

## Developing Materials

You may already be using the materials that are available for download at no cost at the website *How do your skills Measure Up?* ([www.skillplan.ca](http://www.skillplan.ca)). Approximately 80 occupations are represented, however, these occupations may not suit your instructional setting. You may be considering developing your own materials. Here are some reasons why you might be developing work-related materials:

- Learners in your setting are motivated by employment opportunities.
- Learners have work experience but lack strategies for learning.
- Learners have no work experience and need applications to make learning meaningful.
- Occupations you are targeting are not well represented in available materials.
- Employers in your region are partners in your organization.

Here is what a few practitioners say about using work-related materials:

*Clients feel a direct connection with the activities that are tied to the field of work that they want to pursue. Consequently, I believe their motivation is much higher; making success in learning and retaining what they learned easier to achieve.*

-Kyle Downie, Employment Program Instructor

*Using authentic materials means that learners are exposed to requirements of the job early on. They enter the workplace with a better understanding of what will be required of them, they show more self confidence because they know what to do, and they stand a better chance of progressing past an entry level position.*

-Heather Robinet, Literacy Practitioner at Avon Maitland District School Board, in Seaforth, Ontario

For more ideas about how to use work-related materials, click on *Ideas for Users* at the *Measure Up* website.

These pages are for anyone who wants to link instruction with workplace applications. *Getting Started* is, as the title suggests, just the beginning. You can learn more about developing materials by referring to *Developing Work-related Learning Materials*, a publication available at [www.skillplan.ca](http://www.skillplan.ca).

## What are work-related learning activities?

Learning activities typically have three parts. Here is a sample of a finished activity.

NOC 9613 Labourers in Chemical Products Processing and Utilities

**Filter Flow Diagram**

The oil and gas industry uses filtration vessels. The worker reads a flow diagram to check the location of the parts of a filter system. Look at the TOC Flow Diagram.

**Task 1** On the diagram, circle the location of the manual flow bypass.  
*Document Use*

**Task 2** Name the last part that the gas flow will encounter.  
*Document Use*

**Task 3** Draw the symbol used to show gauges.  
*Document Use*

**Task 4** Place an X on the point in the flow diagram that shows where the operator can turn off the system.  
*Document Use*

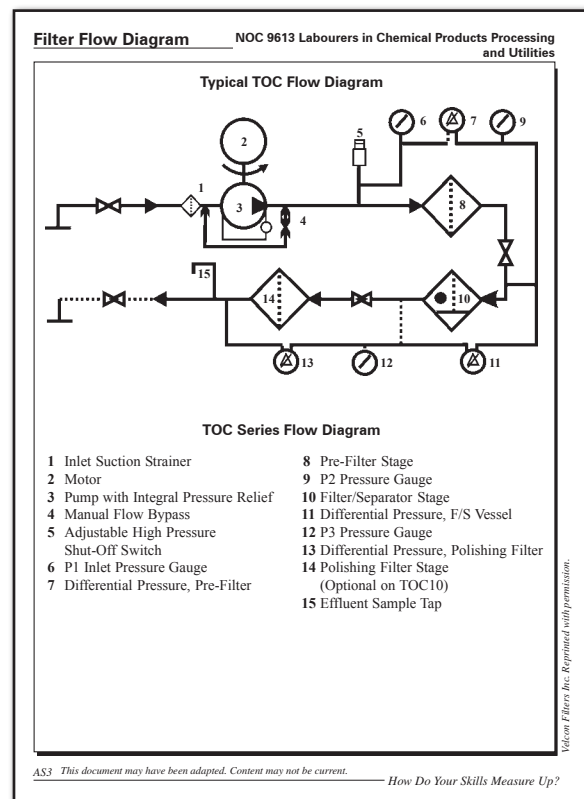
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### 1. Tasks or Questions

Workers usually have a purpose for reading. During the workday, they form unwritten questions and use materials that will help them complete their tasks. These types of questions, or tasks, are simulated in learning activities so that participants or learners can build and practise skills.

### 2. Authentic Workplace Materials

Materials found in workplaces are numerous and varied. The paperwork associated with jobs includes forms to fill out for dozens of different purposes, regulatory documents that range from bylaws to company policy, and communication such as memos and e-mail. Workplace materials can also include unique documents such as photos, diagrams, maps and other visual displays. In every workplace setting, there are many materials available.



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**Filter Flow Diagram**

The oil and gas industry uses filtration vessels. The worker reads a flow diagram to check the location of the parts of a filter system. Look at the TOC Flow Diagram.

**Task 1** Circle the location of the manual flow bypass.

**Answer** See the Filter Flow Diagram Task 1 answer page.

**One way to get this answer**

1. Scan the diagram and numbered key below the diagram.
2. Decide that the numbering system is the same on the diagram and the key.
3. Scan the page using keywords *manual flow bypass*.
4. Locate *4 Manual Flow Bypass*.
5. Scan the flow diagram to locate *4*.
6. Decide that *4* is the location of the manual flow bypass.
7. Decide that a bypass is a way around *3*.
8. Circle the section to the left of *4*.

**Level** Document Use, Level 1  
**CLB** 3, 4 and 5 (estimated performance)

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### 3. Instructional Focus

For workers, the outcome of finding information is completing workplace tasks. For you, the practitioner, the outcome is meeting a learning objective through instruction. The example shown on the left, *One way to get this answer*, is a focus on promoting consistent thinking patterns that become transferable strategies.

