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Using Canadian Language Benchmarks to Improve the LBS Intake/Referral Process

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Who are ESL Literacy learners?

Learners may be:

Pre-literate	These learners come from oral cultures where the spoken languages do not have current written forms or where print is not regularly encountered in daily life. They may not understand that print conveys meaning or realize how important reading and writing are in Canadian society.
Non-literate	These learners do not read or write in any language, even though they live in literate societies.
Semi-literate	These learners have some basic reading and writing skills, but are not yet functionally literate.

What distinguishes ESL learners?

Non-Literate ESL

- Lack awareness of use of literacy
- Lacked access to literacy instruction
- Limited formal learning strategies, concepts
- Need to develop oral language skills (vocabulary, syntax patterns, comprehension)

English Literacy Learner

- Very aware
- Some not successful at school
- May have few skills/strategies
- May have strong oral skills

What distinguishes ESL learners?

(2)

Non-Literate ESL

- Tends to use higher oral language knowledge
- Likely affected by past trauma or other issues
- Remarkable survival skills, resilience, perseverance

English Literacy Learner

- Use higher oral skills to support literacy learning
- Likely affected by poverty, family issues, lack of support
- May have diminished resilience and perseverance due to past failures

What distinguishes ESL learners? (3)

Non-literate ESL

- Tend to develop stronger decoding skills but have more difficulty comprehending
- Tend to make slower progress with very little literacy

Literate English speaker

- Tend to be strong in comprehending what they read but decoding is more difficult
- As the level of the reading skills develop, learners will progress more quickly

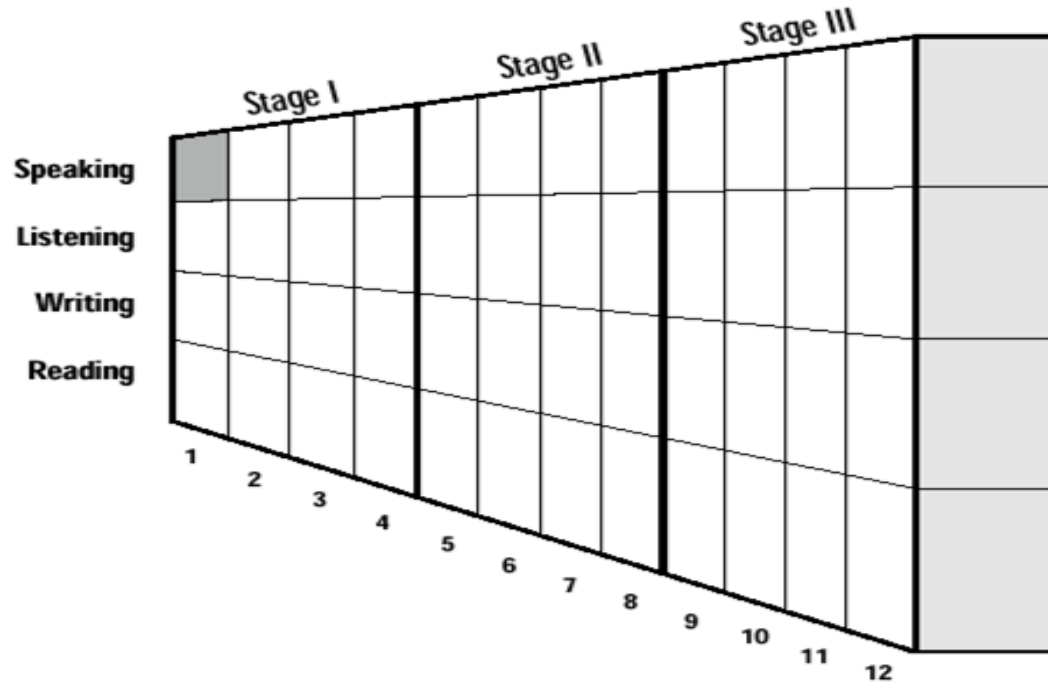
What is similar?

- May lack confidence and self-esteem
- May have health issues, mental health, injuries, disabilities
- Works best in hands-on, experiential learning
- Learns best with strong connections with content, social interaction, personal lives

What are the Canadian Language Benchmarks?

