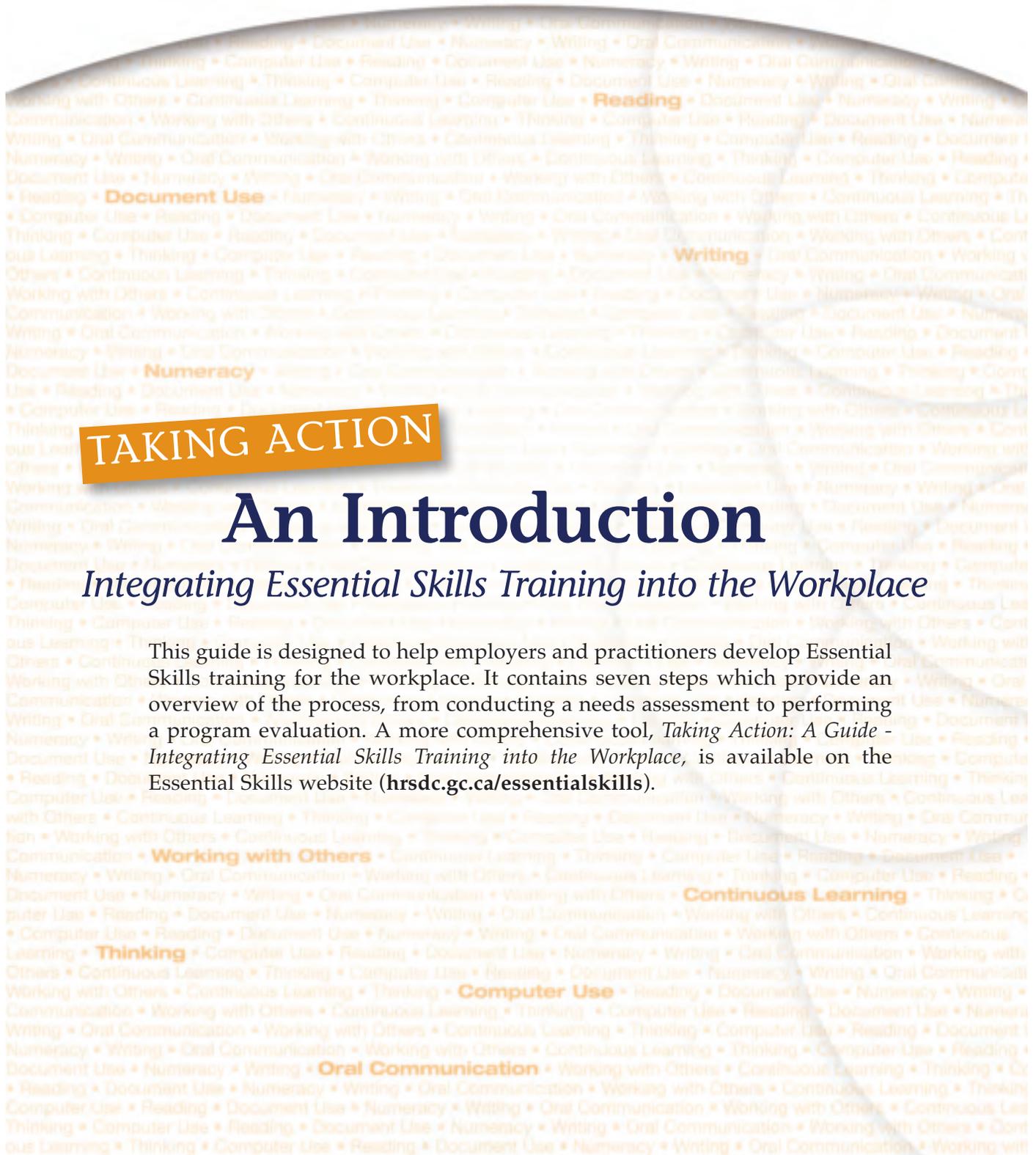




People • Partnerships • Knowledge

Skills and Employment

Office of Literacy and Essential Skills



TAKING ACTION

An Introduction

Integrating Essential Skills Training into the Workplace

This guide is designed to help employers and practitioners develop Essential Skills training for the workplace. It contains seven steps which provide an overview of the process, from conducting a needs assessment to performing a program evaluation. A more comprehensive tool, *Taking Action: A Guide - Integrating Essential Skills Training into the Workplace*, is available on the Essential Skills website (hrsd.gc.ca/essentialskills).