As a professional, you will know best how to structure single learning activities to fit into your curriculum for your learners.

The learning activity sample shown above is only one way to use workplace materials. These pages will help you to develop learning activities based on workplace documents. Checklists are included on collecting documents and developing tasks to satisfy your instructional focus and goals.

Developing instructional activities based on authentic workplace tasks and materials will build both ability and confidence in your learners.

To get started you will need to follow a few steps:

1. Gather work-related materials.
2. Develop worker-focused learning activities.
3. Decide on an instructional focus.
4. Get reprint permission.

**Step 1 Gather Work-related Materials**

Almost every job requires paperwork for record keeping, for communication or for finding information. Start with an occupation you know something about or work places where you have a connection. Getting in the door is much easier if you have help from a relative, friend or neighbour. The list below will help you decide what to collect.

**Document Checklist**

**This checklist summarizes some points to consider when collecting workplace documents.**

**Document type:**

- Document provides an information display that is typical of the workplace documents for this occupation (table, manual, label, schedule, map).
- Drawings or diagrams have clear labelling that will provide answers to the tasks.

**Document contents:**

- Document satisfies your instructional focus.
- Document content is interesting visually.
- Document contains enough information to allow someone not familiar with the job to use it.
- Document has potential for Reading Text, Document Use and/or Numeracy questions.
- Document is authentic.

**Other items to consider:**

- Document is available in French, if you are developing tasks in English and French. Copy of this French source document collected.
- Minor errors such as misspellings have been corrected.
- Copyright owner information is clearly identified so you can contact the owner for reprint permission.
- Approval has been given to use real names or fictitious names.

**Step 2      Develop Worker-Focused Learning Activities**

The purpose of using work-related tasks is to simulate how a worker would actually use that document to get the job done. The checklist below will help you think like a worker and structure questions that help your participants practise workplace applications. You will also want to think ahead to Step 3.

**Task Writing Checklist**

**This checklist summarizes some points to consider when writing tasks.**

**Task phrasing:**

- Task is authentic. The worker uses the document in this way on the job.
- Task wording is clear and brief.
- Task wording is appropriate for the difficulty level of the requested information.
- Tasks are varied. Use combinations of How, What, Where, Name, etc.

**Task order:**

- Task starts with an orientation (a getting-to-know this document) task.
- Tasks are ordered from least difficult to most difficult.
- Tasks are independent of each other. A correct answer in one task is not required to answer another task.

**Responses:**

- Requested response is how the worker would complete the task.
- Requested response modes are varied. (highlight or underline, enter information, enter the answer)
- Tasks request open-ended responses, NOT yes or no answers.

**Other:**

- Tasks avoid specifying gender.
- Tasks are written in the active, not passive, voice.
- Tasks have names, phone numbers, and addresses that retain authenticity.

**Step 3      Decide on an Instructional Focus**

What do you want to emphasize in instruction? Develop a single learning activity or a series of linked activities to meet the learning outcomes for your student or your program.

The *How do your skills Measure Up?* website is organized with three focuses; however, many more are possible.

**1. Explore careers**

Career education may be part of your curriculum. Depending on the setting, your focus may be intended to:

- meet the goals of individuals.
- reflect job availability in your local labour market.
- provide general career information.
- demonstrate transferability of skills.

**2. Practice**

Structure activities by topic to provide practice in specific areas. Examples follow.

- Topics organized by skill area such as Reading Text, Document Use, or Numeracy
- Topics organized by application such as Money Math, Scheduling or Budgeting and Accounting or Calculating, Measurement & Calculation or Data Analysis
- Topics organized by document type such as row and column information displays, text written in point form and graphic references

**3. Assessment**

Program participants and practitioners measure progress by assessment. Participants demonstrate selected skills by completing learning activities. Practitioners adjust learning activities to scaffold learning from one level to the next.

4. The website *How do your skills Measure Up?* demonstrates another instructional focus. *One way to get this answer*, shown on page 3, are answer steps that focus on
  - transferable learning strategies
  - realistic integration of skill areas such as Reading and Numeracy
  - thinking processes

#### Step 4 Get Reprint Permission

If you use a company's materials for instruction, even for one student, you need to ask for permission. Most companies are receptive to practitioners who are interested in the work they do and welcome the free advertising that you will give them. On the other hand, be aware that they may not want to give out information about customers or their trade secrets.

#### **SAMPLE** of a reprint permission request form:

One way to get permission to use materials for instruction is to have the owner of the document(s) sign a form letter. An example is provided for you.

1. Substitute highlighted words with specifics.
2. Fill in the blanks as needed.
3. Keep the signed copy in a file along with a copy of the document you collected.

**Organization's Letterhead**

Our organization appreciates the opportunity to gather documents that are used by workers at your work site.

As we discussed, title of the document(s) will be adapted into learning activities for learners in our programs. Thank you for contributing to a curriculum that allows individuals to practise workplace applications and to build employability skills.

As the owner of the copyright, or representative of the copyright owner, I give permission to use the document(s) for educational purposes as stated.

\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

We wish you all the best as you join colleagues across the country in providing instruction that contributes to getting and sustaining employment.