Matching Skills to Jobs

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Skills match project report

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Project Overview

Summary

This project builds on remarkable information learned through the Niagara Workforce Planning Board's (NWPB) Local Integrated Labour Market Planning process. 76% of Niagara's locally owned businesses are small or medium sized. NWPB has identified clusters of declining industries and dominant jobs in these industries and clusters of emerging growth industries and dominant jobs in those industries.

Literacy Link Niagara had been working on identifying the Essential Skills Profiles of Niagara's dominant jobs before the Skills Match project. The next step was to research and develop essential skills material of declining jobs and compare them to those in the emerging jobs to allow us to develop a skills matching system for laid-off workers trying to find new careers. This newly created system allowed people to find the best fit for their specific skills sets and needs.

Goals & Objectives

The goals & objectives of the Skills Match project was to

- develop the skills matching assessment system

- communicate to small and medium businesses and laid-off workers

    o the findings of labour market planning and the industry analysis
    o the skills-matching services available to them

- share the profiles of emerging jobs/industries with laid-off workers served by Action Centres and Employment Service Providers to help them transition to emerging jobs

- conduct assessments with laid-off workers to find their best fit in emerging industries and the basic skills/academic upgrading needed to be successful

Deliverables

The original deliverables of the Skills Match project were

- a Skills matching system between small/medium sized business and laid-off workers

- 2 targeted communication plans on Essential Skills, the matching system and its services

    o one to small/medium employers
    o one to laid-off workers

- 40 new essential skills profiles on declining jobs and emerging jobs

- enhanced relationships between literacy/basic skills, action centres, employment services and small/medium sized business in Niagara

- 150 laid-off workers assessed and referred to basic skills/academic upgrading

- systems, tools and findings from the project that may be applicable in other regions of the province

Situation

Literacy in Niagara

In 2005, the Niagara Integrated Social and Community Planning Project was created as a result of community members discussing their concerns about the social future of Niagara's citizens. The primary concern was the absence of integrated social planning and its missed opportunities. The group realized that we needed a mechanism in Niagara for integrated social and community planning.

3 years of research and consultation followed. On November 28, 2008, the Living in Niagara – 2008 Report was released.

Living in Niagara - 2008 is a description of critical indicators and areas of life in Niagara. It describes the vitality of Niagara as a place to live, learn, work and grow. The document reports on how well Niagara is doing in comparison to provincial and national trends in **eleven areas** critical to community quality of life, including

- housing
- health
- transportation
- the environment
- the arts
- leadership
- crime
- "welcome-ness"
- Income
- Employment
- education.

Each area and indicator was graded using the following grading levels:

Level 1.   In dire need of corrective action

Level 2.   Of concern, needs attention

Level 3.   Progress is being made

Level 4.   We're doing well and headed in the right direction

Level 5.   We're doing great – Niagara is a leader

The topic of Literacy is included as an indicator in the section of the report on Education. Both Education and Literacy were rated as a Level 2, "of concern and needs attention".

> **While Niagara's rates of literacy are comparable to those of the province, it still means that a substantial portion of our population cannot fill out documents such as job applications or driver's licenses, read a book, use a telephone directory, read instructions for safety at home or work, read road maps or signs, write business letters or read educational materials.**
>
> **Source: Living in Niagara – 2008 Report**

Unemployment in Niagara

Niagara has the second highest unemployment rate at the time this report was produced. It has been widely acknowledged that the history of manufacturing in Niagara has led to this state. Many manufacturers have closed down or moved out of the region in recent years. Many people who worked in these factory jobs did not complete their Grade 12 or equivalent because it was unnecessary for their success in the industry. As they are pushed to look for work outside this industry, many of them are finding that their literacy and essential skills as well as traditional credentials are lacking. They cannot find work without upgrading their skills.

Many in Niagara believe that jobs are not available at all. Niagara Workforce Planning Board and other strong economic leaders state this is not the case. There are specific industries that are growing including

Emerging Industry Cluster	Potential/Sample occupations
Niche bio-product manufacturing	Clinical Operations Manger
	Research Scientist
	Materials Handler
Digital media and software development	2D/3D artist
	Media Specialist
	Games Programming
Environmental, energy, and other 'green' services	Computer Controlled Machine Operator
	Electrical Engineers
	Home Energy Evaluator
Health, wellness and life sciences	Practical Nurses
	Research Scientist
	Geneticist

Source: Jobs in Niagara Policy Brief, Niagara Workforce Planning Board, Nov. 2010

Niagara College and Brock University are actively trying to build new programming to meet the needs of Niagara's current economy. It is important that literacy and employment services in Niagara recognize the opportunities to help guide clients in the direction of long term sustainable employment opportunities.

Assessment

Tool

It was important to the project team that the assessment tools selected or created did not resemble traditional education assessments, but resembled authentic workplace documents. This was determined important as many of the people to be assessed would have not seen a classroom, test or exam in several years, maybe decades. For this reason, the project team decided to use PTP's Communications and Mathematics Employment Readiness Assessment (CAMERA) to measure skills levels. By using a tool that could be articulated to the client in Essential Skills, the tool could be marketed to people that would not have signed up for a literacy assessment. The tool does offer assessors the data in literacy levels to allow for referrals to literacy programs if necessary.