- National standard for English as a second language for adult immigrants for living, working and studying in Canada
- French standard: NCLC
- Describe the four skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing at 12 benchmarks
- A learner can be at a different level in each of the skills
- A literacy learner may demonstrate fairly high Listening and Speaking benchmarks

CLB Stages



	STAGE	BENCHMARKS	WHAT THE PERSON CAN DO	
I - - - V	Stage 1	CLB 1-4	Able to communicate in common, familiar situations of immediate personal relevance	Basic
	Stage 2	CLB 5-8	Able to function independently in most familiar social, educational and work-related situations	Intermediate
	Stage 3	CLB 9-12	Able to communicate effectively, appropriately, accurately and fluently in most situations	Advanced

What does it mean to be a CLB 6 in Listening and Speaking?

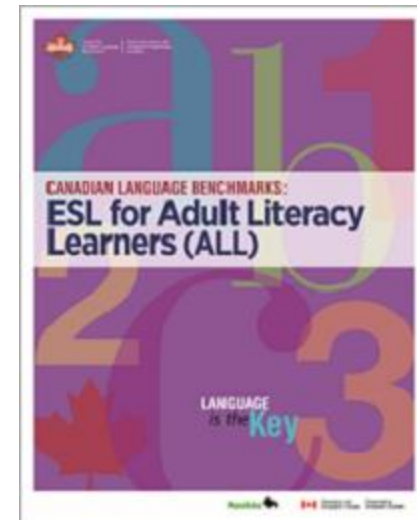
- At CLB 6 in Listening, a learner can understand most moderately complex formal and informal communication, including some abstract concepts and ideas related to life experience.
- At CLB 6 in Speaking, a learner can communicate with some confidence in routine social situations, and present concrete information in some detail about familiar topics of personal relevance.

CLB 6 Listening and Speaking task: Take part in a training session and respond appropriately to follow-up training activities



CLB Literacy Benchmarks

- Described in CLB: ESL for Adult Literacy Learners, available for download at www.language.ca
- Describe Reading and Writing competencies at Foundation, CLB 1L, 2L, 3L and 4L only but
- Three useful sections:



PART 1 ESL Literacy

Approaches and Supports

- Describes the unique characteristics and needs of ESL Literacy learners.
- Focuses on approaches to instruction that can effectively help learners draw on their existing strengths and strategies as they internalize new concepts.
- Provides specific learning supports that facilitate ESL Literacy development, such as oral communication, learning strategies, numeracy, digital literacy, and sociolinguistic and cultural awareness.

PART 2 ESL Literacy and the CLB

- Focuses on supporting ESL Literacy learners as they develop critical concepts and abilities for Reading and Writing.
- Describes the surface similarities to mainstream ESL learners while acknowledging the ESL Literacy learner's lack of underlying knowledge, skills, & strategies.
- Encourages instructors to take a holistic approach to assign benchmarks that capture both CLB outcomes and literacy needs.
- Provides suggestions for classroom activities, tasks, & supports that can enhance the learning process.

Part 3 ESL Literacy Skills Continuum

- Presents a five-phased continuum of ESL Literacy skills, focusing on reading and writing skill development.
- Provides instructors with a sense of the skills, knowledge and strategies that ESL Literacy learners may need to acquire to support their daily activities.
- Provides a reminder of the uniqueness of each learner.
- Shows instructors how to use information to informally diagnose gaps in the learner's skill set.
- Illustrates how to target instruction to help ESL learners with literacy needs develop the ability to complete communicative tasks.

CLB and Essential Skills

- CLB - Describe the second language proficiency of people and their ability to communicate effectively in the workplace and community. They describe language proficiency in the areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- Essential Skills (for the workplace) - Are enabling skills, for example, reading and oral communication skills, which help people participate fully in the workplace and community. Seven of the 9 Essential Skills have a scale to describe levels of task complexity. Essential Skills Profiles describe how specific skills are used in a given occupation.

