

History

In 1994 the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) research and results were released. The international research linked labour market success to a set of teachable, transferable and measurable skills. HRSDC launched a national research study in 1994 that built on the international studies. The result was the Essential Skills.

Myth: Essential Skills and IALS are two different level scales

The Essential Skills are based on the IALS. The levels and point scales are the same. It is only the number of skills covered that is different. IALS covered

- Prose (Reading Text)
- Document Use
- Quantitative (Numeracy)
- Problem Solving (which was a new addition to the Survey in 2004)

Facts

There are nine Essential skills. Thinking Skills are broken down into six more skills and Numeracy is broken down into five more skills

Reading Text

Document Use

Writing

Numeracy

Oral Communication

Thinking Skills

Computer Use

Continuous Learning

Working with Others

Thinking Skills

Problem Solving

Critical Thinking

Decision Making

Job Task Planning and Organizing

Finding Information

Significant Use of Memory

Numeracy

Measurement and Calculation

Budgeting, Scheduling and
Accounting

Numerical Estimation

Data Analysis

Money Math

The Essential Skills are based on a five-level scale with a 500-point system

Level 1 = 0 - 225

Level 2 = 226 - 275

Level 3 = 276 - 325

Level 4 = 326 - 375

Level 5 = 376 - 500

Raising an individual's Essential Skills level by 25 points is equal to that person taking a year of schooling.

The Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) five-level scale roughly fits into Level 1 and 2, and a portion of 3, in the Essential Skills scale

The Essential Skills 500 point system

- makes it is easier to show learning progress than the LBS 5 scale system -
 - an LBS low level one learner has progressed to high level one, but on paper it looks like no progress, but if they started at 100 points and moved to 110 points, there is visual progress
- is consistent across all levels
 - a Level One Document Use would use consistent information or skills as Level One Numeracy or Level One Decision Making

Essential Skills are

- co-related and interdependent
 - you cannot use one without other(s) - when Measurement and Calculation Numeracy is being used an individual is most likely also using Problem Solving and perhaps Document Use
- for work, learning and life
 - Essential Skills profiles are just related to work and are only based on a worker's experience, not an employer's
- used to provide a consistent language in education across Canada and across educational sectors
- consistent across jobs
 - it is the complexity level they are used at that will change

Main websites for Essential Skills

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/essential_skills/general/home.shtml

<http://skills.edu.gov.on.ca/OSPWeb/jsp/en/login.jsp>

<http://www.towes.com/home.aspx>

http://www.itsessential.ca/itsessential/display_page.asp

