

**WANT THE COMPETITIVE EDGE?**

**LITERACY IN THE WORKPLACE**





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The views in this document do not necessarily reflect those of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

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### **WORKPLACE LITERACY INITIATIVES IMPROVE**

the abilities of organizations to provide high-quality goods and services, while they improve worker employability and ultimately, the economic welfare of Canada.

Conference Board of Canada

### **THE SKILLS AND PRODUCTIVITY OF OUR EMPLOYEES ARE A KEY FACTOR IN OUR ABILITY TO WIN.**

Employees today are expected to play a broader, more responsible and self-directed role than ever before in the production system. To do this, they need new and more varied skills than was considered necessary in the past.

Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, Ontario Division

### **IT IS ALWAYS DIFFICULT TO GAUGE THE RELATIVE PAYOFFS TO DIFFERENT ECONOMIC POLICIES.**

Nevertheless, with regard to the four key productivity drivers (human capital, competition, R&D [Research and Development] and institutional flexibility) discussed, a case can be made that the payoff from additional investment in the area of skills development would be greater than that of additional investment in R&D. This is in part because Canada already has one of the most generous fiscal regimes for R&D in the world. In contrast, our investment in skills development by both the public and private sectors is relatively weak by international standards. From this perspective, a skills development strategy should play a salient role in Canada's overall productivity strategy.

Centre for the Study of Living Standards

To do this, they **need new and more varied skills** than was considered necessary in the past.

## Introduction

## INTRODUCTION

Literacy and basic skills are critical to the success of every business yet millions of Canadians do not have the literacy skills necessary to meet the increasing demands of the modern workplace.

Employers in this area have identified the need to continue to raise the level of literacy and essential skills in the workplace to compete effectively in a knowledge-based, global economy. Most do not have the in-house training or skills development expertise to assess and act on their needs. Some are not aware of the opportunities that exist. This is especially true for small and medium-sized businesses.

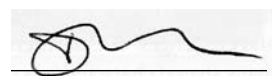
A gap exists between local workplace literacy resources and employers. That is what this booklet and other initiatives of the Workforce Development Board, Literacy Ontario Central South and our partners in education, business and labour are intended to address.

We have the 'know how' and resources in this area to develop effective partnerships, assess needs, design in-house programs, link employees with upgrading, continuing education and other literacy and basic skills programs that are needed to benefit both employers and employees.

Over the past decade governments, sector councils, voluntary organizations and many leading businesses and business associations in Canada have been piloting, refining and disseminating information about workplace skills, including literacy, essential skills and employability skills. We now have the tools to transfer the success that has been realized in successful, diverse companies across the country.

In this booklet we explain and draw the links between literacy, employability, essential skills, emotional intelligence and plain language, all essential components of effective workplaces. We have included information on the status of the literacy challenge in our area, local resources, free tools, case studies and best practices relevant to diverse and sometimes challenging situations.

The Workforce Development Board and Literacy Ontario Central South are partnering with local employers and employee groups on the delivery of workplace education programs. We are poised to expand this partnership and help facilitate the development of a more highly skilled and fulfilled workforce that will, in turn, increase productivity and the potential for a thriving economy.

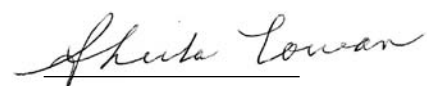


Dan Borowec,  
Business Co-Chair

Workforce Development Board



Keith Riel,  
Labour Co-Chair



Sheila Cowan,  
Chair

Literacy Ontario Central South

### Literacy and Workplace Skills: Overview and Status

*Our economy has entered a new era. Those with strong communications skills – reading, writing, and speaking – and more particularly those who have the ability to thoughtfully analyze information are the most valued people in our labour market. They are the ones who have more job opportunities, higher pay, and are less often without work than any other group. The ability to communicate and analyze are the keystones of a knowledge economy.*

Thomas F. Phillips, Ph.D., Economist

Literacy is often considered an either/or issue; one can read and write and do basic math or not. The continuum of literacy and basic skills is becoming increasingly better understood, however, to mean the degree to which people can communicate, learn, adapt to change and deal with complex problems. Minimum literacy skills for the current economy have been benchmarked and a study of 23,000 working-age Canadians found that 40 percent have marginal to poor skills<sup>1</sup>. These categories include those at levels one, two and the bottom of level three. The levels are described as:

**Level 1:** It identifies people who can read, but test poorly. They may have developed coping skills to manage everyday literacy demands but their low level of proficiency makes it difficult for them to face novel demands, such as learning new job skills.

**Level 2:** People can only deal with material that is simple, clearly laid out, and in which the tasks involved are not too complex. It denotes a weak level of skill, but more hidden than Level 1. At this level, people have developed coping skills to manage everyday literacy demands but face difficulty learning new job skills.

**Level 3:** The minimum skill level suitable for coping with the demands of everyday life and work in a complex, advanced society. It denotes roughly the skill level required for successful secondary school completion and college entry. Like higher levels, it requires the ability to integrate several sources of information and solve more complex problems.

**Levels 4/5:** It represents people who demonstrate command of higher-order information processing skills.

### Types of Literacy International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) Definitions

**Prose Literacy** - the knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from texts including editorials, news stories, poems and fiction.

**Document Literacy** - the knowledge and skills needed to locate and use information contained in various formats, including forms, maps, tables, and graphs.

**Quantitative Literacy (Numeracy)** - the ability to work with numbers such as balancing a checkbook or completing an order form.

