

Project Overview

As part of a national partnership with Fanshawe College and the Canadian Virtual College Consortium, Bow Valley College has developed an online Essential Skills training tool designed to teach Essential Skills from a sector specific workplace context:

Essential Skills Direct (ESD)

Providing accessible, innovative and convenient learning options, ESD aims to effectively remove barriers to learning and employment by teaching the skills needed for working in Canada's highly skilled labour market. The ESD tool will help learners develop techniques for improving Essential Skills and introduce an integrated approach to training in an online environment. The tool will improve the Essential Skill levels of learners in the context of specific sectors including:

Health Care | Automotive | Oil & Gas | Aviation | Trades

ESD Online Tool Overview

ESD Support Components

Learner Survey

- Survey (first time log in ONLY)
- Disclaimer (first time log in ONLY)

Profile

- Facilitator info
- TOWES Scores
- Occupational info

Tutorial

- Learner Guide
- Tips & Help

ESD Content Components

Theme Based Units

- Modules
- Source Documents
- Answer Keys

SkillBuilders

- 16 different SkillBuilders

Practice Assessments

- Problem Sets & Source Documents
- Answer Keys

Tutorial

An online User Tutorial will help learners navigate through the content. The tutorial will address the following:

- Using ESD (structure of the content, navigation, organization, etc.)
- Hints and tricks
- How to access support
- Facilitator contact information

Learners will also be able to download and print a pdf copy of this information which is also contained in the *Learner Guide*.

ESD Content Components

Theme Based Units

Each unit centres on tasks with a particular workplace-sector focus.

The Essential Skills activities for each sector are contained in individual **Workbooks**. Activities are based on a workplace task or problem and the information required to complete the task or solve the problem is located in a source document. Source documents may be integrated into the activities in the workbook or they may be in a **Source Document** booklet. Instructions in the workbook direct the learner to the location of the source document.

Completing the exercises:

- Learners can type directly onto the PDF form within the ESD online Learning Management System (LMS)
- The PDFs can be saved to the learner's computer and completed at anytime (on or offline)
- The PDFs can be printed and completed by hand

SkillBuilders

SkillBuilders are short movies that provide additional information and examples to help learners develop techniques to complete the exercises and strengthen their Essential Skills. As they complete the exercises in the Workbook, they are directed to view certain SkillBuilders. They may also access the SkillBuilders anytime to review the concepts or as preparation before completing assessments or TOWES. A brief explanation on how to use the SkillBuilders will play at the beginning of each movie.

Practice Assessments

Each Theme Based Unit also contains two **Assessments**. These assessments allow learners to test what they have learned, help them apply their learning, and help them prepare for writing TOWES.

If learners are in a facilitator-led course, the facilitator will indicate when they are required to complete the assessments. If learners are in a self-directed course, they may use the assessments at any point, to evaluate or challenge. These assessments can be completed more than once and are useful tools within the ESD course.

The Integrated Learning Model

The ESD content has been built with flexible delivery in mind. Below are descriptions of some of the delivery models Facilitators may choose to use during the pilot project.

Independent Delivery

Individual learners may access and use Essential Skills Direct independently. Each learner begins by logging in and completing a learner survey which then generates an individual learning plan. Next the learner completes the User Tutorial to learn how to navigate the tool and to gain an understanding of the course objectives contained in the Introduction. The learner then navigates through the content made up of Theme-Based Modules and SkillBuilders, using the learning plan as a guide. Some learners may decide to review all of the SkillBuilders and then apply their learning to the Theme Based Units. Others may decide to complete the Theme Based Units and view the related Skill Builders they encounter problems with content in the Theme Based Units. Finally, the learner completes the *Informal Assessments* to determine how well he or she has acquired the skills or if more practice is required.

Blended Delivery

Facilitators may work with a learner or group of learners to complete Essential Skills Direct, using a blended format. In this situation, the facilitator has options related to how much access to provide for the learners to assessments and other elements of ESD. A Facilitator may, for example, restrict access to the assessments requiring learners to submit their assessments for facilitator review.

Facilitator's may wish to introduce the learning concepts in the SkillBuilders in a classroom environment and then have learners review and practice as an additional assignment. The Theme-Based Modules can be used as assignments and graded by the facilitator or completed in a group environment.

This approach to learning allows flexibility in the delivery of Essential Skills remediation, as the learner or facilitator can customize how the content is used and what materials are viewed.

Facilitator's Guide

In addition to Facilitator Training for this project, facilitators will receive a Guide which will provide all the materials and resources needed to deliver the ESD content. The guide will contain suggestions and best practices for using Essential Skills Direct in an existing training program and tips for developing supplemental course materials. Specifically, facilitators will find:

- an introduction to Essential Skills and the research supporting Essential Skills training
- learning objectives, content and Authentic Workplace Materials used in ESD
- chapter assessments and answer steps
- instructions for using ESD (navigation, set-up, accessing learner information)
- links to free tools and resources related to Essential Skills and industry
- guide to using ESD in the classroom

Project Mentorship (phone or email)

Mentorship will be available to learners or facilitators to assist them with questions on the content, interpretation of TOWES results, learning plans, occupational requirements, or anything related to Essential Skills. Mentorship will be available during business hours via a 1-800 number or email and a response will be provided within 24 hours of receiving the request. The mentor will be a subject matter expert in Essential Skills (certified Essential Skills Analyst and Test Administrator) who has experience delivering training and developing training materials.

Technical Support (phone or email)

Technical Support will be provided to assist with common technical issues encountered with online learning. These typically include things like login issues, navigation problems, etc. Technical support will be available during business hours through the Essential Skills Online email or 1-800 phone number.