Tell us...

- Your name
- Reason for being at the session
- What do you hope to get out of the session?
- Something unusual about yourself
Icebreaker Exercise

Goal:
To get someone to guess the name of the famous person on your slip of paper

Rules:
› you must only use the ES that you are given (either Oral Communication or Writing) and provide hints to your partner
Exercise Instructions:

- Take a yellow slip of paper with a name on it. (provided by the instructor) It has the name of a famous person on it. Keep the name a secret.
- Take a pink slip of paper. It will say “Oral Communication” or “Writing”. If you get “Writing”, you will need paper and a pen or pencil.
In 1994, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) launched a national research study, the Essential Skills Research Project (ESRP), to examine how the essential skills were used in various jobs.

HRSDC considered research and adapted scales from the International Adult Literacy Survey which has included comparing Reading Text, Document Use and Numeracy to the IALS 500 point scale.
ES Research came from requests from industry to have a standard system to measure skills by, education (at any level) is generally not standardized and can be difficult to compare.

The Average Canadian Occupation requires Essential Skills (Reading Text, Document Use and Numeracy) level 3

42% of Canadians function below level 3
Beginning Exercise ...

- Use the building blocks to build a tower/building
Exercise Conclusions ...

- What made the building stand?
- What are the characteristics of a good building?
Essential Skills are...

- The FOUNDATION of all other skills
- The “VELCRO” to which all other skills stick
- The skills that employees need to do their jobs SAFELY, COMPLETELY and EFFICIENTLY
The 9 Essential Skills

- Reading Text
- Document Use
- Writing
- Numeracy
- Oral Communication
- Working with Others
- Thinking Skills (note there are 6 sections)
- Computer Use
- Continuous Learning
Essential Skill Myths

Myth #1:

You either have an Essential Skill or you don’t

Reality:

There are varying levels of complexity
Myth #2:

Employers/Employees don’t have to worry about ES if the work is getting done.

Reality:

The Global Economy requires life-long learning
Myth #3:

If you can hide it, a lack of ES will not affect your life

Reality:

There is a greater chance of unemployment or extended unemployment with low ES levels
Myth #4:

It is a better investment for employers to “train the best and forget the rest”

Reality:

With future demographics and workplace demands, everyone will benefit from skill development
Myth #5:

Employers who hire based on Education don’t have to worry about ES

Reality:

Many grads at all levels lack the ES skills that most employers seek
READING TEXT:

- Reading text refers to reading material that is in the form of sentences or paragraphs

  (ex. Notes, letters, memos, manual, specifications, regulations, books, reports, journals)

- Reading text includes: forms and labels if they contain at least one paragraph; print and non-print media

  (ex. Computer screen, microfiche text); and paragraph-length text within charts, tables and graphs.
Refers to tasks that involve a variety of information displays in which words, numbers, symbols and other visual characteristics (ex. Line, colour, shape) are given meaning by their spacial arrangement.
Includes both text writing and writing in documents, such as filling in forms. It also includes non-paper based writing such as typing using a computer.
NUMERACY:

- Refers to the use of numbers on the job and the requirement to think in quantitative terms to complete tasks.
ORAL COMMUNICATION:

- Pertains to the use of speech to give or exchange thoughts or information on the job.
WORKING WITH OTHERS:

- Refers to employees working with others to carry out their tasks.

Do they work independently?  
Do they work with a partner or helper?  
Do they work as a member of a team?
**THINKING SKILLS:**

**Problem-Solving:**

- Involves problems that require solutions. Most problems concern mechanical challenges, people or situations.

**Decision Making:**

- Refers to making a choice among options. Problem solving tasks usually include decision making, but not all decision making is part of problem-solving.
Critical Thinking:

- Is the process of evaluating ideas or information, using a rational, logical thought process, and referring to objective criteria, to reach a rational judgment about value, or to identify strength and weakness.

Job Task Planning & Organizing:

- The extent that workers are required to plan and organize their own job tasks. It does not refer to involvement in the planning function for the organization in which they work, although this is captured in Other Information.
Significant Use of Memory:

- Includes any significant or unusual use of memory for workers in the occupational group.

Finding Information:

- Involves using any of a variety or sources including text, people or computerized databases or information systems.
COMPUTER USE

- Indicates the variety and complexity of computer use within the occupational group.
CONTINUOUS LEARNING

- Examines the requirement to participate in an ongoing process of acquiring skills and knowledge.
Where will you find Essential Skills?

