

The ACCC National Framework for Developing Essential Skills: Research Findings and Future Perspectives



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Key messages



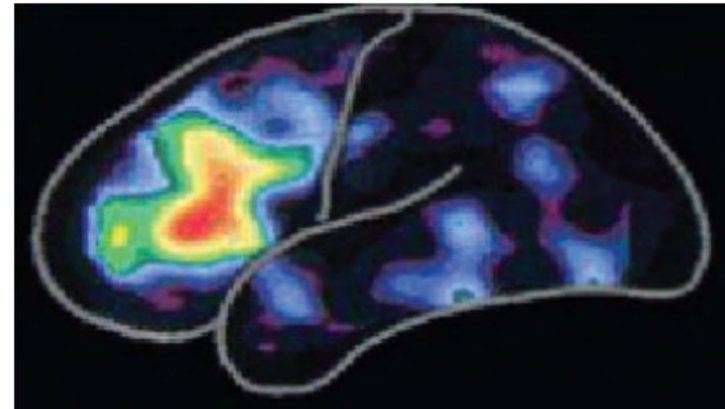
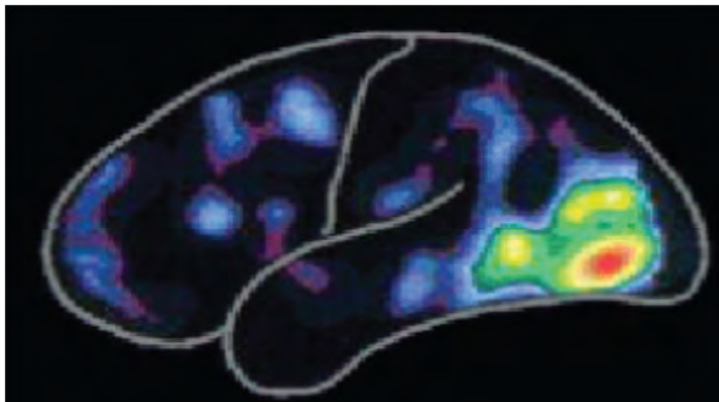
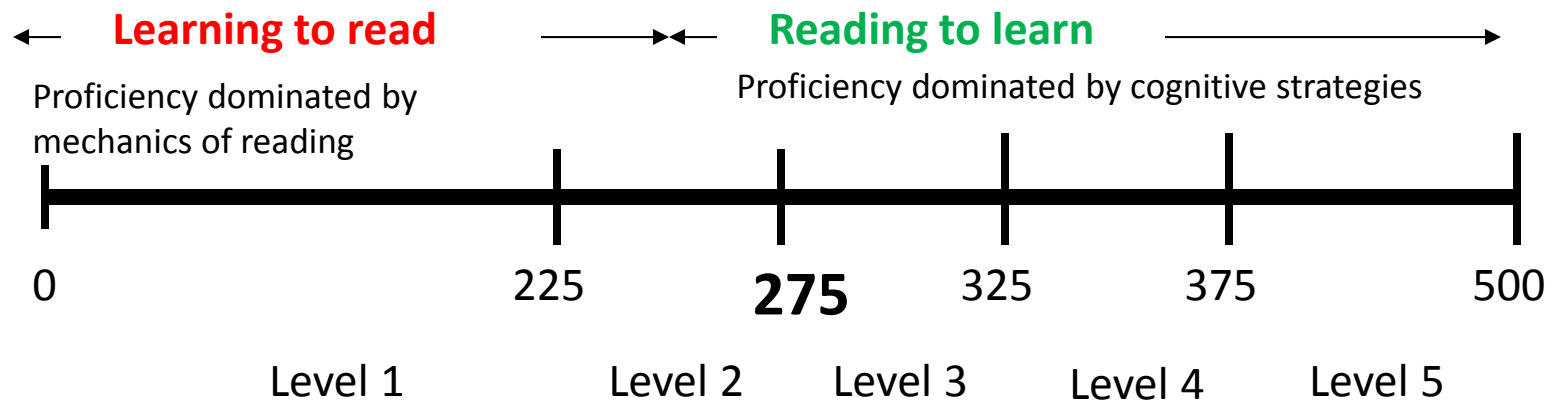
1. Why Essential Skills are important
2. Outcomes of the ACCC pan-Canadian action-research project and Return on Investment
3. Conclusions and Recommendations

