

Key Question:

How to make linkages between Essential Skills and your Curriculum?

Learning Goals:

We are learning to:

- Develop an understanding of the difference between **Essential Skills** tasks and Skill-Building Activities.
- Introduce you to Skill-Building Activities leading learners to be able to successfully complete a task using the tools and resources on the OSP website.
- Analyze the Task by identifying the **Essential Skills** being used and the skill level demands.
- Identify linkages between **Essential Skills** tasks and your curriculum.
- Make **Essential Skills** explicit in your classroom teaching and Assessment.

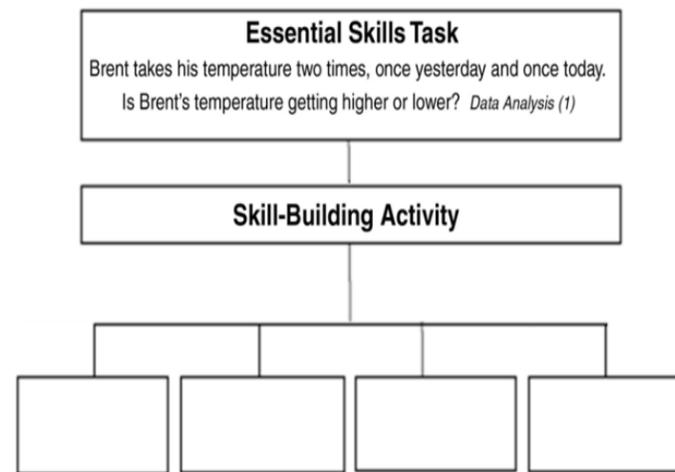
Skill-building activities

Not every classroom activity is an Essential Skills task. Teachers/ Facilitators use Skill-building activities to help learners develop their skills and prepare to apply their skills to perform tasks.

Skill-building activities are the building blocks for Essential Skills tasks.

Activity 1:

What are the Skill Building Activities needed to complete this task?



What is an ES task?

An activity considered complete in itself that:

- Employs a skill or skills.
- Describes what is being produced or acted upon.
- Includes a purpose (real life or work context).

Writes a report to summarize a recent event.

Evaluates the quality of source materials to select what to use.

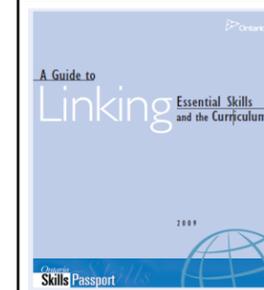
Why should I worry about tasks?

Essential Skills levels can only be assigned to tasks. The Essential Skills methodology uses an internationally recognized scale – between 1 and 4 or 5 – to describe the complexity of tasks. This scale enables each Essential Skills task to be analysed for its relative difficulty. The scale for each of the Essential Skills can serve as a common “language” with which to discuss skill requirements and skill levels in a way that is meaningful for learners, educators, employers, and other community members.

Activity 2:

Decide whether these are Skill-Building Activities or Essential Skills Tasks...

1. Fill the 7-day pill box with your grandmother’s four prescriptions.
2. Complete the page of addition and subtraction problems.
3. Determine the costs for tuition and textbooks for the first semester of your postsecondary program to decide how much you need to save.
4. Total your annual heating bill to decide whether the equal billing plan would be a better payment option.
5. Write a paragraph about something you like to do.
6. Scan the college map to find your way to the bookstore.
7. Double the recipe to serve 12.
8. Make a list of sale grocery items you need and the sale prices.
9. Read the bus schedule to find which bus will take you to the doctor’s office.
10. Read the memo and answer the questions that follow.
11. Read the classified ads and circle jobs you want to apply to.
12. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences.
13. Compare the size and cost of two cans of tomatoes and determine the best buy.
14. Make a list of all the documents you read today.



This Guide is located in the Resources Section of the OSP Website and in the Sample Activity Database section on Skills Zone. It outlines a two-step process for identifying and analysing Essential Skills in classroom activities which will help you uncover the Essential Skills learners are using and determine the skill demands.

Step 1: To figure out if an activity is an Essential Skills task, ask:

What is the learner being asked to do?

Why is the learner being asked to do it?

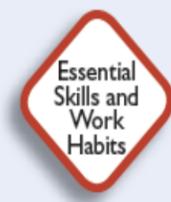
Might individuals do this outside the classroom?
If yes, then we have an Essential Skills task!

Step 2: To analyse Essential Skills tasks, ask:

Which Essential Skills are being used?

What are the skill level demands?

Use the OSP website to help you. On the main page click this icon to take you to a list of Essential Skills with definitions.



Use the OSP website to help you. Once you are on the page with the list of Essential Skills and definitions, click either “skill levels” or the name of an ES to get to skill level descriptions for each ES.

The brain tends to discard information for which it finds no connection or meaning, or for which the meaning is obscure. The need to find meaning is a strong motivational force in the life of each of us. If teachers can consistently help students connect subject matter content with the context of application, I believe we may be astonished at the significant increase in learning.

Dale Parnell, Cerebral Context

Activity 3: Analyze these Essential Skills Tasks

Please go to the OSP website at www.ontario.ca/skillspassport. Click on **Essential Skills** and then click on any skill title to view descriptions of the skill levels.