A CAMERA information sheet is located in APPENDIX A.

Framework

Because this tool was attempting to reach an audience who may be unfamiliar with literacy and academic upgrading services, the project team wanted to make sure the assessment was straight forward and relevant to the target client. The project team wanted to create a tool that

- assessed a client in 1.5 hours or less
- created an action plan for the client with as much information and steps as possible
- focused on the most necessary essential skills for the specific job goal
- showed transferability from the laid-off job to the new job goal
- complemented the services of the referral partners

The ideal client was identified as someone who

- had been laid off from a job that had been profiled in the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) Essential Skills profiles
- had a clear career goal in mind (that had been profiled)
- was able to fund or access funding to complete the educational steps required for their goals
- recognized what they did well and did not do well in their last job
- was open to literacy and educational intervention
- was motivated to complete multiple action steps

To build on the authentic and relevant style of CAMERA, the assessment framework included a Thinking Skills Self-Assessment completed with the client in reference to their past job. See APPENDIX B for the Self-Assessment.

Clients were given a three page assessment report that included the following

Page 1 – Contact and background information including education and employment history

Page 2 – Essential Skills comparison – Old job requirements, New job requirements, Current skill levels

Page 3 – Recommended steps to reach their career goals and any information that would support their journey

See APPENDIX C for the assessment report.

Clients were regularly given information about funding options including Second Career and Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP). Some clients were also referred to additional support agencies including Renewed Computer Technologies Ontario (RCTO).

Jobs in Niagara Profiles

As the economy changes, the jobs that are in demand also shifts. After working for several years in the same industry, many people in Niagara are finding it difficult to transition from one career to another when their jobs become obsolete. The identification of which jobs are declining and growing in Niagara allows us the opportunity to direct clients into jobs that show strong potential for long term opportunity. As Second Career and Skills Development funding continue to offer clients the opportunity to upgrade their skills and change their careers, local labour market information helps support and increase the chances for success for Niagara residents.

Originally, Literacy Link Niagara was part of the Niagara Occupational Profiles project with Niagara Workforce Planning Board. Literacy Link Niagara developed Essential Skills summaries in an easy to read format. As the project changed and became a provincial project of the training boards, the Essential Skills piece was transferred to the Ontario Skills Passport.

Jobs in Niagara Profiles were created to make up for the inability to meet one of the original deliverables. Information templates were developed to help clients and case managers make more informed decisions about career directions and transitions. Displayed in an easy-to-read format, clients are able to use documents to compare and contrast different in demand career options. These templates were constantly being updated and allowed assessors to quickly pull information on specific jobs.

Jobs in Niagara Profiles include
- local labour market prospects for the next 5 to 10 years
- average salary or wage
- educational requirements for success
- potential training programs (publicly funded and private TCU registered options)

These profiles will continue to be given to clients who require referrals or assessments by LLN assessors.

Assessment Roll out

Community Partners

The project team tried to recruit as many different types of agencies as possible to pilot the Skills Match assessment tool. The agencies that participated included

- an Action Centre
- three Employment Service agencies
- two Literacy & Basic Skills agencies
- one Pre-Apprenticeship program
- several Social Assistance sites

After the agency registered with Literacy Link Niagara, the following steps occurred (typical).

Pre- Assessment Steps

1) Delivery agency uses a checklist to ensure that client can benefit from assessment.
2) If a client meets the criteria the caseworker will log on to the Literacy Link Niagara (LLN) website to complete a referral form.
3) The caseworker must identify the client's past job(s) and the field or occupation of interest at point of referral. They must also identify all completed levels of education.
4) LLN will follow up with client to book an appointment time. The caseworker will be notified with a date and time.
5) Using the client profile and the Niagara Occupational Profiles, LLN will compare the skills required to transition into the new field of interest.
6) Using the client profile and the Niagara Occupational Profiles, LLN will determine any credentials required to be successful in the new field of interest.

Assessment

1) Client will be given essential skills activities to create an action plan to get into the new field of interest. The essential skills activities will be chosen based on the job they are transitioning from and into. Most clients will be assessed using numeracy, document use, writing and reading text.

2) Clients will be interviewed to determine soft skill gaps (thinking skills/working with others). Activities for upgrading in this area will be given to clients who self- identify these gaps.

3) If a client requires traditional upgrading (i.e. Grade 12, college) LLN may choose to have the client complete additional literacy activities.

4) The client will leave with the information of every training step they need to complete the transition into the new field of interest.

After Assessment

LLN will forward the assessment results to the delivery agency.

To assist with awareness and recruitment, LLN provided some agencies with Skills Assessment Information Session directed to their clients and sometimes staff. The agenda included

1) highlights of assessment (30 minutes with questions)

    a. Essential Skills

    b. Niagara Occupational Profiles and Emerging and Declining industries

    c. Types of activities

    d. Action Plan and Literacy Link Niagara's knowledge of education and training programs

2) Career Possibilities exercise (30 minutes)

Client types

There were no restrictions on client criteria or experience for referrals. Clients were not limited by income source or employment status. Community partners were given an idea of who would be ideal for this type of assessment as outlined below.