Why Essential Skills are important



- **Differences in average literacy explain:**
 - Up to 55% over long term differences in GDP and productivity growth
 - Social inequality in valued outcomes: social, health, education, income and employment
- **Essential skills are needed for the efficient acquisition and application of technical skills and knowledge**

Need to shift from **Learning to read** to **Reading to learn**



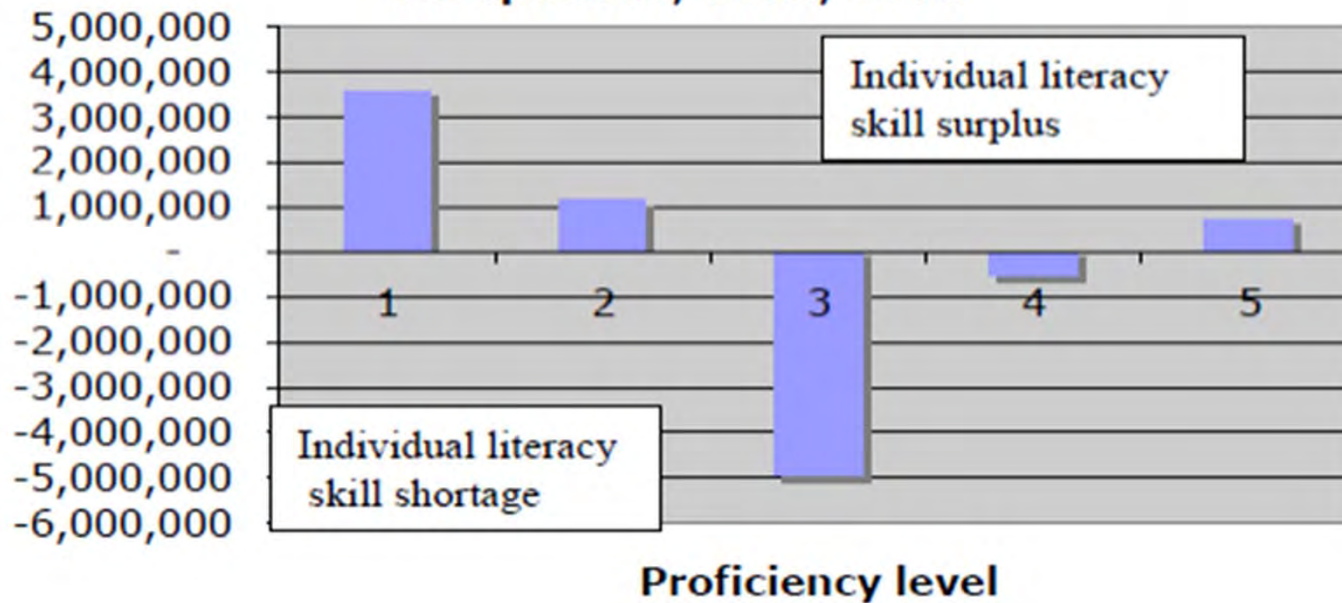
Level 3 provides individuals with the cognitive skills they need



- To **ACQUIRE** technical skills and knowledge efficiently
- To **APPLY** these skills in work to globally competitive levels

