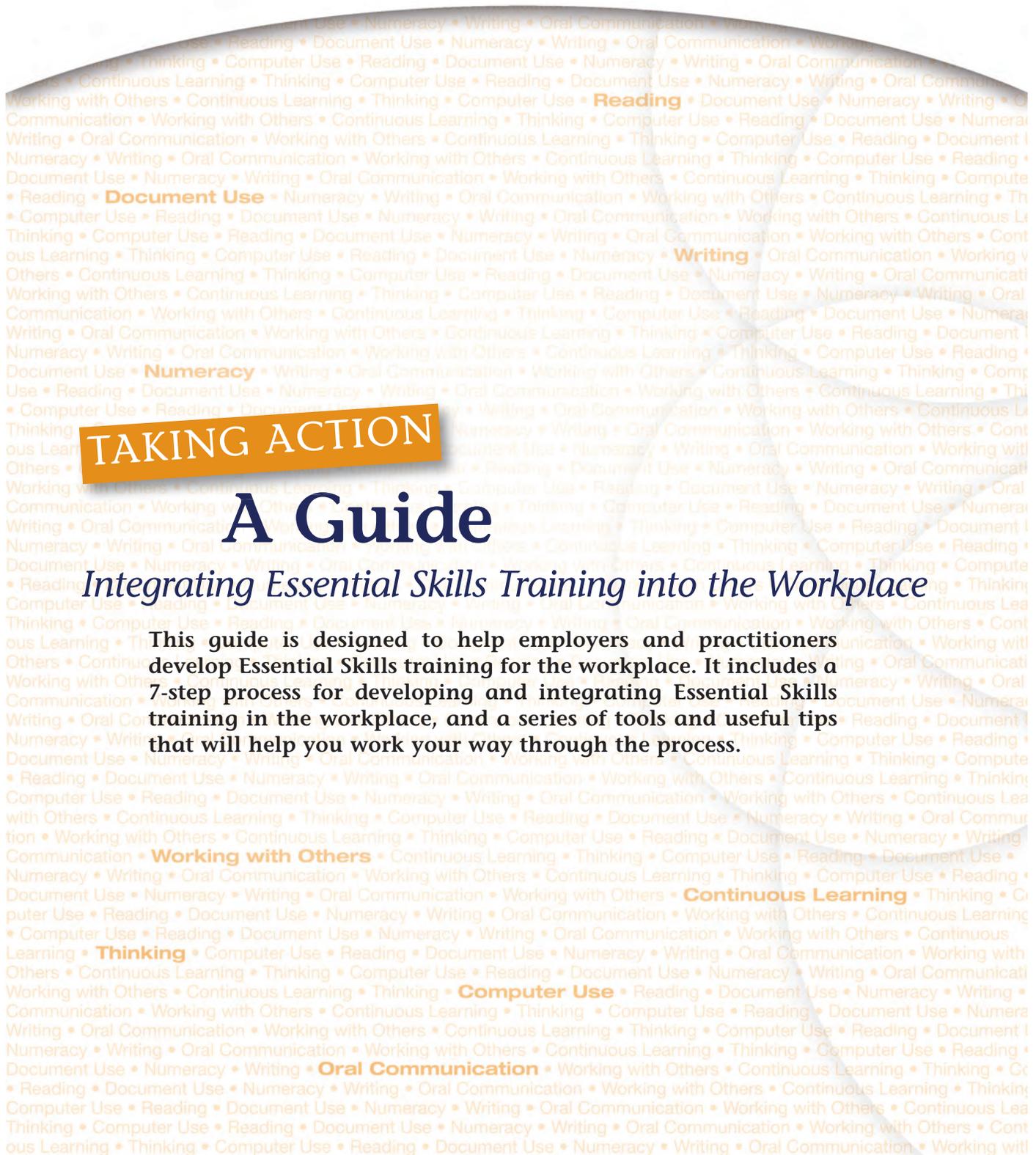




People • Partnerships • Knowledge

Skills and Employment

Office of Literacy and Essential Skills



TAKING ACTION

A Guide

Integrating Essential Skills Training into the Workplace

This guide is designed to help employers and practitioners develop Essential Skills training for the workplace. It includes a 7-step process for developing and integrating Essential Skills training in the workplace, and a series of tools and useful tips that will help you work your way through the process.