Client Profile	Deliverables of assessment
Second Career	- receive labour market information and prospects on the new career - assisted and given information required to complete their application - tested to confirm they are taking the necessary steps to be successful
Client without Grade 12	- given information on all routes to Grade 12 or equivalent in Niagara - tested to make sure they do not require Literacy Upgrading first - Provided with examples of the skills they already have (to build confidence)
Client who has been out of the classroom or workforce for a considerable amount of time	- Credentials checked to confirm they are up-to-date - Offered quickest solutions to any skills or credential gaps - Provided with examples of the skills they already have (to build confidence)

Delivery Methods

Most of the assessments were booked as clients identified interest or a caseworker referred them forward. In this case, assessors were booked into an office on the site of the referral partner. Clients were booked in 1.5 hour time slots. Clients were given the results of their assessments before they left.

In a few cases, assessors piloted a different style of assessment delivery. Clients were given a form to fill out the week before the assessment appointment that provided more information about education and employment background and career goals then gathered from the other referrals. The assessor went into an office on the site of the referral partner and completed the first part of the CAMERA assessment with the client. After 10-15 minutes, the client was moved to complete the rest of the assessment independently. At this time another client was brought in to complete the 1-to-1 part of the assessment and the revolving style continued. The assessor booked a follow up day approximately 1 week later to give back reports to the clients. These reports took approximately 15-20 minutes to return. This style significantly decreased the time required per assessment from 1.5 hours to 35-45 minutes. It should be noted that this style worked in programs where clients were expected to show up on a regular basis and were currently enrolled in upgrading or training.

Client Data

The project team assessed 105 clients in 6 months.

34% of clients were female. 66% of clients were male.

Clients were referred through a range of different service providers. Below is a breakdown of where clients were referred through and assessed.

17% - Action Centre

18% - Employment Service Provider

12% - Pre-Apprenticeship program

18% - Literacy & Basic Skills program

34% - Social Assistance

Most clients were between ages 20 to 29 (47%). 27% of clients were over age 45. Many of these clients had been laid off from the manufacturing sector. 21% of clients were between ages 30 to 44. Only 5% of clients were under 20.

63% of clients assessed did not have their high school diploma or equivalent.

47% of clients were identified as needing Literacy & Basic Skills upgrading before they completed their next step (usually training and education for sustainable employment.)

Below is a breakdown of the essential skill levels of the clients assessed.

Essential Skills Level	Document Use	Reading Text	Numeracy	Writing
1	2%	14%	13%	4%
2	22%	29%	39%	23%
3	76%	57%	48%	73%

Feedback from Partners

Community partners were asked for their feedback on the process and procedures of the Skills Match assessment. Their responses are below.

What did you like about the Skills Match Assessment?

Ashley Hoath came into our centre to conduct the assessments which was great. People felt more comfortable coming into our centre as opposed to going to another facility. Ashley is a wonderful person to work with. She is extremely professional and friendly. The people who had assessments done thoroughly enjoyed working with her. The reports we received at the end of each assessment were very helpful and explained in detail what each person needed to do as well as what skills they possess.

It was an excellent opportunity for client to assess their skills and where they needed training.

I like the fact that it builds confidence in learners that may feel there is no more hope.

It was easy for the participants to complete and the results were very directional - it really helped the participants to see that there was a path to reach their goals and that it was possible. It was a good esteem booster.

The process worked well and it was a benefit that the assessors were able to meet with clients in the offices of community partners.

It was wonderful to have an option for those learners that we sometimes think can stay with us forever.

What would you change about the assessment process?

I can't think of anything I would change.

I would like to see only the higher level learners assessed because even though it is great what I found was that it gives lower level learners options but once they move towards that goal they still lack literacy skills and will eventually be back.

Nothing - it worked well.

100% of those surveyed said the assessment complemented their services.

100% of those surveyed said the assessment benefitted their clients.

80% of those surveyed said the assessment process helped them and their staff better understand Literacy & Basic Skills and academic upgrading programming in Niagara.

100% of those surveyed said they would like to see this assessment of something similar offered to their clients in the future.

Feedback from Clients

The feedback from clients was consistently positive. One agency collected testimonials to help promote the assessment service through their newsletter APPENDIX D.

Business Engagement

Direct Campaign

Literacy has been a difficult cause to sell to business in Niagara historically. Businesses are starting to recognize skills gaps in traditional credentials with their potential and even current staff as more demands for training and education are required to be successful in work. With the growing concern of the skills gap due to the retiring baby boomers, businesses are starting to listen.

Literacy Link Niagara's Executive Director, Gay Douglas Broerse approached 38 employers at the Niagara Workforce Planning Board's Employment Expo in March 2011. She provided each employer with a brief explanation of who we are and how our services can support business. Each employer was given a key chain to remember LLN as well as an Essential Skills for Business brochure. See APPENDIX D for brochure.

LLN will continue to distribute brochures through business networking events including chamber and small business events.

Email Campaign

In 2010, Literacy Link Niagara became members of the St. Catharines & Thorold Chamber of Commerce, the largest Chamber of Commerce in the Niagara Region. This was a strategic move to try to build relationships with businesses, starting with their knowledge of literacy issues and programs in Niagara.

