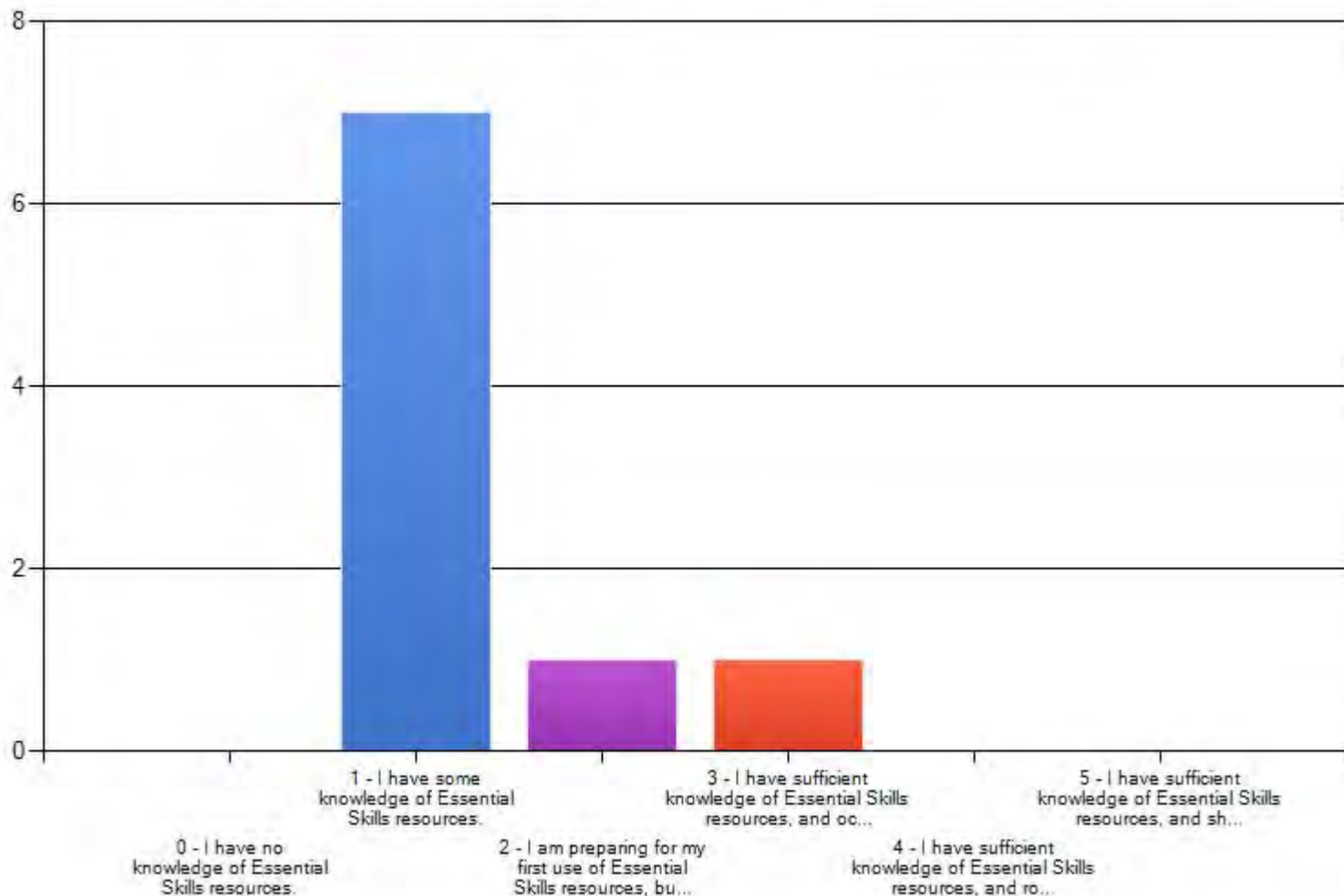
Where do you place yourself on this scale as you reflect on your current KNOWLEDGE of Essential Skills and Essential Skills profiles?



