



A Comprehensive Review and Development of Measurement Options for Essential Skills Initiatives

Final Report

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CAM NGUYEN | BORIS PALAMETA | WENDY LEE | SONYA HOWARD |
TAYLOR SHEK-WAI HUI | PAUL LALONDE | DAVID GYARMATI

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For information on SRDC publications, contact

Social Research and Demonstration Corporation
55 Murray Street, Suite 400
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 5M3
613-237-4311 | 1-866-896-7732
info@srdc.org | www.srdc.org

Vancouver Office

789 West Pender Street, Suite 440
Vancouver, British Columbia V6C 1H2
604-601-4070

Calgary Contact

587-890-8425

Montreal Office

4126 Saint-Denis Street, Suite 302
Montreal, Quebec H2W 2M5
514-948-5317 ext. 234

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERALL PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES) currently supports a wide range of Literacy and Essential Skills (LES) projects that include pilots of various training delivery models in both workplace settings and for jobseekers, through the Adult Learning, Literacy, and Essential Skills Program (ALLESP). This program aims to develop, test and evaluate innovative training models that support Canadians in improving their LES, with the aim to help them obtain and keep a job, as well as to adapt and succeed at work. Performance measurement is critical to the achievement of these broader objectives of ALLESP and to the success of the projects it supports.

One of the many challenges is that the measurement options for evaluating success of LES initiatives are vast and complex in nature. The preferred measurement instruments will vary by, among other factors, program objectives, scope of the models, delivery context, and the target population. Measurement options are also quite dynamic with new indicators and evidence on their validity and reliability emerging on a frequent basis not to mention evolution in the delivery models that require new approaches to measurement. The wider LES community would benefit greatly from i) a consolidation of current knowledge on existing measurement options for LES initiatives, as well as ii) the development of a framework for the application of measurement options in different program contexts, with different targeted populations.

SRDC was contracted by OLES to conduct a comprehensive review of measurement options for assessing outcomes of LES initiatives and to develop a framework to support a broader performance measurement strategy. The project was conducted in four phases, each with specific objectives:

Phase 1 – Literature review and environmental scan

Through a comprehensive literature review and environmental scan, SRDC documented currently available instruments and measures relevant to all nine Essential Skills, including the core literacy and numeracy skills (Reading, Writing, Document Use, and Numeracy), digital literacy, and the four ‘soft’ skills that are receiving increasing attention in recent research: Oral Communication, Thinking, Working with Others, and Continuous Learning. As part of this review, SRDC outlined and assessed any existing evidence on the validity and reliability of all measures and their suitability for different contexts and populations. The review also updated and expanded on analysis from analysis of publicly-available documents by incorporating

information from key informant interviews with assessment developers, practitioners, and other key LES stakeholders. The results are available in the project Phase 1 report.

Phase 2 – Framework development

Following the review and scan, SRDC developed a broader framework to support performance measurement applicable to a range of LES initiatives. This included a milestone-pathway based approach that incorporates measures linked to both intermediate performance gains and longer-term employment outcomes, including key contextual variables that may act to create conditions for success. SRDC developed the framework by building on the Phase 1 review as well as evidence from earlier SRDC projects such as Pay for Success, Foundations, and UPSKILL. The results are available in the project Phase 2 report.

Phase 3 – Further data analysis to identify tipping point milestones

SRDC conducted additional data analysis of a selected subset of key skills measures and performance indicators from the Phase 2 framework. This analysis helps provide evidence for the suitability of these intermediate measures as precursors (tipping points) to longer-term outcomes such as employment. This effort focused on extended analyses of existing SRDC data sets (e.g., Foundations and UPSKILL), with the aim of replicating the Pay for Success approach of determining which indicators function best as possible milestones towards longer-term success of LES initiatives. The results are available in the project Phase 3 report.

Phase 4 – Final report and recommendations

For the current report, SRDC has revised the framework and recommended a series of preferred indicators along with guidelines for their use in evaluating different LES programs in a range of contexts and for various populations. The final report aims to serve as a practical guide for LES practitioners and policy-makers in selecting suitable indicators for evaluating success of their initiatives. At the same time, it will support OLES in creating alignment and synergies across projects, as part of a broader performance measurement strategy and monitoring of the achievements of ALLESP.

1.2 STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

The report is organized as follows. The next section summarizes the key findings and themes that have emerged from our work in previous phases of this project. Section 3 presents a practical guide for Literacy and Essential Skills practitioners and policymakers to use to select

suitable measures for evaluating the success of their initiatives. We have field-tested the practical guide with one training delivery organization. Their perceptions and feedback on the guide are summarized in section 4. The report ends with concluding remarks and suggestions for future work to enhance the performance measurement capacity of the sector.

2.0 OVERVIEW OF THE AVAILABILITY AND APPLICABILITY OF MEASUREMENT OPTIONS FOR ESSENTIAL SKILLS INITIATIVES

2.1 LITERACY AND ESSENTIAL SKILLS MEASUREMENT OPTIONS

Literacy and Essential Skills (LES) measurement options span a range of objective, competency-based tools (e.g., questions with correct answers) and subjective, self-assessed tools (e.g., questions that rely on learners' self-reports). Within each of these two categories, there are various generic and industry-contextualized measurement options, each of which aligns with different types of learners' objectives and training needs.

Generic assessments draw upon materials and skill domains used in a variety of work and non-work settings. They tend to be most appropriate for programs that aim to sharpen transferrable Essential Skills to enhance readiness for a wide range of learning and employment contexts. Industry-contextualized assessments are informed by and embedded within job competency frameworks for specific industries or sectors. These are more suitable for workplace training programs that are more tightly aligned with industry skill needs.

2.2 MILESTONE-BASED MEASUREMENT

LES measurement tools have an important role to play in a robust evaluation, but it is important to recognize that single LES metrics alone are not sufficient to demonstrate the full value of LES initiatives. Focusing on just LES metrics can underestimate the benefits of LES training programs. Successful employment training initiatives often improve more than just Essential Skills. A range of behavioural competencies and attitudinal factors related to employability can increase after participation in training.

Measurement frameworks should be customized according to program objectives and the target populations – and optimally, organized into milestone-based learning pathways. A milestone-based pathway design uses a series of interconnected indicators of success to guide training and evaluation activities. Milestones are arranged in a logical hierarchy where achievements of earlier, foundational milestones provide the necessary pre-conditions to maximize the chances of achieving subsequent, longer-term milestones.

A milestone-based approach can improve not only the strength of an evaluation but also the design and delivery of programs, leading to further innovation and capacity-building for delivery partners. It avoids focus on a single overarching measure of success, and recognizes that multiple small steps are often needed to produce a ‘final’ outcome. It puts practitioners at the front and centre of milestone design, encouraging practitioner input on defining learning pathways and selecting measures appropriate for their programs. It facilitates timely tracking of learner outcomes, identification of bottlenecks, and needs for service adaptation. Furthermore, it can stimulate innovation in program delivery by establishing links between earlier and later milestones – e.g., designing a skills curriculum customized to specific job performance targets. Finally, it facilitates demonstration of program value, while maintaining accountability to funders and other stakeholders.

2.3 EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE SUPPORTING MILESTONE-BASED MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORKS

The Phase 3 report summarized evidence from three recent SRDC-led projects on measures of training milestones (tipping points) that are linked to longer-term employment outcomes for a range of different program contexts and target populations. Establishing empirical links between intermediate and longer-term outcomes is a powerful way to validate learning targets and the measures used to track those targets.

The programs examined for the Phase 3 report were:

- 1) Pay for Success, a sector-based employment training model for lower-skilled job seekers, featuring intensive engagement with a single, large employer in the garment manufacturing industry;
- 2) UPSKILL, a sector-based workplace and career advancement model offering training for lower-skilled employees with multiple employers in the tourism and hospitality sector; and
- 3) Foundations, a career pathfinding and skill upgrading model for those seeking employment in multiple target sectors and occupations.

In general, the findings show that for sector-based models, gains in Essential Skills are likely to be tipping points to employment success to the extent that these skills are linked to sector-specific job performance requirements (and that these requirements have been used to inform and customize training). This applies whether the skills are objectively measured such as document use or numeracy, or self-reported such as thinking, communication, or receptivity to continuous learning. Soft skills have been under-investigated, largely because of the relative lack

of objective measures of skill gain. Nonetheless, we provide promising evidence that self-reported measures of skill gain can act as reliable predictors of employment success.

For models with no specific target sector, on the other hand, tipping points to employment success tend to be gains in transferable skills – such as career adaptability – that enable job seekers to navigate their ways to a range of possible occupations.

As programs begin to increasingly define milestone-based pathways and measure outcomes, continued analyses of Essential Skill and other tipping point milestones will help build an important evidence base and inform the prioritization of learning targets and measures suitable for a variety of program objectives, delivery contexts and target populations.

Overall, options for evaluating success of LES initiatives are vast, complex and constantly evolving. Choice of measurement instruments can depend on program objectives, scope of training models, delivery contexts, and target populations. To help LES practitioners and policymakers navigate the complex landscape of measurement options and select the most suitable tools for their programs, we have developed a practical guide, presented in the next section. This guide organizes the series of decisions practitioners and policymakers need to make in a logical order, helping them narrow down the measurement options that are best aligned with their programs.

3.0 PRACTICAL GUIDE TO CUSTOMIZE MILESTONE-BASED MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK AND DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

We organize the recommendations, best practices, and key lessons learned from the first three phases of the project into a practical guide, helping LES practitioners and policymakers select suitable measures to build customized milestone-based performance framework and tools. The goal is to provide a solid foundation of all key elements of a measurement framework for users to design data collection tools aligned with their programs' objectives and scope. We aim for this guide to be applicable and user-friendly – not only helping staff to implement concrete steps to collect data, monitor progress and evaluate programs' effectiveness; but also contributing to the LES sector more broadly in terms of enhancing its performance measurement and evaluation capacity.

We prioritize measures that assess 1) the core and soft Essential Skills, 2) other important psychosocial competencies and attributes that are pertinent to work readiness, employability, and learning readiness, 3) key short-, medium- and long-term indicators of downstream success (labour market transition, attachment, and retention). We also incorporate measures that capture the contextual factors – those that shed light on the conditions for success and/or whether the training is suitable for different target populations.

The guide organizes the Phase 2 measurement framework into a hierarchical series of user choices, helping users navigate from the broad definition their participants' distance from the labour market, to measurement categories pertinent to their participants, and finally to specific measures within each of those categories depending on their programs' scope and focus. New measures have been added in areas where gaps were identified in the Phase 2 report – for example, a more wholesome menu of measures customized to Indigenous learners has been developed.

We structure the guide with a series of choices to make it easier for users to navigate through the wide range of measurement options. The guide asks users to make key decisions to ensure that the chosen measures tightly align with their assessment needs. Figure 1 provides a summary of the navigation pathway of the practical guide. Particularly, practitioners and policymakers can navigate through the following steps:

- **Step 1 – Choose participants' distance from the labour market:** The guide provides different sets of measurement menus based on how ready participants are to enter and

advance in the labour market. Program staff can explore measurement options customized to i) multi-barriered jobseekers quite distanced from the labour market, or ii) work-ready jobseekers less distanced from the labour market.¹

- **Step 2 – Explore sample measurement menus tracking in-program outcomes:** Based on their choices in Step 1, program staff are then given a list of measurement tools capturing outcomes that indicate participants' progress within the program. These tools include different types of Essential Skills assessments but going beyond them to capture skills, behaviours and attitudes related to employability and work-readiness. Although it is comprehensive, the list is in no way exhaustive – it is meant to give program staff a solid foundation to start building data collection tools to best address their program's assessment needs. In Figure 1, we illustrate the functionality of this step with a sample measurement menu for work-ready jobseekers. This menu includes measures of job pathfinding skills and receptivity to continuous learning, behavioural competencies, as well as generic and industry-contextualized Essential Skills.
- **Step 3 – Choose how comprehensive the measures within each outcome category should be:** Program staff has the flexibility to customize the length of the tool measuring each type of outcomes, depending on the goals and scope, as well as the measurement capacity and resources of the program. As shown in Figure 1, associated with each outcome category are three measurement options with varying length: the full version of all the measures within each outcome category, the shorter version prioritizing key measures that has theoretical or statistical significance, and the absolutely basic indicators that users should definitely include in their data collection tools.
- **Step 4 – Select indicators of contextual factors:** As discussed in SRDC Phase 2 report, contextual factors are an important element informing program design and supporting program evaluation. The practical guide will provide users with common survey questions capturing individual-level contextual factors related to barriers to employment, work history, demographic characteristics. Note that baseline skills and psychosocial capitals can also serve as contextual factors as well.
- **Step 5 – Add measures customized to target populations:** If applicable, staff of programs serving key vulnerable populations can add measures to gain a deeper understanding of their participants and provide additional meaningful information to monitor progress and

¹ We recognize that there are measurement options and tools for employees participating in workplace training to upgrade their industry-specific skills; however, the vast majority of employment training programs are tailored to jobseekers. Therefore, to provide the best values for as many stakeholders in the field as possible, the current guide only focuses on measurement options for training programs targeting jobseekers. More work can be done to expand the navigation pathway to include options for employed participants in workplace training programs.