As part of the Skills Match project, Literacy Link Niagara sent out a message to more than 1200 Chamber members about the importance of Essential Skills in regards to their current and potential employees. The message includes a YouTube video that tells employers about Essential Skills in one minute. The hope is that businesses will connect with Literacy Link Niagara when hiring new employees, making changes to current employees' roles and/or when addressing economic issues on a regional scale.

Youtube video

As stated previously, Literacy Link Niagara has created an Essential Skills outreach video on YouTube. The video has been sent out to several businesses and partners in Niagara and is also housed on the homepage of the Literacy Link Niagara website.

The link for the YouTube video is http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghjsKmazlwU

Lessons Learned

Literacy Link Niagara learned a few lessons that will help us shape future projects and initiatives.

Minimum Number of Appointments booked

At the beginning of the project we did not set a minimum number of assessments that needed to be booked before an assessor went out to a community partner's site. This changed in December as we found we were not reaching the numbers that we had expected because community partners were booking assessments as clients were identified, not in groups. We changed this to better use resources and time in the second half of the pilot.

Needed time to build relationships with community partners

We needed more time to get the referral numbers coming in then expected. It took time to find community partners that could see the benefit in our service. In the future we will build this time into our project timelines.

Administrators bought in before frontline staff

Administrators were very confident that their staff would have clients to refer to our service. Unfortunately the proper messaging and benefits were not always communicated to frontline staff. We will create better messaging tools for administrators to give to frontline staff in future projects and put checks and balances in place to make sure everyone understands the service.

Next Steps

The assessment has been well received by both clients and agencies. With a few tweaks, the tool and framework will replace current tools used in Ontario Works Learning Choices appointments May 1, 2011.

Literacy Link Niagara will continue to build Jobs in Niagara profiles and find ways to deliver them to clients who need knowledge about Niagara's current labour market opportunities.

Literacy Link Niagara will continue to try to engage business in Essential Skills. In the future, we would like to deliver these assessments in Niagara businesses to find opportunities for current employees to increase their literacy skills and perform better in their jobs.

CAMERA

Communications And Math Employment Readiness Assessment

CAMERA is a series of standardized tests that provide placement and diagnostic information about adult learners' abilities to manage workplace communications and numeracy tasks. The assessments incorporate authentic workplace documents, input from employers, and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's (HRSDC) Essential Skills Profiles to give an accurate snapshot of learners' skills.

CAMERA tasks are selected from a wide variety of occupations and job sectors; the skills learners are asked to demonstrate are not occupationally specific but, rather, highlight the underlying Essential Skills required for success on the job. CAMERA comprises tasks that assess four skill domains: reading text, document use, numeracy and writing.

The CAMERA tests are a critical part of the CAMERA System, a set of cohesive resources that can be used to support learners engaged in adult upgrading. This booklet begins with an overview of the CAMERA System and follows with detailed information about the CAMERA tests.

CAMERA System Highlights

- includes assessment tools and skills development resources

- highlights skills required for success in entry-level work

- utilizes Essential Skills Profiles and employer input

- addresses reading, writing, document use and numeracy

- contains high-quality, easy-to-use materials, priced for accessibility

What is the CAMERA System?

The Communications and Math Employment Readiness Assessment (CAMERA) System is an integrated assessment and curriculum system for adult learners interested in developing the skills they need at work. It includes three components: CAMERA tests, curriculum guidelines called Signposts, and the *workwrite* series of workbooks. Together these components provide a continuum of resources for assessors, instructors and learners.

Developed by PTP Adult Learning and Employment Programs, the CAMERA System employs real-life workplace documents and tasks to test and develop adult learners' reading, document use, writing and numeracy skills. Drawn from HRSDC's Essential Skills research, the documents and tasks together represent common activities in a wide variety of entry-level occupations and diverse employment settings.

CAMERA System in Use

Ann teaches upgrading. Learners are placed in her class after writing the CAMERA Placement Test, so she is confident that they should be working with tasks at Essential Skills level 2 (ES 2). Ann selects the content to cover by reviewing the curriculum guidelines in Signposts. She either develops her own learning activities using the instructional ideas in Signposts, or she selects existing activities from workwrite. Every week or two Ann administers sample assessment activities to monitor skills development.

At fixed points during the program, the assessor pulls learners from Ann's class in order to administer the CAMERA Stage 2 diagnostic test. The assessor uses the test results to determine whether the students should continue to work on tasks at ES 2 or whether they are ready to take on the challenge of more difficult tasks. After the assessment and debriefing with the assessor, the learner returns to class, where Ann uses the results to select appropriate signposts to cover.

Why was the CAMERA System developed?

The CAMERA System was created to help upgrading programs meet the needs of adults strengthening literacy and numeracy skills for work. CAMERA tests were developed to provide information to both learners and practitioners on the skills learners have and those they need to work on. Signposts and *workwrite* complement the tests and were developed for instructors to identify learning content, provide practice opportunities and monitor skills acquisition.