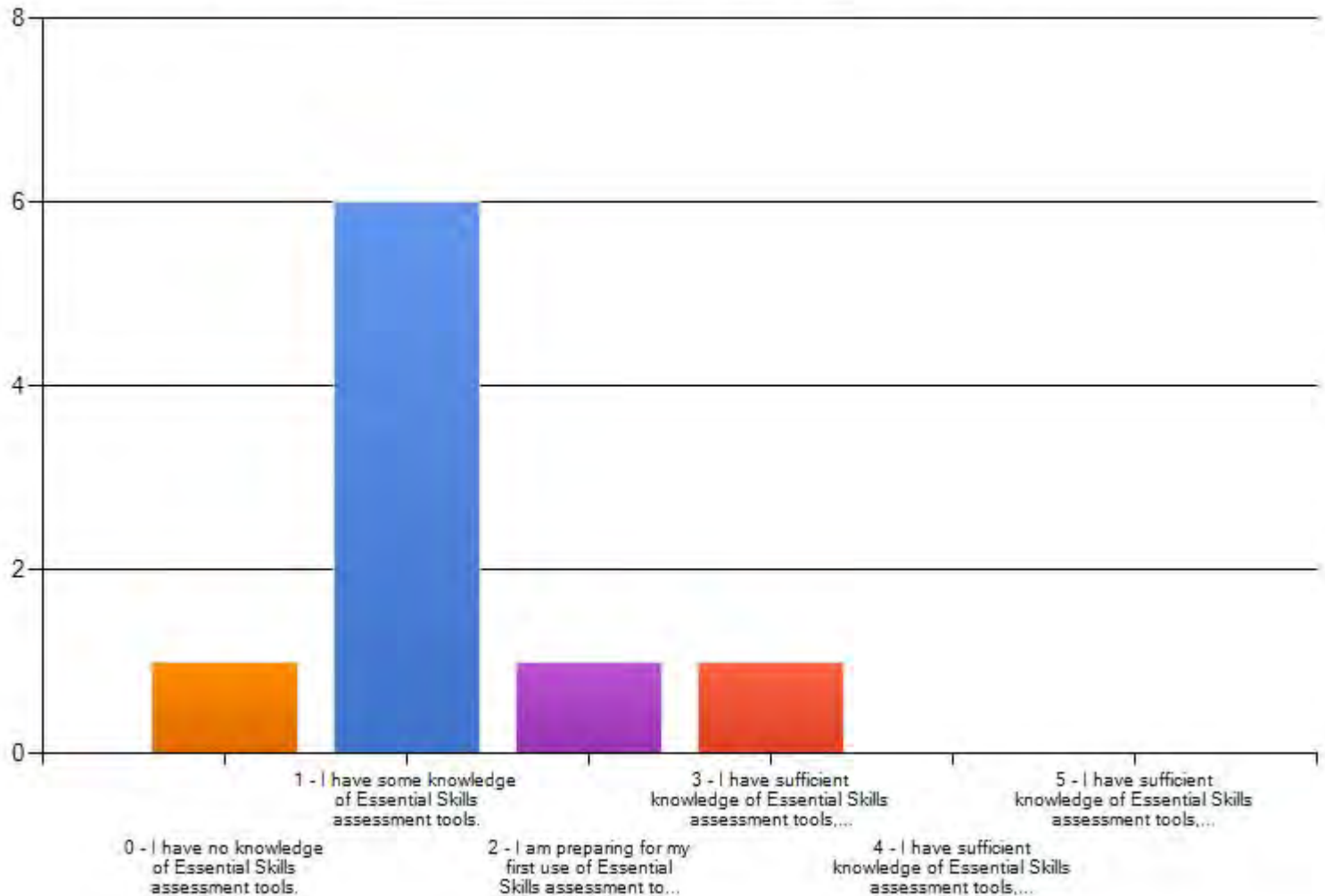
Where do you place yourself on this scale as you reflect on your current USE of Essential Skills and Essential Skills profiles?



Where do you place yourself on this scale as you reflect on your current KNOWLEDGE/USE of Essential Skills resources (ie, learning resources, tools for employers in the workplace, websites, job descriptions, job profiles, the Essential Edge project team, interview tools, checklists, etc.)



Where do you place yourself on this scale as you reflect on your current UNDERSTANDING/USE of Essential Skills assessment tools (TOWES, self assessment, etc.)?