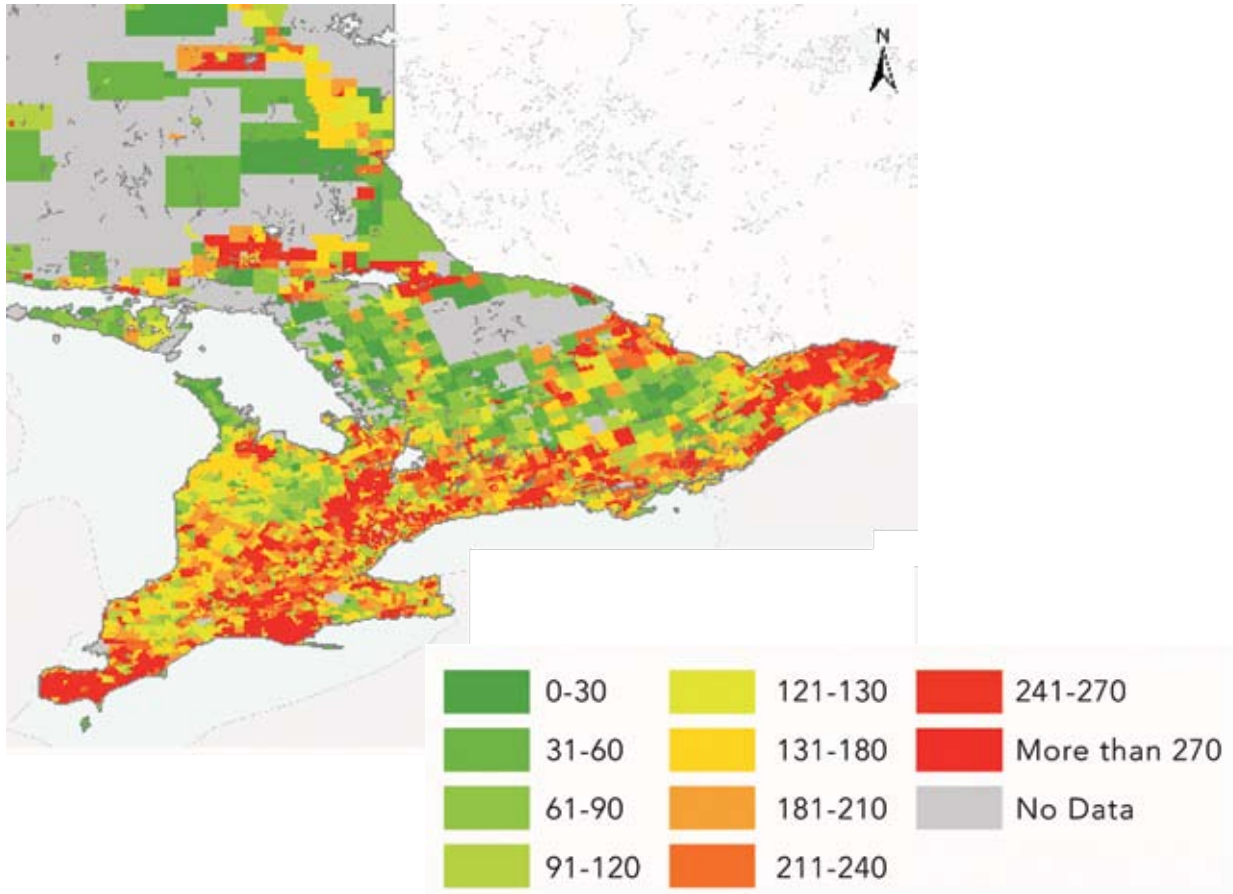
## Highlights from the 2003 International Adult Literacy Survey

- Canada participated in international studies of adult literacy in 1994 and 2003
- 23,000 Canadians were tested in 2003 study
- four in ten Canadians do not have the literacy skills needed to meet increasing demands of modern life and economy
- 42 percent of Ontarians, representing 3,400,000 people, scored below adequate levels in both prose and document literacy
- 50 percent of Ontarians, representing 4,162,000 people, scored below adequate levels in numeracy
- the largest proportion of workers with inadequate, level 1 proficiency are in manufacturing, construction, transportation, gas and electricity
- Ontarians scored significantly lower than Canadians from Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia and Yukon
- 60 percent of immigrants have inadequate skills in an official language, compared to 37 percent of Canadian-born adults
- average literacy scores have not improved significantly in the past decade even though educational attainment has improved
- literacy skills erode over time if they are not used

### Number of Employees in Ontario Below Level 3 Prose Literacy by Type of Industry, 2003<sup>2</sup>

Industries	Number Below Level 3	% of Workforce Below Level 3
Manufacturing	504,289	46
Trade, finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	491,530	36
Accommodation and food services	248,845	67
Health care and social assistance	215,864	35
Construction	198,712	54

### Geographic Distribution of People Aged 16-65 at Levels 1 and 2 (Prose) in Southern Ontario<sup>3</sup>





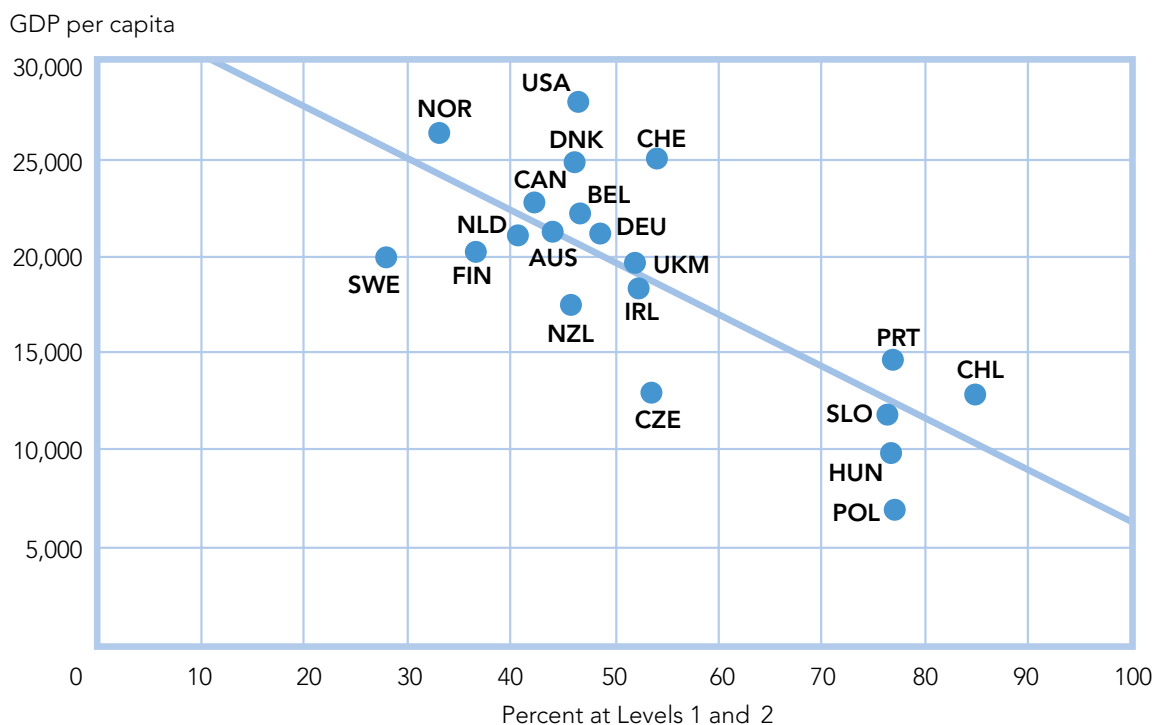
## Why Literacy and Skills Development are Critical