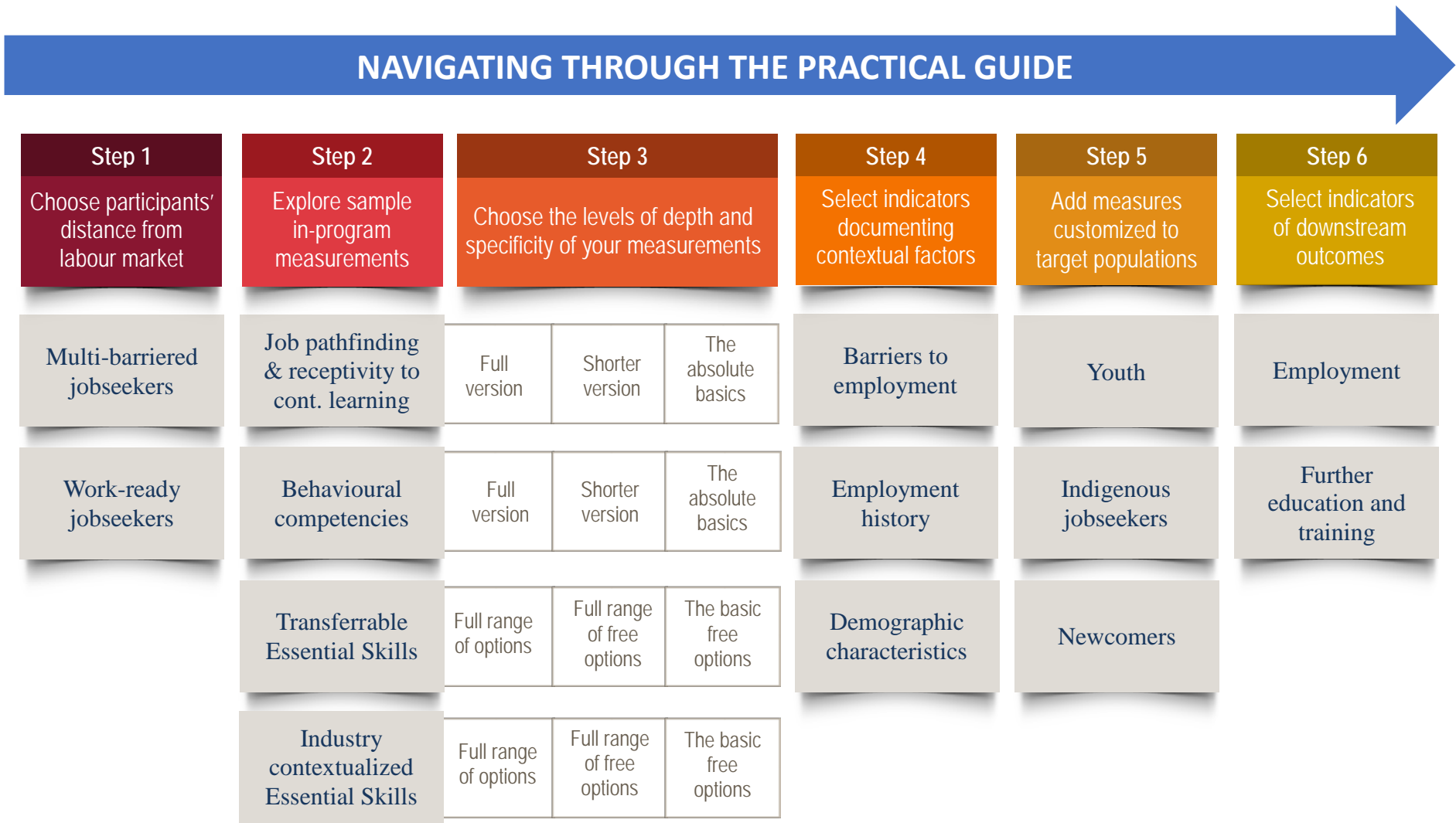
evaluate end-results. Measures tailored to youth, newcomers, and Indigenous jobseekers are included in this practical guide.²

- **Step 6 – Select indicators of downstream outcomes:** Downstream outcomes indicating successful transition from the program to the labour market are important to track, in order to fully illustrate the intermediate and long-term effects of employment training programs. These outcomes include participation in further training to enhance employability, employment status, job satisfaction, as well as other quantitative and qualitative indicators showing engagement and fulfillment at work. However, these downstream outcomes are challenging to track, mainly because they occur after participants have left the program. In this practical guide, we will provide suggestions on how to follow-up with participants to ensure that downstream labour market success is recorded.

The next section will elaborate on each of the six steps of the guide. It also includes actual measures and assessments that practitioners and policymakers can use to customize their performance framework and data collection tools to align with their programs' scope and objectives.

² We have developed a comprehensive suite of measures specifically tailored to the learning needs of newcomers, based on our previous projects. Based on discussions with a key training provider serving Indigenous Peoples, we have also refined our recommended measurement tools for Indigenous learners. Our recommendations related to youth are currently quite narrow in scope, focusing on programs that have enrollment and participation in post-secondary education as an objective. More work needs to be done to further enhance and expand the recommended measurement tools tailored to the employment training needs of youth.

Figure 1 Structure and navigation pathway of the guide



3.1 STEP 1. CHOOSE PARTICIPANTS' DISTANCE FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

Users can choose the option that best describes their participants' distance from the labour market:

1. **Multi-barriered jobseekers, quite distanced from the labour market:** These participants typically have not been working or have been out of work for a long time due to a wide range of barriers challenging their ability to find and keep a job. These barriers may also affect their engagement and commitment to other activities, including further education and employment training. For example, they might lack child care supports, transportation, or other kinds of wrap-around supports to start planning for their career, or conduct a targeted job search. They might not have the necessary behavioural competencies such as future orientation, conscientiousness, motivation, etc. to engage in further training to give them a better chance at finding and securing high-paying employment opportunities. Youth who do not have the necessary educational credentials to enter high-skilled sectors in the labour market also fall under this category. Generally, these participants benefit from pre-employment training programs that enhance their employability/workability skills transferrable to multiple contexts.
2. **Work-ready jobseekers, less distant from the labour market:** These participants tend to be recently unemployed, or currently underemployed in survival jobs. They tend to be closer to the labour market than multi-barriered jobseekers, seeking assistance to get a job more tightly aligned with their interests and commensurate with their skills and educational background. These jobseekers can benefit from an employment training programs with customized learning pathway that helps them meet the skills requirements and performance standards to work in their chosen sector or industry.

3.2 STEP 2. EXPLORE SAMPLE MEASUREMENT MENUS TRACKING IN-PROGRAM OUTCOMES

3.2.1 For multi-barriered jobseekers quite distanced from the labour market

We recommend that program staff consider using one set of measures from all of the following categories presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Recommended measurement menus for multi-barriered jobseekers

1	Capacity and resources supporting participation in further training	These measures capture participants' readiness to engage in further training, including scales assessing self-esteem, ability to get along with others, ability to take care of one's self, etc. Besides measures of internal personal capacity, this category also includes measures of external resources and social capital that participant can access to help them not only achieve life stabilization but also move beyond it to start planning and searching for a job.
2	Job pathfinding skills & receptivity to continuous learning	This set of measures captures participations' ability to apply positive thoughts and behaviours to make plans and carry out tasks that will lead to better employment opportunities, in spite of economic stressors. It also includes a scale to assess participants' attitude toward the learning itself, and how they see current learning contributes to future employment success.
3	Behavioural competencies conducive to employability	Indicators in this set measure the behavioural competencies, personality traits, and other non-cognitive skills that have been found to be predictive of important life outcomes, including educational attainment, labour market participation, wages, and job satisfaction.
4	Transferrable Essential Skills	These assessments measure the skill domains that are critical for a variety of work and non-work settings. They represent the transferrable skills that participants need in order to fully engage and benefit from a wide range of learning and employment contexts, including further sector-based training.
5	Health and wellbeing	Positive effects on health and general wellbeing have been observed even for interventions that may not directly target health-related outcomes. It is therefore important to include this set of measures in the data collection tool to adequately capture the full values of the programs.

3.2.2 For work-ready jobseekers less distanced from the labour market

We recommend that program staff consider using one set of measures from all of the following categories presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Recommended measurement menus for multi-barriered jobseekers

1	Job pathfinding skills & receptivity to continuous learning	This set of measures captures participations' ability to apply positive thoughts and behaviours to make plans and carry out tasks that will lead to better employment opportunities, in spite of economic stressors. It also includes a scale to assess participants' attitude toward the learning itself, and how they see current learning contributes to future employment success.
2	Behavioural competencies conducive to employability	Indicators in this set measure the behavioural competencies, personality traits, and other non-cognitive skills that have been found to be predictive of important life outcomes, including educational attainment, labour market participation, wages, and job satisfaction.
3	Transferrable Essential Skills	These assessments measure the skill domains that are critical for a variety of work and non-work settings. They represent the transferrable skills that participants need in order to fully engage and benefit from a wide range of learning and employment contexts, including further sector-based training.
4	Industry-contextualized Essential Skills	These assessments evaluate the underlying Essential Skills that workers utilize and apply to successfully carry out the day-to-day job tasks in their occupations. In the employment training context, these assessments show how ready jobseekers are to participate as meaningful contributing employee in their targeted sector or industry.
5	Health and wellbeing	Positive effects on health and general wellbeing have been observed even for interventions that may not directly target health-related outcomes. It is therefore important to include this set of measures in the data collection tool to adequately capture the full values of the programs.

3.3 STEP 3. CHOOSE THE LEVELS OF DEPTH AND SPECIFICITY OF YOUR MEASUREMENTS

3.3.1 Skills, behaviours, and attitudes related to employability beyond Essential Skills

We recommend that program staff consider using either the full tool, the shorter version, or at least the absolutely basic version in each of the outcome categories presented in Table 3.

- **The full tool** provides a comprehensive list of measures that capture the full range of skills, competencies, behaviours and attitudes within the category.

- **The shorter version** focuses on the key measures that have been shown to be conceptually important, or statistically significant in predicting later labour market success, based on previous SRDC projects.
- **The absolute basics** emphasizes and highlights the key measures that are statistically significant in predicting later labour market success, based on previous SRDC projects.

In laying out these three options, we hope that the guide can provide program staff with the flexibility to customize the length, levels of details, as well as depth of engagement of the final measurement tool based on their programs’ scope and objectives. For example, if in reviewing the measures related to job pathfinding skills and receptivity to continuous learning, program staff recognize the alignment between these skills and the skills their programs aim to improve for their participants, and may want to incorporate the full version in their data collection tool. On the other hand, if behavioural competencies conducive to employability are an important training objective, but are currently seen as a secondary goal of the training program, staff may want to consider using the shorter version in their tool. Finally, recognizing that health and wellbeing are an important category of outcomes of track, but being aware of the constraints in measurement capacity and resources of their programs, staff may opt for the absolutely basic version of this outcome category.

Details of the scales included in each outcome category, as well as the details of the three versions are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Customizing the length of the measurement tool

	Included in:		
	The full tool	The shorter version	The absolute basics
Capacity and resources supporting participation in further learning Click here for the full scales			
Self-esteem	✓	✓	
Self-care	✓	✓	
Getting Along with Others	✓	✓	✓
Understanding and Thinking	✓	✓	✓
Social Supports	✓	✓	
Domestic Responsibilities	✓		
Participation in Society	✓		

	Included in:		
	The full tool	The shorter version	The absolute basics
Job pathfinding skills and receptivity to continuous learning			
Click here for the full scales			
Career Adaptability, which consists of:			
Career Planning	✓		
Career Decision-making Self-efficacy	✓	✓	
Job Search Clarity	✓	✓	✓
Job Search Self-efficacy	✓	✓	✓
Attitude toward Learning	✓	✓	✓
Behavioural competencies conducive to employability			
Click here for the full scales			
Personality Factors, which consists of:			
Emotional Stability	✓		
Extraversion	✓	✓	
Openness to Experience	✓	✓	✓
Agreeableness	✓	✓	✓
Conscientiousness	✓	✓	✓
Future Orientation	✓	✓	✓
Self-Control	✓	✓	✓
Employability Skills Assessment Tool – Futureworx	✓		
Health and wellbeing			
Click here for the full scales			
Activity Limitation due to Physical and/or Mental Health Issues	✓		
Life Satisfaction	✓	✓	
Trust	✓	✓	✓

3.3.2 Essential Skills assessments

Rather than making specific recommendations, the guide aims to support staff’s decision-making process in selecting the most appropriate Essential Skills assessment for their programs.

Program staff knows their participants' characteristics, their measurement capacity and resources, as well as their evaluation needs the best. These are the key factors that staff should take into consideration when deciding which series of Essential Skills assessments to use. We therefore focus on highlighting the critical information regarding psychometric properties, administrative costs, response burden, and other aspects of each assessment series to help staff make the right decisions aligned with their programs' needs.

Similar to the previous section, the recommended tools in this section are organized into three layers:

- **The full range of options** provides information on the most comprehensive types of assessments. These assessments often require extensive resources to administer and/or develop.
- **The shorter version** focuses on the well-used tools that require less extensive resources to administer and/or develop. Some of these tools are free for staff to adopt and adapt.
- **The absolute basics** emphasizes and highlights the key resources that have been proven to have strong predictive validity, based on SRDC previous projects. These are also free for staff to use and refine, as appropriate.

The rest of this section will describe these three options in greater details, first for transferrable Essential Skills and then for industry-contextualized Essential Skills

Transferrable Essential Skills

Option 1: The full range of paid and free tools to assess transferrable Essential Skills

The full range of tools assessing transferrable Essential Skills spans a wide variety of objective assessments and self-reported indicators. Specifically, it includes validated objective assessments tightly aligned with OLES Essential Skills framework (Group 1a in Table 4), other objective assessments of Document, Numeracy, Reading, and Writing that are user-friendly but are not entirely aligned with the OLES Essential Skills framework (Group 1b in Table 4), and self-reported measures indicating the confidence and frequency of Essential Skills usage (Group 2 in Table 4).

In terms of prioritizing, we recommend that program staff and practitioners choose one set of assessment from Group 1a. If appropriate, an assessment from Group 1b may also be used. If possible based on their programs' measurement resources and capacity, staff may also add a survey with questions from Group 2 to assess participants' confidence and frequency of Essential Skills usage. Following the brief overview of each group of assessments in Table 4, further details on these tools are provided in Table 5.