In keeping with the principles of good assessment practise, the CAMERA System as a whole:

• Provides opportunities for frequent assessment;

• Connects test content to instructional content;

• Reflects learners' goals in assessment content;

• Provides opportunities for learners' success;

• Provides opportunities for learner feedback and participation; and

• Uses a variety of assessment approaches.[1]

CAMERA System Goals

• promote Essential Skills development within a workforce context

• identify skills gaps for programming purposes

• determine promotion readiness in settings with multiple class levels

• ensure that upgrading reflects workplace demands

[1] Adapted from R.J. Dietel, J.L. Herman and R.A. Knuth, "What Does Research Say About Assessment?" (Oak Brook, Illinois: North Central Regional Education Laboratory (NCREL), 1991).

What does the CAMERA System include?

The three components of the CAMERA System are intended to work together.

CAMERA tests: a series of seven standardized assessments

Trained assessors administer CAMERA tests at the start of learners' programs and at set intervals to give learners an opportunity to demonstrate skills and see progress

Test features:

• provides realistic workplace tasks

• captures gains at Essential Skills levels 1 to 3

• created as progressive model

• gives results in concrete, easy to understand language

• designed for low-skilled learners

• validated through extensive pilot and field testing

+

Signposts: curriculum guidelines

Instructors use Signposts to identify what to teach and to monitor learning along specific Essential Skills

Signposts features:

• describes skills workers use on the job

• includes instructional ideas

• provides sample informal assessments for classroom use

• designed for low-skilled learners

• synthesized from over 800 Essential Skills examples

+

workwrite: a series of workbooks

Learners complete activities in *workwrite* to develop and practice the Essential Skills they will need at work

***workwrite* features:**

• provides hundreds of workplace-specific Essential Skills activities

• includes instructor notes, lesson plans, discussion questions and answers

• designed for low-skilled learners

• can be photocopied for classroom use

How much does the CAMERA System cost?

The CAMERA System was developed with program accessibility in mind; therefore, the cost of components is minimal. Program assessors interested in using the CAMERA tests must attend a two-day training session; however, no special training is required to use Signposts and *workwrite*.

As indicated below, once assessors have been trained, the only costs are for test booklets and *workwrite* workbooks. Currently, individual Test Books are priced under $10; because they are reusable, the only ongoing costs are for replacing Test Books should they become damaged. All test consumables, including score sheets and booklets in which learners record their responses, are provided in electronic format for users to print as necessary. Moreover, because activities in *workwrite* can be photocopied, the workbooks can be used repeatedly.

The following is a summary of the tools that programs interested in using CAMERA will require. The following costs are associated with using the CAMERA tests:

Tool Required	Cost
User Guide	no cost a copy of the User Guide is provided to all trained assessors
Test Books	under $10 each Note: Test Books are reusable
Response Books	no cost provided on CD with purchased Test Books to be printed as necessary
Score Sheets	no cost provided on CD with purchased Test Books

If the CAMERA System is used alongside the tests, the following costs are applicable:

Tool Required	Cost
Signposts	no cost for trained assessors; a copy is provided during training $48.50 for additional copies
workwrite workbooks	unit prices range from $39.50 to $49.50 Note: Activities can be photocopied; workbooks sold separately

For more information about Signposts and the *workwrite* series of workbooks, visit www.ptp.ca. Additional information about the CAMERA tests follows; however, further information can also be obtained by contacting PTP at (416) 510-3266.

ptp
pathway to possibilities

Who are CAMERA tests appropriate for?

The tests has been validated for use where:

• learners receive programming with a workforce orientation

• learners are able to follow oral and written instructions as presented to complete the tasks

• tests are administered using practices set out in administration guidelines

• tests are administered by an assessor who ideally is not the learner's instructor

• tests are administered in their original form and sequence

Test results cannot be interpreted reliably when test materials or administration procedures are altered in any way. Therefore, altering tests for use with other learner groups, whether a population with English as a Second Language programming needs or those with identified learning disabilities, will render results that cannot be interpreted with confidence.

What are the seven CAMERA tests?

The CAMERA test series includes seven standardized assessments. Each test has an intended audience and purpose:

	Placement	Stage 1 Form A & Form B	Stage 2 Form A & Form B	Stage 3 Form A & Form B
Who?	Learners at all levels of proficiency	Learners with lower-level literacy skills	Learners with mid-range literacy skills	Learners with higher-level literacy skills
When?	Upon entry into upgrading program	At set intervals during programming		
Why?	To determine at which level a learner should begin programming	To confirm placement decision; obtain diagnostic information to plan learning; determine promotion readiness		

There are two forms of each of CAMERA Stages 1, 2 and 3: form A and form B. Both forms evaluate the same skills using similar tasks. The two forms can be used interchangeably to monitor learner skill development. Alternating between the forms will reduce the likelihood that a practice effect skews results.

What do CAMERA tests look like?

Each test in the CAMERA series is designed so that learners are faced with a series of appropriately challenging tasks that allow them to demonstrate reading, writing, document use and numeracy skills. Each CAMERA test includes 5 to 12 tasks; most tasks include a workplace-style document and multiple questions.

Documents are organized into a reusable Test Book; Response Books contain space for learners to record answers. All tasks, while designed for assessment purposes, have an authentic feel — important for introducing learners to real workplace tasks.

Following are samples that represent CAMERA tasks.

Sample A
Stage 1
Skill: Writing

At the lowest level, learners are asked to write a short note. They listen to the following prompt in order to decide what to write. Although the assessor is present to read the prompt to the learner, additional support is not provided.