*Reading the Future: A Portrait of Literacy in Canada* states: "Society rewards individuals who are proficient and penalizes those who are not, whether expressed in terms of employment opportunities and job success or active social, cultural and citizenship participation in society. Literacy is also important to nations, as these skills are building blocks. They enable the creation of a labour force capable of competing in a changing world - a key step to economic growth and improvement of the human condition." Statistics Canada

Numerous studies have shown that investment in literacy development is as important if not more important than investment in research and development or in physical plant. Countries with higher literacy levels simply have greater productivity and wealth. Recent research by Statistics Canada found that average skill levels among OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries are responsible for 55 percent of differences in economic growth since 1960.<sup>4</sup> Countries with literacy scores only 1 percent higher than the average end up with labour productivity 2.5 percent higher than other countries, and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita 1.5 percent higher, on average. These results hold whether literacy is measured by prose, numeracy or document skills.

## Gross Domestic Profit and Literacy<sup>5</sup>

Relationship between GDP per capita and percent at prose literacy Levels 1 and 2, population aged 16-65, 1994-1998



## INVEST IN WORKPLACE LITERACY

There are numerous reasons why literacy skills are increasingly important. The pace of organizational and technological change requires higher level skills than many employees possess. Lean management structures require more problem-solving skills from employees. Often, organizations have made major investments in new technology only to run into costly delays in implementing it because their employees do not have the reading, writing, math or communication skills required. Sometimes the introduction of new technology can be dangerous. Employees have been seriously and fatally injured attempting to use machinery they do not understand.

### Ontario Injury Rates – 2005<sup>6</sup>

280,000 claims filed with the WSIB – 90,000 had at least one day off work

84 traumatic fatalities – 343 when occupational diseases included

48,000 young workers injured – 13,000 had at least one day off work and 8 were killed on the job



Investments in skill development  
**will foster economic  
growth more effectively**  
when a large proportion of the labour force – rather than  
a small number of highly talented individuals  
**8 – benefits from additional skills training.**

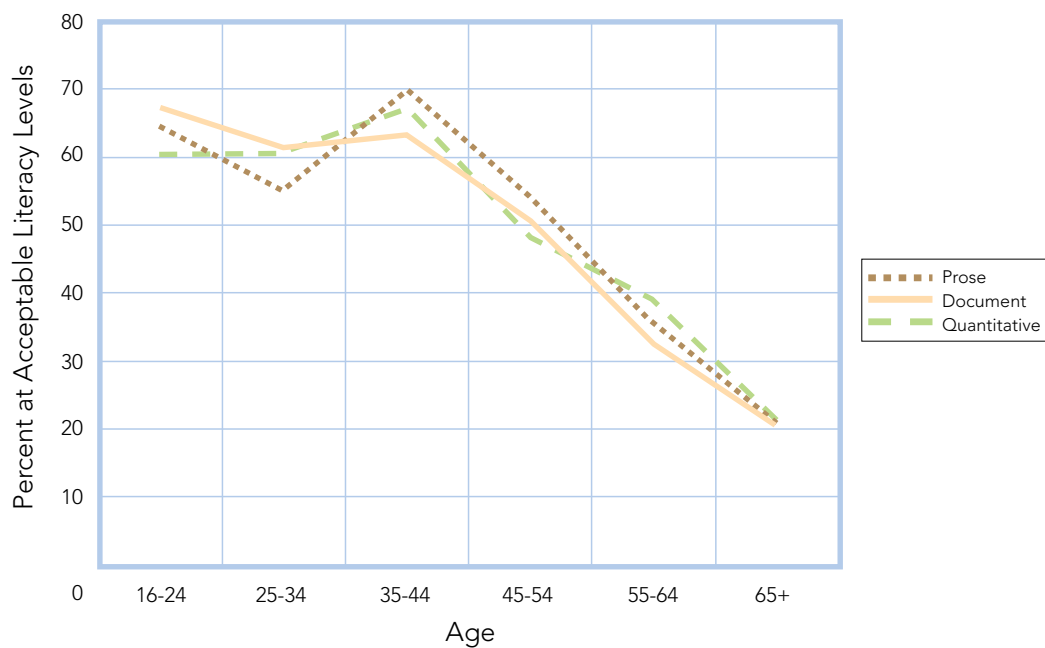
It is becoming increasingly rare to find jobs that do not demand substantive literacy skills. The number of high-knowledge businesses in Canada increased 78 percent between 1991 and 2003 while the number of low-knowledge businesses decreased.<sup>7</sup> As local companies increasingly compete with those in countries with easy access to low-cost labour it is vital to invest in human capital. This is expected to become increasingly important over the next few years as the workforce ages and the pool of labour for entry-level positions shrinks. Various studies have shown that skills erode over time if not used. The chart below shows the deterioration of skills over the 16-65 age span. Supporting the maintenance and upgrading of skills among older workers will be more and more necessary.

*Investments in skill development will foster economic growth more effectively when a large proportion of the labour force – rather than a small number of highly talented individuals – benefits from additional skills training. Canada’s efforts to close the skills gap must include the broadest possible cross-section of Canadians.*

Canadian Council on Learning

Literacy by Age Group<sup>8</sup>

LITERACY BY AGE GROUP



The automotive industry, to use one example, is facing the retirement of large numbers of skilled tradespersons.<sup>9</sup> Shortages are forecast among machinists, tool and die, mould makers, millwrights and industrial electricians. The shortage is expected to be greatest among the small and medium-sized businesses in this sector. Marginal and poor literacy skills are also disproportionately found in the smaller businesses.

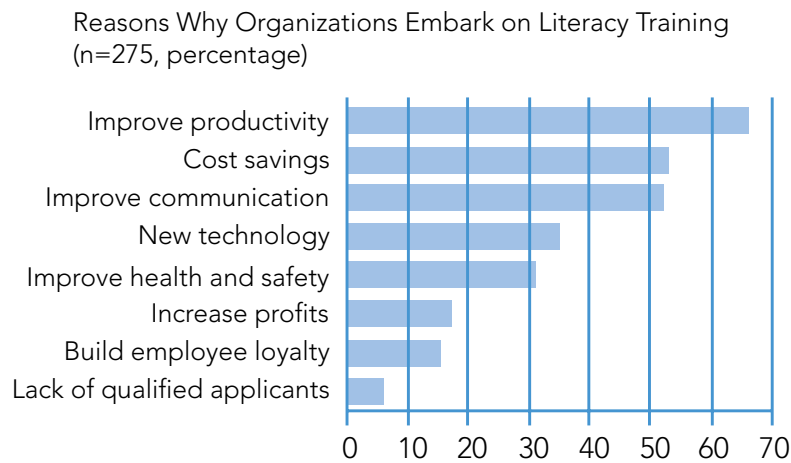
## INVEST IN WORKPLACE LITERACY

In 2005, all six priority labour market trends identified by local employers and the Workforce Development Board related directly or indirectly to literacy and basic skills development.