You can order this publication by contacting:

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Example

IDENTIFIED ISSUE (e.g. common performance problem, skill gap)	SKILL(S) INVOLVED (i.e which skill(s) are related to the	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP AFFECTED	TRAINING REQUIRED? YES/NO	DATE
Joe has trouble following written instructions and procedures on a consistent basis.	Reading	Joe Brown in Customer Service	Yes	April 5

IDENTIFIED ISSUE	SKILL(S) INVOLVED	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP AFFECTED	TRAINING REQUIRED? YES/NO	DATE

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If you decide to develop and deliver training in-house, follow these steps to develop a customized Essential Skills activity.

	✓
1. Make a list of the occupations in your organization.	
2. Identify the occupational groups that require Essential Skills training.	
3. Find the Essential Skills Profile (hrsd.gc.ca/essentialskills) for the chosen occupation(s). (Note: If you cannot find a profile for a specific occupation, use a profile for a similar occupation or refer to an existing job description.)	
4. Review the Profile(s) to identify the tasks and complexity levels that employees are expected to perform in that occupation.	
5. Develop training activities that help employees practice these tasks. (Note: Develop training activities that allow employees to progress from less complex to more complex tasks. Ensure that the training activities closely resemble employees' expected work tasks.)	
6. Select relevant workplace materials (manuals, policy documents, charts, etc.) to support the training activity.	

Visit the Essential Skills Website (hrsd.gc.ca/essentialskills) for tools that can help improve Essential Skills in your workplace.

Keys to Success

The following table provides some helpful tips for introducing Essential Skills training into the workplace.

- Build Essential Skills training activities into existing training sessions (e.g. mandatory training, technical training, safety training). For example, you can develop customized training activities that are relevant to different training sessions.
- Where possible, customize existing Essential Skills training for the workplace. For example, use authentic workplace materials (manuals, graphs, timesheets, etc.) from your organization to connect training activities and the workplace.
- Include Essential Skills training activities in other workplace events such as meetings or team-building sessions.

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STEP 5: Finalizing training plans

This section will help you finalize and organize your training plans.

Participation

Participation in the training will be:

- Voluntary for all employees
- Mandatory for all employees
- Mandatory for certain employees (e.g. all employees in a certain position)
- Recommended to certain employees, but voluntary
- Voluntary, with successful completion tied to opportunities for advancement

Time

You are willing to provide the following amount of time to employees completing training:

- Several weeks of full-time training for up to ____ weeks
- ____ day(s) per week for up to ____ weeks
- ____ ½ day(s) per week for up to ____ weeks
- ____ hour(s) per week for up to ____ weeks
- Lunch time for up to ____ weeks

Costs

You are willing to provide the following for training fees, time off from work and transportation expenses:

- Reimburse ____ % of training fees
- Reimburse ____ % of employees' salary during training
- Reimburse ____ % of transportation expenses
- Fully fund training

Will you incur any temporary staffing or other costs while participants are on training? Does any action need to be taken (e.g. apply for increase in budget; hire temporary staff)?

Estimate the overall cost of training: \$ _____

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Essential Skills Training Plan

Use the following worksheet to outline your training plans. It will keep you organized and can be useful when presenting your ideas to employees, colleagues or management. (**Note:** Complete separate worksheets for groups or individuals with different training needs.)

Target Individual(s)/Group(s) (e.g. all customer service agents):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Learning Need(s) (e.g. improve oral communication skills):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Proposed Training:

- Classroom Training E-Learning On-the-job Mentoring Self-Study
 Other: _____

Training Delivery (e.g. outsourced to one local trainer):

- Outsourced In-House Web-Based Other: _____

Frequency of Training (e.g. once a week for six weeks):

Timeline for Training Development & Delivery:

Training development (Date, Approximate Timeline): _____

Training delivery (Date, Approximate Timeline): _____

Cost (e.g. \$200 per employee): _____

Training Evaluation to Follow? (If yes, see STEP 7)

- Yes No

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STEP 6: Obtaining employee & management support

This section will help you gain support from employees and management for your training plans.

Tips for obtaining employee support for Essential Skills training:

- Educate employees about Essential Skills. Communicate the benefits of Essential Skills upgrading for employees both at work and at home (e.g. increased self-confidence, improved employee morale, etc.). Visit hrsdc.gc.ca/essentialskills for background material on Essential Skills.
- Demonstrate management's commitment to the training.
- Use clear, respectful and positive messaging when promoting Essential Skills training.
- Demonstrate to employees how job tasks can be easier as a result of Essential Skills upgrading.
- Engage employees in the process (e.g. hold open discussions about training objectives).
- Communicate to employees the confidential nature of training information (e.g. clearly communicate how assessment results will be used).
- Include Essential Skills training activities in employees' learning or personal development plans.
- Help employees keep track of their progress with respect to Essential Skills improvements. Always recognize employees' skill gains.