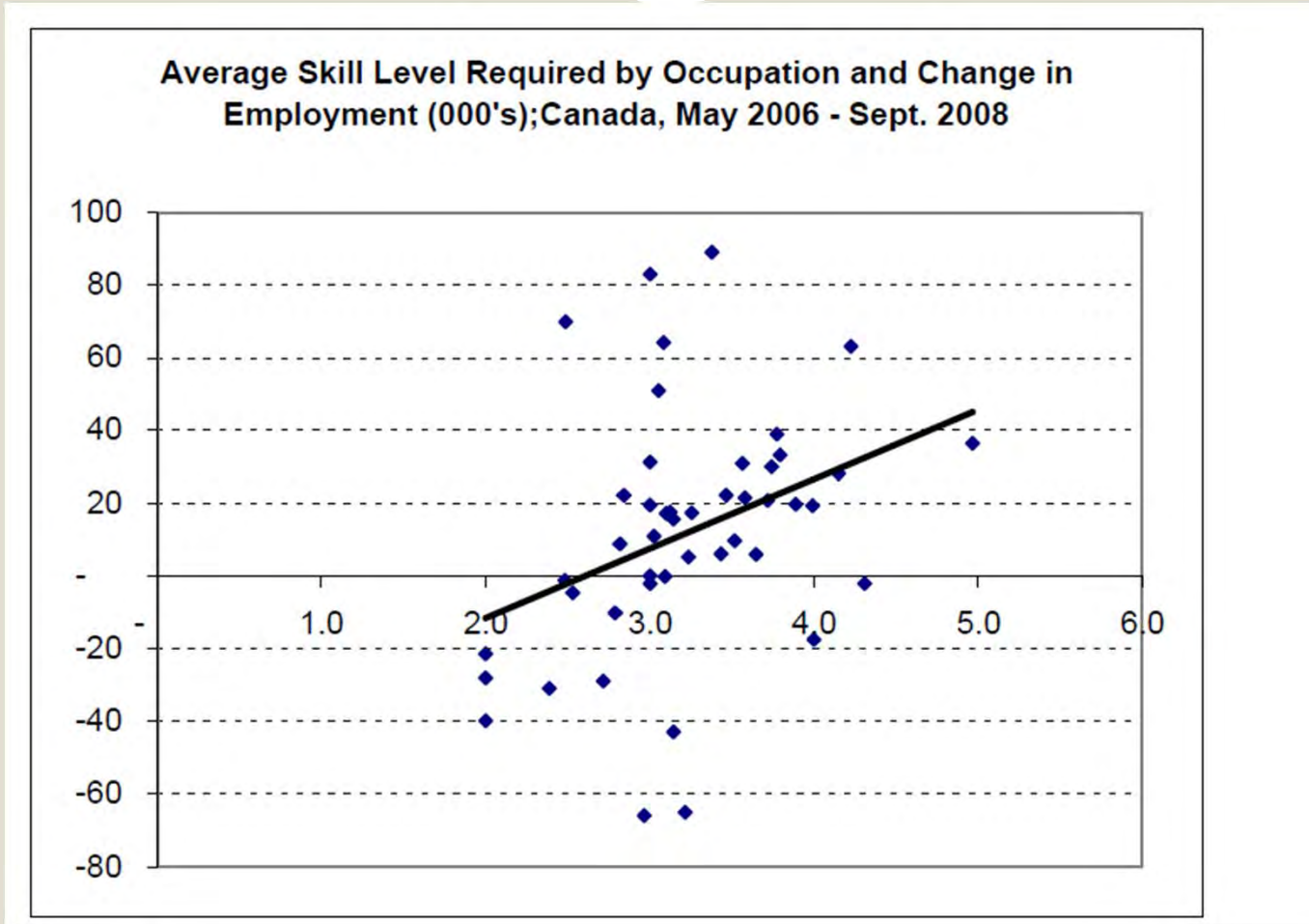
Mismatch between available jobs and skills:
More Level 1 and 2 workers, than level 1 and 2 jobs
A huge shortage of Level 3 workers for available Level 3 jobs

Figure 4.3A Number of workers in literacy skill surplus and shortage by literacy proficiency level, all occupations, Total, 2006



The demand for Essential Skills is rising rapidly:

The Canadian economy is rapidly shedding jobs at prose Levels 1 and 2, and adding jobs at Levels 3, 4 and 5



Key sources of new skill supply include relatively high proportions of people with ES below Level 3