They were:

- skill requirements and shortages;
- literacy, language and essential skills training;
- out-migration of youth from the area
- access to employment programs and services in rural communities;
- marginalized labour force; and
- the need for a training network for employers and training institutions

### Why Organizations Introduce Literacy Training<sup>10</sup>



Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

*Investment in human capital, such as education and skills training, is three times as important to economic growth over the long run as investment in physical capital... [A] country that achieves literacy scores 1% higher than the average ends up, in a steady state, with labour productivity 2.5% higher than other countries, and Gross Domestic Product per capita 1.5% higher, on average.*

Statistics Canada

## Benefits of Workplace Literacy Programs

## BENEFITS

For Employees	For Employers
greater self esteem and self confidence	improved productivity, quality and safety
more positive	improved flexibility
able to participate more fully in the organization	improved employee relations
improved advancement and earnings potential	improved capability for continuous improvement
better job security	improved ability to introduce change
improved family and personal life	

There are a range of locally available training programs including:

- class-based, in-house or through a school board or college
- peer tutoring, in-house
- tutoring through a community-based agency
- small group
- computer-based learning
- a blend of the above

More information is provided in the Literacy and Basic Skills Program section, starting on page 22.

Most options are **free**.

*“Rotary International and local Rotary clubs recognize the importance of literacy skills. At the local level, we focus on children and youth to help ensure the next generations enjoy and contribute to a high quality of life. Hopefully, our efforts will reduce the need for workplace literacy programs in the future”.*

Brenda Booth, President, Kawartha Rotary Club

## Skills Gained Through Workplace Education Programs<sup>11</sup>

### Skills Gained by Employees Through WEPs

N=55	Percent of Employers Reporting Skill Gain
Greater willingness and ability to learn for life.....	85%
Improved ability to listen, to understand, learn, and apply information and analysis .....	84
Improved understanding and ability to use documents .....	84
More positive attitude toward change .....	84
Better ability to build and work in teams.....	80
Increased understanding of and ability to use numbers by themselves or in charts and tables.....	76
Improved capacity to think critically and act logically to evaluate situations, solve problems, and make decisions.....	73
Better ability to communicate using English.....	67
Improved ability to use computers and other technology, instruments, and tools and information systems effectively.....	65
Heightened understanding and willingness to work within the group's culture.....	65
Stronger understanding of and ability to use prose.....	53
<b>Employers reporting at least one skill gained.....</b>	<b>98</b>

### Organizational Benefits Gained Through WEPs

N=55	Percent of Employers Reporting Benefit
Improved employee morale/self-esteem .....	87%
Increased quality of work .....	82
Improved capacity to solve problems.....	82
Better team performance .....	82
Improved capacity to cope with change in the workplace .....	75
Improved capacity to use new technology .....	73
More employees participating in job-specific training.....	73
Higher success rate in promoting employees within the organization.....	71
Improved effectiveness of supervisors.....	69
Increased capacity to handle on-the-job training.....	67
Improved labour-management relations.....	65
Increased output of products and services .....	65
Higher success rate in transferring employees within the organization .....	60
Improved results in job-specific training.....	56
Increased profitability.....	56
Reduced time per task.....	56
Quicker results in job-specific training.....	55
Reduced error rate .....	53
Better health and safety record.....	51
Reduced waste in production of products and services .....	49
Increased customer retention.....	42
Increased employee retention.....	40
Reduced absenteeism.....	33
<b>Employers reporting at least one benefit gained .....</b>	<b>98</b>

*Lack of adequate literacy skills create significant self-esteem issues, which may be masked by anger toward others and to all types of difficulties in life. When a person learns that they are not alone and there are comfortable, non-judgmental surroundings where they can learn with others who are experiencing the same problems, they find hope and desire to try learning again.*

Bev Eldridge, CHRP

## Workplace Education Definitions

**Literacy and Basic Skills are skills** necessary to function as a contributing member of the community. These skills include everything from reading and writing to math to working in teams.

**Essential Skills are the skills** people need for work, learning and life. They include literacy and are the basis for learning all other skills. Essential skills underlie the performance of most workplace tasks.

The Canadian Government in partnership with a number of other national and international agencies has identified and validated nine Essential Skills:

1. Reading text
2. Writing
3. Document use
4. Oral communication
5. Numeracy
6. Computer use
7. Working with others
8. Continuous learning
9. Thinking skills, including:
  - problem solving
  - decision making
  - critical thinking
  - job task planning and organizing
  - significant use of memory
  - finding information

Essential Skills profiles have been developed for about 200 occupations. These profiles are valuable in screening candidates for jobs, assessing skills and developing practical training programs.

## Employability Skills include:

### Fundamental Skills - skills needed as a base for further development

- communicate
- manage information
- use numbers
- think and solve problems

### Personal Management Skills - personal skills, attitudes and behaviours that drive one's potential for growth

- demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours
- be responsible
- be adaptable
- learn continuously
- work safely

### Teamwork Skills

- skills and attributes needed to contribute productively
- work with others
- participate in projects and tasks

## Link Between the Nine Essential Skills and Employability Skills

### Employability Skills

Communicate

Manage information

Use numbers

Think and solve problems

Work with others

Participate in projects and tasks

### Essential Skills

Reading text  
Document use  
Writing  
Oral communication

Computer use

Numeracy

Thinking skills

Working with others

Continuous learning

*Education is truly an empowering tool to success. Focusing and being diligent in my studies enabled me to achieve and prosper even beyond my own personal scope.*

Dominic Ninivaggi, Recent recipient of Academic and Career Entrance Certificate from Fleming College



## Two Complementary Approaches to Training and Workplace Education

Many organizations effectively use emotional intelligence and plain or clear language training to complement workplace literacy programs.

