

# On The Way To Work

## Background

Literacy instructors in Ontario today (2005) are challenged

- to provide real tasks based on authentic documents,
- to be aware of and act on the Human Resources and Social Development (HRSD) **Essential Skills** and the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) research and levels, and
- to embed the **Essential Skills** complexity levels into the **Literacy and Basic Skills** and secondary workplace destination programming.

This resource seeks to address these challenges, thus enhancing the employability of learners.

The tasks for the adult learners are aligned with the N.O.C. classifications of entry-level jobs in the following sectors:

Auto / Truck Services  
 Business Services  
 Construction \*  
 Horticulture and Landscaping  
 Hospitality \*\*  
 Personal Care Services  
 Printing  
 Retail  
 Tourism \*\*

The tasks have been aligned to the Ontario Secondary School Curriculum, so that this resource may serve that population as well. Finally, because it is skills-based rather than curriculum-based, this resource will be useful across Canada.

We drew on a number of resources to develop and level the tasks.

- The **Essential Skills** (HRSDC)  
 website: [http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/home\\_e.shtml](http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/home_e.shtml)
- *The Level Descriptions Manual: LBS* resource developed by the Ontario Literacy Coalition
- International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) research: see for example [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca) search for IALS
- National Occupation Classification System (NOC): available at [www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/noc](http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/noc)
- **The Big Picture**, a student Applications of Working And Learning (AWAL) resource, Waterloo Region District School Board
- SkillPlan resources, such as **Writing at Work** by Sue Grecki and Sheila Whincup, **Document Use at Work**, by Julian Evetts and Lynda Fownes, and **Numeracy Rules** by Sue Grecki
- The research of Peter Mosenthal and Irwin Kirsch on structure

\* The tasks included here are from a fully developed, separate resource. Construction Zone is available from the Office of Partnerships and Innovation, Waterloo Region District School Board's website at <http://opi.wrdsb.on.ca>

\*\* The NOC, **LBS**, and the Waterloo Region District School Board define the Hospitality and Tourism sectors differently. Because the sectors are closely related, we suggest that learners complete assignments in both sections.

# How to Use This Resource

There are ten sections to the resource:

- Introductory
- Auto / Truck Services
- Business Services
- Construction
- Horticulture and Landscaping
- Hospitality
- Personal Care Services
- Printing
- Retail
- Tourism

Each of the nine employment sectors has tasks at the Beginner, Intermediate and, possibly, Expert levels.

## Introductory Section

It is suggested that all learners complete the unlevelled Introductory section, with instructor assistance as necessary. The purposes of this section are:

- to familiarize learners with the concepts of, and the language used to describe the **Essential Skills (ES)** and **Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS)** levels, and
- to enable learners to develop the skills needed to perform the tasks in the leveled sections.

The Introductory Section contains assignments:

### Exploring **Essential Skills**

Learners will navigate the **Essential Skills** website and become familiar with the nine **Essential Skills** and with the **Essential Skills** profiles for specific jobs. The goal is for the learner to see his / her skills and interests in the context of **Essential Skills** and to relate these to possible jobs.

### Using Literacy and Basic Skills

A copy of *The Level Descriptions Manual*, (Ontario Literacy Coalition) is the basis for this assignment. The goal is to show learners the structure of the **LBS Levels** – domains, components, levels – and to enable the learner to recognize both the kinds of skills embedded in specific tasks, and also the progression of these skills from basic to more complex. Learners will become better able to assess learning on subsequent assignments. This self-assessment will be transposed to the training plan, and the learner will become more confident in goal setting and in tracking progress toward their goal.

### Career Cruising

This website task assists learners to choose a job or career based upon their individual interests and skills. In conjunction with the **Essential Skills** profiles and the NOC website, learners can identify the skills they will need. Learners can use the skills needed for their chosen careers to develop individual goals and training plans.

## How to Use a Textbook

Workers in many sectors often refer to manuals or textbooks. As well, if the chosen career requires further training, textbook use is necessary. This assignment focuses on the structure common to most textbooks: the table of contents, the index, the glossary, and the general instructions for use of the textbook. This Assignment is based on *Home Depot's Home Improvement 1-2-3*, which is readily available across Canada.

## Getting A Job

Included in this section are tasks related to completing an application form, writing a resumé and cover letter, and a role-play of an interview situation.

## On The Job

In this section are tasks common to all employment sectors: completing a timesheet, reading a pay stub, understanding WHMIS, sending a fax or email, filing an accident report, and participating in a performance review.