APPENDIX E

LIST OF RESOURCES AND PUBLICATIONS



Office of Literacy and Essential Skills	http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/index.shtml
<p>About OLES: Through extensive research, the Government of Canada, along with other national and international agencies, has identified and validated key literacy and Essential Skills. These skills are used in nearly every job and throughout daily life in different ways and at varying levels of complexity.</p> <p>How can I use the OLES website?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access information about OLES.• Access information and definitions of the nine Essential Skills.• Access online self-assessments in reading, document use and numeracy: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/tools_resources/tools_audience/general/online_indicator.shtml• Access online job profiles for a wide variety of occupations: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/profiles/profiles.shtml• Access Essential Skills tools and resources by audience or by type (these can be accessed online or hard copies can be ordered from OLES free of charge: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/tools_resources/tools.shtml	

Skill Plan	http://www.skillplan.ca
<p>About Skillplan: BC Construction Industry Skills Improvement Council, SkillPlan, is a joint labour and management initiative of the BC construction industry which was established as a not-for-profit society in 1991. The mission of SkillPlan is to develop strategies to improve the essential skills of people working in the unionized construction industry in British Columbia and the Yukon Territory.</p> <p>How can I use Skillplan?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multiple Essential Skills publications can be ordered from this site including workbooks on reading, writing, numeracy, document use and trades specific workbooks.• Research and reports on Essential Skills at work are available.• Access information on upcoming Essential Skills workshops.	

APPENDIX E

LIST OF RESOURCES AND PUBLICATIONS



Measure Up	http://www.skillplan.ca/measureup/english/index.asp
<p>About Measure Up: Measure up is a Skillplan website that allows workers and learners to practice and self-assess three Essential Skills (reading, document use and numeracy) needed in all types of occupations.</p> <p>How can I use Measure Up?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-assessments in reading, document use and numeracy• Practice activities in reading:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Labels or Forms with at least one paragraph of text○ Notes, Letters, Memos○ Manuals, Specifications, Regulations○ Reports, Books, Journals• Practice activities in document use:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Lists and Tables○ Entry Forms to add or read information○ Graphics including graphs, maps, symbols, pictures• Practice activities in numeracy:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ By Application:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Money Math▪ Scheduling, Budgeting and Accounting▪ Measurement and Calculation○ Or By Operation:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Add▪ Subtract▪ Multiply▪ Divide▪ Percent▪ Fractions▪ Ratio• Explore careers• Try activities typical of each occupation• Access workbooks in construction, tourism or trucking occupations• Search “ideas for users” of the site in the following categories:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Teachers (K-12)○ Adult Basic Educators○ Career Counsellors and Employment Trainers○ Students and Workers• Access tips for developing your own materials	

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ITA Essential Skills Online Tool	http://www.itabc.ca/Page1206.aspx
<p>About ITA Essential Skills Online Tool : This website was created to help people prepare for success in the first two levels of technical training during their apprenticeship. It focuses on Essential Skills, which are the foundation skills like reading, math and document use. Each trade requires Essential Skills, but to different degrees. For example, both carpenters and bakers use math, but carpenters need trigonometry and bakers do not. The assessment can be challenging. So are the trades. This assessment will give you a realistic look at the skills you need for the job. It even uses examples and forms that you would find at work. There is a different assessment for each trade and it automatically adjusts to your skill level. If you are getting the correct answers, the assessment will automatically give you more challenging questions. The opposite is also true. If you are answering incorrectly, you will get easier questions.</p> <p>How can I use the ITA tool?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access a comprehensive assessment for most trades occupations.• The results of the assessment give you a report card that outlines which of the skills you need for the trade, which skills you have currently mastered and which skills you can build on.• Both a short and long learning plan (with online resources) are created based on your assessment results.	

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Construction Sector Council Essential Skills Tools	http://www.csc-ca.org/en/catalog/essential-skills/essential-skills-tools
<p>About CSC:</p> <p>The Construction Sector Council (CSC) is a national industry-led organization committed to the development of a highly skilled workforce that will support the future needs of Canada's construction industry.</p> <p>One of their missions is to take a leadership role at the national level for the construction industry by promoting opportunities for collaboration in the development of Essential Skills tools and resources and by providing a focal point for Essential Skills development.</p> <p>How can I use the CSC?</p> <p>Order any of the following publications for free:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Masons' Math Worksheets○ Developing Trades Math Worksheets, A Handbook for Construction Trades Instructors○ How Do Your Skills Measure Up? Self-Assessment Construction Worker's Workbook○ Preparing for Carpenter Training○ Step Up: Build on your talents, Construction Supervisor First Level Essential Skills – Self-Assessment○ Step Up: Build on your talents, Construction Supervisor First Level Essential Skills – Workbook○ Essential Skills Activities for Trades○ Plain Language for Construction○ Using Trades Math	

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Ontario Skills Passport	http://skills.edu.gov.on.ca/OSPWeb/jsp/en/login.jsp
<p>About OSP: The Ontario Skills Passport (OSP) provides clear descriptions of the Essential Skills and work habits important for work, learning and life. The OSP offers high school students, adult learners, job seekers, workers, employers, teachers, trainers, practitioners, job developers and counsellors a common language, resources and tools that help build competence, confidence and connections.</p> <p>How can I use OSP?</p> <p>Access any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Essential Skills and work habits definitions.• Job profiles (very user friendly).• A list of tools and resources including resume building, lesson plans and guides to using Essential Skills for educators and employment services providers.• Help creating a work training plan or a transition plan.• Employer tools.• Online skill practice tools.	