Assessor Instructions:
Present the Response Sheet to the learner. Say:

While on break you notice that a cellphone was left behind in the lunchroom. Write a note to put on the bulletin board to inform your co-workers and to tell them to come see you if the cellphone is theirs.

Sample B
Stage 2
Skill: Document Use

By this stage learners can read comfortably at the sentence level. Learners read a prompt in order to complete this form independently. Assessors are present while learners work but do not provide assistance.

Greg's
Heating & Cooling

38528

Date: ———————————————— Priority: ☐ 1 ☐ 2

Client Information

Name:	
Address:	Intersection:
Home Tel:	Cell:

Nature of Problem

☐ No heat
☐ High wintertime electric bill
☐ Bad smell when running
☐ Unit won't shut off
☐ Pilot light goes off

☐ No A/C
☐ High summertime electric bill
☐ Unusual noises when running
☐ Water leak
☐ Thermostat won't maintain temp.

Other: ————————————————————————————

————————————————————————————

Call received by:————————————————————————

Priority 1: No heat/AC   Priority 2: All other

You work as the head security guard in a large manufacturing facility. Recently, more and more of the after-hours visitors are surprised, and in some cases upset, when asked to sign in.

Write a memo to distribute to the departments in the building. Be sure to:

- inform them of what has been happening;

- describe the consequences for the company; and

- tell them what they can do to avoid this occurring in future.

Follow standard business memo format. You may write a draft on scrap paper and use the Response Sheet provided for the final version.

Sample C
Stage 2
Skill: Writing

As with tasks that test other skill domains, learners at higher levels of proficiency read prompts on their own to determine what to include in lengthier writing samples. The Response Sheet provided for a task such as this would include formatting typical of a workplace memo.

Sample D
Stage 2
Skills: Numeracy, Document Use

Many numeracy tasks in the workplace require some degree of document use as well. This task requires learners to complete a reservation contract by performing a series of calculations. Learners decide which calculations are required in this context.

Star Class HOTELS

GROUP RESERVATION CONTRACT

Date:_____ Customer Service Rep:_____
_____

GROUP CONTACT INFORMATION

Marjorie Melton   Tel: (613) 228-5200, ext 242
Travel Plus Tours   Cell: (613) 226-6254
4206 Dewson Avenue   e-mail: mmelton@travelplus.com
Wentworth, ON K6G 4V7

Description	Rate	Cost
continental breakfast for 56 adults	$6 per person	
26 nights in Star Standard rooms	$97.55 per night	
12 nights in Deluxe Star rooms	$126.15 per night	
SUBTOTAL		
booking discount A132 (-10%)		
service fee, including all applicable taxes (+18%)		
TOTAL		

TERMS/CONDITIONS:
- Changes to reservations can be made up to 45 days prior to arrival at no charge.
- Changes made within 45 days prior to arrival will be subject to a penalty.
- Check-in time is no earlier than 3:00 pm **July 15, 2008**.
- Check-out time is no later than 12:00 pm **July 17, 2008**.

I have read and agree to the terms listed above:

Signature:_____ Date:_____

Ridgeview

POLICY NUMBER: T17-06	
SUBJECT: External Training	
SCOPE: All Full-time Employees	

PURPOSE
This policy sets out the position of Ridgeview Seniors' Residence on external training.

POLICY STATEMENTS
1 Responsibility
1.1 The department manager is responsible for managing staff training.

1.2 Employees should identify potential training opportunities for themselves. Once identified, employees must complete an External Training Authorization form to provide to the department manager for approval.

2 Authorization
2.1 The department manager will authorize the payment of registration fees for staff to attend training in advance. Ridgeview's contribution, at the discretion of the department manager, is:
- 100% if the training is directly related to the Residence's operations
- 50% if the training has limited relevance

2.2 An External Training Authorization form must be approved by the department manager, prior to enrolment.

3 Training Expenses
3.1 For short-term training (seminars, workshops, etc.) Ridgeview will pay the registration fee directly to the training institution upon receipt of the approved External Training Authorization form.

3.2 For long-term training, whether credit or non-credit courses, Ridgeview will reimburse the employee 50% of their registration fee upon receipt of the approved External Training Authorization form. The remaining 50% will be reimbursed once the finance department receives written notification from the department manager that the employee has successfully completed the course.

3.3 Ridgeview may choose to reimburse employees for travel expenses if the training is directly related to the Residence's operations and if the department budget allows.

Sample E
Stage 3
Skill: Reading

At the higher levels, learners read longer texts with more complex vocabulary. In the corresponding Response Book, they answer questions requiring the ability to apply information they have read.

How are CAMERA tests administered?

CAMERA tests are standardized, which means they must be administered according to set procedures. When these procedures are followed, assessors can be confident that test results are a fair and accurate reflection of learners' skills. However, only trained assessors can administer the tests.

Trained assessors receive a User Guide that includes an Administration Reference Sheet for each test. It lists the materials assessors need while administering, the supports available to learners, and the estimated completion time for the assessment. It also provides a script that outlines how the test should be introduced and invigilated. For learners with very limited literacy skills, questions are presented orally by the assessor; learners who are able to read comfortably at the sentence level can record answers independently.