### Emotional Intelligence

*Emotional intelligence (EI) includes abilities such as recognizing, appraising, describing, understanding, and analyzing emotions in self and others, as well as regulating, managing, and adapting one's emotions in changing situations. EI has been associated with many aspects of daily living, including one's perceived emotional well-being, self-esteem, happiness, and life satisfaction, general psychological and physical health, and quality of interpersonal interactions. Not surprisingly, EI has also been found to be an important predictor of success in almost any job.*

James D. A. Parker. Ph.D., Canada Research Chair in Emotion & Health, Trent University

Considered a soft skill, emotional intelligence is increasingly recognized as a complementary field of knowledge that can be integrated with workplace training programs. Emotional intelligence training can help to change habits that prevent supervisors and employees from communicating effectively and skillfully, and from dealing positively with conflict and stress.

### Plain Language

Workplace literacy is not only about improving the skills and abilities of your employees. It is also about effectively and clearly communicating with them. Plain language is defined as straightforward expression, using only as many words as are necessary. It is language that avoids obscurity, inflated vocabulary and convoluted sentence construction. Using plain language principles in information bulletins, health and safety manuals, forms and other modes of communications saves time, money and lives.

- readers understand documents better
- readers locate information faster
- documents are easier to update
- it is easier to train people
- documents are more cost-effective

Considered a soft skill,  
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 increasingly recognized**  
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 integrated with workplace training programs.

### Sample of Sick Leave Policy: Before and After<sup>12</sup>

#### BEFORE

It is the Employer's policy that all Employees on the active payroll shall be entitled to continuation of regular pay in accordance with the provisions of this Article when absent due to illness, injury, disability, or illness of an immediate family member (immediate family member is defined as spouse including common law spouse or gay/lesbian spouse residing with the Employee in a conjugal relationship outside of marriage), and dependent children, parents, or grandparents of the Employee resident with the Employee.

#### AFTER

If you are on the active payroll you will continue to be paid your regular pay if you are absent due to:

- illness
- injury
- disability, or
- the illness of an immediate family member

*Immediate family member means your spouse (including common law, gay, or lesbian spouse), dependent children, parents, or grandparents who live with you.*

### The Nuts and Bolts of Plain Language

1. Know your audience – reader input ensures readability and usability
2. Organize the information logically – divide information into categories
3. Choose your words carefully – be careful of jargon and trendy language
4. Layout and Design – keep it simple, create a visual contrast, organize with design and design to project the image
5. Test it – have colleagues or focus group review it

### Great Savings from Plain Language Use<sup>13</sup>

In Australia, by rewriting one legal document, the Victoria Government saved the equivalent of \$400,000 a year in staff salaries.

General Electric saved \$275,000 by redrafting manuals into plain English

At Alberta Agriculture, rewriting forms in plain language resulted in annual savings of over \$3,400,000.

Success Stories - National and Local

LITERACY AWARDS

Conference Board of Canada Workplace Literacy Award Winners<sup>14</sup>

Small Category (<100 Employees)

Company	Outcomes
Diversified Metal Engineering, PEI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 70% passed Red Seal (average pass rate is 30%)</li> <li>■ number of certified welders doubled</li> <li>■ increased production</li> <li>■ lower staff turnover</li> <li>■ informal peer training initiated by employees</li> </ul>
Durabelt Inc, PEI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ successful introduction of new technology</li> <li>■ increased efficiency and productivity</li> <li>■ better quality and customer service</li> </ul>
Elmsdale Lumber Corporation, NS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ increased productivity</li> <li>■ improved safety records</li> <li>■ reduced sick time and absenteeism</li> </ul>
National Silicates, ON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ zero voluntary turnover rate in three years</li> <li>■ reduced overtime hours</li> <li>■ reduced outside contractor hours</li> <li>■ reduced plant downtime</li> </ul>
Stedfast, QC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ positive return on investment</li> <li>■ more innovative and flexible workforce</li> </ul>

Medium-Sized Category (100-500 Employees)

Company	Outcomes
J.D. Irving, NB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ reduced outsourcing projects</li> <li>■ savings in time and money</li> <li>■ employees appreciate new respect and recognition for their efforts</li> </ul>
Minas Basin Pulp and Power, NS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ unprecedented operating efficiencies</li> <li>■ low absenteeism rate</li> <li>■ massive reduction in accidents and lost time</li> </ul>
Technocell, QC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ improved skills, attitudes, behaviour and teamwork</li> <li>■ improved workplace safety record</li> </ul>
Teleflex, BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ on-time delivery of finished products up to 90% from 65%</li> <li>■ cell lead time 2-3 days, down from 2 weeks</li> <li>■ inventory turnover nearly doubled</li> <li>■ designated as a "Lean Manufacturer" in 2002</li> </ul>

Conference Board of Canada Workplace Literacy Award Winners<sup>18</sup> (continued)

Large Category (>500 Employees)

Company	Outcomes
Cavendish Farms, PEI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ greater employee commitment to the company</li> <li>■ increased employee retention</li> <li>■ increased completion of high school and Red Seal</li> </ul>
Diavik Diamond Mine, NWT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ increased workplace safety</li> <li>■ increased productivity</li> </ul>
Honeywell, ON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ higher productivity, quality and cost reduction</li> </ul>
Palliser Furniture, MB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ higher employee retention</li> <li>■ higher transferability of employees</li> </ul>

Local Successes

The local Skills Identification Project, initiated in 2006 and facilitated by the Workforce Development Board, found that successfully implementing workplace literacy and skills development would require:

- providing employers with information and training about literacy, essential skills, prior learning assessment and emotional intelligence before expecting a buy-in
- implementation of programs in a methodical, sensitive manner in any organization
- identification of workplace “champions” to introduce the process in a small part of the organization
- education of management during the initial stage of any implementation plan
- developing methods of measuring success specific to each participating organization

Skills Identification Project Committee members have partnered with Cobourg-based GE Plastics over the past several months to address workplace training and test the above principles in a pilot project. The Committee has worked with GE Plastics’ Health and Safety Committee, their in-house champions, to provide training and information about literacy and essential skills. The company trained community partners in technical skills and quality control processes specific to this workplace, including six sigma and lean manufacturing. Together, the team adapted company documents using plain language. Assessments were completed on Committee members and a number of supervisors, approximately 30 employees in all, to determine pre-training essential skill and emotional intelligence levels. These will be repeated, as a post-training assessment, in the near future. Tentative plans involve providing essential skills and emotional intelligence training for the entire workforce of some 350 employees.

Employers involved with the Skills Identification Project are monitoring the pilot at GE Plastics and a number are expected to come on board with their own training programs.

