

## Essential Skills Mini-Lesson

Use this lesson to introduce participants to Essential Skills. Wait until you have finished a few sessions before using it. From time to time during the UPP sessions, get out the Essential Skills Check-In and ask participants which Essential Skills they have been using in each session. Use check marks on the chart to record their answers.

### Central Idea

Essential Skills are the foundations on which other skills are built.

### Lesson Plan

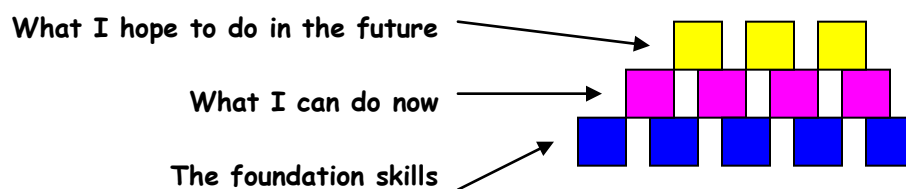
1. You will need objects to use as building blocks, about 27 of them. They can be any of these:

- children's blocks
- small pieces of wood
- small flat stones
- books
- small boxes
- any combination of the above



2. Gather real-life examples of activities to represent the Essential Skills. See the chart below for ideas. [link to this](#)
3. Write the names of the nine Essential Skills on separate pieces of paper or cardstock and stick each one on the board or wall as you introduce it. If possible, also write the skill names on the building blocks themselves.
4. Explain to the group that you are going to build a model with their help.
5. Start by arranging the Essential Skills blocks on the bottom layer. For participants who need it, point to the words and sound them out so they can more easily remember and read them later. As you place each one, explain what it means. Show real examples.


6. When the foundation layer has been laid and explained, ask participants to give examples of how they use some of these skills now in their daily lives. Remind them that many daily tasks require a combination of several Essential Skills. Don't worry if they can't think of examples for all the Essential Skills. For each example given, put another building block on top on the first layer. These examples become the second layer. They do not have to be laid in any special order.
7. Finally, for the top layer, ask participants to say what they would like to be able to do in the future. In other words, if they work at improving their skills, what goals do they hope to achieve? Answers here could be as broad as 'Get a good job', or as specific as 'Read this book to my child'.



8. When the activity is finished, put the signs with the skill names somewhere in the room so they will be visible in later sessions.
9. There are two worksheets for follow-up. One is a matching activity; the other asks for written examples. Give the one that is most appropriate for each participant's skill level.
10. From time to time during the UPP sessions, get out the Essential Skills Check-in (link to this) and discuss with participants which Essential Skills they have been using.

Source: *Completing the Circle: Teaching Our First Teachers*, Ontario Native Literacy Coalition

| <b>Essential Skill</b> | <b>Description</b>   | <b>Examples</b>                               |
|------------------------|--|---|
| Reading text           | Understanding books, articles or letters. Text is in the form of sentences and paragraphs.   | a children's book, a newspaper                |
| Document use           | Getting information from drawings, signs, forms or labels.   | a form, a map, a diagram                      |
| Writing                | Writing using a pen, pencil, typewriter or computer.   | a phone message, a letter, a résumé           |
| Numeracy (Math)        | Any time we calculate on paper or in our heads, measure quantities, count or make a rough estimate.  | a calculator, a tape measure, coins, a recipe |
| Oral communication     | Giving and getting information in person or on the phone. Reassuring someone who is upset. Explaining how to do something.   | a phone, a picture of two people talking      |
| Thinking skills        | Working out what to do if something needs to be fixed. Solving problems. Choosing the best route to take when in a hurry. Finding information. Memorizing important facts. | a broken toy, a 911 sign, a phone book        |
| Working with others    | Getting along, helping, asking for help, co-operating. Working independently when it is necessary.   | a pack of cards or a board game               |
| Computer use           | Getting information from a computer, e.g. the Internet. Writing a letter or an e-mail.   | a computer disk, a cell phone                 |
| Continuous learning    | Being willing to learn new things. Taking a course, like this one. Seeking out information on your own.  | Ask for examples from the group.              |

| Match the skill to the picture. |  |   |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| Reading Text                    |  | 1    |
| Document Use                    |  | 2    |
| Writing                         |  | 3    |
| Numeracy                        |  | 4    |
| Oral Communication              |  | 5  |
| Thinking Skills                 |  | 6  |
| Working With Others             |  | 7  |
| Computer Use                    |  | 8  |
| Continuous Learning             |  | 9  |

| <b>Essential Skill</b>     | <b>An example of how you use this skill <u>now</u></b> | <b>An example of how you would like to use this skill in the <u>future</u></b> |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Reading Text</b>        |  |  |
| <b>Document Use</b>        |  |  |
| <b>Writing</b>             |  |  |
| <b>Numeracy</b>            |  |  |
| <b>Oral Communication</b>  |  |  |
| <b>Thinking Skills</b>     |  |  |
| <b>Working With Others</b> |  |  |
| <b>Computer Use</b>        |  |  |
| <b>Continuous Learning</b> |  |  |

## Essential Skills Check-In

|                            | Family | Literacy at Home | Healthy Eating | Planning, Budgeting | Growing, Learning | Keeping Fit | Sickness and Health | Playing with Language | The Next Step |
|----------------------------|--------|------------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| <b>Reading Text</b>        |        |                  |                |                     |                   |             |                     |                       |               |
| <b>Document Use</b>        |        |                  |                |                     |                   |             |                     |                       |               |
| <b>Writing</b>             |        |                  |                |                     |                   |             |                     |                       |               |
| <b>Numeracy</b>            |        |                  |                |                     |                   |             |                     |                       |               |
| <b>Oral Communication</b>  |        |                  |                |                     |                   |             |                     |                       |               |
| <b>Thinking Skills</b>     |        |                  |                |                     |                   |             |                     |                       |               |
| <b>Working With Others</b> |        |                  |                |                     |                   |             |                     |                       |               |
| <b>Computer Use</b>        |        |                  |                |                     |                   |             |                     |                       |               |
| <b>Continuous Learning</b> |        |                  |                |                     |                   |             |                     |                       |               |