Project Read Resources	http://www.projectread.ca/resources/publications
<p>About Project Read:</p> <p>Project Read is devoted to promoting literacy issues and programs to the community, bringing literacy practitioners together, and improving service delivery. This mandate of information and support remains the heart of the organization.</p> <p>How can I use Project Read?</p> <p>Download copies of the following resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adding to My Skills, 2011: This is a Numeracy Curriculum for learners at Essential Skills Levels 1 and 2• Spotlight On Change: An Essential Skills Upgrading Program for Women Over 40, 2010• Trading Up: Getting Ready for a Hairstyling or Electrical Apprenticeship Program, 2002• Working Together, Working Well, 2005: This facilitator's manual contains over 25 activities to develop an individual's teamwork skills. It includes facilitator's notes and handouts. All activities are linked LBS and Essential Skills levels.	

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Workplace Education Manitoba	http://www.wem.mb.ca/
<p>About Workplace Education Manitoba:</p> <p>Literacy BC is the provincial literacy organization that promotes and supports literacy and learning in British Columbia.</p> <p>How can I use WEM?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access Essential Skills case studies.• Essential Skills awareness tools.• Reflection tools for a number of different occupations.• Instructional tools and workbooks for:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Entrepreneurs○ Health Care workers○ Pharmacy workers• Learner materials:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Strategy for writing tests○ Navigating workplace documents	

Tools for the Trade	http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/tools/tft/cover.htm
<p>About Tools for the Trade – Document Use and Reading:</p> <p>This resource was developed to help learners prepare for the workplace. Using actual examples from local businesses or organizations, we have developed questions and activities that will give learners hands-on experience with communication systems similar to what they may find in a workplace.</p> <p>How can I use Tools for the Trade?</p> <p>Download this free resource which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workplace exercises in reading and document use at levels 1, 2 and 3 (examples include food production, incident reports, housekeeper routines).• Practice job application forms	

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Steps to Employment	http://www.settlement.org/steps/manuals.html
<p>About Steps to Employment:</p> <p>The Steps to Employment workshop manuals include a workbook for participants, notes for instructors, and an implementation guide. Each sector provides information for many different occupations. This is an Ontario based resource and some information will not be relevant, but there are units on occupation-specific terminology and workplace communication. The final unit contains a self-assessment form and activities to guide the participants in setting short-term goals.</p> <p>How can I use Steps to Employment?</p> <p>Download workbooks, instructors guides and an implementation guide in the following sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Automotive Service Trades• Call Centre• Computers• Construction• Education• Electrical Trades & Occupations• Entrepreneurs• Financial Clerks• Food Service Trades & Occupations• Home Health Care• Industrial Trades• Logistics• Personal Services Trades & Occupations• Sales Occupations• Technologists & Technicians in Applied Sciences• Technologists & Technicians in Engineering• Technologists & Technicians in Health Care• Telecommunications Trades & Occupations	

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GCF Learn Free	http://www.gcflearnfree.org/
<p>About GCF Learn Free:</p> <p>GCFLearnFree.org® is supported by the Goodwill Community Foundation, Inc. (GCF®) whose mission is <i>"to create and provide education, employment, and life enrichment opportunities for people who desire to improve the quality of their lives"</i>.</p> <p>How can I use GCF Learn Free?</p> <p>This site provides quality, innovative online learning opportunities to anyone who wants to improve the technology, literacy, and math skills necessary for them to be successful in both work and life.</p> <p>Categories include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Utilizing various learning tools featuring videos and games, learners will be able to learn and practice reading the top 1,000 most frequently used words in the English language. Everything is self-paced and self-directed so that learners can choose to focus on the areas that are most important and relevant to learn.• Computers:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Tutorials on computer basics, Microsoft Excel, Facebook, Microsoft Office, Internet Basics, Google, Windows and more.• Math:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Addition and subtraction, multiplication and division, fractions, decimals, money and more. <p>How can I use GCF Learn Free – Job Development? http://www.gcflearnfree.org/jobdevelopment</p> <p>These tutorials and learning interactives cover the basics of job development, like workplace safety and time management, in addition to the job success strategies needed to advance in your career.</p> <p>Lessons include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workplace basics• Job Success• Money• Timesheet• Time Practice• Career• Email Basics	