*My exposure to workplace literacy is primarily through my association with the Workforce Development Board in Peterborough. I thought that workplace literacy was more of a 1980's and 90's issue when IT technology created a need for employees with low education to upgrade just to operate machinery. As the vast majority of employees now have grade 12 education, I assumed it was not a relevant issue. I can now see that some of the performance issues in the workplace may actually be from low literacy skills that are manifested in poor teamwork, deflecting to others, inability to follow procedures etc. Additionally, I have come to see how improving these skills for even strong employees makes them even more significant contributors as they gain confidence in doing math, using problem solving tools like six sigma, writing reports, emails or in preparing arguments for presentations. I believe literacy is underestimated in its impact on productivity growth in the workplace.*

Paul Van Iaren, Site Manager, GE Plastics Cobourg

**Employers should start with a needs assessment** before determining what approach may fit best with their company. For assistance, contact LOCS (705) 749-0675, [learningworks@locs.on.ca](mailto:learningworks@locs.on.ca), [www.locs.on.ca](http://www.locs.on.ca)

Common Barriers and Solutions<sup>15</sup>

BARRIERS & SOLUTIONS

Barrier	Potential Solution
Employee indifference or tepid support Fear, embarrassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ promote information on benefits to employees</li> <li>■ establish champions among supervisors and labour representatives</li> <li>■ maintain confidentiality</li> <li>■ recognize existing skills and experience</li> <li>■ do a skills needs assessment and disseminate results</li> <li>■ involve employees from all areas and levels of the organization</li> </ul>
No quick fix; Long-term effort required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ tie to corporate strategic plan</li> <li>■ get advice from government, etc.</li> </ul>
No time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ develop tightly focused training goals, based on a needs assessment</li> <li>■ outsource the assessment and training provider</li> </ul>
No money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ use free training materials at the library, local institutions, agencies or on-line</li> <li>■ involve supervisors and workers in design of training program</li> <li>■ use workplace or community volunteers as tutors or mentors</li> <li>■ partner with a university, college, or continuing education provider</li> </ul>
Scheduling that fits both work and personal schedules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ mentoring</li> <li>■ voluntary sessions during lunch breaks/non-peak times</li> <li>■ learning centre</li> <li>■ pay employees to attend/participate in external programs</li> </ul>
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ use both hard and soft measures, direct and in-direct impact on bottom line</li> <li>■ use existing program evaluation guides (see tools section on page 26)</li> <li>■ use Return on Investment (ROI) measurement software</li> <li>■ hire an experienced consultant</li> </ul>

## Overcoming Barriers<sup>16</sup>

# OVERCOMING BARRIERS

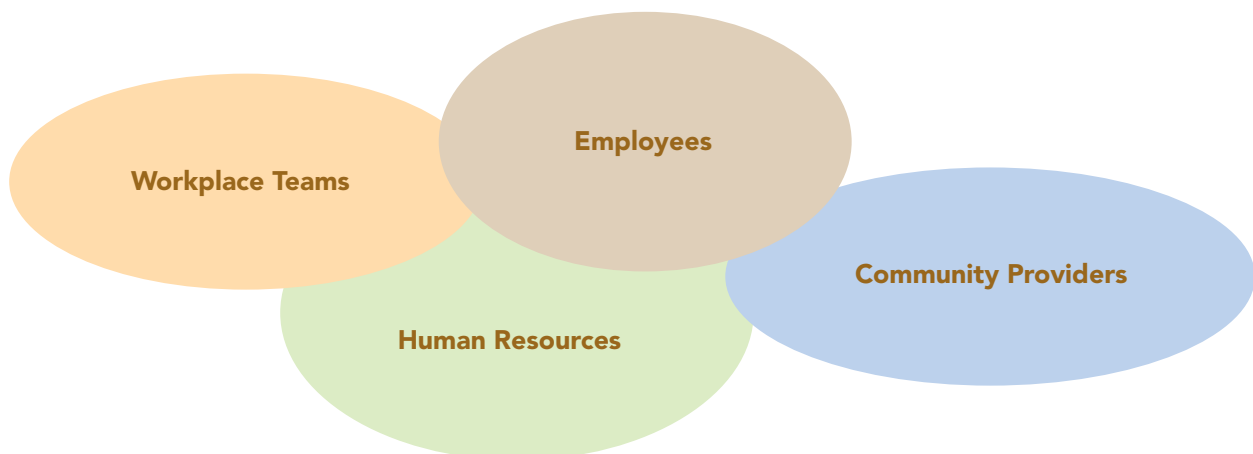
The Conference Board of Canada's research suggests that to be successful, organizations need to:

1. Create a learning environment
2. Recognize literacy needs
3. Plan before initiating
4. Find adequate funding and support
5. Make decision-making inclusive
6. Design an effective curriculum
7. Select the right instructor
8. Use the best delivery mix
9. Market and sell the program
10. Engage supervisors
11. Encourage employee participation
12. Evaluate programs realistically

### Common Threads

Our reading of the literature and case studies of successful workplace literacy programs also found the following common threads:

- partnerships with educational institutions, governments and community agencies
- collaboration between employers and employees
- privacy of individual employees strictly maintained
- some cost-sharing between employers and employees; in many instances 50% of group/classroom training time was paid and 50% volunteered



*I am very anxious to work with the Workforce Development Board to identify resources available to our team members. As an HR manager, I am anxious to see the positive effect on team members' morale and self esteem.*

Debbie Timperio, Manager Human Resources and Service Admin., Quickmill

## Appendix: Literacy and Basic Skills Programs - Northumberland County

## PROGRAMS BY COUNTY

	Fleming College	Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board	The Northumberland READ Centre
Levels	LBS 3,4,5 and OBS IV	LBS 1 - 5	LBS 1 - 3
Delivery Method	Large Class (20 - 25)	1 to 1 Tutoring Small Group	1 to 1 Tutoring Small Group
Services Delivered	All literacy and upgrading training is developed on an individual basis, based on the goal of the learner.		
Specialized Services	A.C.E. (Academic & Career Entrance) Certificate Academic Upgrading: College Prep/ Math/Communications/ Sciences/Computers/ Strategies for College & Work	Computer Instruction Classes for Developmentally Challenged Mon/Wed 1:00-3 :00 Tues/Thurs 1:00-3:00 Essential Skills Instruction 90 Hrs	Computers Essential Skills Pre-GED
Accessible	Yes	Yes	Yes
Assessment	Yes	Yes	Yes
Continuous Intake	Yes	Yes / Closed for August	Yes
Hours of Operation			
Location	1005 Elgin Street West, Suite 301 Cobourg, ON K9A 5J4	Centre for Individualized Studies Peterborough, ON	700 Darcy Street, Unit 31 Cobourg, ON K9A 5T3
Phone Numbers	Phone: (905) 372-6865 Fax: (905) 372-8570	Phone: (705) 745-4523 Fax: (705) 745-4886	Phone: (905) 373-7033 Fax: (905) 373-8162
Email	<a href="mailto:bbellair@flemingc.on.ca">bbellair@flemingc.on.ca</a>	<a href="mailto:calvin_smith@kprdsb.ca">calvin_smith@kprdsb.ca</a>	<a href="mailto:thereadcentre@on.aibn.ca">thereadcentre@on.aibn.ca</a>