- **40% of youth leaving the secondary system in Canada**
- **60% of current college-level learners**
- **9% of current university-level learners**
- **50% of recent working age immigrants to Canada**
- **65% of Aboriginal adults**

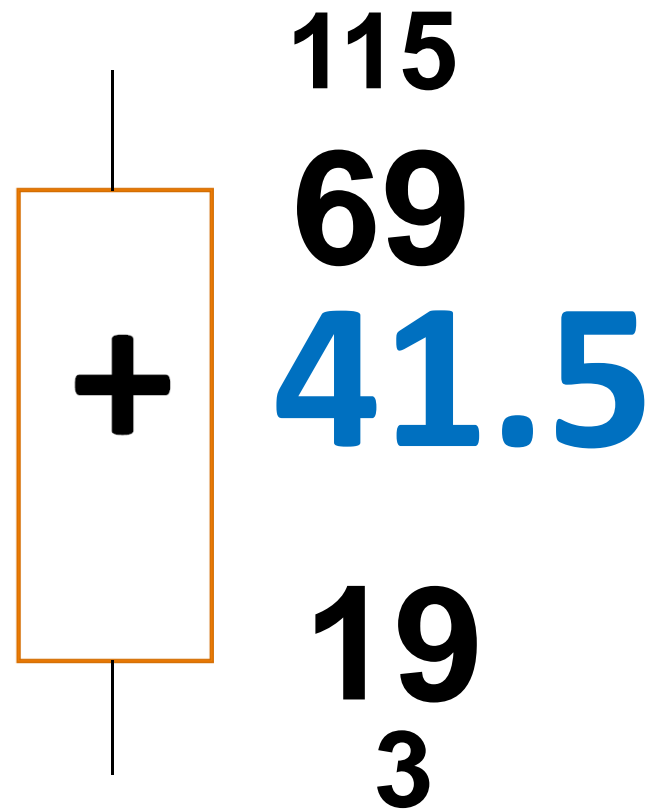
Source: DataAngel, 2012. Analysis based on tabulation from Statistics Canada's *Youth in Transition Survey (2000)*

ACCC project: An evidence-based, learner-centered approach

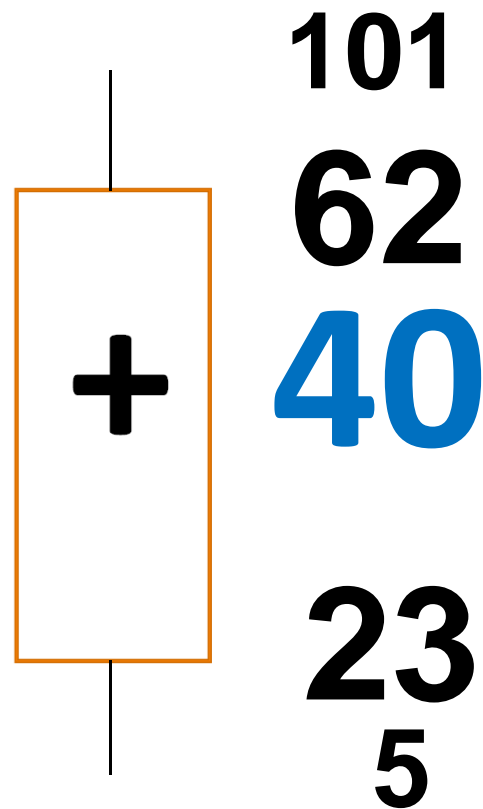


- Needs analysis and early diagnostic assessment inform individual learning plans
- 20-40 hours of ES instruction and coaching
- Post-test and questionnaires to confirm learning gains and service quality at program exit
- Follow up support and practice
- Assessment and questionnaires to confirm sustained learning gains, and impacts 6 months after program exit
- Case studies identify contributing factors

ACCC Action – Research: Results of pre-tests
**Number of points needed for Workers to attain
Level 3 document literacy**