Who can obtain CAMERA training and how?

Assessors who work with learners in the target population can obtain training in order to use the tests in their upgrading programs. Training is offered to interested parties on a cost-recovery basis. For current information about training costs, upcoming training dates and registration information, contact PTP at (416) 510-3266.

What does CAMERA training include?

Assessors attend a two-day, in-person training course. Training includes an introduction to the CAMERA System, review of all test content, opportunities to observe the administration of assessments, and occasions to score learner-generated assessment samples. Throughout the session, trainees are encouraged to present questions and discuss solutions with fellow assessors and trainers. By the end of the training, participants have all the tools necessary to administer and score CAMERA tests.

As part of training, assessors receive:

- the User Guide with administration and scoring procedures
- samples of all test content
- a copy of Signposts (curriculum guidelines)

How are CAMERA tests scored?

Trained assessors are able to score CAMERA tests. Consequently, learners can receive results from their assessors very soon after writing the tests. A comprehensive User Guide is provided to trained assessors. The guide gives detailed scoring notes and exemplars. The User Guide, along with practice opportunities during training, ensures scoring procedures and test results are valid and reliable.
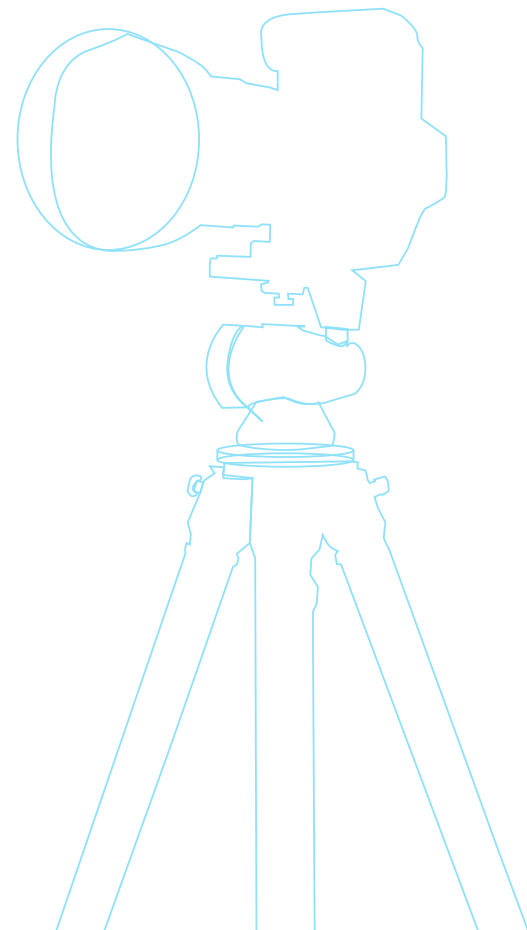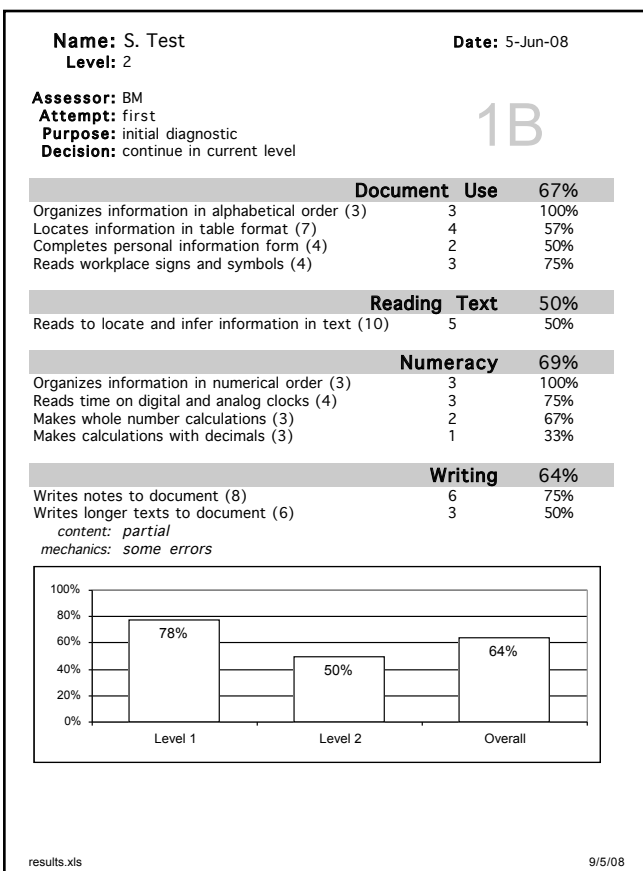
What do CAMERA test results show?

The results on each test are displayed both visually and numerically. Numeric scores are presented in three ways, each intended for a different purpose. First, results show the extent to which the learner is able to demonstrate competency in each of the four skill domains: reading text, document use, numeracy and writing. This diagnostic information can inform programming decisions about which skills learners need to develop. Second, in cases where tests include questions at different levels of complexity, results show the extent to which learners have demonstrated skills at these different levels. Finally, an overall score is provided on each test. Assessors use this score to inform decisions about program placement and promotion readiness.