- Listed in job postings on Service Canada’s Web-site: www.jobbank.gc.ca
- Ontario Skills Passports
  Web-site: http://skills.edu.gov.on.ca/OSPWeb/jsp/en/login.jsp
- Essential Skills Profiles
- TOWES assessments
  Web-site: www.towes.ca
- Job Descriptions
It is not enough to “be able to read” or have oral communication skills.

The Essential Skills format also includes complexity levels.

There are varied levels of Essential Skill use in the Profiles and broadly in the Canadian Workforce.
Each ES has a complexity level scale
Some are level 1-4, some 1-5
Level 1 is a starting point and each level builds on the next
Essential Skill Analysts review job descriptions and assign complexity levels to each task
ES Complexity Ratings

- All ES profiles have descriptions that have complexity ratings
- Ontario Skills Passports also have the complexity ratings
- ES profiles have a range of skill levels
Key Words when thinking about the Essential Skill levels:

Level 1 – Locate

Level 2 – Cycle

Level 3/4 – Integrate

Level 4/5 – Generate
WORKING WITH OTHERS
Working with Others examines the extent to which employees work with others to carry out their tasks. Do they have to work co-operatively with others? Do they have to have the self-discipline to meet work targets while working alone?*

*HRSDC Essential Skills Web-site
Types of Work Contexts

Work alone

- Employees work alone providing products or information on progress to others.
- Home-based production workers work alone within their home environments.

Work independently

- Workers are not physically alone but work independently, co-ordinating their work with that of others.
- Receptionists in a large office and production line workers with responsibility for a very specific part of the process are in physical environments that include other workers. However, they work essentially on their own.
Work jointly with a partner or helper

- One worker co-ordinates and co-operates with only one other co-worker at a time.
- A tradesperson works with an apprentice.
- A dental assistant works with a dentist.

Work as a member of a team

- A team is a group of workers who produce a product or accomplish a task through combined effort and organized co-operation.
- Members of a film crew work together to create a feature film or documentary.*

*HRSDC Essential Skills Web-site
Working with Others may involve:

- Oral Communication
- Writing
- Team work
- Problem-solving
- Finding Information
Assessing your workplace and your job requirements...

- Think about your current work situation
- Draw on your everyday knowledge and experience
- If available/applicable use the Essential Skill Profile for your current occupation to complete the Working with Others Workplace Assessment
WORKING WITH OTHERS
Almost all jobs in the Canadian workforce require some sort of interaction with others. This interaction may include live, face-to-face interactions, teleconferences, telephone calls, email, blogs, fax etc. Tasks that involve working with others may be straightforward with clear rules and routines or they may be more complex where the interaction requires negotiating, dealing with unpredictable situations, goal setting and dealing with complicating factors. Our work can involve having our work managed and co-ordinated by others or we may be required to oversee, manage and co-ordinate the work of others. Take a few minutes to answer the following questions to assess the work required in your current job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe tasks that require interaction with other people at your job:</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often do you work with others?</th>
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<tr>
<td>□ All the time</td>
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<td>□ A few times a day</td>
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<td>□ One time per day</td>
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<td>□ A few times per week</td>
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<td>□ One time per week</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ A few times per month</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Monthly</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Other</td>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>My work includes the following interactions:</th>
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<tr>
<td>□ Email</td>
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<td>□ Telephone</td>
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<td>□ Fax</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Chance meetings in the hallway</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Scheduled meetings one-to-one</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Team meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Teleconference</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Blogs/on-line discussion groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Sub-committee meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Video Conferencing</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ None of the above</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Think of job titles that require very little interaction with others

Example:

- Night shift security guard?
- Data Entry Clerk?
- Mortician?
- How many can you think of?
Brainstorm

Name ways we have to work with others...

Examples:
- Special Projects
- Meetings
- Team Work
- Job Sharing
Group Exercise

- Choose an occupation title from the Essential Skill Profiles

- Create a list of tasks that someone from this occupation might need to do in relation to working with others

- Create a list of ways that their tasks might affect the work of others
Tips for working with others

- Share information willingly
- Take time to help others with their work
- Work cooperatively in a group to achieve common goals
- Complete assigned tasks when working with others
- Demonstrate respect for the ideas and expertise of others
Tips for Working with Others Con’t

- Look for ways to resolve conflict
- Ask for help when required
- Work independently when required
- Create an atmosphere of cooperation
- Be tactful
- Show Sensitivity
- Develop team work skills
- Be Respectful
- Take responsibility for your own actions
Additional Tools and Resources:

- OSP Check-Up Tool (on-line assessment)
  http://skills.edu.gov.on.ca/ESCTWeb/jsp/en/home.jsp

- Essential Skills Portfolio Checklist
ORAL COMMUNICATION
ORAL COMMUNICATION

- Refers to one’s ability to use speech to give and exchange thoughts and information
4 Levels to consider

1. **Purpose and Mode:** Why and how one communicates

   Example: in–person, phone, in meetings

2. **Information Complexity:** The complexity of the information that needs to be shared

   Example: meeting times, budget information, confidential information
3. **Communication Context:** To whom you are communicating and the circumstances

Example: direct report, co–worker, manager, team, meetings, one–to–one

4. **Risk of Failure:** What are the consequences of communication failure?

Example: low–risk, potential money losses, “life or death”
Things in life that can inhibit Communication...

- Multi-tasking
- MP3’s
- Cell Phones
- Texting vs. face-to-face communication
- Slang
- Not taking the time to listen
Oral Communication Self-Assessment

Oral communication is the ability to use speech to share thoughts and information. Strong oral communication skills are essential to being able to present your ideas clearly in a variety of situations such as: explaining procedures to a co-worker, giving directions to a friend, or dealing with customer service to discuss a problem with your phone bill. Complete this self-assessment to help you understand your oral communication strengths and areas for improvement.

Instructions:
1. Read each statement in Section 1 and place a check mark in the column that best describes how well you can complete that task. Tip: Think about your work and life experiences as you consider each task.
2. Review your responses for each task. If you have checked five or more in the “Somewhat” and/or “No” columns, you may want to consider upgrading your oral communication skills.
3. Complete Section 2 to identify your training needs.

Section 1: Self-Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I can ...</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask relevant questions to obtain information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leave brief voice messages.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understand short messages and communicate the information to others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Give simple instructions to other on a familiar topic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explain simple facts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follow simple oral instructions.</td>
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<td>Listen to others without interrupting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use appropriate body language (e.g., smiling, nodding, making eye contact) while having a conversation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discuss work-related problems or issues in detail.</td>
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<td>Ask complex questions to get the appropriate information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicate with others to resolve minor conflicts, such as customer complaints.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicate with others to co-ordinate work or resolve problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Express my opinions and ideas clearly and concisely.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restate information that is presented orally.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Train or give clear written instructions to a co-worker.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Give a brief presentation to a small group.</td>
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</table>
Scenario #1

- Sarah needs to communicate to her co-workers about a meeting that is coming up where politicians will attend. There will be a large funding announcement for her organization.

Discuss:
- Purpose and Mode
- Information Complexity
- Communication Context
- Risk of Failure
Bill is an intake nurse for day surgery. His patient is coming in for knee surgery. He needs to communicate with the patient to gather information and provide information to the Anesthesiologist and Surgeon.

Discuss:
- Purpose and Mode
- Information Complexity
- Communication Context
- Risk of Failure
Leo is a Truck and Coach Technician. He is working on the brakes of a large transport truck, along with his team. The job will take several days to complete. They have completed one day of the work. Leo will be in late tomorrow as he has a Dr.’s app. He needs to communicate with his team.

Discuss:

- Purpose and Mode
- Information Complexity
- Communication Context
- Risk of Failure
Group Discussion
Oral Communication Tip Sheet

This tool provides practical tips to help you improve your Oral Communication skills. Review each of the tips below and practice the ones that are the most relevant to your learning needs.

General Tips

- Slow down your speech and pronounce words clearly and correctly.
- Vary your pitch, tone and volume to emphasize key words or sentences.
- Record yourself speaking and then listen to the recording to analyze your pitch, tone, speed and volume.
- Adjust the volume of your voice to your audience (e.g. speak softly when you are talking one-on-one; speak louder when you are talking to a larger group or across a room).
- Be conscious of your speech to avoid filler words (e.g. um, uh, ah, like, well, etc.).
- Organize your thoughts and ideas before speaking (e.g. write notes on what you want to say).
- Do not interrupt when someone else is speaking.
- Concentrate on the speaker’s message and resist distractions in order to focus your attention on listening.
- Respond non-verbally to show understanding and interest when communicating (e.g. nodding your head, smiling, etc.).
- Make eye contact when listening or talking to people.
- Ask questions until you are sure you understand what is being said.
- Be specific when asking questions and giving answers.
- Take notes to help remember what is being communicated.
WRITING SKILLS
Writing Includes:

- Writing texts and writing in documents (for example, filling in forms)
- Non-paper-based writing (for example, typing on a computer)
We need to consider:

The length and the purpose of the writing:

- less than a paragraph, more than a paragraph
- expressing ideas or directions
- longer documents, making recommendations
- critiquing or evaluating, effectiveness
The Style and Structure:
- Informal, pre-set format or format unimportant
- More formal style, sets a tone, routine
- Established format (headings, footnotes)
- Consider the audience, may need to edit the format
- Tone and mood may be required, complex document

The Content of the Writing
- Concrete, day to day
- Routine
- Non-routine, data is available
- Gathering of information, abstract, technical, specialized information
- Created or synthesized
Joe Jobseeker just had an interview. Write a business thank-you note to say thank-you for the interview.

Consider:
- The length and the purpose of the writing
- The style and the structure
- The content of the writing
Write an email to your boss to request your vacation time.

Consider:
- The length and the purpose of the writing
- The style and the structure
- The content of the writing

Scenario #2
Write a press release that you will submit to the local newspaper to introduce your new business.

Consider:
- The length and the purpose of the writing
- The style and the structure
- The content of the writing
Group Discussion
Writing Self-Assessment

Writing is the ability to get a point across by arranging words, numbers and symbols, whether on paper or a computer screen. Strong writing skills are essential to communicating effectively at work (e.g., writing memos, emails, or phone messages) and in everyday life (e.g., writing letters, grocery lists, or notes). Complete this self-assessment to help you understand your writing strengths and areas for improvement.

Instructions:
1. Read each statement in Section 1 and place a check mark in the column that best describes how well you can complete that task. Tip: Think about your work and life experiences as you consider each task.
2. Review your responses for each task. If you have checked five or more in the “Somewhat” and/or “No” columns, you may want to consider upgrading your writing skills.
3. Complete Section 2 to identify your training needs.

Section 1: Self-Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I can:</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write short reminder notes to myself or others.</td>
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<td>Write simple lists (e.g., grocery list, list of work tasks).</td>
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<td>Write notes in point form.</td>
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<td>Write entries in appointment calendars.</td>
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<td>Write brief notes or emails to coworkers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write brief entries into forms (e.g., bank deposit slip).</td>
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<td>Write down telephone messages.</td>
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<td>Write short memos or letters to request or clarify information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write text that is a paragraph or longer such as memos or letters.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepare written materials using templates.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use correct grammar and spelling.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Include details and examples to support my writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tailor my writing to a specific audience.</td>
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<td>Write informal emails or letters to clients or supervisors.</td>
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<td>Write a brief summary of a larger piece of text.</td>
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<td>Write short reports about an event or presentation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write long pieces of text such as letters or reports.</td>
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Writing Tip Sheet

This tip sheet provides practical tips to help you improve your writing skills. Review each of the tips below and practice the ones that are the most relevant to your learning needs.

General Tips

- Determine why you are writing before you start (e.g., to inform, to persuade, or to explain).
- Write down a list of ideas (i.e., brainstorm) before you begin to write.
- Keep your writing short and to the point by setting a length or word limit.
- Write neatly so that others can read your writing.
- When writing numbers, spell out the numbers from zero to nine, and use digits for numbers that are higher than nine (e.g., 10).
- Use words that are simple and easy to understand.
- Avoid using too many punctuation marks (e.g., exclamation points).
- Use a comma to indicate a break, a pause, or to separate ideas within a sentence (e.g., Women live in an urban area, sleep and eat in close quarters with their co-workers).
- Use a dictionary or spell-checker to verify the correct spelling of words.
- Proofread your writing several times to make sure that there are no grammar or spelling errors.
- Use formatting techniques to draw attention to important information (e.g., bold, underline, and/or italicize text where appropriate).
- Use headings to organize your writing into key sections.
- Avoid using the same word too often. Use a thesaurus to help you identify alternate words that have similar meanings.
- Only introduce one main idea in each paragraph.
- If you use someone else’s words or ideas, make sure to reference the original author or source.
- Review your work to make sure that important information is not missing.
- Read your work out loud and listen for anything that sounds awkward or unclear.
- Ask a colleague, friend, or family member to proofread your work and provide feedback.
What have you learned today?

Name 3 things that you can take away from today’s session that you will be able to use in the workplace

How could you contribute to making changes in your workplace in these ES areas?

Questions?