Number of points needed for **Students** to attain **Level 3 document literacy**



Students : Learning gains at program exit



**+ 27 points on
average**

**Equivalent to the average skill gained
through **ONE YEAR** of formal education
at the secondary level**

Workers: Learning gains at program exit



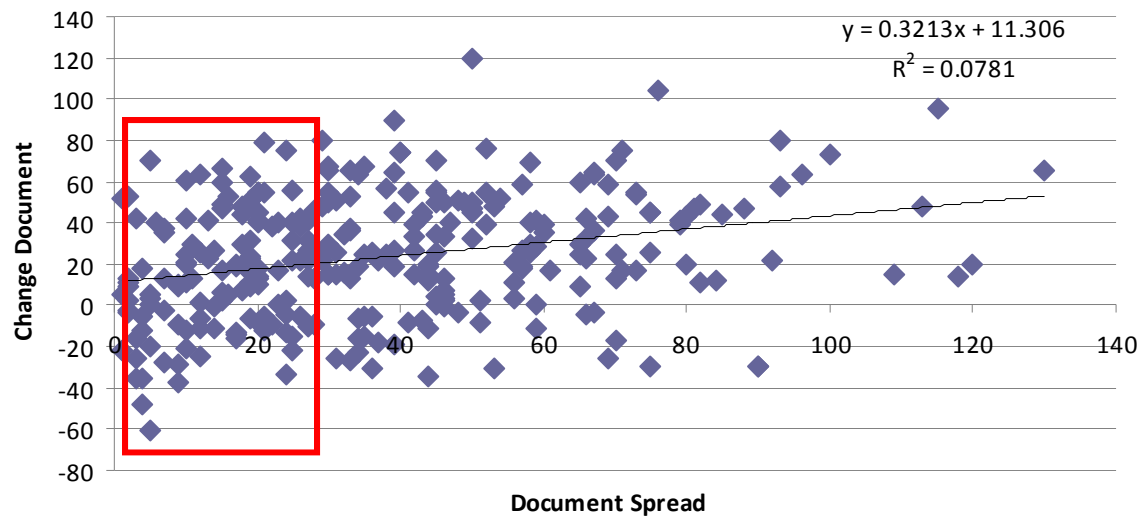
**+ 18 points on
average**

**Equivalent to the average skill gained
through **8 months** of formal education
at the secondary level**

Learners close to the Level 3 threshold gained the least



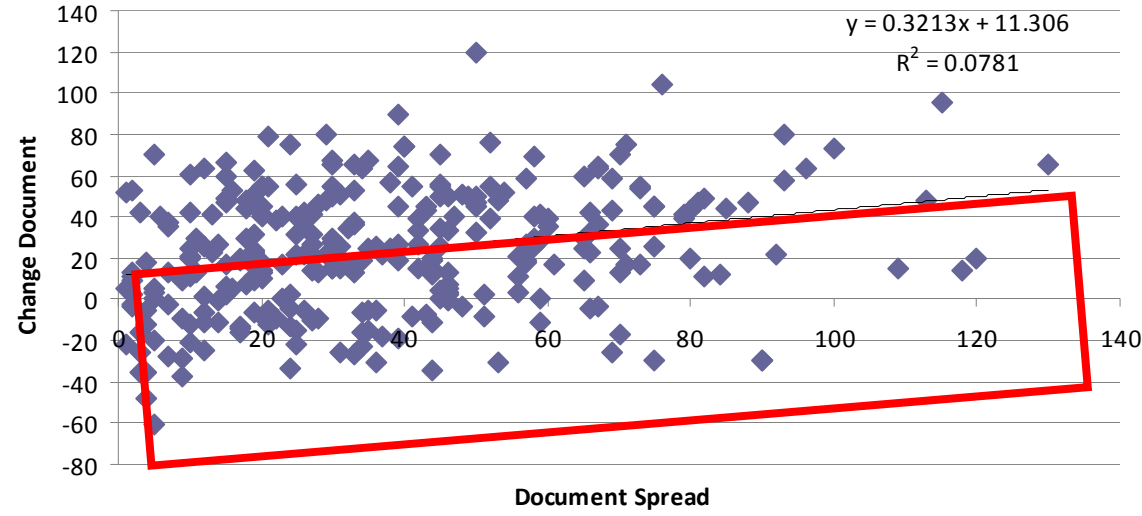
Tracking Records: Levels 1 and 2 with Post Scores