Table 4 **The full range of tools assessing transferrable Essential Skills – Brief overview**

Group	Assessment Type	Description
1a	<u>Objective assessments</u>	<p>Assessments in this group are developed with well-defined psychometric properties. They are intended for low-stake testing situations where the results may be used with other information to inform decisions affecting individual outcomes, such as needs for training or evidence of skills acquisition. They can also be interpreted in aggregate form to inform decision-making about large groups of people, for example to evaluate the effect of training on groups of participants.</p> <p>The administration of these assessments follow strict protocols, and training for invigilators may be required. These assessments can take between 30 to 90 minutes to complete, depending on the assessment versions and the combination of skills assessed. There is a fee associated with the usage of these tools.</p>
1b	<u>Other objective assessments</u>	<p>The assessment currently included in this group is well-developed, with questions that have objectively right or wrong answers. However, it is not directly aligned with OLES's Essential Skills framework, and assessment results from this tool cannot be directly compared with assessment results from tools in Group 1a. The key advantage of this assessment is user-friendliness – it is not intimidating for learners to take; therefore, it is particularly suitable for learners who have had negative experiences with testing and schooling, or who have been out of school for a long time and need some time to get used to formal testing.</p>
2	<u>Self-reported skill use</u>	<p>Questions in this group ask about 1) one's confidence in the application of Essential Skills, and 2) the frequency of Essential Skill usage. Improved confidence in Essential Skills is a good indicator of skill acquisition, and increased frequency of skill usage is a strong proxy for changes in the underlying competency.</p> <p>The assessment asks about confidence and frequency of skill usage in general contexts. The underlying assumption of skills training interventions is that the skills gained would be transferrable to multiple situations beyond the employment context.</p> <p>Depending on the program's targeted Essential Skills and length of post-training follow-up period, staff can choose to use the full set of self-reported measures, or some combinations of the measures.</p>

Table 5 The full range of tools assessing transferrable Essential Skills – Detailed descriptions

Assessment	Essential Skills	Links	Description and notes
Group 1a. Objective assessments			
Essential Skills Group (ESG)	Reading Document Use Numeracy Writing Oral Communication	Click here	These assessments are most suitable for respondents with low Essential Skills proficiency (Levels 1 and 2), as they are developed to capture the precise performance of low-skilled test-takers. ESG assessments are delivered through an online platform compatible with most common web browsers. There are options to customize the length of the assessments, with longer assessments being more precise.
Test of Workplace Essential Skills (TOWES) – Paper	Reading Document Use Numeracy	Click here	These assessments can be customized to the starting skill levels of learners, e.g., if most learners are expected to be at Level 2, TOWES test booklets can be selected to have more Level 2 questions. A Level 2 test booklet would be less precise in assessing individuals at Level 3 or 1, however. TOWES assessments can also be customized in terms of length, with longer assessments being more precise. All assessments are available in English and French.
Test of Workplace Essential Skills (TOWES) – Web-based	Reading Document Use Numeracy	Click here	The web-based version of TOWES uses adaptive testing to make sure that adequate measurement precision is achieved. There are multiple options to customize the test to different usage. For example, TOWES Foundation is best used to diagnose reading problems or issues that affect how an individual learn to read. TOWES Focus measures skills at multiple levels and can be applied to a wide range of learning and employment contexts. In the process of development are TOWES Sharp, which is designed for employment and high-stake assessments, as well as TOWES Target, which can quickly pinpoint if a client's skills are above or below the threshold between level 2 and 3. Training for the administration of these assessments – referred to as invigilation – is mandatory. The assessments are delivered through an online platform that requires computers to run Google Chrome in kiosk mode. All assessments are available in English and French.
Education & Skills Online Assessment (linked with the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies – PIAAC)	Reading Document Use Numeracy Problem-solving in technology-rich environment	Click here	This is an online assessment tool designed to provide individual-level results linked with PIAAC measures of literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments. Results can be benchmarked against the national and international data available. In addition, the assessment contains non-cognitive measures of skill use, career interest, health and well-being, and soon also behavioural competencies. The test is available in English, French, and some other languages.

Assessment	Essential Skills	Links	Description and notes
Group 1b. Other objective assessments			
Communications and Math Employment Readiness Assessment (CAMERA)	Reading Document Use Numeracy Writing	Click here	<p>Although can be used as a stand-alone tool, CAMERA tests are best integrated into a system with accompanying curriculum guidelines (Signposts) and series of workbooks (<i>workwrite</i>). The CAMERA System represents common activities in a wide variety of entry-level occupations and diverse employment settings. The assessments are often used as diagnostic tests, identifying skills gaps to help instructors and learners decide the next steps in their learning plans, providing input for programming purposes, as well as illustrating program progress.</p> <p>CAMERA test series include a Placement test evaluating participants' skills upon entry into a program, Stage 1 tests assessing progress and outcomes of learners with lower-level literacy skills, Stage 2 tests assessing learners with mid-range literacy skills, and Stage 3 tests assessing learners with higher-level literacy skills.</p> <p>There is a small fee associated with the usage of the CAMERA tests. Program staff using CAMERA are required to participate in training to learn about the standardized process to invigilate and score the tests.</p>
Group 2. Self-reported skill use			
Confidence in skill application Frequency in skill usage	Reading Document Use Numeracy Writing	Click here	These indicators are easy to incorporate in a survey and are free to use.

Option 2: The range of free tools to assess transferrable Essential Skills

Program staff has the option to use one set of self-reported/self-administered free assessments (Group 1 in Table 6) to develop more refined measures customized to their programs. If possible, they can also add a survey with questions indicating the confidence and frequency of Essential Skills usage (Group 2 in Table 6). Following Table 6, Table 7 provides further information on these free resources.

Table 6 **The free options of transferrable Essential Skills assessments – Brief overview**

Group	Assessment Type	Description
1	Self-reported assessments	<p>Assessments in this group are designed to help the participants explore and gain a better understanding of their own skills sets. These tools can also be integrated into participants' learning paths, as they usually provide users with not only a snapshot of their current skills and abilities but also suggestions on how to enhance strengths and address weaknesses.</p> <p>As standalone tools, these assessments should be treated as supporting resources to help trainers check in with participants and develop learning plans. They are not meant to be measurement tools that can provide pre-post data to evaluate a program.</p> <p>However, they can be a solid starting point for program staff to develop their own Essential Skills measures, to be used in program evaluation and performance assessments. This is because staff can use these tools to develop and refine self-assessed Essential Skills measures to be included in surveys, by adding more details aligned with training contexts while adhering to the fundamental behaviours associated with each of the nine Essential Skills being assessed.</p>
2	Self-reported skill use	<p>Questions in this group ask about 1) one's confidence in the application of Essential Skills, and 2) the frequency of Essential Skill usage. Improved confidence in Essential Skills is a good indicator of skill acquisition, and increased frequency of skill usage is a strong proxy for changes in the underlying competency.</p> <p>The assessment asks about confidence and frequency of skill usage in general contexts. The underlying assumption of skills training interventions is that the skills gained would be transferrable to multiple situations beyond the employment context.</p> <p>Depending on the program's targeted Essential Skills and length of post-training follow-up period, staff can choose to use the full set of self-reported measures, or some combinations of the measures.</p>

Table 7 The full range of tools assessing transferrable Essential Skills – Detailed descriptions

Assessment	Essential Skills	Links	Description and notes
Group 1. Self-reported assessments			
Office of Literacy and Essential Skills – Jobseekers and Workers – Self-assessments	Reading Document Use Numeracy Writing Digital Oral Communication Thinking Working with Others Continuous Learning	Click here	<p>The Office of Literacy and Essential Skills offers a series of self-assessments asking jobseekers and workers to reflect on their work and life experiences and provide a subjective evaluation of their abilities to perform a range of tasks. These tasks reflect common job responsibilities that workers have in any workplace, regardless of industries or occupations. At the end of each skill assessment, test-takers can complete a Personal Development section, helping them document and reflect on strengths and weaknesses. This means learners can use these tools to identify, in broad terms, the skill gaps they need to address, although it doesn't provide further details on their competency levels or contexts of their skills needs. As a standalone assessment, these are simple tools for learners to gain a better understanding of their Essential Skills.</p> <p>These tools also provide a solid starting point for program staff to develop, refine and customize their own self-reported Essential Skills measures. This is because indicators in these assessments capture in a succinct way the key behaviours and attitudes underlying each Essential Skill. Staff can rely on these tools and incorporate the contexts and objectives of their specific training programs to design measurement tools that can address the unique assessment needs of their programs.</p>

Assessment	Essential Skills	Links	Description and notes
Office of Literacy and Essential Skills – Jobseekers and Workers – Indicators	Reading	Click here	<p>This tool provides objective assessments that can be self-administered. It offers different pre and post quizzes to help users measure their improvement after participating in a training program. The tests are divided into Levels 1, 2, and 3. Test-takers are recommended to begin with Level 1, but they can start with any level. Upon completing a test at a given level, test-takers can choose to move on to the next level above or below as they see fit. They also receive a result report at the end of each level explaining the rationales behind each correct answer to help them learn.</p> <p>As a standalone tool, this assessment can be used as an exercise for participants to become more familiar with a typical Essential Skills assessment’s content and format. They are best used as practice tests to prepare participants for longer, more comprehensive Essential Skills assessments.</p>
	Document Use		
	Numeracy		
	Writing		
	Digital		
	Oral Communication		
	Thinking		
	Working with Others		
Continuous Learning			
Group 2. Self-reported skill use			
Confidence in skill application Frequency in skill usage	Reading	Click here	These indicators are easy to incorporate in a survey and are free to use.
	Document Use		
	Numeracy		
	Writing		

Option 3: The absolute basics in assessing transferrable Essential Skills

At the absolute basics, program staff should at least include a set of survey questions measuring participants’ confidence and frequency of Essential Skills usage (see Table 8).

Questions in this group ask about 1) one’s confidence in the application of Essential Skills, and 2) the frequency of Essential Skill usage. Improved confidence in Essential Skills is a good indicator of skill acquisition, and increased frequency of skill usage is a strong proxy for changes in the underlying competency.

The assessment asks about confidence and frequency of skill usage in general contexts. The underlying assumption of skills training interventions is that the skills gained would be transferrable to multiple situations beyond the employment context.

Depending on the program's targeted Essential Skills and length of post-training follow-up period, staff can choose to use the full set of self-reported measures, or some combinations of the measures.

Table 8 **The absolute basics in assessing transferrable Essential Skills – Detailed descriptions**

Assessment	Essential Skills	Links	Description and notes
Self-reported skill use			
Confidence in skill application	Reading	Click here	These indicators are easy to incorporate in a survey and are free to use.
	Document Use		
Frequency in skill usage	Numeracy		
	Writing		

Industry-contextualized Essential Skills

Option 1: A comprehensive tool with extensive employer engagement

The most comprehensive way to assess industry-contextualized Essential Skills is to develop measurement tools with extensive engagement and input from employers and industry stakeholders. Through close collaboration, program staff and key industry players can come to a mutual understanding of the required performance standards expected of a productive employee in the sector, as well as the underlying Essential Skills that the training programs aim to upgrade to support the development of such performance competencies.

Using this knowledge, program staff can work to refine the alignment between targeted training skills and industry-specific performance standards. This provides crucial information that can, among other things, help staff develop assessment tools to closely examine participants' progress, understanding not only Essential Skills acquisition but also performance competency development, shedding light on how ready participants are to become contributing employees in the targeted sector.

This section describes the steps involved to develop such comprehensive industry-contextualized Essential Skills measurement tool. Gathering industry input through this process not only ensure

tight alignment between the measurement tool and the sectoral or organizational Essential Skills training needs, but also facilitate industry buy-in and validation. More specifically, it helps employers and industry stakeholders see the values in both the measurement tool itself and in the training program more broadly. The high-level overview of each step in the process is provided in Table 9.

Table 9 Steps to customize tools assessing industry-contextualized Essential Skills

Step 1. Develop a performance framework that achieves a preliminary alignment between business priorities, performance gaps, and Essential Skills gaps leading to training needs

The performance framework is a systematic approach to develop an organized structure describing and identifying skills deficits, job performance gaps, and business outcomes of the targeted sector or industry. The objective of the performance framework is to link together a manageable number (roughly 6-8) of broadly defined business outcomes with employee-level performance requirements, for instance by acknowledging how employee-level workplace practices may influence business-level outcomes.

To develop a preliminary performance framework, project staff can conduct a document review to compile the performance standards or occupational standards of targeted sector or industry. These documents are typically published by industry associations, provincial and national training authorities, sector councils, unions, or other business stakeholder organizations. These documents should provide project staff with a starting point to organize employee-level performance standards, and to identify broad performance requirements as they relate to specific job tasks. Referencing to these documents helps ensure that the linkages between business priorities and performance requirements are grounded in the actual work required by employees in the targeted sector or industry.

The performance framework provides a basis for discussion to engage employers and industry stakeholders in the next step. It is important to note that the linkages made in the draft frameworks should be considered preliminary. Inputs from employers collected in the next step will confirm, validate, and update the mapping of employee-level performance requirements with business-level outcomes.

Step 2. Conduct Organizational Needs Analysis to confirm and validate the alignment

The Organizational Needs Analysis consists of a series of consultations and interviews with the employer(s), multiple levels of employees, and/or industry representatives and key stakeholders in the targeted sector. The number of interviewees vary depending on the scope and design of the training project. The purpose of these consultations is to confirm and validate the performance framework, refining the alignment between business needs, performance gaps and skills needs, ensuring not only that the resulting training is well-customized to target the needs of the industry in focus, but also that measurement tools adequately capture the fundamental job performance and Essential Skills requirements that a prospective employee needs to meet in order to be a productive and contributing worker of the sector.

The Organizational Needs Analysis also serves a recruitment and engagement purpose. It provides a structured way for employers and workers to think about performance gaps and business needs, as well as their linkages to each other and to skills needs. It conveys to employers the mechanism through which the current training program can help address the key skills gaps and performance gaps commonly found among prospective or inexperienced workers in the industry. It also helps illustrate the importance and relevance of the resulting data collection instruments measuring changes in these performance and skills.

Finally, program staff can rely on internal knowledge, expertise and understanding of the Essential Skills framework to refine the alignment with Essential Skills needs. This is the final step to prepare for the construction of a measurement tool that captures changes in Essential Skills well-aligned with industry-specific performance standards, and well-contextualized with the environment of the targeted sector or organization.

Step 3. Collaborate with the employer(s) and/or key industry stakeholder(s) to develop skills measures well-aligned with industry-specific performance standards

In this last step, project staff collaborate with employer(s) and/or key industry stakeholder(s) to construct and refine measurement tools capturing industry-contextualized Essential Skills. These measures should be expressed as task-based indicators, describing the fundamental Essential Skills required for a good worker in a sector to successfully carry out job tasks. The ultimate goal is to develop well-targeted Essential Skills measures embedded within performance requirements of the targeted sector or industry.

The levels of details and specificity of the measures depend on the measurement needs of the employer and/or industry, as well as the scope of the project. These assessments can be structured as self-assessed instruments – to be completed by the participants – or employer-assessed tools – as a way to record their observations of participants' job performance during work placement, depending on the preference of the employer or industry.

Option 2: A range of options with pre-selected and pre-consolidated industry input

If such extensive engagement with employers and industry stakeholders does not align with the needs and structure of the program, staff has the option of using existing industry-contextualized assessment tools. These tools have been developed and refined in response to increasing demand from employers in multiple sectors to embed assessments of core and soft skills within industry-relevant job performance criteria. As a result, these measures are tightly aligned with industry-specific job performance requirements, using language that resonates with employers as well as current and prospective employees. This ensures that the respondents see the relevance and importance in engaging with the tools.

Depending on the scope, scale, and assessment needs of their program, staff can choose an objective or expert-assessed tool from Group 1 in Table 10, use a self-assessed or employer-

assessed tool from Group 2 in Table 10 to develop their own measures better aligned with their training contexts, or some combinations of both. Following Table 10, Table 11 provides further information on each of these assessments.