## Appendix: Literacy and Basic Skills Programs - Peterborough County

## PROGRAMS BY COUNTY

	Fleming College	Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB	Lovesick Lake Native Learning Centre (LLNLC)	Peterborough Native Learning Program (PNLP)	Trent Valley Literacy Association (TVLA)
<b>Levels</b>	Levels LBS 3,4,5 and OBS IV	LBS 1 - 5	LBS 1 - 5	LBS 1 - 5	LBS 1 - 3
<b>Delivery Method</b>	Large Class (20 - 25)	1 to 1 Tutoring Small Group	1 to 1 Tutoring Small Group	1 to 1 Tutoring Small Group	1 to 1 Tutoring Small Group
<b>Services Delivered</b>	All literacy and upgrading training is developed on an individual basis, based on the goal of the learner.				
<b>Specialized Services</b>	A.C.E. (Academic & Career Entrance) Certificate Academic Upgrading: College Prep/Math/ Communications/ Sciences/Computers/ Strategies for College & Work	Computer Instruction Classes for Developmentally Challenged Mon/Wed 1:00 - 3:00 Tues/Thurs 1:00 - 3:00 Essential Skills Instruction 90 Hrs	Computers Essential Skills Pre-GED	Pre-GED Computer Tutoring Computer Basics Courses (evenings/Saturdays) Goal Setting and Transitions	Pre-Employment Training - Food Services Sector Open Computer Lab Assistance available if needed
<b>Accessible</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Assessment</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Continuous Intake</b>	Yes	Yes / Closed for August	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Hours of Operation</b>	9:00 - 3:00 Mon/Fri Evenings 6:00 - 9:00 Tues/Wed/Thurs Closed Mon in Summer 9:00 - 1:00 Tue/Fri Based on availability	9:00 - 2:30 Mon-Fri Closed for August	8:30 - 4:30 Mon-Thurs 8:30 - 3:00 Friday Non-Natives Welcome	9:00 - 5:00 Mon-Fri 2 week Shutdown in August Occasional Night/Saturday Courses and Circles in response to client requests Non-Native Clients Welcome	9:00 - 5:00 Mon & Wed 9:00 - 8:00 Tues & Thurs 9:00 - 1:00 Friday
<b>Location</b>	599 Brealey Dr. Peterborough, ON K9H 7B1	360 Reid Street Trinity United Church Simcoe Street Entrance Peterborough, ON K9H 7G6	3165 County Rd #29 Unit #1 Lakefield, ON K0L 2H0	227 George Street N. Unit #2 Peterborough, ON K9J 3G7	139 Douro Street Peterborough, ON K9H 1H5
<b>Phone Numbers</b>	Phone: (705) 749-5530 Fax: (705) 749-5540	Phone: (705) 745-4523 Fax: (705) 745-4886	Phone: (705) 652-9673 Fax: (705) 652-9673	Phone: (705) 741-0798 Fax: (705) 740-7262	Phone: (705) 749-0777 Fax: (705) 749-0084
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:jaaustin@flemingc.on.ca">jaaustin@flemingc.on.ca</a> or <a href="mailto:cshannon@flemingc.on.ca">cshannon@flemingc.on.ca</a>	<a href="mailto:calvin_smith@kprdsb.ca">calvin_smith@kprdsb.ca</a>	<a href="mailto:lovesickoffice@nexicom.net">lovesickoffice@nexicom.net</a>	<a href="mailto:info@pnlp.org">info@pnlp.org</a>	<a href="mailto:info@trentvalleyliteracy.ca">info@trentvalleyliteracy.ca</a>

## Appendix: Literacy and Basic Skills Programs - Kawartha Lakes

## PROGRAMS BY COUNTY

	Fleming College	Trillium Lakelands District School Board	Outreach Literacy Program John Howard Society
Levels	LBS 3,4,5 and OBS IV	LBS 2 - 5	LBS 1 - 5
Delivery Method	Large Class (20 - 25)	1 to 1 Tutoring Small Group	1 to 1 Tutoring Small Group
Services Delivered	All literacy and upgrading training is developed on an individual basis, based on the goal of the learner.		
Specialized Services	A.C.E. (Academic & Career Entrance) Certificate Academic Upgrading: College Prep/ Math/Communications/ Sciences/Computers/ Strategies for College & Work	Computers High School Credit Program Preparation GED Preparation	Computers Essential Skills Pre-GED
Accessible	Yes	Yes	Yes
Assessment	Yes	Yes	Yes
Continuous Intake	Yes	Closed for July/August	Yes
Hours of Operation		Mon - Thurs 9:00 - 2:30	
Location	200 Albert Street Lindsay, ON K9V 5E6	Adult Education Centre 230 Angeline Street South Lindsay, ON K9V 4R2	31 Peel Street Lindsay, ON K9V 3L9
Phone Numbers	Phone: (705) 878-9311 Fax: (705) 324-7702	Phone: (705) 324-5280 Fax: (705) 324-9773	Phone: (705) 328-0472 Fax: (705) 328-2549
Email	<a href="mailto:jmcguire@flemingc.on.ca">jmcguire@flemingc.on.ca</a>	<a href="mailto:harold.somers@tldsb.on.ca">harold.somers@tldsb.on.ca</a>	<a href="mailto:bgraham@bellnet.ca">bgraham@bellnet.ca</a>