The bottom 20% of learners need more hours, more support, more motivation or something else

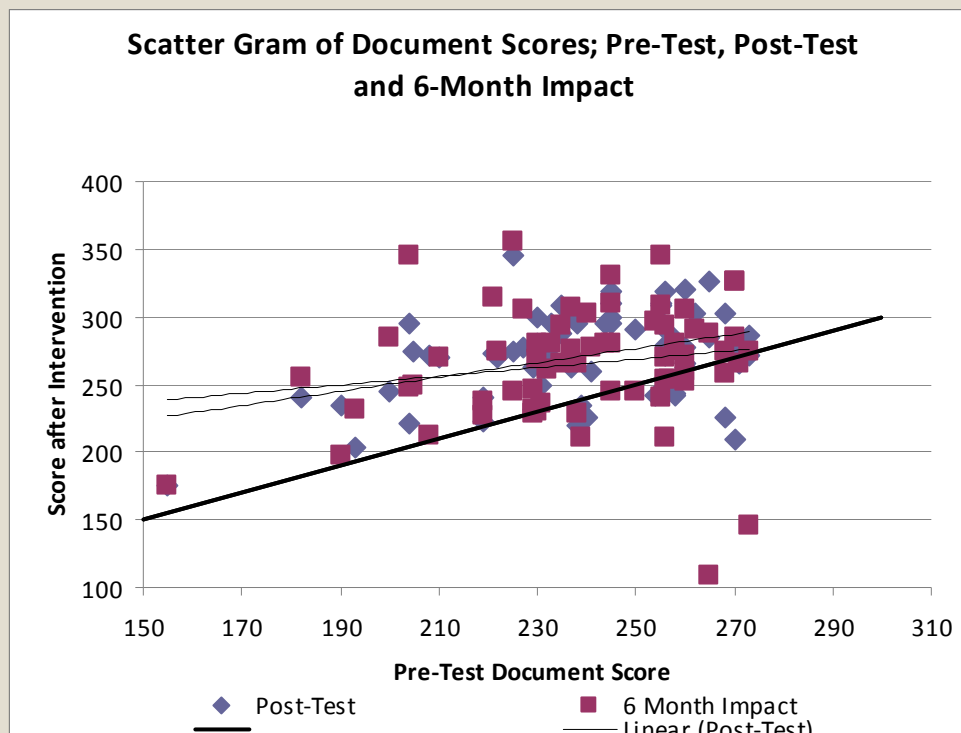


Tracking Records: Levels 1 and 2 with Post Scores



20% of learners

Students continue to gain points in 6 months (practice effect), workers less so



Direct economic value of additional points of document literacy to individuals:



- \$ 155 in additional earnings per point
- \$4,185 in additional earnings for student per year
- \$2,790 in additional earnings for workers per year
- Return on investment (aggregate value divided by costs of ES upskilling) = 302%

Return on Investment: Data from case studies and satisfaction questionnaires



- **For Students**, increased mastery of ES:
 - Helps them save time, balance work and study more effectively
 - Improves their marks
 - Increases likelihood of persistence to graduation
 - Reduces time to graduation
- **For workers**, increased mastery of ES:
 - Increases their retention and tenure in the organization
 - Improves the probability of being promoted
 - Reduces likelihood of unemployment

Policy prescriptions



- 1. Reduce the flow of low skilled youth leaving the education system**
- 2. Improve ES skills of college students: assess ES needs at intake, upskill and aim to graduate all with a minimum of level 3.**
- 3. Increase skills of the adult population through instruction focused on reducing proportions of workers at levels 1 & 2: government incent employers to invest, and pay for upgrading of unemployed.**
- 4. Increase demand for skills through job and process redesign to ensure new skills supply is put to good use**