## Employment Sectors

Each of these sections contain several *Assignments* which are leveled Beginner, Intermediate or Expert, based on authentic documents. Documents are included in both hard copy and electronic form on CD-ROM. All learner sheets and all documents should be photocopied for the learner.

Each *Assignment* begins with an **Instructor sheet**, which follows a standard format.

- The title identifies the employment sector of the *Assignment* (e.g. Personal Care) and the main focus of the **Task(s)** (e.g. filling out forms.)
- A large **B, I, or E** identifies the overall level of the *Assignment* as Beginner, Intermediate, or Expert. Generally, Beginner tasks are **LBS Levels** 1 or 2; Intermediate tasks include components at **LBS Levels** 3 or 4; and Expert tasks include **LBS Levels** 4 or 5.
- The Assignment Summary indicates what the learners will actually **DO** if all the given tasks are accomplished.
- **Prior Knowledge** indicates what background understanding and/or skills will be required. All *Assignments* include understanding the **ES** and **LBS Levels** as prior knowledge, since the learner is always required to reflect on which of these was practised.
- **Teaching Planning Notes** are intended to help the instructor. They include the document to be used in the *Assignment*, the skills or concepts to be reviewed or practised, the materials to be gathered, and the guests to be invited. They are not intended to be exhaustive, and instructors are encouraged to personalize them according to learners' needs, backgrounds and interests.

- **Achievement Indicators** align with the *Assignment Summary*. This can be of help to the instructor in completing the **Instructor Assessment** page, found in the **Appendix** and on the CD, which can be used as a *Demonstration Cover Sheet* for a learner's **Portfolio**, and can facilitate entries onto a learner's **Training Plan**. The learner is always required to self-assess, using two self-assessment forms contained in the *Appendix*: one focused on **Essential Skills**, the other on **LBS Levels**. The learner will identify the task and will check off boxes to indicate which skills were being used. At the Beginner Level, this assessment will be done with the assistance of the instructor, probably in the form of an oral debriefing. Later, with increased familiarity with the **Essential Skills** and **LBS Levels**, the learner will be able to complete this independently, resulting in a growth in self-confidence.
- **Focus on Learning**, found on the right hand side of the *Instructor sheet*, identifies the **Essential Skills** and the **LBS Outcomes** that are embedded in the *Tasks*. Levels are given where appropriate. The goal is that instructors become more familiar with the correspondence between **Essential Skills** and **LBS Levels**. **LBS Levels** have been subdivided and leveled, reflecting the familiarity of these levels for the **LBS** instructors. As comfort with the nine **Essential Skills** increases, these too can be subdivided where appropriate. (The authentic documents have not themselves been leveled, but rather the tasks of using the document were leveled. Many of the documents are of higher complexity in themselves than the tasks planned.)
- **Curriculum Linkages for Ontario Educators** (on reverse of *Instructor sheet*) makes specific connections between the *Assignment's Tasks* and the Ontario secondary school curriculum. This will be of assistance to teachers of students pursuing school-to-work pathways, as well as all secondary teachers in their collective responsibility to enhance the literacy skills of all students and to make connections with the community beyond the school. Curriculum expectations can be found on the Ministry of Education website: [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/curriculum.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/curriculum.html). These linkages are not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to facilitate use of this resource by secondary school teachers.

The intended audience of the Assignment sheet is the learner. A *scenario or task* overview sets the context. Step by step instructions and response sheets are included as needed.

## Appendix

The appendix contains the following:

- A blank *Instructor sheet* template. It is hoped that instructors will develop their own *Assignments* and *Tasks* to augment this resource.
- Self-Assessment forms for both instructor and learner
- Resource Suggestions
- **Alignment** of ***Essential Skills*** and ***LBS Levels***

The **Alignment** of the ***Essential Skills*** and the ***LBS Levels*** is presented as a series of large charts, which may be laminated and posted as an assist to instructors. Samples tasks from both ***ES*** and ***LBS*** were examined and matched. Often there is some overlap with a task being given a different level of complexity or difficulty in the two systems. An attempt has been made to look at the broad correspondence of tasks.

The ***LBS Domain of Self-Management*** and ***Self-Direction*** covers many of the ***Essential Skills***. As well, some of the ***Essential Skills***, in particular the Thinking Skills, are included within the ***LBS Communications*** and ***Numeracy Domains***.