Table 10 **Assessment options with pre-selected and consolidated industry input – Brief overview**

Group	Assessment Type	Description
1	Objective or expert-assessed tools	Most of these assessments are still in early development or testing, and therefore their psychometric properties are still under ongoing examination and analysis. In some cases, some sectors have their own set of expert-assessed performance benchmarks, each of which may align with one or more Essential Skills that can be further explored as measurement needs arise in the future.
2	Self-assessed or employer-assessed tools	Unlike objective or expert-evaluated assessments described in the previous section, these assessments rely on the subjective impressions of either the test-takers or their employers to gauge their Essential Skills. The instruments that collect test-takers' self-assessed evaluation reflect their self-efficacy in applying Essential Skills to carry out job tasks effectively. The employer-reported assessments ask supervisors and managers to provide their informed opinions on how well their employees or prospective employees perform on the job using their Essential Skills. The tools listed here provide a solid basis to develop and refine these measures capturing the test-taker's willingness and ability to apply Essential Skills to complete job tasks.

Table 11 **Assessment options with pre-selected and consolidated industry input – Further details**

Assessment	Essential Skills	Sample sectors	Description and notes
Group 1. Objective or expert-assessed tools			
Essential Skills Group (ESG)	Reading	Accommodation and food services	The Essential Skills Group (ESG) has developed a test bank with over 45,000 questions, enabling them to subsequently select and modify questions to fit with the varying contextualization and customization needs of users from different industries. ESG has collaborated with various organizations to provide customized assessments according to the needs of workers and learners in specific workplaces, industries and provinces, with the capacity to develop more. There is a fee associated with the usage of these tools.
	Document Use	Agriculture	
	Numeracy	Construction	
	Writing	Green initiatives	
	Digital	Healthcare	
	Oral Communication	Manufacturing	
	Thinking	Skilled trades	
	Working with Others	Supply chain	
		Telecommunications	
		Transportation	

Assessment	Essential Skills	Sample sectors	Description and notes
Test of Workplace Essential Skills (TOWES) – Sector Series	Reading Document Use Numeracy	Aerospace Healthcare Hospitality & Tourism Industrial trades Manufacturing Office & Administration Transportation	Bow Valley College – the developers of TOWES – has worked closely with industry stakeholders and employers to develop Sector Series tests assessing the Reading, Document Use, and Numeracy skills needed for safe and productive employment within specific industries. These assessments incorporate authentic workplace materials to measure the extent to which test-takers have the competencies to carry out the daily job tasks required of typical workers in these industries. For example, the assessments for the manufacturing sector contain questions in the contexts of assembly drawings, schematics, as well as safety manuals and regulations. The Sector Series are also customized to the skill level requirements of these industries. For example, the assessment for the health sector targets skill levels 2 and 3, while the assessment for transportation professional focuses on skill levels 3 and 4. There is a fee associated with the usage of these tools.
SkillPlan – Measure Up	Reading Document Use Numeracy	Accommodation and tourism Boilermaking Bricklaying Carpentry Electrical Finishing trades Plumbing Trucking Welding	SkillPlan has developed a tool to help learners explore different Essential Skills requirements of a variety of sectors and occupations. These are short assessments with objective questions to help learners visualize the types of questions they would encounter on objective Essential Skills assessments, as well as the types of tasks they would need to resolve on the job. On their own, these assessments can serve as a supporting tool to help learners and trainers check in and gauge learning progress on an informal basis. Beyond this purpose, these assessments provide a solid starting point to help project staff develop and refine contextualized Essential Skills measurements that are more appropriate for program evaluation.
Group 2. Self-assessed or employer-assessed tool			
Office of Literacy and Essential Skills – Apprentices and tradespersons – Essential skills self-assessment for the trades	Reading Document Use Numeracy Writing Digital Oral Communication Thinking Working with Others	Automotive service technician Carpenter Construction electrician Industry mechanic Machinist Plumber Sheet metal worker Welder	OLES provides informal assessments for apprentices and journeyworkers to gauge the levels of Essential Skills required for a career in the trades. These assessments ask learners to reflect on their work and provide a subjective evaluation of their abilities to perform trade-related tasks. Statements used in these assessments closely reflect the fundamental behaviours of each of the nine Essential Skills, but unlike the generic assessments presented in the previous section, these statements are contextualized in a trades work environment. At the end of the self-assessments of all skills, test-takers are presented with a Skills Summary section that provides them with a guideline to identify their essential skills strengths and areas for improvement. On their own, these assessments can serve as a supporting tool to help

Assessment	Essential Skills	Sample sectors	Description and notes
	Continuous learning		<p>learners and trainers check in and gauge learning progress on an informal basis. Beyond this purpose, these assessments provide a solid starting point to help project staff develop and refine contextualized Essential Skills measurements that are more appropriate for program evaluation.</p> <p>The tool listed here is most relevant to the trades. For programs targeting other sectors, more work needs to be done to customize the measures to align with sector-specific performance needs.</p>

Option 3: The absolute basics in assessing industry-contextualized Essential Skills

At the absolute basics, program staff should explore ways to incorporate self-assessed or employer-assessed measures of industry-contextualized Essential Skills in their data collection instruments. These assessments rely on the subjective impressions of either the test-takers or their employers to gauge Essential Skills. The instruments that collect test-takers’ self-assessed evaluation reflect their self-efficacy in applying Essential Skills to carry out job tasks. The employer-reported assessments ask supervisors and managers to provide their informed opinions on how well their employees or prospective employees perform on the job, in areas specifically related to Essential Skills.

The tool listed in Table 12 provide a solid basis to develop and refine measures capturing the test-taker's willingness and ability to apply Essential Skills to complete job tasks. The tool listed here is most relevant to the trades. For programs targeting other sectors, more work needs to be done to customize the measures to align with sector-specific performance needs.

Table 12 The basic options to measure industry-contextualized Essential Skills

Assessment	Essential Skills	Sample sectors	Description and notes
Self-assessed or employer-assessed tool			
<u>Office of Literacy and Essential Skills – Apprentices and tradespersons – Essential skills self-assessment for the trades</u>	Reading Document Use Numeracy Writing Digital Oral Communication	Automotive service technician Carpenter Construction electrician Industry mechanic Machinist	OLES provides informal assessments for apprentices and journeymen to gauge the levels of Essential Skills required for a career in the trades. These assessments ask learners to reflect on their work and provide a subjective evaluation of their abilities to perform trade-related tasks. Statements used in these assessments closely reflect the fundamental

Assessment	Essential Skills	Sample sectors	Description and notes
	Thinking Working with Others Continuous learning	Plumber Sheet metal worker Welder	<p>behaviours of each of the nine Essential Skills, but unlike the generic assessments presented in the previous section, these statements are contextualized in a trades work environment. At the end of the self-assessments of all skills, test-takers are presented with a Skills Summary section that provides them with a guideline to identify their essential skills strengths and areas for improvement. On their own, these assessments can serve as a supporting tool to help learners and trainers check in and gauge learning progress on an informal basis. Beyond this purpose, these assessments provide a solid starting point to help project staff develop and refine contextualized Essential Skills measurements that are more appropriate for program evaluation.</p> <p>The tool listed here is most relevant to the trades. For programs targeting other sectors, more work needs to be done to customize the measures to align with sector-specific performance needs.</p>

3.4 STEP 4. SELECT INDICATORS DOCUMENTING CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

3.4.1 Barriers to employment

It is helpful to collect participants' barriers to employment not only at baseline but also at set intervals throughout the training to see how they evolve over the course of the program. The baseline information provides program staff with a better understanding of the challenges to employment that participants face, helping them tailor their training to better respond to these barriers where appropriate. The regular follow-up information helps track progress – as participants move through the training, they should feel more supported and less challenged when it comes to finding and keeping a job. Furthermore, it allows staff to connect participants with the appropriate services and supports beyond the training program when possible to address some of these barriers.

This section provides a sample checklist to help staff build their own tool to track participants' barriers to employment (see Table 13). It is a dynamic checklist to which barriers can be added or removed as appropriate based on staff's knowledge and experience serving their target groups of participants. This checklist is designed for the general population of jobseekers. For programs serving Indigenous participants, please refer to Section 3.5.2 for a customized tool to assess barriers to employment for Indigenous jobseekers.

Table 13 **Sample survey questions to record barriers to employment**

Which of the following barriers might interfere with your ability to find or keep a job?

Check off all that apply to your situation.

- Difficulty with English
- Learning disability
- Legal issues
- Limited work experience
- Lack of child care support
- Transportation issues
- Physical disability, injury or illness
- Housing problems
- Family member health
- Education
- Drug or alcohol problems
- Lack of job hunting skills
- Family issues
- Credentials not recognized in Canada
- Other, please specify: _____

3.4.2 Work history

Demographics	Survey questions	
Relative distance from the labour market	What is the total number of months you were employed over the last three years (36 months)? <i>Please give us your best guess if you are not sure. Put 0 if you did not work.</i>	<input type="text"/> _____ months <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Choose not to answer
	Work history	Have you ever had any paid work?
What is your employment situation right now		<input type="checkbox"/> Not working <input type="checkbox"/> Working less than 20 hours per week <input type="checkbox"/> Working 20 hours or more per week <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Choose not to answer
How many months have you worked (or did you work) with your employer?		<input type="text"/> _____ months <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Choose not to answer
What is (or was) your occupation?		<input type="checkbox"/> Management <input type="checkbox"/> Business, finance and administration <input type="checkbox"/> Natural and applied sciences <input type="checkbox"/> Health <input type="checkbox"/> Education, law and social, community and government services <input type="checkbox"/> Art, culture, recreation and sport <input type="checkbox"/> Sales and service <input type="checkbox"/> Trades, transport and equipment operators <input type="checkbox"/> Natural resources and agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing and utilities <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Choose not to answer
How many years of experience have you had working in the occupation you selected?		<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year <input type="checkbox"/> 1 – 2 years <input type="checkbox"/> 3 – 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> 6 – 9 years <input type="checkbox"/> 10 years or more <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Choose not to answer

Demographics	Survey questions	
	What is (or was) your job title? <i>For example, construction worker, administrative assistant, accountant, restaurant manager, waiter/waitress.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Choose not to answer
Income Assistance	Are you currently receiving Income Assistance (IA)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
		<input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Choose not to answer
Employment Insurance	Have you received Employing Insurance (EI) benefits?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
		<input type="checkbox"/> No → Skip next question
		<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Choose not to answer
	If yes, how many weeks of Employment Insurance (EI) benefits have you received last year?	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Choose not to answer

3.4.3 Demographic characteristics

Table 14 lists the demographic characteristics frequently collected in the adult training context, as well as associated questions that program staff can easily incorporate in a survey.

Table 14 Demographic characteristics and associated survey questions

Demographics	Survey questions	
Gender	What is your gender?	<input type="checkbox"/> Male
		<input type="checkbox"/> Female
		<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Choose not to answer
Age	In what year were you born?	<input type="checkbox"/> Year: _____
		<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Choose not to answer
Marital status	What is your current marital status?	<input type="checkbox"/> Single/Never married
		<input type="checkbox"/> Common law
		<input type="checkbox"/> Married
		<input type="checkbox"/> Divorced
		<input type="checkbox"/> Separated
		<input type="checkbox"/> Widowed
		<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Choose not to answer

Demographics	Survey questions	
Children in household	<p>How many children <u>under the age of 18</u> live in your household? <i>Please include all children who usually live with you, including those who may be away attending school, traveling, or in hospital.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> None
		<input type="checkbox"/> 1
		<input type="checkbox"/> 2
		<input type="checkbox"/> 3
		<input type="checkbox"/> 4
		<input type="checkbox"/> 5
		<input type="checkbox"/> 6 or more
		<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Choose not to answer
Adults in household	<p>How many adults 18 years of age or older, <u>including yourself</u>, live in your household? <i>Please include all adults who usually live with you, including those who may be away attending school, traveling, or in hospital.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> None
		<input type="checkbox"/> 1
		<input type="checkbox"/> 2
		<input type="checkbox"/> 3
		<input type="checkbox"/> 4
		<input type="checkbox"/> 5
		<input type="checkbox"/> 6 or more
		<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Choose not to answer
Household income	<p>Over the last 12 months, what was your total household income, before taxes and other deductions? <i>Include all sources of income (for example, wages, alimony, investments, Employment Insurance, social assistance, grants, scholarships, income earned outside of Canada, etc.). Please give us your best guess if you do not know the exact figures.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$10,000
		<input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 to less than \$20,000
		<input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 to less than \$30,000
		<input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000 to less than \$40,000
		<input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000 to less than \$50,000
		<input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 to less than \$60,000
		<input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000 to less than \$70,000
		<input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000 to less than \$80,000
		<input type="checkbox"/> \$80,000 to less than \$90,000
		<input type="checkbox"/> \$90,000 or more
		<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Choose not to answer
Immigrant status	<p>In what country were you born?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Canada → Skip next question
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify country: _____
		<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Choose not to answer

Demographics	Survey questions	
Recent immigrant status	If you were born outside of Canada, when did you come to live in Canada?	Year: _____
		<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Choose not to answer
Indigenous status	Are you an Indigenous person, that is, First Nation, Métis or Inuk (Inuit)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Choose not to specify
		<input type="checkbox"/> No, not an Indigenous person
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, First Nations
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Métis
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Inuk (Inuit)
		<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Choose not to answer

3.5 STEP 5. IF APPLICABLE, ADD MEASURES CUSTOMIZED TO THE UNIQUE TRAINING NEEDS OF TARGET POPULATIONS

We provide additional sets of measures customized to the unique training needs of target populations: youth, newcomers, and Indigenous jobseekers.

Programs that serve these target populations should consider including these tools, in addition to all the measures recommended for the general populations listed in other steps.

Based on our experience with previous projects as well as input from service delivery organizations, the pathway to full participation in the labour market for youth, newcomers and Indigenous jobseekers involve additional milestones or indicators of earlier success. For instance, for newcomers, training that provides them with a clearer direction for job search should also enhance their sense of belonging to Canada, as they now see a concrete pathway toward meaningful engagement with the Canadian society and economy. For youth, employment training may also lead to more positive perceptions toward post-secondary education (PSE), as they gain a better understanding of its costs and benefits related to future employment prospects. For Indigenous learners, participating in a culturally-contextualized employment training program may strengthen their cultural identity in addition to enhancing their employability skills. Therefore, to fully capture the effect of programs serving these target populations, additional measures indicating progress in these domains are needed.