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Skills Workshop	http://www.skillsworkshop.org/
<p>About Skills Workshop:</p> <p>Skills Workshop, the home of free adult literacy and numeracy resources since 2001. This site provides more than 1200 free Functional Skills and Skills for Life resources.</p> <p>How can I use Skills Workshop?</p> <p>The site has a powerful search facility: try typing something into the “Search” box at the top left of every page, or use the search page.</p> <p>Look for things for a given subject area using the tabs at the top of every page, such as Numeracy, then filter the resource list by level and/or subject.</p> <p>You can see our 300+ resource contributors and follow the links to their information pages to see lists of all the resources they’ve contributed.</p> <p>Check out the News page for all the latest site information and Recent changes for lists of all new and updated site content. Both pages include a standard RSS feed so you can subscribe for automatic update notifications.</p>	

APPENDIX F

Essential Skills: A course for ABE students

What is this course? This course is designed in 4 modules which:

- 1) introduces the learner to Essential Skills
- 2) Introduces them to a profile of their chosen career
- 3) pre-tests their Essential Skill levels,
- 4) provides some upskilling in document use, reading, writing and numeracy using materials related to their career,
- 5) post-tests to assess any improvement in levels.

It is self paced, and could be completed in about 5 hours, or longer depending on the student (and how much upskilling they need). It can be done individually, or in small groups, requiring some instructor facilitation.

What will the learner be able to do by the end of the course?

- 1) be familiar with what Essential Skills are and how it can benefit them
- 2) be familiar with what they'd be expected to do on the job
- 3) know their pre- and post test Essential Skill levels and how it relates to the levels required by the job
- 4) have gained practice in reading, document use, numeracy and writing using materials that they will find on the job.

Who would benefit from taking this course? A learner who:

- can identify a specific career goal
- is motivated to know what skills their chosen career requires, how their own skills match up, and wants to be better prepared for the training leading to their career.

Course codes available: SSES 01, 02, 03, 04. The first semester a student is enrolled in the Essential Skill course, enroll him/her in SSES 01. For a second semester, use SSES 02, etc.

Note: As part of the enrollment process, please fill out an Essential Edge Confidentiality form (at end of package). It is important that students know their name will not be used in any of the reporting.

Module 1:

Activity 1: Welcome to the Essential Skills website! – web-quest

Activity 2 : My Essential Skills – self-exploration

Module 2:

Activity 1: Get to Know Your Job Profile – webquest and self-exploration

Activity 2: Assess Your Skills – pre-test and “soft skill” self-assessment

Module 3:

Activity 1: Upskilling at Measure Up

Module 4: Activity 1: Post-assessment and self-reflection

APPENDIX F

Module 1 - Activity 1: Welcome to The Essential Skills Website!

This web-quest activity will introduce you to the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) website for Essential Skills.

Go to the Essential Skills website

<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/videos/videos.shtml>

Click on the 2nd video called “Essential Skills to Get Ahead” and use the information there to answer questions 1 – 4.

1. What is the definition of Essential Skills? _____

2. How many skills are there? _____

3. What are 2 reasons why it is important to know about these skills?

4. In the space provided below, draw a simple map illustrating all of the Essential Skills.

APPENDIX F

Module 1 - Activity 2: My Essential Skills












1. Ask your instructor for a copy of the handout “What are Essential Skills?” or print it off at: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/pdfs/awareness/what_are_es.pdf
Read it over. What is an example of an Essential Skill you have, and how you have used it (ie, at home, school, work)? _____

2. Ask your instructor for a copy of “My Essential Skills.” Check any of the squares that describe you. Then write in the Essential Skill that is being referred to in each box. Hand in all the work you’ve done in this module to your instructor.

My Essential Skills

Directions: Read the descriptions below, and place a check in the box if it applies to you. Then, write in the Essential Skill that is being referred to.



I am someone who.....