Tips for obtaining management support for Essential Skills training:

- Educate management about Essential skills. Communicate both the organizational and employee benefits of Essential Skills upgrading (e.g. improved productivity, improved employee retention, improved employee morale, etc.). Visit hrsdc.gc.ca/essentialskills for background material on Essential Skills.
- Where appropriate, present a business case for investing in Essential Skills training. You might want to develop a business case if the proposed training involves substantial costs. The business case should include the reasons for the training, the expected benefits, the options considered, the expected costs of the project, the estimated costs of **not** implementing training and expected risks. Draw on the results of the needs assessment to build your business case. Identify anticipated benefits to staff and demonstrate that the investment has value.
- Communicate regularly with management as you implement training in the workplace. Track the progress of participants and the impacts on the organization. Make the results available to management and staff.

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Possible Questions

The table below shows some key areas in which a training evaluation might focus. It provides example questions for each area. You may not want to ask evaluation questions in all of these areas. Your information needs should guide the development of evaluation questions.

Evaluation Areas	Types of Questions	Suggested Data Collection Methods
Trainees' Reactions and Perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent were trainees satisfied with the training? To what extent were trainees satisfied with the instructor/trainer? The facilities? The content? Opportunities to practice skills? To what extent did the trainees feel the training objectives were met? Did the trainees find the information useful? How do training participants plan to use training information? 	<p>Questionnaire Form: This information is usually collected right after the training activity.</p> <p>Follow-up surveys, interviews with trainees.</p>
Knowledge/Skill Gains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did the trainees' skills and/or knowledge improve? Did the trainees acquire skills at acceptable levels? 	<p>Pre and post assessments.</p> <p>Follow-up surveys or interviews with trainees and/or supervisors.</p>
Transfer of training to the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are new skills/knowledge being used in the workplace? If skills are not being transferred, why? Are there any barriers that prevent workers from applying their knowledge/skills to the workplace? 	<p>Observations of work site/ observations of job task performance.</p> <p>Interviews/surveys with employees, supervisors, trainees, managers, and/or clients.</p>
Impacts on the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What impacts did the training have on the workplace (e.g. improved employee retention, improved safety, improved customer satisfaction, improved productivity, etc.)? To what extent can these improvements be attributed to the training? 	<p>Interviews/surveys with employees, trainees, supervisors, managers, and/or clients.</p> <p>Review of company statistics.</p> <p>Observations of work site/ observations of job task performance.</p>

Possible Indicators

The table below shows some key indicators which can be used to evaluate training. Not all indicators will be applicable to all training activities. Your information needs should guide the the selection of indicators.

<p>Extent of Training (activity and output indicators)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of training activities delivered in the past six months• Types of training activities (e.g. mentoring, on-the-job training) delivered in the past six months• Number of people who participated in the training activities• Cost per course• Cost per trainee• Amount of paid release time for trainees
<p>Perceptions of Training/Perceptions of Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Degree of trainee satisfaction with training• Thoughts on the quality of training activities• Thoughts on the usefulness of training activities for the job• Thoughts on the adequacy and availability of Essential Skills learning opportunities• Thoughts on the barriers to transferring skills to the workplace• Thoughts on factors that enhance the transfer of skills to the workplace
<p>Training Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Level of improvement in Essential Skills (e.g. improved writing skills, improved computer use skills)• Evidence of job performance improvement:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Increased productivity- Improved quality of work- Increased efficiency in the performance of job tasks• Supervisor ratings of employee job performance (pre and post training)• Evidence of skills utilization – the extent to which a trainee applies new skills to job tasks• Reduced absenteeism• Reduced number of safety incidents• Increased employee retention• Changes in sales volume

Training Results (continued)

- Accuracy of customer orders
- Number of transactions per day
- Number of lost customers
- Number of customer complaints
- Extent of repeat business
- Evidence of impact on employee career development
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Level of improvement in employees' self-confidence
- Degree of employee motivation
- Level of improvement with respect to staff morale

Collecting the Information

The following table provides a description of various data collection methods that are typically used to evaluate and track Essential Skills training activities and results.

<p>Interviews</p> <p>A discussion that covers a variety of topics or questions, and gathers information from particular groups such as training experts, employees, trainees, supervisors and/or managers.</p> <p>Can be conducted by telephone or face-to-face.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You do not have a lot of people to obtain information from.• You want opinions on whether employees' skill levels have improved (where pre and post tests were not conducted).• Good when you need a flexible, in-depth approach.• Interviews may be preferable when the subject matter is complicated or the topic area is sensitive.

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