## Appendix: Literacy and Basic Skills Programs - Haliburton County

# PROGRAMS BY COUNTY

	Fleming College	Haliburton Highlands Learning Program John Howard Society
Levels	LBS 3,4,5 and OBS IV	LBS 1 - 5
Delivery Method	Large Class (20 - 25)	1 to 1 Tutoring Small Group
Services Delivered	All literacy and upgrading training is developed on an individual basis, based on the goal of the learner.	
Specialized Services	A.C.E. (Academic & Career Entrance) Certificate Academic Upgrading: College Prep/ Math/Communications/Computers/ Strategies for College & Work	Computers Essential Skills Pre-GED
Accessible	Yes	No
Assessment	Yes	Yes
Continuous Intake	Yes	Yes
Hours of Operation		9:00 - 1:00 Tutoring takes place at the convenience of the tutor and learner
Location	Haliburton Campus P.O. Box 839, Haliburton, ON K0M 1S0	P.O. Box 119, Haliburton, ON K0M 1S0
Phone Numbers	Phone: (705) 457-4562 Fax: (705) 457-4037	Phone: (705) 457-3430 Fax: (705) 457-4037
Email	<a href="mailto:keglesto@flemingc.on.ca">keglesto@flemingc.on.ca</a>	<a href="mailto:haliburtonliteracy@bellnet.ca">haliburtonliteracy@bellnet.ca</a>

## Appendix: Tools and Resources

## TOOLS &amp; RESOURCES

**For Skills Assessments**

- TOWES (Test of Workplace Essential Skills) [www.towes.com/](http://www.towes.com/)
- CAMERA (Communication and Math Employment Readiness Assessment); applicable to entry level positions [www.ptp.ca](http://www.ptp.ca)
- ESPORT (Essential Skills Portfolio) includes a self-assessment and occupational planning tool [www.esportfolio.com](http://www.esportfolio.com)

**For Recognition of Existing Skills and Knowledge Among the Workforce**

- Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment [www.capla.ca](http://www.capla.ca)
- Academic and Career Entrance Certificate – A.C.E. is offered by all Ontario colleges; establishes knowledge and skills at grade 12 level [www.collegeupgradingon.ca/upgrade/ace/aboutace.htm](http://www.collegeupgradingon.ca/upgrade/ace/aboutace.htm)

**For Job Classifications, Essential Skills Profiles**

- National Occupational Classifications 2006: [www23.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/2001/e/generic/welcome.shtml](http://www23.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/2001/e/generic/welcome.shtml)
- Essential Skills Profiles: About 200 profiles have been developed for various occupations [http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/ES\\_Profiles\\_e.shtml](http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/ES_Profiles_e.shtml)

**For Plain/Clear Language**

- An international network of plain language advocates and specialists [www.plainlanguagenetwork.org/Resources](http://www.plainlanguagenetwork.org/Resources)

**For Emotional Intelligence**

- An international applied research consortium that studies emotional intelligence in the workplace [www.eiconsortium.org](http://www.eiconsortium.org)

**For Literacy and Skills Development Program Evaluations**

- U.S. site with a variety of evaluation tools [www.workplacebasicskills.com](http://www.workplacebasicskills.com)
- Open Learning Agency; includes case study of return on training investment at National Sea Products [www.nssc.ca/files/roti.pdf](http://www.nssc.ca/files/roti.pdf)

**General**

- Education and Learning Reports and Tools: leading-edge research on workplace educational practices and policies, practical tools that help organizations and individuals use and develop skills [www.conferenceboard.ca](http://www.conferenceboard.ca)
- Employment Ontario, linking skilled workers with employers and training [www.ontario.ca/employmentontario](http://www.ontario.ca/employmentontario)
- ABC Canada: a national, registered charitable organization committed to promoting literacy for the general public and the private sector [www.abc-canada.org/](http://www.abc-canada.org/)
- Canadian Training Solutions for Workplace Learning: one of the largest public databases of training providers in Canada [www.strategis.gc.ca/training](http://www.strategis.gc.ca/training)
- NALD (National Adult Literacy Database): lists literacy organizations, contacts, newsletters, and events for each province and territory in Canada [www.nald.ca/](http://www.nald.ca/)

- Statistics Canada: a Canadian business resource for market and industry trends, publications, and data analysis [www.statscan.ca/](http://www.statscan.ca/)
- Sector Councils - The federal government permanently established 32 national Sector Councils to address human resource issues needed to ensure a skilled workforce. Many Sector Councils are involved in workplace education and training initiatives. To find the Council that best fits with your business, go to: [www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/hip/hrp/corporate/sector/listsectorcouncils.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/hip/hrp/corporate/sector/listsectorcouncils.shtml)

- <sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada, *Learning a Living: First Results of the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey* (2005)
- <sup>2</sup> See, for example: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, *Literacy in Ontario: Implications of Findings from IALSS 2003*, Presentation by the Learning Policy Directorate, April 2006 and Statistics Canada, *Building on our Competencies: Canadian Results of the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey 2003* (2005)
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid
- <sup>4</sup> S. Coulombe, J.F. Tremblay and S. Marchand, *Literacy Scores, Human Capital and Growth across 14 OECD Countries*, Statistics Canada (2004)
- <sup>5</sup> T. Scott Murray, *What We Know About Learning a Living: Results of the Adult Literacy and Life Skills (ALL), International Adult Literacy (IALS) and PISA Surveys*. UNESCO (2005)
- <sup>6</sup> See Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) [www.wsib.on.ca](http://www.wsib.on.ca)
- <sup>7</sup> Canadian Council on Learning, *Lessons in Learning: The Skills Gap in Canada*, [www.ccl-cca.ca](http://www.ccl-cca.ca)
- <sup>8</sup> Statistics Canada, *At Risk: A Socio-Economic Analysis of Health and Literacy among Seniors* (1998)
- <sup>9</sup> See Service Canada Industry Profiles [www.hrsdc.gc.ca](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca)
- <sup>10</sup> Conference Board of Canada, *Strength from Within: Overcoming the Barriers to Workplace Literacy Development* (2003)
- <sup>11</sup> The Conference Board (U.S.), *Turning Skills into Profit: Economic Benefits of Workplace Education Programs* (1999)
- <sup>12</sup> United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Canada, *Clear Language and Design for Union Communicators*, <http://www.ufcw.ca/Theme/UFCW/files/training&educ/ClearLanguageAndDesignForUnionCommunicatorsEng.pdf>
- <sup>13</sup> See, for example: [www.plainlanguagenetwork.org](http://www.plainlanguagenetwork.org)
- <sup>14</sup> See case studies of workplace literacy award winners at [www.conferenceboard.ca](http://www.conferenceboard.ca)
- <sup>15</sup> Adapted from the Conference Board of Canada's Solution Tree Framework
- <sup>16</sup> The Conference Board of Canada, *Profiting from Literacy: Creating a Sustainable Workplace Literacy Program* (2005)





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Website: [www.locs.on.ca](http://www.locs.on.ca)

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