 <p>I am someone who ... Loves all kinds of reading materials ... magazines, novels, newspapers ...anything!</p> <p>Essential Skill: _____</p>	 <p>Keeps a journal or likes to write stories or poems.</p> <p>Essential Skill: _____</p>	 <p>Is good at filling in forms; likes working with charts.</p> <p>Essential Skill: _____</p>
 <p>Spends a lot of time using computers and improving my computer skills.</p> <p>Essential Skill: _____</p>	 <p>Can calculate GST and PST on anything!</p> <p>Essential Skill: _____</p>	 <p>Likes to work as a team to organize the office Christmas party.</p> <p>Essential Skill: _____</p>
 <p>Likes to create schematic drawings before buildinganything!</p> <p>Essential Skill: _____</p>	<p>You use your Essential Skills everyday!</p>	 <p>Is always taking some course to improve my skills.</p> <p>Essential Skill: _____</p>
 <p>Likes to talk a lot and enjoys presenting ideas to others.</p> <p>Essential Skill: _____</p>	 <p>Likes to plan my day and organize events.</p> <p>Essential Skill: _____</p>	 <p>Weighs all the options before choosing what to do.</p> <p>Essential Skill: _____</p>

APPENDIX F

My Essential Skills - KEY

Directions: Read the descriptions below, and place a check in the box if it applies to you. Then, write in the Essential Skill that is being referred to.

 <p>I am someone who ... Loves all kinds of reading materials ... magazines, novels, newspapers ...anything!</p> <p>Essential Skill <u>Reading Text</u></p>	 <p>Keeps a journal or likes to write stories or poems.</p> <p>Essential Skill <u>Writing</u></p>	 <p>Is good at filling in forms; likes working with charts.</p> <p>Essential Skill: <u>Document Use</u></p>
 <p>Spends a lot of time using computers and improving my computer skills.</p> <p>Essential Skill: <u>Computer Use</u></p>	 <p>Can calculate GST and PST on anything!</p> <p>Essential Skill: <u>Numeracy</u></p>	 <p>Likes to work as a team to organize the office Christmas party.</p> <p>Essential Skill: <u>Working with Others</u></p>
 <p>Likes to create schematic drawings before building anything.</p> <p>Essential Skill: <u>Document Use</u></p>	<p>You use your Essential Skills everyday!</p>	 <p>Is always taking some course to improve their skills</p> <p>Essential Skill: <u>Continuous Learning</u></p>
 <p>Likes to talk a lot and enjoys presenting ideas to others.</p> <p>Essential Skill: <u>Oral Communication</u></p>	 <p>Likes to plan my day and organize events.</p> <p>Essential Skill: <u>Thinking</u></p>	 <p>Weights all the options before choosing what to do.</p> <p>Essential Skill <u>Thinking</u></p>

APPENDIX F

Module 2 - Activity 1: Get to Know Your Job Profile

This web-quest activity will introduce you to a Job Profile on the Essential Skills website.

From the website in Module 1 - Activity 1, click on Essential Skills Profiles in the left column OR go to <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/profiles/profiles.shtml>

Click on “Search the Profiles” in the middle of the page. Click on “Occupation”. Enter the job you’re considering in the search box. Click on “Next.” You may have to fine-tune your search from the options offered, depending on what job you entered. When you have found the job that most closely matches your choice, print off the Job Profile. Ask your instructor to explain complexity levels and the most important Essential Skills of this job, then answer the following questions:

1. What is the name of the job you’re considering? _____

2. What are the 2 or 3 most important Essential Skills this job requires? (These are listed near the top of the profile.)

3. List an example of a Level 1 daily task from one of the most important Essential Skills.
Is this a task you can do?

4. What are the highest complexity levels listed for each of the most important Essential Skills?
List an example of a task that is at the highest level for one of the most important Essential Skills.

5. How well do you think you could do on the task you listed above?

APPENDIX F

Module 2 - Activity 2: Assess Your Skills

Now it is time to find out how your skill levels compare to the Job Profile. Ask your instructor for the Essential Skills pre-assessment. This will give you an idea of what level you are currently working at in Reading, Document Use and Numeracy. If you need to do some upskilling, this will show you where to focus. The assessment will take about an hour to complete.

1. Once you have completed this, and your instructor has had a chance to go over the results with you, think of the other Essential Skills (Working with Others, Oral Communication, Computer Use, Continuous Learning, Writing, and Thinking). Which of these skills is your best?

2. Ask your instructor for a self-assessment for the Essential Skills listed above, or access them online at: http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/tools_resources/assessment.shtml

Complete at least 2 self-assessments, then answer the following questions about the Essential Skills you possess.

- a. What are your strongest skill areas? _____

- b. What are your least developed skill areas? _____

- c. Look back on your Job Profile. What skill areas do you need to boost to bring up your level to those listed in your Job Profile? Pick the top 3. If you're already at the levels you need, discuss next steps with your instructor.