The rest of this section provides further details on these measurements. We would like to emphasize that these recommended measures are optional, customizable and complementary to

those common measures available throughout the rest of the practical guide.³ Program staff have the flexibility to select measures across the entirety of the practical guide, including from these additional menus, based on the aims and approaches of their programs and the needs presented by learners.

For quick access, please click the following link to be directed to the appropriate measurement menu customized to:

[Newcomers](#)

[Indigenous jobseekers](#)

[Youth](#)

3.5.1 Newcomers

Our recommended measurement menu for programs serving newcomers include indicators capturing acculturation attitudes, sense of belonging and social networks adapted for newcomers. Tables 15, 16 and 17 present these measures.

Table 15 Acculturation attitudes

How important is it for you to...?

	Not at all important 1	Not very important 2	Somewhat important 3	Very important 4
Keep in contact with others in Canada from the same ethnic or cultural group as yourself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keep in contact with others in Canada who are not from the same ethnic or cultural group as yourself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carry on the values and traditions of your ethnic or cultural group or your homeland	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learn and practice the values and traditions of people in Canada	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

³ The additional measurement menus customized to newcomers and Indigenous learners are fairly well-developed, using both our knowledge of previous projects and input from key service providers in the field. More work needs to be done to build the measurement menu for youth, going beyond capturing attitudes toward post-secondary education to incorporate measures that align with a wider range of training goals and contexts.

Table 16 **Sense of belonging**

The next few questions are about your sense of belonging. Your sense of belonging is how strong you feel like you are connected to something, and feel like you are a meaningful or important part of something.

How would you describe your sense of belonging to...?	Very weak 1	Somewhat weak 2	Somewhat strong 3	Very strong 4
Your local community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your city	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your province of residence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Canada	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your country of origin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Table 17 **Social networks – For newcomers**

For the next few questions, think about the people you know who have the same culture, ethnic background, or language as you.

Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

If you cannot decide whether you agree or disagree with a statement, please select "Neutral."

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
If I need help with household activities (such as child care or housework), I can easily get it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I need specialized advice (for example, about money, health, or legal problems), I can easily get it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I need emotional support (such as encouragement, reassurance, or confidential advice), I can easily get it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I need help with my job or career, I can easily get it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For the next few questions, think about the people you know who have a different culture, ethnic background, or language than you.

Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

If you cannot decide whether you agree or disagree with a statement, please select "Neutral."

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
If I need help with household activities (such as child care or housework), I can easily get it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I need specialized advice (for example, about money, health, or legal problems), I can easily get it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I need emotional support (such as encouragement, reassurance, or confidential advice), I can easily get it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I need help with my job or career, I can easily get it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.5.2 Indigenous jobseekers

This component of the practical guide is intended to support milestones-based program planning and delivery and associated performance measurement for Indigenous learners within a holistic, culturally-centered approach. Program staff can select measures from across the entirety of the practical guide, including from the Indigenous component, based on the aims and approaches of their program and the needs presented by learners. The common measures across the practical guide have been tested in milestones-based training programs, like Pay for Success and Foundations, that included Indigenous participants. These common measures proved effective for Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners alike in those training program tests.

This draft practical guide is a “living guide” and the customized Indigenous recommendations can be further tailored by service delivery agencies as appropriate to each region and their learners’ experiences, cultural backgrounds and needs.

The Indigenous-focused measures, when taken together with applicable common measures and customized as appropriate, assist in developing and delivering learner-centered training that considers all aspects of the learner’s life, a best practice identified in the Phase 2 report. Further, applying both the common and Indigenous-focused measures provides an expanded framework for service delivery organizations to demonstrate Indigenous learner gains in self-esteem, resilience, self-confidence and trust in others. Including these types of psychological capital

indicators in evaluation frameworks aligns with the strategic recommendations from the national research project examining Literacy and Essential Skills as a poverty reduction strategy, which included input from Indigenous organizations (Lalonde et al., 2019).

A review of existing literature and documentation of Literacy and Essential Skills milestone measurement considerations in the context of serving Indigenous learners

This review explored measurement options for unique psychosocial or other attributes that may be unique to Indigenous learners and linked to training and workplace success. This review included government reports and program evaluations produced by provincial and territorial governments across Canada and, in one instance, the United States. It also included program documents and summary reports produced by Indigenous LES service providers or those providing services to Indigenous learners. In addition, this review included research reports accessed through peer reviewed journals and research organizations providing evidence on effective strategies for the delivery of LES programs and any associated measures.

Findings from the literature review informed each of the recommendations in the Indigenous component, as outlined further in each recommendation below. A full list of work consulted is presented in the Reference section.

Recommendation 1: Assess Barriers to Employment

Understanding and seeking to address an Indigenous learner's barriers to employment is one possible measure to support the early milestone of needs assessment and service planning.

In an Indigenous context, it can be helpful to understand the learner's barriers to employment by formally checking in with the learner at the start and end of the program, as well as informally throughout.

This allows program staff to connect Indigenous learners with culturally appropriate wrap-around supports and services to alleviate some of these challenges, which also helps strengthen their commitment, participation and success throughout this program and beyond.

Checking in at the end of the program allows both the program staff and the learner to recognize and celebrate progress, as well as help identify any additional supports or services the learner may need referrals to once the program ends.

The sample survey shown in Table 18 is in the form of a dynamic checklist with a self-assessed scale for each item. The sample survey asks Indigenous learners to identify any barriers to employment they may face, and to rate how hard these barriers make it to find or keep a job, or take part in an education or training program. The sample survey can be customized to allow

program staff and the learner to note any other barriers they may wish. Program staff can choose to administer this same customized survey post-training to capture and demonstrate any reductions in barriers to employment. If items are changed or added, it is recommended to use the same revised checklist pre- and post-program.

The barriers listed are drawn from those commonly reported or cited in the literature by Indigenous learners or service providers (Wannell & Currie, 2016). They are also reflective of Indigenous-focused program delivery practices in the field through participant intake forms (BladeRunners, 2012). They also broadly align with and reflect the types of barriers identified by survey respondents, which included Indigenous organizations, through the national research project examining Literacy and Essential Skills as a poverty reduction strategy (Lalonde et al., 2019).

Table 18 **Sample survey question to understand barriers to employment**

Think about the past three months. Did any of the following make it hard for you to find or keep a job, or take part in an education or training program? If so, how hard?

	Not at all 1	Mild 2	Moderate 3	Severe 4	Extreme 5
Learning disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal issues, including criminal record	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Limited work experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of child care support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transportation issues, including lack of driver's license, vehicle or bus pass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of clothing/work gear/tools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical or mental disability, injury or illness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family member health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not enough education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drug or alcohol problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of job hunting skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cultural background not respected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, please specify: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

One observation appearing across the literature is that an Indigenous learner's experiences of exclusion, racism or discrimination can create challenges directly in accessing the labour market, or indirectly through impacts on self-esteem.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples reports that experiences of racism can impact engagement in the labour market (1996). The NWT Literacy Council also reports that Indigenous adults and youth they work with face barriers like exclusion, racism, and experiences that result in low self-esteem (2013).

Program staff with Indigenous employment and training service providers across the country note that racism still impacts Indigenous people at times, pointing out that even when racism isn't a direct barrier to participation, it further undermines self-confidence, perpetuates poor treatment of Indigenous people and contributes to social barriers (Wannell & Currie, 2016).

Some Indigenous LES service providers in Ontario report that they talk directly with learners about racism as a barrier to employment, as learners are well aware of it and seeking constructive ways to address this and prepare for success (Cooper, 2006).

The term "Cultural background not respected/Cultural bias" is included in this fully customizable survey to provide learners, should they choose to, with a means of acknowledging any racism, bias or discrimination they may experience as a barrier to employment. This broad, neutral term is suggested to support program staff and learners in engaging with this challenging barrier in a way that creates space for exploring and developing effective responses and preparing learners for success.

In some Essential Skills service delivery organizations, program staff may already be informally seeking to understand and address the additional non-training needs of Indigenous learners. This sample survey supports program staff in doing so in a more formal manner with an option of tracking progress over time.

If administered pre- and post-program, this self-assessed survey provides Indigenous learners with another potentially empowering measure to see the progress they have made over the course of the training program in domains other than formally-assessed Essential Skills.

Additionally, it can support program staff in demonstrating the value and impact of providing culturally-appropriate wrap-around supports and services, specifically, as a means of helping Indigenous learners reduce barriers to participation in the labour market.

The provision of holistic, culturally-appropriate wrap-around supports is identified in the literature as a best practice for the planning and delivery of Essential Skills training programs for Indigenous learners (Harrison & Lindsay, 2009; Klinga, 2012; Wannell & Currie, 2016).

Identifying and connecting Indigenous learners with culturally relevant supports and resources was also a lesson learned over the course of the Aboriginal Literacy and Essential Skills Pilot Project conducted between 2010 and 2013 with First Nations communities on southern Vancouver Island (Literacy Victoria, 2013). Importantly, Literacy Victoria found that many learners were experiencing trauma from the Residential School experience and residual effects of involvement in mainstream educational systems. Literacy Victoria found that supporting learners in healing through culturally relevant workshops, activities and supports was necessary prior to developing formal Essential Skills learning plans.

Recommendation 2: Develop culturally-contextualized Prior Life Experiences Essential Skills Portfolio

Working with the Indigenous learner to develop a culturally-contextualized prior life experiences essential skills portfolio is an additional possible measure to support the early milestone of needs assessment and service planning.

This section of the recommended measurement menus tailored to Indigenous learners includes an overview of customizable steps for program staff to work with Indigenous learners in developing a culturally-contextualized prior life experiences Essential Skills portfolio. This portfolio approach is also fully customizable based on the lived realities and cultural experiences of the Indigenous learner. Table 19 provides further details on the steps involved in this process.

Assisting Indigenous learners to identify all of the ways in which they have already used Essential Skills in a cultural or lived context may help them start the training program from a place of strength and empowerment. This, in turn, can facilitate learner engagement, full participation and success throughout the training program. This portfolio might also assist program staff in identifying those cultural elements to consider including in the delivery of the training program to support learner engagement and that are appropriate and sensitive to local and individual cultural realities.

Table 19 **Steps to customize tools assessing industry-contextualized Essential Skills**

Step 1. Identify cultural activities, practices or community events the learner has taken part in, or any culturally-based activities the learner enjoyed

Examples identified might include any cultural activities, skills, knowledge or experience in their homes, families, communities, through volunteering with Indigenous or community organizations, and on the land. This might include traditional and land-based skills, crafts, arts or practices. It might also include participating in, planning or leading ceremonies, gatherings, feasts or other cultural activities. Examples might be grounded in traditional knowledge, storytelling, songs, teachings, spirituality, Indigenous languages, working with Elders and knowledge keepers, providing care for Elders and family or community members, and other cultural activities as appropriate to the region. Learners may also wish to bring in any items they have made as samples or examples.

It is important to note that this inventory or listing is intended to inform and support both the learner and program staff in better understanding the unique starting point of each learner and can provide a positive basis for further discussion with the learner in the next step. Learners are encouraged to provide only those examples of cultural activities that they are comfortable sharing.

Step 2. Describe the detailed actions the learner took throughout that cultural activity

For each of the cultural activities listed by the learner, work with the learner to discuss or demonstrate the specific actions they did throughout that activity. This might include describing the specific actions in designing, planning, measuring and making traditional crafts, carvings, weaving, beadwork, painting, drum making, clothing, regalia or other cultural elements appropriate to the region. It might also include any ways the learner may budget for materials, sell, market, or manage the proceeds from any items they may make. It might also include descriptions of the actions they take during land-based activities like hunting, trapping, fishing, medicine picking or gathering. The learner might also choose to outline the specific actions they took to help plan, manage or assist with a powwow, round dance, feast, longhouse ceremony or other culturally-based event in their community or city or town, or with a local organization. In addition, the learner may choose to identify the actions, materials, documents and methods (oral, written, or additional) for how they teach others any traditional skills, knowledge, crafts, Indigenous languages or other cultural elements.

Step 3. In discussion with the learner, program staff describe the nine Essential Skills and provide some examples of how each might be used in daily life

In addition to outlining the nine Essential Skills with some general examples, program staff can also speak to the subgroups and range of complexity within each Essential Skill, as well as provide some examples of different tasks within each level of complexity.

Depending on the comfort level of the learner, the discussion about level of complexity could be informal and structured around a general range of high, medium and low instead of by formal levels typically used in formal assessments.

This discussion outlining Essential Skills with examples is intended to assist both the learner and the program staff prepare for the next step of connecting the learner's actions in cultural activities to specific Essentials Skills. It is also intended to assist both the learner and program staff in discussing Essential Skills are in a non-formal, non-assessment environment to provide the learner an opportunity to think about, understand, and ask any questions about Essential Skills.

Step 4. Identify the Essential Skills demonstrated throughout the cultural activity

For each of the detailed actions described or demonstrated by the learner in their listed cultural activities, work with the learner to identify which Essential Skills were used, how, to what general level of complexity, and how the skills demonstrated in the detailed actions connect to and reinforce each other. This may involve asking guiding questions to gather more targeted information about the detailed actions.

In discussion, written form or other means of expression the learner is comfortable with, systematically go through each of the detailed actions described by the learner and group them by Essential Skill and, where appropriate, further by subgroup. This could involve identifying a problem they had to solve over the course of the cultural activity, and how they solved it. This discussion might also include exploring how the learner continued to learn and build their skills, knowledge or experience over the course of the cultural activity.

Within each Essential Skill, (and subgroup, if appropriate) discuss what level of complexity (high, medium or low) the learner believes each detailed action is. Program staff are encouraged to provide comparison prompts across and between actions to assist the learner in determining complexity levels. Program staff could also explore with the learner what impact it would have had on their involvement in or completing the cultural activity if they had a low level of oral communication, for example, or a low level of one of the Essential Skills.

Step 5: Consolidate all discussion, notes and materials into an appropriate portfolio format

The appropriate portfolio format could be determined over the course of the discussion with the learner, and include any hand-made items or other materials the learner chooses to bring in to demonstrate any Essential Skills.

While this portfolio is not part of the learner's official assessment, it enables both the learner and the program staff to see, in tangible terms, the learner's current strengths in Essential Skills. It also enables the learner to see, in a non-formal setting, those Essential Skills where they may want to devote time and attention to improving. This also assists the program staff in informally identifying any current gaps in the learner's Essential Skills, which can assist with tailoring the formal training, as well as identifying the additional formal training supports to assist the learner.

This portfolio can also be an informal resource for the learner to refer back to throughout the course of the training as a reminder of the position of strength and capacity from which they entered the training program.

