

What is Workplace Literacy?

Workplace literacy is the skills employees need to have in order to be successful at work functions and manage the demands of their jobs in a healthy, productive way. These skills include life skills and employability or soft skills.

Increasing employee skills in the workplace helps provide a foundation for lifelong learning as people and businesses grow together. Improving workers' skills creates a more productive workforce and a more competitive economy.



Workplace Literacy in Canada

- Six in 10 workers will require training before 2027, but only half of workers are seen to have access to adequate training opportunities today. The highest priority for skills training from 2023-2027 is analytical thinking, which is set to account for 10% of training initiatives, on average. The second priority for workforce development is to promote creative thinking, which will be the subject of 8% of upskilling initiatives. (*The Future of Jobs Report – World Economic Forum, 2023*)
- Post-pandemic, Canada has faced persistent labour and skills shortages across most regions, sectors and occupations: 80% of major employers are having trouble finding skilled workers. At the same time, employers play a pivotal role in ensuring the success of upskilling initiatives for their existing workforces. Further, it has been shown that technical-oriented training interventions are most successful when they are paired with non-technical skills training. (*2023 State of Skills: Effective employer engagement in skills development – From rhetoric to solutions – Future Skills Centre, 2023*)
- Skills—for individual workers, as well as the whole labour force—are a core component of human capital. In terms of earnings, the five most valuable skills are troubleshooting, operations monitoring, time management, reading comprehension, and monitoring. Developing and strengthening skills feeds into more valuable human capital, which then parlays into higher earnings. (*Valuing Skills in Canada: A Statistical Approach – The Conference Board of Canada, 2022*)
- Investment in workplace literacy also leads to cost savings from reduced errors and waste. (*UPSKILL Health – Technical Report on worker and business outcomes – Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 2016*)
- According to the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, on average, a one-dollar investment in training returns a benefit to the employer of \$1.38. (*Apprenticeship – Building a Skilled Workforce for a Strong Bottom Line – R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd., Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, 2006*)