A Comparative Framework



ES ORAL COMMUNICATION*	1	2	3	4
CLB SPEAKING	5-6	6-8	9-10	11-12
CLB LISTENING	5-7	7-8	9-10	11-12

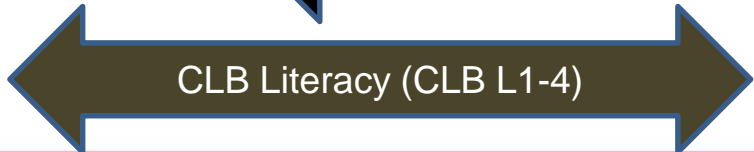
ES READING	1	2	3	4	5
CLB READING	3-5	6	7-9	10	11-12

ES WRITING	1	2	3	4	5
CLB WRITING	4-5	6-7	8	9	10-12

ES DOCUMENT USE	1	2	3	4	5
CLB READING & WRITING	3-5	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12

The CLB/ES Continuum

Foundation	Listening CLB 1-4	Listening CLB 5-7 = Oral Communications 1
Foundation	Speaking CLB 1-4	Speaking CLB 5-6 = Oral Communications 1
Foundation	Reading CLB 1-2	Reading CLB 3-5 = ES Reading 1
Foundation	Writing CLB 1-3	Writing CLB 4-5 = ES Writing 1
Foundation	CLB 1-2 Reading & Writing	CLB 3-5 Reading & Writing = ES Document Use 1



The Essential Skills Primer: CLB Stage

1

- The Essential Skills Primer: CLB Stage 1 is available for download at <http://www.itsessential.ca>. It was designed to be used for CLB levels that fall below those corresponding to the ES levels in the Comparative Framework.
- For example, if the Comparative Framework shows that a CLB 5-6 for Speaking correlates to ES 1 for Oral Communication, then the Essential Skills Primer: CLB Stage 1 lists ES-related language tasks for CLB 1-5.
- There are also learner Primer checklists to do for or with learners with good oral fluency.

Using CLB and ES

CLB Reading – ES Reading Text and Document Use *continued*

CLB Reading Benchmark 1	CLB Reading Benchmark 2	CLB Reading Benchmark 3	ES Reading Text and Document Use Level 1
Skill-building Tasks			Typical Tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match a very short set of instructions with the pictures that it describes Match common signs with words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read and explain/demonstrate standard operating instructions on a washing machine Read and follow 1-4 step instructions written on the board by the teacher or found in a textbook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read simple, common, everyday written instructions with pictures, illustrations, or diagrams Match 1 to 5 step point-form written instructions on how to use a familiar piece of equipment with pictures depicting the process and put them in the right sequence Follow 1 to 5 step point-form written directions to locate items on a map or diagram 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read container labels for instructions, precautions, and handling requirements Read brief notices about changes in regulations or restrictions Read about new procedures Read workplace signs and symbols, such as WHIMIS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read a very short simple report of a daily routine and select illustrations that show the main tasks or events Match phrases or captions (up to 3 sentences) with photographs of a friend's or colleague's vacation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match the correct picture with a short verbal description of an event or incident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Label a diagram using information from a simple, explicit 1-2 paragraph descriptive text Read a simple narrative of a routine event Read descriptive prose about people, places and things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read status reports from supervisors or co-workers from an earlier shift Read to stay current on workplace (a clinic's or hospital's) procedures, policies, scheduling, fees, accounting practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read a cash-register sales receipt to identify amount, date, and place Show on an application form which information is required in which section Identify where to write personal information on a form Locate items on simplified diagrams Identify familiar places on a simple map Point to the correct date on a calendar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locate community facilities on a neighbourhood map Identify where to write personal information on a form Identify familiar layout of a place in a simple diagram Locate specific details in a common formatted text such as a utility bill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify layout and specific information on a common form Locate a department in your building on a simple layout diagram Locate specific detailed information on an invoice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read daily logs, time sheets, overtime forms Read price tags, bills, cash register displays, account statements to determine amount due Read an assembly or vehicle-readiness checklist