The structure, steps and format of this culturally-contextualized prior life experiences Essential Skills portfolio could also serve as an example for program staff to incorporate and link cultural elements for inclusion in the formal training program in tandem with or supplementary to industry training. It can also assist both program staff and learners in starting to link Essential Skills gained in cultural context with industry-contextualized Essential Skills and on-the-job skill requirements.

Program staff may determine how applicable this recommendation is to the unique learner's situation and learning path, depending on the program's aims, and the Indigenous learner's needs and degree of interest. In the case of the Miqut 2 program delivered in Rankin Inlet, NU in 2012, the program was a form of a culturally-contextualized Essential Skills portfolio, as it was a non-formal traditional skills program with embedded literacy focusing on sewing and clothing production (Tulloch et al., 2013). A culturally-contextualized Prior Life Experiences Essential Skills portfolio may prove beneficial for some Indigenous learners in regions where, for example,

sewing and clothing production is still very much linked to identity and survival, as noted in the Miqqut 2 summary program review.

In other regions, urban areas, or depending on the program aims and individual learners' cultural realities, however, program delivery staff may determine that this recommendation may be best used to inform a discussion or introductory overview of Essential Skills instead of conducting each of the individual steps or developing the full portfolio.

Should program staff utilize this culturally-contextualized prior life experiences Essential Skills portfolio, it is intended to be separate from and developed or discussed before conducting formalized Essential Skills assessments. Further, it is intended to complement, not replace, formalized assessments.

Additional needs assessment measures grounded in culture that enable a learner-centered approach focused on building hope, self-esteem and self-awareness are cited in the literature as a best practice for Essential Skills program delivery (Klinga, 2012).

Frontline workers surveyed by the Ontario Native Literacy Coalition noted that assessment of Indigenous learners is best done in a holistic manner using tools that include culturally relevant materials and topics, enable learners to measure success in other areas of their lives, and allows learners to demonstrate the skills they already have to inspire further learning (2017).

This culturally-based Essential Skills pre-assessment portfolio approach is informed by learning frameworks, program summaries and tools that have been developed and tested by Indigenous Essential Skills projects and organizations across the country. The frameworks and tools that inform this section include:

- *Aboriginal Adult Reading Literacy Benchmark Consultations* (Bow Valley College, 2013);
- *Aboriginal Literacy and Essential Skills Pilot Project* (Literacy Victoria, 2013);
- *Aboriginal Literacy Intake Assessment Tool (ALIAT)* (Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network Inc., 2012);
- *An Aboriginal Essential Skills Journey: Planting the Seeds for Growth* (Douglas College, 2017);
- *First Nations, Inuit and Métis Lifelong Learning Models* (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007);
- *Indigenized Assessment Tool* (Ontario Native Literacy Coalition, 2017); and
- *Miqqut 2 Program* (Nunavut Literacy Council, 2013).

All of these works were developed with input from and engagement with Indigenous peoples directly or organizations providing LES services to Indigenous learners. Further, all of the works referenced above are well-aligned with the learner-centered approach, a best practice identified in the Phase 2 report.

Recommendation 3: Customized cultural identity attitudes, belonging and social networks scales

Providing Indigenous learners with customized scales to self-asses any changes in cultural identity attitudes, belonging, and social networks are three possible measures to support the training delivery milestone of gains in general wellbeing. In addition, these measures also enable program staff to demonstrate the impact and value of culturally-relevant Essential Skills training programs on Indigenous learners’ cultural identity, sense of belonging and social networks.

These additional measures can be further customized by service delivery organizations and administered pre- and post-training to track changes in these measures over the course of the program. These surveys can be applied in the format that service delivery organizations find most appropriate for their program and learners. Some organizations may determine that surveys completed individually by participants might work best for capturing these measure within their program context. Others may choose to use these surveys to inform semi-structured one-on-one discussions with learners.

As shown in Tables 20, 21 and 22, program staff have the option to include these measures in their data collection tools.

Table 20 Cultural identity attitudes

How important is it for you to...?

	Not at all important 1	Not very important 2	Somewhat important 3	Very important 4
Keep in contact with other Indigenous people where you live	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keep in contact with Indigenous people from your home community or traditional territory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keep in contact with non-Indigenous people where you live?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice your values, traditions, teachings, culture and spirituality where you live	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Share your values, traditions, teachings, culture and spirituality with non-Indigenous people where you live	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Table 21 **Sense of belonging**

The next few questions are about your sense of belonging. Your sense of belonging is how strong you feel like you are connected to something, and feel like you are a meaningful or important part of something.

How would you describe your sense of belonging to...?	Very weak 1	Somewhat weak 2	Somewhat strong 3	Very strong 4
The local community where you live right now	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your home community or traditional territory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your city	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your province of residence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Canada	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Table 22 **Social networks – for Indigenous learners**

For the next few questions, think about the Indigenous people you know.

Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

If you cannot decide whether you agree or disagree with a statement, please select "Neutral."

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
If I need help with household activities (such as child care or housework), I can easily get it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I need specialized advice (for example, about money, health, or legal problems), I can easily get it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I need emotional support (such as encouragement, reassurance, or confidential advice), I can easily get it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I need help with my job or career, I can easily get it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I need spiritual support (such as taking part in ceremony or guidance from Elders), I can easily get it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For the next few questions, think about the non-Indigenous people you know. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. If you cannot decide whether you agree or disagree with a statement, please select "Neutral."

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
If I need help with household activities (such as child care or housework), I can easily get it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I need specialized advice (for example, about money, health, or legal problems), I can easily get it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I need emotional support (such as encouragement, reassurance, or confidential advice), I can easily get it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I need help with my job or career, I can easily get it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I need spiritual support (such as taking part in ceremony or guidance from Elders), I can easily get it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I need understanding and sensitivity to practice my values, traditions, teachings, culture and spirituality, I can easily get it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

As noted by service delivery organizations in Alberta, Indigenous literacy learners report the loss of their cultures, particularly in regions or areas that have been culturally deeply affected by a long history of contact (Kreiner, 2013). To help address this, Essential Skills programs that reinforce learning through traditional cultural practices, community- and land-based activities and incorporation of spiritual values is a best practice cited in the literature (Klinga, 2012).

In addition to supporting gains in cultural identity attitudes, belonging and social networks, the inclusion of culture in Essential Skills training programs has been reported effective for Indigenous learner engagement and program completion in programs in British Columbia, Ontario, and Nunavut, among other provinces (Kreiner, 2013; Literacy Victoria, 2013; Cooper, 2006; Tulloch et al., 2013).

Indigenous service providers in Alberta noted that one effective “wise practice” was the regular involvement of Elders in programming. Staff remarked that they found this particularly valuable for urban-based programs, and observed that community-based programs also invited Elders into their classroom (Kreiner, 2013).

Initial findings from culturally-tailored Essential Skills training programs like Miqqut 2 indicate learner gains in the domains of cultural identity attitudes, sense of belonging and social networks. Learner gains in these domains were both self-reported by learners through program feedback discussions, and observed by program staff. Delivered in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, in 2012, Miqqut 2 was a non-formal traditional skills program with embedded literacy focusing on sewing and clothing production that is still very much linked to identity and survival in the North (Tulloch et al., 2013).

Learners self-reported that their gains in these domains were specifically due to the inclusion of culturally-relevant components like sewing, Inuktitut language and Elder teachings in the Miqqut 2 program. Program staff anecdotally described learners' interwoven gains in Essential Skills, cultural identity attitudes, sense of belonging and social networks thusly:

“As the women created beautiful, functional clothing, these tangible products ‘documented’ each woman’s success. As women wore their sewing, other community members commented on their skills, and encouraged them in other new endeavours. As they spent time engaged in traditional practices, women also re-embraced Inuit values such as generosity, patience, resourcefulness, respect, and working together. In all these ways, Miqqut 2’s focus on traditional skills created a motivating environment for young Inuit, conducive to holistic learning.”

Further, learners in the Miqqut 2 program self-reported that they became more confident, happier, prouder of who they are, and motivated to live up to their own expectations of themselves. Participants said they were better people following the course. Staff observed that some moved away from unhealthy life choices to more positive life choices. The summary program review of Miqqut 2 notes that, while these types of outcomes are common in literacy programs across the country, they seem enhanced in this traditional cultural skills program (Tulloch et al., 2013).

In addition, the healing power of reconnecting with these traditional cultural skills practices was seen among all participants in the Miqqut 2 program. The summary program review noted that factors such as healing, reclamation of identity, language, cultures and self-determination, can play a major role in the complex issues of Aboriginal literacy and learning (Tulloch et al., 2013).

In the case of culturally-contextualized Indigenous literacy and Essential Skills programs in Ontario, learners reported that the inclusion of cultural elements, like smudging, medicine teachings, and Elder involvement led directly to an increased cultural awareness providing a sense of belonging (Cooper, 2006). Further, learners reported that training material addressing the context of Canada’s history of relations with Indigenous peoples enabled them to reframe and connect with employer components or workplace systemic expectations in ways they hadn’t before (Cooper, 2006). If delivered in a manner that is appropriate and sensitive to local and individual cultural realities, this culturally-based approach of reframing and connecting with

employer or workplace expectations could support learners in meeting the milestones associated with continuing employment success.

Practitioners, service providers and Indigenous learners consistently observe anecdotally that the inclusion of cultural elements in Essential Skills training programs can lead to gains in Indigenous learners’ cultural identity attitudes, sense of belonging and social networks. When applied with sensitivity and consideration for the Indigenous learner’s situation, these surveys suggest questions to assist in formally capturing these gains through a structured approach. Further, by utilizing a customizable framework for capturing these gains, these measures can support service providers in tracking and understanding gains over time across learners, as well as across program cohorts to help identify and inform service innovations that may be unique to the cultural and lived realities of Indigenous learners.

3.5.3 Youth

This recommended measurement menu is based on previous SRDC projects that see increased participation in post-secondary education as a means to enhance youth’s employment success. Therefore, the menu focuses on indicators that show progress in terms of youth’s perception toward PSE – particularly, increases in perceived benefits and/or decreases in perceived costs associated with PSE. More work needs to be done to build this measurement menu for youth to incorporate measures that align with a wider range of training goals and contexts, going beyond increased participation in PSE as a training goal.

Tables 23 to 28 present the measures related to perceived costs and benefits of PSE.

Table 23 Monetary benefits to post-secondary education

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
People who get a post-secondary education will make more money over their lifetime than those who just get a high school education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Although post-secondary education can be costly, I believe that I would make more money in the long run	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
I think that if I were to put the time and effort into getting a good post-secondary education, I would make a lot of money in the long run.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The best way to get a prestigious job is through a post-secondary education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am confident that a post-secondary education would lead me to a better paying job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Table 24 **Non-monetary benefits to post-secondary education**

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
Getting a post-secondary education will lead me to find work that I really enjoy doing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you want a rewarding career these days, you need a post-secondary education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People who have a post-secondary education get jobs that are much more satisfying.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Table 25 **Debt avoidance**

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
The costs of a post-secondary education have become so high that they outweigh any future financial benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Given the high costs of a post-secondary and the time it takes to complete it, you are really no further ahead financially than if you get a job right after high school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I'm not sure that a post-secondary education would pay off even in the long run, given how costly it is these days	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I'm hesitant to undertake a post-secondary education because of the amount of debt I'm likely to accumulate by the time I graduate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Table 26 **Identity anxiety**

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
I'm hesitant to pursue a post-secondary education because it would create tensions with the people I grew up with	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I were to pursue a post-secondary education, my friends would think that I'm trying to be better than them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I pursue a post-secondary education, I'm afraid that it would confuse me about "who I am."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I'm hesitant to pursue a post-secondary education because it would create tensions between my parents and me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Table 27 **Indecision concerns**

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
I'm hesitant to pursue a post-secondary education because I really don't know what I want to do with my life yet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I really haven't honed down my interests enough to know what to study if I were to go to post-secondary school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't feel that I am emotionally prepared to go to post-secondary school yet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't think that I have the correct mindset right now to tackle a post-secondary program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Table 28 **Monetary benefits to post-secondary education**

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
I think I could find a rewarding job with a post-secondary education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good jobs can be found without a post-secondary education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You can learn enough about the real world without a post-secondary education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't think I would ever find fulfilling work if I didn't get a post-secondary education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.6 STEP 6. SELECT INDICATORS MEASURING DOWNSTREAM OUTCOMES

Downstream outcomes indicating successful labour market participation after the program can be tracked either through follow-up surveys, or through a Project Management Information System (PMIS). The PMIS is a systematic way for staff to record labour market results from follow-ups with participants, either through structured interviews or more informal discussions, conducted at a pre-determined period of time following the end of the program.

There is a wide range of outcomes indicating downstream success. Our recommended menu includes not only the obvious indicators of attachment to the labour market such as completion of further training aligned with career goals, employment status, wages, skill level of job, but also the more subjective indicators of employment success such as job satisfaction, job-related stress, motivation and engagement at work, etc. Table 29 provides some suggestions on how to collect these information through a survey. Program staff has the flexibility to adapt our recommended measures into interview or discussion questions, depending on the preferred follow-up methods and capacity of their programs.

Table 29 Recommended downstream outcomes indicating successful labour market participation

Further education and training
<p>Not counting the [name of the program], have you taken any other education, training programs or courses since you first became involved in this study?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, I have not → Skip the rest of this section</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I have...</p> <p>Check off all that apply:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Career planning or job search workshop</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Job or work-related skills training</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> General language or literacy courses, not directly related to jobs or work</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Courses for personal interest, such as hobby/leisure, volunteer activities, or to improve my general level of education</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Choose not to answer</p>

For the career planning or job search workshops you took, how many hours in total did you spend taking these workshops?

- Less than 5 hours
- Between 5 and 10 hours
- Between 10 and 20 hours
- Between 20 and 30 hours
- More than 30 hours
- Don't know/Choose not to answer

For the job or work-related skills training you took, was any of this training part of a program of studies towards a degree, diploma or certificate?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/Choose not to answer

Please specify the degree, diploma, or certificate.

- A high school diploma or equivalent
- Trade/vocational or apprenticeship diploma or certificate
- Community college or CEGEP diploma or certificate
- University degree – Bachelor level or equivalent
- University degree – Masters level or higher
- Other diploma, degree, or certificate, please specify: _____
- Don't know/Choose not to answer

How many hours in total did you spend taking job or work-related skills training?

- Less than 5 hours
- Between 5 and 10 hours
- Between 10 and 20 hours
- Between 20 and 30 hours
- More than 30 hours
- Don't know/Choose not to answer

For the general language or literacy courses you took, how many hours in total did you spend taking these workshops?