ES Task	Which Essential Skills are being used?	What are the skill level demands?
Read pamphlets and information sheets to learn about the causes of diabetes.	Main skill:	1 2 3 4 (5)
	Other skills:	1 2 3 4 (5)
Gives a 10-minute presentation to the class on findings from Internet research about the long-term health effects of narcotics use.	Main skill:	1 2 3 4 (5)
	Other skills:	1 2 3 4 (5)
Complete and sign a waiver acknowledging awareness of risks associated with using shop equipment.	Main skill:	1 2 3 4 (5)
	Other skills:	1 2 3 4 (5)
Measure a classroom to figure out how many desks fit in the room, to show understanding of a recently taught unit on area.	Main skill:	1 2 3 4 (5)
	Other skills:	1 2 3 4 (5)

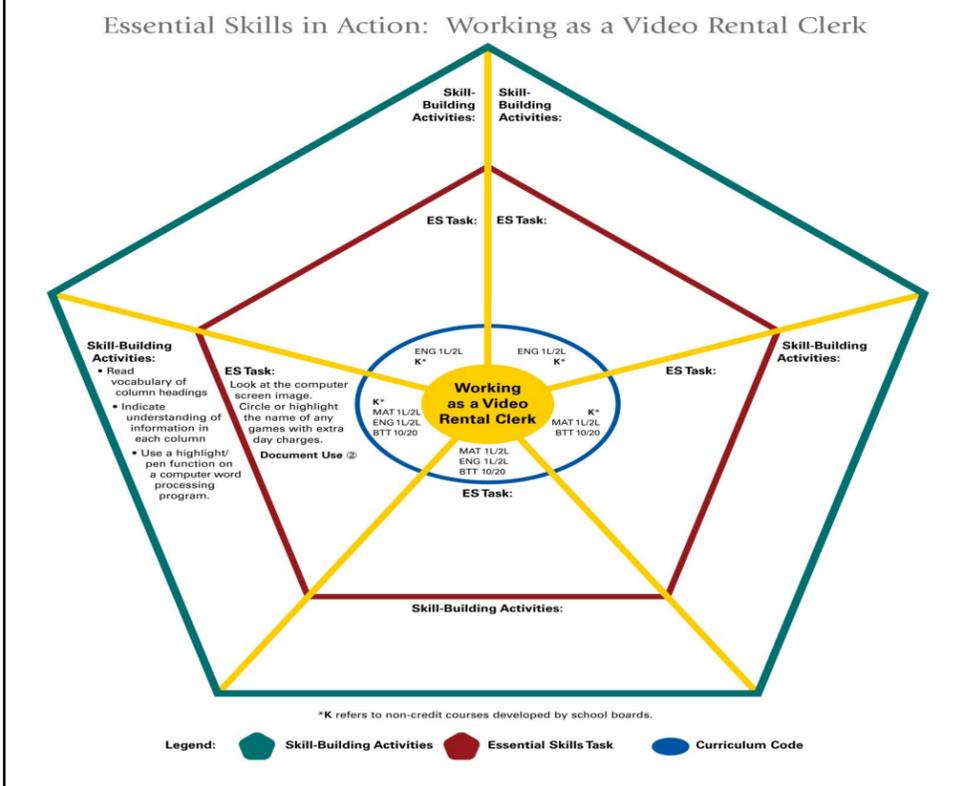
Identifying Essential Skills in tasks:

1. Anchors learning in the real world.
2. Connects learning to learners' goals thus increasing both motivation and persistence.
3. Informs instruction by helping practitioners understand the complexity of what they're asking their learners to do and what kind of "scaffolding" learners may need to perform a task.
4. Helps learners monitor and see their progress.
5. Supports assessment (particularly self-assessment).

Connecting skill-building activities and Essential Skills real-world tasks provides a focus, organizational structure, and purpose for learning and helps teachers and facilitators to explain to learners what they are learning, why they are learning it, and when they will use it outside the classroom.

- Go to the OSP site and click on **Skill Zone**. Click on **Interactive Learning Resources** to access an interactive **Linking Essential Skills and the Curriculum** wheel, like the one shown below.
- Go to **Skills Zone** and click on **Sample Activity Database**. Search for activities in a variety of ways, including those activities including skill-building activities.

Activity 4: In groups of two or three try to complete the curriculum wheel.



Whether you teach in an elementary school, help adults upgrade their math skills, or create activities for use in physics classes, you are giving learners an opportunity to develop and practise their Essential Skills. Having a balance of skill-building activities and Essential Skills tasks is a great way to link classroom activities to applications outside the classroom.

Activity 5: With a partner, try to complete this chart using your own curriculum documents.

**Curriculum Planning Chart –
Light Duty Cleaner**

Course(s)	Curriculum Expectations	Essential Skills Tasks	Skill-Building Activities
Locally Developed Compulsory Credit Course, English - Grade 9 (ENG 1L)	DRV1.02 – read and recognize a variety of short, engaging, authentic, and relevant print and non-print text forms, both teacher- and student-selected; DRV1.02 – preview the features and organizational patterns of print and non-print text, using appropriate strategies;	The Canada Day holiday will be taken on the last Monday of June and no cleaning will be completed on that day. Look at the Monthly Schedule. Highlight or circle the date on the Cleaning Schedule. Document Use (2)	*Read a calendar to locate specific information *Use tools to highlight or indicate specific information
		Mark T. provided the light duty cleaner with \$50 in payment for cleaning services. The cost for two hours of cleaning services is \$40 plus HST. Calculate the change the light duty cleaner owes to Mark. Money Math (2)	
		Cleaners sign confidentiality agreements as a condition of employment. Look at the Confidentiality Agreement. Highlight or circle the places where the Cleaner would print and sign his or her name. Reading Text (1) Document Use (1)	

Reflection

What did I learn that is new for me?

What is the next step in my learning?