- d. How can you improve upon the least developed skill areas? Discuss these ideas with your instructor.

- e. How will this information help you better prepare for your career? _____

APPENDIX F

Module 3 - Activity 1: Upskilling at Measure Up.

Now that you know what skills your chosen job requires, and you know what your skill levels are, you now have the information that will allow you to upskill using the actual materials you'll find on the job. These activities will strengthen your skills in Reading, Numeracy and Document Use. Go to the Measure Up website at:

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

Click on “Explore Careers” on the left column. Then click on “All Occupations”. Then click on the job that is closest to your chosen career. At the bottom of this page, click on a grey key: “Try some activities typical of this occupation.” Follow Steps 1 – 3. If you'd like to try some more activities typical of this occupation, click the grey key “Same occupation” or try activities from a different career. Check in with your instructor if you are having any problems. Do at least 3 activities. Hand in these completed activities.

Another way for you to upskill at the Measure Up site is to click on “Practice” on the left hand column. You can choose activities from the Practice menu, which breaks each skill (numeracy, reading text, and document use) down into specific categories: for example, you could choose “reading text: labels for forms with a least one paragraph of text.” Discuss with your instructor which and how many of these activities to do to improve your skills. Hand in these completed activities.

You can also practice and assess your skill levels by clicking on “Test Your Skills” on the left hand column. Choose a skill at either your current level or one above (level 1-2, level 2-3, and level 3+). When you have reached the levels required by your job profile, hand in your activities to your instructor.

APPENDIX F

Module 4- Activity 1: Post-assessment

Now that you've practiced your Essential Skills of reading, numeracy and document use, it's time to find out how much you've improved. Ask your instructor for the Essential Edge post-assessment. This will take about an hour. Discuss the results with your instructor.

1. Reflect on how well prepared you feel for your chosen job. What you have learned about your skills in relation to your job?

2. What have you learned about the job? What were your reasons for choosing that job? Will you still pursue this job? If not, why not?

3. List 3 ideas on how you can use the information you've learned about the job and about your skills when you apply for and interview for this job?

APPENDIX G

Essential Skills Integration into Client Services

Service	ES tool	Suggestions for use
Evaluation of self-assessments	OLES ES self-assessments (reading, writing, document use, numeracy, computer use, oral communication, working with others, thinking, continuous learning)	Administer before job change, training, or entry/re-entry into workforce
Develop, renew, revise action plan	Skill enhancement	After assessment, refer client who could benefit from skill enhancement to ABE at Selkirk and write this into action plan.
Revise/update action plan for transferred clients	Skill enhancement	After assessment, refer client who could benefit from skill enhancement to ABE at Selkirk and write this into action plan.
Identify readiness skills & strengths	ES assessments (informal), job profiles	Administer ES assessments to identify skill levels and match skill levels to job profiles that are of interest to the client. This will give you information on whether skill enhancement is necessary.
Labour market and/or career research	Job profiles	Use descriptions and task lists in job profiles to identify/confirm occupations of interest for clients. This can also be used to identify skill strengths and gaps.
Create and/or update resume	Job profiles	Use task lists for wording on resumes. Use most important skills for the occupation to highlight skill strengths on resume (e.g. oral communication for a food and beverage server).
Career planning	Job profiles	Use descriptions and task lists in job profiles to identify occupations of interest for clients. This can also inform next steps such as assessment or skill enhancement.
Identify transferable skills	Job profiles	Use job profiles of previous job and desired job and match skill strengths. Go through job profile of previous job and ask client to identify skill strengths from that job then identify

APPENDIX G**Essential Skills Integration into Client Services**

		whether those skills could be transferred to another occupation or added to resume.
Job search	ES assessments (informal), job profiles	Use self-assessments or online indicators to identify skill strengths to inform type of job to search for. Use job profiles to identify skills needed for desired job.
Interview skills	ES Interview Assistant	Use this CD-Rom to create interview questions for a variety of occupations.
Effective workplace behaviour	Working with others self-assessment and tip sheet, ASPECT online ES resource	Use assessment to identify areas of strength and use tip sheet to strengthen areas that need building. Use “working with others” section of ASPECT online ES resource to support client in learning about effective workplace behaviour.
Workplace communication skills	Oral communication self-assessment and tip sheet, ASPECT online ES resource	Use assessment to identify areas of strength and use tip sheet to strengthen areas that need building. Use “oral communication” section of ASPECT online ES resource to support client in learning about effective workplace communication skills.
Workplace problem solving	Problem Solved booklet, ASPECT online ES resource	Use booklet to strengthen problem solving skills by discussing scenarios and solutions with client (included in booklet along with problem solving strategies). Use “Thinking” section of ASPECT online ES resource to support client in learning about effective workplace problem solving.
Workplace oral, written and non-verbal communication	Self-assessments (oral communication, writing), tip sheets (oral communication, writing), ASPECT online ES resource	Use assessments to identify areas of strength and use tip sheets to strengthen areas that need building. Use “oral communication” section of ASPECT online ES resource to