- Less than 5 hours
- Between 5 and 10 hours
- Between 10 and 20 hours
- Between 20 and 30 hours
- More than 30 hours
- Don't know/Choose not to answer

For courses you took for personal interest, were any of these courses part of a program of studies towards a degree, diploma or certificate?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/Choose not to answer

Please specify the degree, diploma, or certificate.

- A high school diploma or equivalent
- Trade/vocational or apprenticeship diploma or certificate
- Community college or CEGEP diploma or certificate
- University degree – Bachelor level or equivalent
- University degree – Masters level or higher
- Other diploma, degree, or certificate, please specify: _____
- Don't know/Choose not to answer

How many hours in total did you spend taking courses for personal interest?

- Less than 5 hours
- Between 5 and 10 hours
- Between 10 and 20 hours
- Between 20 and 30 hours
- More than 30 hours
- Don't know/Choose not to answer

For the other education or training you mentioned, was any of this education or training part of a program of studies towards a degree, diploma or certificate?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/Choose not to answer

Please specify the degree, diploma, or certificate.

- A high school diploma or equivalent
- Trade/vocational or apprenticeship diploma or certificate
- Community college or CEGEP diploma or certificate
- University degree – Bachelor level or equivalent
- University degree – Masters level or higher
- Other diploma, degree, or certificate, please specify: _____
- Don't know/Choose not to answer

How many hours in total did you spend taking this other education or training?

- Less than 5 hours
- Between 5 and 10 hours
- Between 10 and 20 hours
- Between 20 and 30 hours
- More than 30 hours
- Don't know/Choose not to answer

Employment Status

Have you had any paid work since you first became involved in this program?

- Yes
- No → Skip the rest of this section
- Don't know/Choose not to answer → Skip the rest of this section

When did you start this job?

Day _____ Month _____ Year _____

- Don't know/Choose not to answer

Are you still employed in this job?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/Choose not to answer → Skip the rest of this section

What is (or was) your occupation?

- Management
- Business, finance and administration
- Natural and applied sciences
- Health
- Education, law and social, community and government services

- Art, culture, recreation and sport
- Sales and service
- Trades, transport and equipment operators
- Natural resources and agriculture
- Manufacturing and utilities
- Don't know/Choose not to answer

What is your job title?

For example, construction worker, administrative assistant, accountant, restaurant manager, waiter/waitress.

Wages and earnings

On average, about how many hours per week do (or did) you work?

- 1 week
- 2 weeks
- 3 weeks
- 4 weeks
- Don't know/Choose not to answer

How many weeks per month do (or did) you work?

- 1 month
- 2 months
- 3 months
- 4 months
- 5 months
- 6 months
- 7 months
- 8 months
- 9 months
- 10 months
- 11 months
- 12 months
- Don't know/Choose not to answer

Please select ONE of the options below to tell us how much you are (or were) paid in this job before taxes and other deductions. Please select ONE option only.

- \$ _____ per hour
- \$ _____ per week
- \$ _____ every two weeks
- \$ _____ per month
- \$ _____ per year
- Other (please specify) \$ _____ per _____
- Don't know/Choose not to answer

Motivation and Engagement at Work

Still thinking about this job, please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
On the whole, I believe I do a good job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In my job I'm focused on learning and improving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe that what I do at work is important and useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I try to plan out the things I have to do in my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I use my time well and arrange my work area so that I can work under the best conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I persist in my job even when it is challenging or difficult	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I get quite anxious in my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I work hard in my job it is usually to avoid failing or disapproval from my boss or colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't think I have much control over how well I do in my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I find that I sometimes reduce my chances of doing well in my job (e.g., waste time, not try hard, procrastinate)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I often feel like I have no interest in my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Job Satisfaction

Using a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 means “completely dissatisfied” and 7 means “completely satisfied,” how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the aspects of your current (or previous) job listed below?

	Very dissatisfied						Very satisfied	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The opportunities to use your skills and experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The opportunities to use your own initiatives to make decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Your job security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Support from your supervisor or manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The opportunities for career growth and promotion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The opportunities for learning new things and developing your abilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
All in all, how satisfied would you say you are with your current (or previous) job?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

4.0 PRELIMINARY ENGAGEMENT AND FEEDBACK ON THE PRACTICAL GUIDE

To help refine the draft practical guide broadly for Literacy and Essential Skills training service providers, and enhance its applicability specifically to an Indigenous context, SRDC sought initial feedback from service providers and detailed feedback from Indigenous service providers.

SRDC first presented an overview of the draft practical guide, including an outline of the main components and functionality, to Literacy and Essential Skills organizations from across Canada. Some organizations provide services directly to learners, and others provide capacity development support to service providers.

Respondents welcomed the guide, noting that customizable measures structured around a milestones-based pathway will be helpful for evaluation purposes.

Some organizations providing capacity development support to LES organizations underscored the importance of measures like job search self-efficacy, career adaptability and career planning and remarked on their applicability across demographic and learner categories. These respondents re-iterated the importance of addressing the full range of learner needs in a holistic manner along the entire milestones-based pathway. They noted that this may be especially so when working with multi-barriered jobseekers who may benefit from a broader range of interventions over a longer time span before considering long-term attachment to the labour market. Further to the health and wellbeing measures and the downstream outcomes for employment, further training, wages and skill level of jobs at time of follow up, these respondents encouraged considering additional qualitative measures to understand if the downstream outcomes matched the learner's interests and career aspirations.

SRDC then presented and provided the full draft practical guide to ACCESS Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures, an Indigenous ES service provider that expressed interest in providing detailed feedback.

ACCESS Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures serves Indigenous learners with multiple needs in an urban area, as well as learners who come from reserves, communities, and towns across the province and from other provinces. In this way, this service provider could speak to the potential applicability of measures to multi-barriered learners, generally, and Indigenous learners specifically, both in urban areas, and in rural and remote areas.

The key informant offers training contextualized to employer and industry-specific needs, ranging from the construction trades and tourism and hospitality sectors, to banking and energy sectors. They also offer a range of supports, either in-house or through partner agencies, to assist learners throughout and beyond the training program. Services range from housing and transportation supports to individualized counselling and post-program follow-up and support. Once the key informant had had an opportunity to explore the draft practical guide, they shared their feedback with SRDC through a semi-structured interview.

Through this interview and discussion, SRDC sought to understand the extent to which the draft practical guide and the milestones-based measures are practical, relevant and applicable in helping ACCESS Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures meet their program delivery and performance measurement objectives.

USABILITY AND PRACTICALITY OF THE DRAFT GUIDE

ACCESS Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures noted that, based on their past experience with various assessments and tools, “the guide is very comprehensive and useable.” They found it easy to navigate between sections and categories through the direct, embedded links. The customizability of the guide contributes to its applicability and usability for a broad range of service delivery providers. They noted that this can be particularly important for meeting the needs of various organizations with ranging degrees of service delivery experience:

“For those service delivery organizations that have extensive experience, this guide is streamlined and can be a very useful tool. For those organizations that may be just starting out in delivering Literacy and Essential Skills training, there might be a fair learning curve in using it. But when we look at it, it is speaking our language.”

The three possible target populations identified in the first stage of the guide, multi-barriered, job ready and employed, are appropriate based on the range of clients they serve. The range of measures as laid out in this milestones-based format align with their full service delivery model, including intake, needs assessment and service planning, delivery, and follow-up.

Having access to the full tool, a shorter version or absolute basics in applicable measure categories, is helpful. The full tool within each applicable category might prove most helpful for those program staff who wish to see the big picture of the measurement aims. Program staff can then determine if the shorter version or absolute basics more effectively helps them capture any measurement gaps they may wish to focus on. Having access to the shorter version or absolute basics can be helpful should program staff find they do not have time to go through each of the full measures.

While ACCESS Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures noted that the categories of measures currently in the draft guide seem to be complete, any measure that might need to be added would become apparent through active pilot testing in a service delivery setting.

RELEVANCE, APPLICABILITY, AND COMPLETENESS OF SPECIFIC MEASURES COMMON TO ALL LEARNERS

ACCESS Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures noted that they found all of the common measurement categories in the draft practical guide useful, useable and relevant to the range of Indigenous learners they serve. They noted that their program delivery staff typically have a thorough understanding of each learner's capacity & resources supporting participation in further training, job pathfinding skills and receptivity to continuous learning, and behavioural competencies. These measures are currently assessed mainly through observation, discussions and one-on-one meetings, however. Applying the surveys and measurement options contained in these categories could prove helpful for capturing and tracking these measures in a more consistent, structured manner. In addition to this range of measures that they currently capture informally, they also use the Structure of Intellect (SOI) test to understand each individual's capacities and abilities related to learning. Given this test's consistent applicability to Indigenous learners in their program delivery context, it might be worth considering further reviewing this measure for possible inclusion in a future version of the draft practical guide.

When considering the Transferable Essential Skills component, ACCESS Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures remarked that it is helpful to have the listings of assessments across the full range (paid + free), full range of free options, and basic free options. The Test of Workplace Essential Skills (TOWES) assessment has proven to be the most consistently applicable in their program delivery setting. While it is helpful to have links to each of the assessment tools in the draft practical guide, their experience has shown that a paper-based assessment approach is more effective for Indigenous learners than computer-based. They currently formally assess document use, reading and numeracy, while oral communication tends to be assessed by observation. While the HRSDC self-assessment option currently listed in the draft practical guide is helpful and applicable in their program delivery context, they recognize it is subjective. It might be worth considering adding a practitioner's note in the guide that any self-assessed ratings should be considered for consistency in relation to ratings from program staff or employers. The development and testing of future assessments for soft skills like thinking, problem solving and communication would also prove helpful, informed by the knowledge and experience of practitioners working with Indigenous learners.

ACCESS Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures noted that the Industry-Contextualized Essential Skills component is thorough, useful and directly applicable, based on their experience. Further,

it closely matches employer engagement tools they had developed and refined in-house to assist them in ensuring training is linked with occupational or employer need:

“The detailed approach [to industry-contextualized essential skills] outlined here easily ensures alignment with what we are measuring and the intervention approach.”

For those organizations that have integrated a similar approach as an automatic part of their service delivery, this thorough process description could prove helpful as a comparative reference for ensuring all steps are consistently applied and tracked. For those Essential Skills service delivery organizations that may be starting out or seeking to build or expand their capacity in this area, this component could be a helpful starting point from which they could refine their approach taking into account their local and regional industries and employer partners.

While ACCESS Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures noted that the current measures for health and wellbeing and downstream outcomes for employment, training and education are generally applicable, they also provided some suggestions for future potential study and consideration. While employment and training outcomes are important, there are also many other dimensions. They currently follow up with individual learners to track downstream employment and other outcomes. This is done either by calling individual learners directly, or by receiving updates from those individual learners who contact ACCESS Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures to share their success stories. The downstream outcome is typically captured in a narrative statement that can include the barriers the learner overcame and how completion of their training has helped them become employed or pursue other activities like opening a business. In addition to this statement, some learners also self-disclose the positive life changes they have made as a result of their increased confidence gained through the program. These positive life changes might range from successfully addressing an addiction and securing stable housing, to improved relationships with a spouse or children. ACCESS Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures notes that:

“These types of outcomes then lead to further confidence building. We build people up quite a bit through our program, and that built-up confidence and that positive life change goes with them wherever they are.”

Additional outcomes, like increased self-confidence, could potentially be captured by applying the surveys and measures pre- and post-training and at a later point in time after the learner has left the program. One potential measurement option for future consideration might be an approach that allows for learners to provide a statement or story, in the spirit of storytelling in an Indigenous context, and that provides space for the learner to self-identify all of the ways in which their life has improved or any other outcomes that are meaningful to them.

RELEVANCE, APPLICABILITY, AND COMPLETENESS OF MEASURES TAILORED TO INDIGENOUS LEARNERS

As part of a living document, the draft practical guide’s Indigenous-focused and fully customizable measures provide a starting point that broadly aligns with and supports existing service delivery approaches of organizations like ACCESS Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures. With potential further feedback from service delivery organizations and active pilot testing in a service delivery setting, these measures could be further refined to support Indigenous learners along a milestones-based pathway to success in terms that also align with and are meaningful to Indigenous learners.

Assess Barriers to Employment

ACCESS Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures noted that the dynamic list of barriers with accompanying scale closely matches and supports their current approach of working with learners to self-identify any impact identified barriers may have on a learner’s ability to get a job or take part in training.

The notes to the practitioner are helpful, including the summary description of the purpose and application, as well as the statement that this is a dynamic survey to which items can be added by the practitioner or the learner. Applying this survey pre- and post-training could be helpful in understanding the learner’s barriers at the outset, as well as how these items may have improved over the course of the training. The items listed closely match those ACCESS Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures currently collects data on and that learners are asked to consider in check box format on current intake forms.

This customizable survey could inform multiple steps of the intake process pre-training, as well as contribute to an expanded range of outcomes measures if applied again post-training. In the experience of ACCESS Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures, this type of survey could be provided to the learner to complete as part of the initial intake application. These results could then inform the intake interview to better understand where the learner may be at in working through any barriers identified. This discussion format also enables the practitioner to gather additional context beyond the rated checklist survey that can inform the suite of customized supports provided to the learner over the course of the training program.

ACCESS Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures suggested some additions and revisions be considered for future iterations of this draft practical guide, based on the types of barriers presented by the range of Indigenous learners they serve. Additional consideration may need to be given to the term “Cultural background not respected” that enables learners to self-identify if they have experienced specific instances of exclusion from employment and training or on the

job site due to cultural bias, racism or discrimination. One potential revision option for a future iteration of this draft practical guide could be changing this term to “Cultural background not respected/cultural bias.”

Four barriers could be considered for addition, based on observed and learner self-reported experiences. ACCESS Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures observed that “some people may not know what job hunting skills are, for example, but they know they are feeling stuck,” which can then lead to a lack of follow through. This lack of follow through can also be attributed in some cases to a learner’s negative experiences seeking services: “Someone may go to door number one, and if that door closes, people won’t pursue it. They won’t follow through because no one is there to help them.” Some learners also report not being aware of the resources that exist, while others often “say they don’t know where or how to start.” Four additions to the dynamic survey based on and informed by these learner experiences could make this measure more directly applicable to the lived realities of Indigenous learners. These four additions might also assist in gathering a richer range of data about the barriers faced by Indigenous learners that might help inform service innovation.