Comparing CLB and ES

Table 4 Comparing CLB and ES for ESL Instructors

	Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB)	Essential Skills (ES)
1	The CLB standard was developed for adults whose first language is not English.	The ES standard was developed for people, regardless of their first language.
2	CLB describes language proficiency tasks for community, academic, and workplace settings.	ES describe tasks for work, learning, and life.
3	There are four CLB skills: Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing.	There are nine ES: Reading Text, Document Use, Writing, Numeracy, Oral Communication, Thinking Skills, Working with Others, Computer Use, and Continuous Learning.
4	CLB incorporates formatted text (for example, charts and maps) into Reading and Writing skills.	ES refers to the skill of Document Use as a separate skill. It can involve both reading and writing.
5	CLB is divided into three stages (Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced) and 12 benchmark levels.	The ES have complexity levels of 1 to 4 or 5, with the exception of Working with Others and Continuous Learning.
6	CLB levels define an individual's second language abilities in English.	ES levels define tasks in terms of complexity levels and do not represent an individual's ability to demonstrate the task.
7	CLB is the national framework for describing the language proficiency of adult immigrants in Canada.	ES is the national framework used to describe skills for life, work, and learning in Canada.
8	See www.language.ca for more information on CLB.	See www.hrsdc.gc.ca/essentialskills or www.itsessential.ca for more information on ES.



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ASSESSMENT OPTIONS FOR ESL LEARNERS

Three modes of Access

CLB Referral

- Language assessed at local CLARS Centre
- CLB-based; free assessment for those who qualify

Employment Ontario

- WLA Pre-Screening Tool
- Not an assessment but 30 minute tool for counsellors to define if has CLB 6 or not

Self-Referral to Program

- Learner comes to the program and does assessment at the LBS program
- e.g. OALCF assessment done in program

CLB Referrals

- Usually assessed in four skills by qualified assessors (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing)
- Minimum CLB 6 required for entry in Listening and Speaking (see [LBS 2016 SP Guidelines](#), Section 2.5.1)
- “Understanding Your CLB Report Level”
<http://www.language.ca/documents/CLBPT-Flyer-English-Final.pdf>

Understanding a literacy benchmark

ESL for ALL Framework (2015)
CLB 4L (Completed)
CLB 3L (Completed)
CLB 2L (Completed)
CLB 1L (Completed)
Foundation L (Completed)
Insufficient Evidence

Understanding a CLB report

- CLB 6 Listening: The learner understands many common words, some less familiar ones, and some idioms as well as the important details and indirect meanings when someone speaks about familiar topics. He or she recognizes some details about the speaker's attitude and opinions and has no trouble understanding someone when they speak.
- CLB 6 Speaking: The learner is reasonably fluent and can speak about facts and ideas in some detail as well as use different grammatical structures and connect ideas into longer sentences. The learner's vocabulary is growing and includes some idioms. Although he or she make mistakes, people don't usually have trouble understanding

EO Referrals

- Workplace Language Assessment pre-screener
- Available in most EO offices
- Also available to programs under certain conditions

Self-referral to LBS

- A learner comes alone or with someone to register in the program
- Each program uses its own assessment method/testing process
- Interviews, application forms, other test results (e.g. CAAT) plus initial OALCF diagnostic done by instructor in class



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Free resources to supplement resources you already have

RESOURCES FOR LBS PRACTITIONERS

Learner profile and diagnostic

- Learner Profile Form



Diagnostic Literacy Checklist

Diagnostic Literacy Checklist

Learner's Name: _____ Date: _____

Interpreter Present: _____

Literacy Information

1. Has the learner been assessed using the Canadian Language Benchmarks Literacy Assessment or the CLB Literacy Placement Tool?
 No Possibly/Unknown Yes
 If yes, what were his/her scores? Speaking: _____ Reading: _____ Listening: _____ Writing: _____

2. Has the learner been assessed with any other type of tool?
 No Possibly/Unknown Yes
 If yes, provide details: _____

3. Has the learner ever attended school?
 No Possibly/Unknown Yes
 If yes, how many years? _____

4. Can the learner hold a pen or pencil properly and orient a page of print?
 No Possibly/Unknown Yes

5. Can the learner write his/her name and address in English?
 No Possibly/Unknown Yes

6. Can the learner read and write in his/her own language?
 No Possibly/Unknown Yes
 If yes, how well can he/she read and write in his/her first language? (Basic, Functional or Fluent)