Results from CAMERA tests may support any one of the following conclusions:

• The learner is proficient at the skill level assessed; or

• The learner is proficient in particular skill areas assessed; or

• The learner is not yet proficient in any of the skill areas assessed

CAMERA is designed to provide information that will help instructors prepare an effective workforce literacy program. At the same time, CAMERA also provides results that can be shared with learners so they can monitor their own progress. The sample summary sheet pictured here is provided to learners during debriefing, shared with instructors and offered to intermediaries as appropriate.

Name: S. Test		**Date:** 5-Jun-08
Level: 2		

Assessor: BM
Attempt: first
Purpose: initial diagnostic
Decision: continue in current level

1B

		Document Use		67%
Organizes information in alphabetical order (3)		3		100%
Locates information in table format (7)		4		57%
Completes personal information form (4)		2		50%
Reads workplace signs and symbols (4)		3		75%

	Reading Text		50%
Reads to locate and infer information in text (10)	5		50%

	Numeracy		69%
Organizes information in numerical order (3)	3		100%
Reads time on digital and analog clocks (4)	3		75%
Makes whole number calculations (3)	2		67%
Makes calculations with decimals (3)	1		33%

	Writing		64%
Writes notes to document (8)	6		75%
Writes longer texts to document (6)	3		50%
content: partial			
mechanics: some errors			

Bar chart:
- Level 1: 78%
- Level 2: 50%
- Overall: 64%

results.xls   9/5/08

How do I get more information?

For additional information about the CAMERA System, contact PTP Adult Learning and Employment Programs by visiting www.ptp.ca or calling (416) 510-3266.

Thinking Skills Checklist

Problem Solving Skills	Sounds like me	Doesn't sound like me
I can identify the cause of problems on the job (1)		
I can choose effective solutions from a list of choices to solve problems quickly on the job (2)		
I can modify existing procedures to solve a new problem that did not exist before on the job (3)		

Decision Making	Sounds like me	Doesn't sound like me
I can use existing work procedures to make decisions on the job. (1)		
I can use the results of past decisions to help me make current decisions on the job (2)		
I consider many factors and feel comfortable making major decisions, with limited outside input on the job. (3)		

Job Task Planning	Sounds like me	Doesn't sound like me
I can receive and complete clear and direct tasks on the job independently. (1)		
I can order and prioritise tasks within the constraints of my job to increase productivity (2)		
I can make long term plans, and then modify them as necessary on the job (3)		

Significant Use of Memory –Memorization through Repetition.	Sounds like me	Doesn't sound like me
I learn and remember procedures, codes and numbers on the job (Type 1)		
I am able to remember new information and use it on the job until a task is completed. (Type 2)		
I can recall solutions to past problems when faced with similar problems on the job. (Type 3)		

Finding Information	Sounds like me	Doesn't sound like me
I can find information in provided material on the job (1)		
I can find information outside of provided material and established sources on the job (2)		
I can find information and analyse and adapt it so it can be applied on the job. (3)		

SKILLS ASSESSMENTS offered through Literacy Link Niagara

If you missed the Skills Assessment Information Session on Sept. 9th, there's still time! Contact Cindy at the Action Centre to find out how to get your skills assessment booked at the Action Centre.

The free skills assessment is designed to help people take inventory of their workforce essential skills.

The assessment will:

- Be only 1.5 hours long

- Help clients see how they can transfer their essential skills into job opportunities in Niagara's emerging industries

- Assess clients for skills gaps they may have to fill, before they transition into a new job

- Produce an individualized step-by-step educational action plan for the client

- Make appropriate referrals to education or training programs if necessary

- Allow clients to practice and become aware of how they are using thinking skills in their work.

SKILLS ASSESSMENT REVIEW…

"*This assessment was very beneficial as it served as market research for job availability over the next five years, which is needed for the Sec-*ond Career application. It proved that the path I have chosen promises job availability upon completion. The level of testing is compatible to the Niagara College testing. It was interesting to get the same results from two different perspectives. I got much more out of it than I expected. I quite enjoyed it."*

To all participants of the NAC:

"I just completed my Skills Assessment interview with Ashley Hoath from Literacy Link Niagara. This was very productive and helpful. I learned my strengths & weaknesses & was given a clear direction on how to reach my goals. Attending the meeting is more than worth the effort. Ashley is professional and very competent in her job. She is willing to listen and to answer any questions you may have. This is a useful service so be sure to make an appointment through the centre as soon as possible. "

Shirley Butler

The NAC Final BBQ of the Summer—a word from *the Coordinator*

Sadly, summer is over, and so are the NAC barbecues for the season.

To those who came out, it was great to see you all!

And to those who helped out, thanks so much for volunteering your time to help make each barbecue such a great success.

If you missed any of our barbecues, you can view our pictures in the Photo Gallery on our website.

Visit our new website for all the NAC news and events.   The new site will list any new Job Opportunities, BBQ pictures, special events and workshops. Visit our web site at …

www.nacnmp.com

See all the new information posted about...

- Job Opportunities
- Job Fairs
- Workshops
- Newsletters
- Success Stories
- Peer Helper Schedules
- Popular Websites
- And the Photo Gallery.

Again, thank you for making this Action