Develop culturally-contextualized Prior Life Experiences Essential Skills Portfolio

ACCESS Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures supports the notion of including of a culturally-contextualized prior life experiences Essential Skills portfolio in broad terms as a customizable optional measure. Its applicability can be determined by practitioners who choose the extent to which or how they might apply it based on their knowledge of their learners’ needs, interests and lived realities. From their experience developing, testing and training practitioners on culturally-based Essential Skills curricula, they note that this portfolio approach is “not speaking down to people, and it allows for having fun and doing activities. From that perspective, it is needed.” They further note that a culturally-based portfolio approach or elements of it could help provide learners with a foundational awareness of Essential Skills, confidence in the skills they may already have, and contribute to a sense of self-agency. This could prepare learners for more fully engaging with the targeted Essential Skills training requirements based on industry, employer or jobsite needs. In their program delivery context, ACCESS Essential Skills for Essential Futures anticipated that elements of this culturally-contextualized prior life experiences Essential Skills portfolio could help inform a one- or two-day exploratory introduction to Essential Skills at the outset of their program.

Customized cultural identity attitudes, belonging and social networks scales

ACCESS Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures noted that the last set of suggested measures tailored for Indigenous learners can be potentially applicable, provided practitioners consider the

program's aims and geographic context, and are sensitive to each learner's situation. Some practitioners might find that some of these measures assist them in making point in time observations throughout the program to gain further insight into the learners. For example, observing any changes or increases in a learner's sense of belonging and social networks over the course of the program might be helpful in the case of a learner who just moved from another province. The cultural identity attitudes, belonging and social network scales customized to an Indigenous context might benefit from further refinement, research and testing.

Additional demographic contextual factors

Further to the observational assessments and formal assessments that ACCESS Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures undertakes, they note that there are some demographic indicators they and similar service providers currently capture that might enhance a future iteration of this draft practical guide. One potential addition could include an indicator that allows the practitioner to identify the learner as First Nation, Inuit, Métis, Status, or Non-Status, with an additional option to add the name of any Band the learner may be a member of or affiliated with. Another potential addition could include an indicator that identifies if the learner is in an urban, remote, or rural area, or on reserve.

Further research may be needed on the applicability of indicators that seek to capture and understand any unique assessment approaches or learning plan elements customized to First Nation, Inuit and Métis learners. In some areas, particularly large or midsize urban areas, ACCESS Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures notes that “we have every Nation come through our doors and we've seen that everyone learns and has the capacity of learning and growing.” They note that the learners they serve in an urban area have not requested or expressed a need for program elements modified along a distinctions basis. If they were delivering programming in a remote or different setting, however, they note that they would modify the program accordingly to accommodate and be sensitive to all of the cultural perspectives.

Recognizing that the TOWES already captures data on what education the learner's mother has, it might be worth considering adding indicators related to intergenerational education and employment factors. This might include understanding and noting if the learner is the first in their close family to pursue post-secondary or further education. It might also include noting if they are one of the only people in their close family currently working or pursuing training. It might also be worth considering adding an indicator to capture if the learner is the main provider for their close or extended family, in addition to any children they may have. Understanding these types of life circumstances and capturing them over time and across programs might assist in considering programmatic and service innovations.

5.0 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Literacy and Essential Skills measurement options span a range of **objective vs. subjective** tools as well as **generic vs. industry-contextualized** approaches – each of which has an important role to play in a robust evaluation. A best practice in LES performance measurement is that Essential Skills assessments should be part of a broader conceptual and measurement framework that links training goals and expectations with a variety of short- and long-term outcomes based on learner needs. A wide range of indicators should be used including **contextual, psychosocial and other predictors** of employment success.

Single LES metrics alone are not sufficient to demonstrate the value of LES initiatives. If the training makes a difference in participants' perception and ability to conduct career planning and job search, their **self-confidence, self-efficacy and career adaptability** can also increase. Additionally, there is empirical evidence suggesting that successful LES training can enhance participants' psychosocial capitals, including expansion and diversification of **social networks**, decreases in **stress**, and increases in **trust** in the community. Therefore, to fully reflect the value of LES training programs, measurement frameworks should go beyond LES metrics and include other skills, behavioural, attitudinal and psychosocial factors related to employability.

Measurement frameworks should be customized not only to program context but also **target population** – for example, newcomers, youth, and Indigenous Peoples. A program's target population is a key factor that determines which instruments should be used to effectively capture progress along varying and unique pathways to employment.

In general, organizing measurement frameworks into **milestone-based learning pathways** is an optimal way to improve not only the strength of an evaluation but also the design and delivery of programs. A milestone-based pathway helps avoid focusing on a single overarching measure of success, which may result in unintended consequences such as mission drift, goal displacement, provider and learner disengagement. This design also allows training providers, policymakers and other stakeholders to recognize the multiple “small” steps needed (e.g., self-efficacy gains, job search skills improvements) to produce “larger,” ultimate outcomes (e.g., employment).

The milestone-based pathway facilitates training customization and enables tight alignment between the training and the learner's distance from the labour market. It allows staff to help learners take the concrete and achievable steps toward meaningful and sustained participation in the labour market. From an implementation and operation's perspective, it also facilitates timely

tracking of learner outcomes to support identification of bottlenecks and allows for service adaptation and continuous improvement.

More importantly, this design stimulates innovation in service delivery by establishing links between earlier and later milestones (e.g., skill gains linked with job performance). It is a practical and efficient approach that can lead to further capacity-building for the LES sector more broadly.

Opportunities exist to further enhance the performance measurement capacity of the LES sector through a **standardized and actionable process** that helps LES staff and policymakers select, design and operationalize measurement instruments customized to their programs. The field would benefit substantially from a **user-friendly tool** that helps LES stakeholders navigate through the complex landscape of measurement options, making a series of decisions to narrow down the most appropriate measurement instruments aligned with their programs' objectives, scope, delivery context and target population. Ideally, this tool should also allow staff to visualize and refine the milestone-based learning pathways reflecting their learners' distance from the labour market. Such a navigable and standardized tool can significantly contribute to the performance measurement capacity of the sector, supporting the collection of data to 1) ensure that LES initiatives are responsive to learner and employer needs, and 2) allow for the scaling up of proven approaches to replicate success across the country.

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APPENDIX A: CAPACITY AND RESOURCES SUPPORTING PARTICIPATION IN FURTHER TRAINING

Self-Esteem

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
I see myself as someone who has high self-esteem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Self Care

In the past 30 days, how often did you do the following activities?

	Almost never 1	Rarely 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Most of the time 5
Stayed at home all day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paid attention to what you are wearing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made it to scheduled appointments on time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paid attention to personal hygiene	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ate healthy, regular meals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Getting Along with Others

In the past 30 days, how much difficulty did you have in:

	None 1	Mild 2	Moderate 3	Severe 4	Extreme or cannot do 5
Dealing with people you do not know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintaining a friendship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting along with people who are close to you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making new friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Understanding and Thinking

In the past 30 days, how much difficulty did you have in:

	None 1	Mild 2	Moderate 3	Severe 4	Extreme or cannot do 5
Concentrating on doing something for ten minutes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Remembering to do important things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Analyzing and finding solutions to problems in day-to-day life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning a new task, for example, learning how to get to a new place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generally understanding what people say	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Starting and maintaining a conversation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Social Supports

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
If I need specialized advice (such as financial, medical or legal advice), I can easily get it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I need emotional support (or someone to lean on), I can easily get it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I need help with my job or career (such as finding information about, or recommending me to a potential employer), I can easily get it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If I need help with household activities (such as child care, household chores, personal care), I can easily get it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Domestic Responsibilities

In the past 30 days, how much difficulty did you have in:

	None 1	Mild 2	Moderate 3	Severe 4	Extreme or cannot do 5
Taking care of your household chores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting all the household work done as <u>quickly</u> as needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting all the household work <u>done</u> that is needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Participation in Society

In the past 30 days...:

	None 1	Mild 2	Moderate 3	Severe 4	Extreme or cannot do 5
How much of a problem did you have in <u>joining in community activities</u> (for example, festivities, religious or other activities) in the same way as anyone else can?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How much of a problem did you have coping with <u>barriers or crises</u> in the world around you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How much of a problem did you have <u>living with dignity</u> because of the attitudes and actions of others?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How much of a problem did you have in doing things <u>by yourself</u> for <u>relaxation or pleasure</u> ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX B: JOB PATHFINDING SKILLS AND RECEPTIVITY TO CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Career Adaptability

Career Planning

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
I have a plan for achieving my career goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My career goals are not clear	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have not really decided what my career goals should be yet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know what I need to do to reach my career goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Career Decision-making Self-efficacy

How confident are you that you can...?

	No confidence at all 1	Very little confidence 2	Moderate confidence 3	Much confidence 4	Complete confidence 5
Decide what you value most in an occupation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Find information about education or training programs in the area of work you are interested in.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assess how well your abilities match the kind of work you want to do.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Select one occupation from a list of potential occupations you are considering.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	No confidence at all 1	Very little confidence 2	Moderate confidence 3	Much confidence 4	Complete confidence 5
Talk with a person already employed in the area of work you are interested in.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Find information about occupations you are interested in.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Job Search Clarity

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
It is not very clear to me where I should be looking for a job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a clear idea of the type of job I want	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a clear idea of the type of company I want to work for	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have very clear job search goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Job Search Self-efficacy

How confident are you that you can...?

	No confidence at all 1	Very little confidence 2	Moderate confidence 3	Much confidence 4	Complete confidence 5
Use personal networks (groups of friends, co-workers and other personal contacts) to obtain job leads.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Search for and find good job opportunities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use a variety of sources to find job opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	No confidence at all 1	Very little confidence 2	Moderate confidence 3	Much confidence 4	Complete confidence 5
Find out where job openings exist.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plan and organize a weekly job search schedule.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicate your skills and experience in a way that attracts the interest of employers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prepare resumes that will get you interviews.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Receptivity toward Continuous Learning

Receptivity toward Continuous Learning

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
Learning new things makes me more confident.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am more likely to get a better job if I do some learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting qualifications takes too much effort.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX C: BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES CONDUCTIVE TO EMPLOYABILITY

Personality factors

The following questions are about how you see yourself as a person. Please choose the number which best describes how you see yourself, using a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 means "does not apply to me at all" and 7 means "applies to me perfectly."

	Does not apply to me at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	Applies to me perfectly	7
Emotional Stability									
I see myself as someone who worries a lot.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I see myself as someone who gets nervous easily.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I see myself as someone who is relaxed, who handles stress well.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extraversion									
I see myself as someone who is talkative.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I see myself as someone who is outgoing and sociable.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I see myself as someone who is reserved.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Openness to Experience									
I see myself as someone who is original, comes up with new ideas.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I see myself as someone who values artistic, aesthetic experiences	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I see myself as someone who has an active imagination.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agreeableness									
I see myself as someone who is sometimes rude to others.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I see myself as someone who has a forgiving nature.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I see myself as someone who is considerate and kind to almost everyone.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conscientiousness									
I see myself as someone who does a thorough job.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I see myself as someone who tends to be lazy.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I see myself as someone who does things efficiently.	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Personality factors

If you had to choose between \$200 now versus \$2,000 in five years, which would you choose?

- 1 – Certainly \$200 now
- 2 – Probably \$200 now
- 3 – Cannot choose
- 4 – Probably \$2,000 in five years
- 5 – Certainly \$2,000 in five years

Self-Control

In general, how well does each of the following statements describe you?

	Not at all 1	Not very well 2	Very well 3	Completely well 4
I am good at resisting temptation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I find it difficult to break undesirable habits.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am always in control of my actions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I often act without thinking through all the alternatives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am able to work diligently toward long-term goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Tools to assess work-readiness, employability skills and other behavioural competencies

Another approach to assessing behavioural competencies conducive to employability is to use existing tools. From an implementation perspective, these tools often require more time and resources to administer than the survey scales described above. These tools are developed as an integrated part of specific program models, with associated recommendations of how to use the tool to inform training and service delivery. Should your program choose to use one of these tools, close collaboration with the assessment developers may be needed to ensure it can be incorporated properly into your program. There is also a cost associated with the usage of these assessments.

Employability Skills Assessment Tool – Futureworx is one of these tools. It was designed to complement training programs for people facing obstacles to employment, by maximizing their potential in the workforce. The tool is adaptable and can be easily adjusted to consider different attributes and target different outcomes. It combines staff assessments, which are observation-based, and learners' self-assessments, which are questionnaire-based, to provide information on learners' behavioural competencies

related to employability. The tool provides benchmarks aligned with the needs and expectations of most workplaces so that program staff can assess how ready participants are to become a contributing member of the labour market. The ESAT can be used in multiple program contexts, from those as short as three weeks to create awareness of employability expectations, to those as long as six months or more to achieve real behavioural change. There is a web-based case management interface associated with the tool. ESAT assesses motivation, attitude, accountability, time management, stress management, presentation, teamwork, adaptability and confidence.

APPENDIX D: HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Physical and mental health

Does a physical condition or health problem reduce the amount or kinds of activities you can do at work, at home, or for recreation?

Not at all

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Does an emotional condition or health problem (such as feeling depressed or anxious) reduce the amount or kinds of activities you can do at work, at home, or for recreation?

Not at all

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Life satisfaction

Does a physical condition or health problem reduce the amount or kinds of activities you can do at work, at home, or for recreation?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Trust

If you lost your wallet or purse that had \$200 in it, how likely do you think it is that it would be returned with the money still in it if it was found by:

	Very unlikely 1	Somewhat unlikely 2	Neither likely nor unlikely 3	Somewhat likely 4	Very likely 5
A neighbor who lives close by	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An employee at a local business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A total stranger	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX E: SELF-REPORTED SKILL USE

Confidence in skill application

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
I am good with numbers and calculations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel anxious when figuring out such amounts as discounts, sales tax or tips.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I read only when I have to.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading is one of my favourite activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy talking about what I have read with other people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am confident in my ability to write notes, letters or e-mails.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Frequency in skill usage

How much do you do each of the following activities outside of work?

	Never 1	Rarely 2	Less than once a week 3	Once a week 4	A few times a week 5	Every day 5
Do math (such as for bills, bank accounts or credit cards)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read or use information from newspapers or magazines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read or use information from books – fiction or non-fiction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read or use information from letters, notes, or e-mails	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write notes, letters or e-mails	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use a computer outside of work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use a library or visit a bookstore	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



OTTAWA

55 Murray Street, Suite 400
Ottawa, Ontario
K1N 5M3

VANCOUVER

789 West Pender Street, Suite 440
Vancouver, British Columbia
V6C 1H2

CALGARY

MONTREAL

4126 Saint-Denis Street, Suite 302
Montreal, Quebec
H2W 2M5