7. Did the learner miss a lot of school in his/her country?
 No Possibly/Unknown Yes
 If yes, why? _____

PLAR Profile

PLAR PROFILE AND PROOF OF LEARNING

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), or Recognition of Learning (RFL) as it is also called, helps individuals identify realistic goals and prove their learning and current competencies. PLAR is a process to identify, document, prove, assess and recognize an individual's applicable learning from all sources. Related knowledge and skills, whether gained through educational institutions (formal learning), workplace (non-formal) learning, or through experiential (informal) learning should be taken into consideration. New immigrants and potential immigrants to Canada may need help to develop a PLAR Profile and prove their:

- Personal attributes and values that affect the way they work and live,
- Essential Skills,
- Language competency in English or French,
- Transferable skills or competencies that could be used in a number of occupations, and
- Occupation or sector specific skills and abilities.

For further information on PLAR, see www.RecognitionForLearning.ca

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

Personal Attributes describe an individual's values and ethics that relate to their goals and enhance their competencies in life and work. For example, honesty and timeliness may be important attributes for employment.



ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Essential Skills are the skills needed for work, learning and life. They provide the foundation for learning all other skills and enable people to evolve with their jobs and adapt to workplaces change. The Government of Canada and other national and international agencies have identified and validated nine Essential Skills. These skills are used in nearly every occupation and throughout daily life in different ways and at different levels of complexity. Essential Skills Profiles describe how each of the nine Essential Skills is used by workers in a particular occupation. Through research (examining the skills people use at work) and interviews with experienced workers, managers, practitioners and leading researchers, close to 200 Essential Skills profiles have been developed for various occupations of the National Occupational Classification. For more information on Essential Skills, see the Government of Canada website: http://svr108.services.gc.ca/english/general/home_e.shtml

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Reading Text
- Document Use
- Numeracy
- Writing
- Oral Communication
- Working with Others
- Continuous Learning
- Thinking Skills
- Computer Use


CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS

The Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) and the *Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens* (NCLC) are national standards used to describe the language individuals use to complete tasks. Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing competencies are organized in three stages and twelve levels. The national standards in English and French are used for describing, measuring and recognizing second language proficiency of adult immigrants and prospective immigrants for living, studying and working in Canada. For more information see www.language.ca.

An OLA (Occupational Language Analysis) is a standardized summary of language competencies, referenced to the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB), linked to success in one occupation. It defines, in a standardized format, speaking, listening, reading and writing competencies and related sample tasks for a given occupation.

TRANSFERABLE AND SPECIFIC JOB COMPETENCIES

Transferable and Specific Job Competencies are skills and abilities needed to perform in a competent manner for a specific job or an occupational grouping. Transferable competencies are transferable within that job grouping or related occupational groupings. For example, nursing skills used in a hospital are transferable to home care nursing, and basic customer service skills are transferable between many occupations.



INDIVIDUAL PLAR PROFILE

An Individual PLAR Profile becomes the basis for proving learning applicable to an individual's goal.

- PLAR Profile and Proof of Learning (developed by CCLB and CAPLA)
- Checklist of things to find out about the learner's attributes, ES, CLB, and transferable skills

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Can Do Statements

- [Can Do Checklists 1 -12](#)
- The Can Do Statements are based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB). They describe what learners can do at benchmarks 1 to 12 in the skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.



Canadian Language Benchmarks
Can Do Statements



Can Do Statements for Employment

- Simplified descriptions of language proficiency in workplace context
- Examples of English language tasks in a variety of workplace contexts



Describes the three stages in the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB continuum)

The CLB level exemplified by the tasks

Canadian Language Benchmarks

Can Do Statements for Employment Listening and Speaking

Stage I - Basic (Benchmarks 1-4)
Basic language ability encompasses abilities that are required to communicate in common and predictable contexts about basic needs, common everyday activities and familiar topics of immediate personal relevance. In the CLB, these are referred to as non-demanding contexts of language use.