APPENDIX G**Essential Skills Integration into Client Services**

		support client in learning about effective workplace communication skills.
Active workplace listening	ASPECT online ES resource	Use “oral communication” section of ASPECT online ES resource to support client in learning about active workplace listening skills.
Workplace time management/organization	Job profiles – job task planning section, ASPECT online ES resource	Use the job task planning and organization section of job profiles for occupations the client is interested in to identify how client can use this skill on the job. Use “Thinking” section of ASPECT online ES resource to support client in learning about workplace time management and organization.

APPENDIX H

Customer Service and Problem Solving Assessment

1. I deal with customer complaints by acknowledging the customer's unhappiness and trying to find a solution in a friendly and professional manner.				
always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
2. I respect and care for customers regardless of whether they are right or wrong.				
always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
3. I go above and beyond the call of duty when dealing with customers.				
always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
4. I am able to answer questions on all products and services.				
always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
5. I stay calm and reasonable with difficult customers.				
always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
6. I respond to customer inquiries with a sense of urgency.				
always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
7. I identify problems before they happen.				
always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
8. I evaluate all relevant factors and develop a good solution when solving problems.				
always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
9. I consider consequences to all possible solutions to a problem.				
always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
10. When a difficult problem arises, I consult co-workers and/or supervisors when necessary.				
always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
11. I stay positive and learn from mistakes without getting frustrated when the problem solving process does not go smoothly.				
always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never

APPENDIX I



Integrating Essential Skills into Resume Building and Interview Prep

Why?

- It is a way to focus on the skills an individual has rather than on formal education.
- Many people don't realize that they have these skills.
- Helps clients sell themselves to employers.
- The process can be used as a tool to identify transferable skills to use in job search.
- Focuses on self awareness.
- Creates a documented record of skills, qualities, knowledge and capabilities.
- Creates confidence in an interview.

How?

- Create a resume by using work history and ES general statements. These general statements could be generated from job profiles or OLES self-assessments completed by the client.
- Have clients identify their Essential Skills. This helps people see their strengths and also focus on where they need to improve. Focusing on what a client is good at can help match a client with a job. Identification of Essential Skills can be completed through self-assessments or exploring a simple description of the nine skills (for example: the OLES publication, "What are Essential Skills")
- When creating a resume or preparing for an interview use the job profiles and have clients look at which tasks they can do and which tasks they may need to work on. Use this information to create language for the client's resume or to coach them on articulating their skills in an interview.

APPENDIX J

The Essential Edge offers the following **FREE** services

The Essential Edge is a pilot project that offers customized workplace training. We can assist you in updating the competencies, productivity and safety performance of your employees.

We come to you and perform a needs assessment for your business or organization.

We help you define your training objectives and then we customize a training plan and materials based on your needs, time constraints and goals.



- ▲ Onsite needs assessment for your business
- ▲ Job shadowing so we understand your workplace
- ▲ An individualized, practical approach
- ▲ Customized training materials
- ▲ Training delivery based on your needs
- ▲ Follow-up visits
- ▲ Development of training guides for future use
- ▲ Skills assessments for employees
- ▲ Assistance writing job descriptions and postings
- ▲ Assistance matching applicants' skills to available positions



essential
 job training edge learn
 competitive skills productivity effective

APPENDIX J

Could your organization benefit from any of the following?

- ▲ Higher productivity
- ▲ Improved safety records
- ▲ Lower error rates
- ▲ An increased ability to recruit and retain workers
- ▲ An increased ability to adapt to today's changing market



Essential Skills...at work.

Customized Training
for the Workplace




Essential Edge

In Trail/Castlegar:
 Phone: 250-368-5316 ext.227
 Email: jmalcolm@communityskillscentre.com

In the Boundary Region:
 Phone: 250-442-2722 or 250-445-6618



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