Overview

Essential Skills are the skills that people need for work, learning and life. They provide the foundation for learning all other skills and enable people to evolve with their jobs and adapt to workplace change. There are nine Essential Skills:

■ Reading	■ Writing	■ Thinking
■ Document Use	■ Oral Communication	■ Computer Use
■ Numeracy	■ Working with Others	■ Continuous Learning

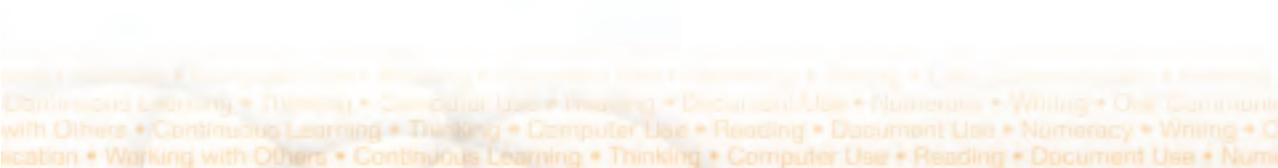
Investing in Essential Skills can lead to many benefits, including increased productivity, and improved employee morale and safety. Essential Skills training can positively impact your organization as a whole, as well as the individuals involved.

Essential Skills training doesn't have to be time consuming or complicated. It can be comprehensive or quick and targeted, depending on your organization's requirements.



The Process

The following is the process for developing and integrating Essential Skills training in the workplace. If you have already started to address Essential Skills in your workplace, skip ahead to the section that addresses your current needs.



Step 1: Performing a needs assessment

Performing a needs assessment allows you to identify any current or impending skill gaps in your organization. Use the results to identify training objectives and to select an appropriate strategy to address skills issues.

There are various ways of performing a needs assessment. Consider the best strategy for your organization. (**Note:** Using a mix of several strategies can lead to better results.)

- Assessment by in-house Human Resources or Training department
- Assessment by front-line management
- Observation of operations
- Prior knowledge of employee skill sets
- Peer assessments
- Performance reviews
- Employee surveys
- Professional services
- Review of industry or media reports
- Essential Skills tools and resources (hrsdc.gc.ca/essentialskills)

Once you have completed the needs assessment, determine which skills are a training priority for your organization.

IDENTIFIED ISSUE	SKILL(S) INVOLVED	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP AFFECTED	TRAINING REQUIRED? YES/NO	DATE
EXAMPLE: Employees cannot understand company memos.	Reading	All employees	Yes	02/2008

Communication • Computer Use • Critical Thinking • Document Use • Numeracy • Writing • Oral Communication • Learning • Thinking • Computer Use • Reading • Document Use • Numeracy • Writing • Oral Communication • Working with Others • Continuous Learning • Thinking • Computer Use • Reading • Document Use • Numeracy

Step 2: Identifying training objectives

Consider what you would like to achieve through Essential Skills training.

- Improve productivity
- Reduce errors
- Improve customer service
- Empower employees
- Improve communication and/or teamwork
- Improve safety
- Reduce absenteeism and/or turnover
- Improve succession planning
- Improve ability to implement change in the workplace
- Other: _____

Establish a deadline to realize your training objective(s): _____

Step 3: Selecting a training technique

Once you have completed your needs assessment and identified your training objectives, consider the best workplace learning strategy for your employees. Formal training often involves structured activities that have specific learning objectives. Informal training is less structured and often occurs through on the job experience/training. (**Note:** Using a mix of several strategies can lead to better results.)

- Classroom training
- E-learning
- On-the-job training
- Mentoring
- Self-study
- Other: _____

- How is participants' progress tracked and evaluated?

- How is participants' personal information kept confidential?

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

- Make a list of the occupations in your organization.
- Identify the occupational groups that require Essential Skills training.
- Find the corresponding Essential Skills Profile (hrsdc.gc.ca/essentialskills) or job description for the chosen occupation(s). If you cannot find a Profile for a specific occupation, use a Profile for a similar occupation.
- Review the Profile and/or job description to identify the tasks and complexity levels that employees are expected to perform in that occupation.
- Develop training activities that help employees practice these tasks.
- Select relevant workplace materials (e.g. manuals, policy documents, charts, etc.) to support the training activity.

Step 5: Finalizing training plans

Approval

Determine the approval process required to proceed with Essential Skills training in your organization.



Step 7: Performing an evaluation

Conducting a formal evaluation at the end of training provides valuable information that can guide future program development by helping determine whether training was relevant, useful and personalized. Positive feedback helps justify continued investment in workplace skills training.

Use information from the evaluation to complete the following checklist.

- The training fully addressed the objectives identified in Step 2.
- The training material and level of difficulty were appropriate.
- The training provider was effective and engaging.
- Employees have been able to apply what they learned during training on the job.

Conclusion

By completing this guide, you have accomplished an important step towards the development of an Essential Skills training strategy. After implementing Essential Skills training, you will likely start to experience gradual improvements in your organization's performance.

Since implementing training in your organization, have you experienced any of the following:

- Improved motivation?
- Higher productivity?
- Lower turnover?
- Employees who embrace change?
- Fewer on-the-job accidents?
- An easier time meeting business goals?
- Other: _____

We hope that this guide has helped you take action on Essential Skills in your workplace. You are encouraged to continue monitoring Essential Skills to ensure employees are well equipped to succeed. This is especially important if your workplace experiences change (e.g. technological, organizational, etc.), which could affect the Essential Skills required in your workplace. Additional assessments or training could be necessary to help ensure employees can effectively adapt and function in the workplace. Visit the Essential Skills website (hrsdc.gc.ca/essentialskills) for additional resources.