Stage II - Intermediate (Benchmarks 5-8)
Intermediate language ability encompasses abilities that allow fuller participation in a wider variety of contexts. It is the range of abilities required to function independently in most familiar situations of daily social, educational and work-related life experience, and in some less predictable contexts. In the CLB, these are referred to as moderately demanding contexts of language use.

Stage III - Advanced (Benchmarks 9-12)
Advanced language ability encompasses abilities required to communicate effectively, appropriately, accurately and fluently about most topics in a wide range of contexts and situations, from predictable to unfamiliar, from general to professionally complex and from specific to nuanced, in communicatively demanding contexts. Learners at this stage have a sense of purpose and audience when communicating (including distance, politeness and formality factors, appropriate register and style, suitable volume or length of communication, accuracy and coherence of discourse, vocabulary range and precision). At this stage, communicating can involve using language within high-stakes or high-risk social, academic and work-related contexts, and in situations in which features of the communication (such as diplomacy, tact, precision) can have significant consequences. In the CLB, these are referred to as demanding contexts of language use.

On the Phone

LEVEL 4
DEMONSTRATES THE FOLLOWING STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

- Comprehension is difficult.
- Participates in very short, simple calls.
- Interactions are very brief.

I can...make and answer calls. For example...

- Find out the opening and closing hours of a business.

My client can...make and answer calls. For example...

- Ask whether or not a company is hiring.

My employee needs to...make and answer calls. For example...

- Understand or provide basic contact information (name, telephone number, time of calling).

The icons represent the language skills exemplified by the tasks.

Context and limitations of the task

Examples of tasks from the perspective of learner

Examples of tasks from the perspective of instructor

Examples of tasks from the perspective of employers

Use Can Do Statements with...

Essential Skills Profiles

Cooks (NOC 6242)

Cooks prepare and cook a wide variety of foods. They are employed in restaurants, hotels, hospitals and other health care institutions, central food commissaries, educational institutions and other establishments. Cooks are also employed aboard trains, ships and at construction and logging camps.



Reading



Document Use



Writing



Numeracy



Oral Communication

- Speak with suppliers to learn about the availability of supplies and their cost. (1)
- Discuss work assignments with co-workers, e.g. speak with kitchen staff to coordinate the use of equipment. (2)
- May instruct kitchen and food servers, e.g. explain food safety protocols to apprentices. (2)
- Make product suggestions and participate in product development meetings, e.g. offer suggestions and opinions about the type, flavour and appearance of menu items. (2)
- May speak with customers, e.g. speak with customers to learn their opinions about recipes and the manner in which food was prepared and served. (2)
- May negotiate contracts with suppliers, e.g. may negotiate with suppliers to establish the terms and conditions of food and equipment purchases. (3)

ES ORAL COMMUNICATION*	1	2	3	4
CLB SPEAKING	5-6	6-8	9-10	11-12
CLB LISTENING	5-7	7-8	9-10	11-12

ES READING	1	2	3	4	5
CLB READING	3-5	6	7-9	10	11-12

ES WRITING	1	2	3	4	5
CLB WRITING	4-5	6-7	8	9	10-12

ES DOCUMENT USE	1	2	3	4	5
CLB READING & WRITING	3-5	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12

Occupational Language Analysis (OLA)

- An OLA* is a description of language competencies linked to success in one occupation
- Referenced to the CLB, it outlines in a standardized format, speaking, listening, reading and writing competencies and related sample tasks for a given occupation
- OLAs are based on 3 national sources:
 - Canadian Language Benchmarks
 - Essential Skills Profiles
 - National Occupational Standards



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- * Requires an Essential Skill Profile and a National Occupational Standard (NOS) from the sector



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Benchmarks

Ontario Skills Passport

- [Lots of information](#)
- Materials for K-12
- Skills Zone ([Skillszone.ca](#))
- Links there to videos, Ontario skills profiles (based on NOC codes) and a Facilitator's Guide to working with Newcomers to Canada



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Questions and Answers





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Thank You

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