

CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS

*A Summary of Courses,
Programs, Occupations and Tests
that have been Benchmarked in
Manitoba*

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Adult Language Training Branch
Manitoba Labour and Immigration
5th Floor - 213 Notre Dame Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 1N3 Canada
Phone: (204) 945-6300
Fax: (204) 948-2148
Email: immigratemanitoba@gov.mb.ca
www.immigratemanitoba.com

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PREFACE

This report is for employers, human resource personnel, employment counselors, post secondary institutions, regulatory bodies and others concerned with the employment opportunities of immigrants in Manitoba.

Current labour market conditions and predictions of shortages in the near future have resulted in looking to immigrants to fill the jobs.

Many skilled immigrants come to Manitoba every year with experience and training in a profession or trade but are unsuccessful in securing employment in their chosen field. While there are many reasons and factors that contribute to this disconnect, it is clear that English language proficiency is a key determinant in an immigrant's ability to attain employment commensurate with his/her competencies.

Knowing the language levels needed to perform a job safely, effectively, and successfully enables non native speakers of English to access employment in the areas that best utilize the skills, knowledge and experience that they bring.

The Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) can be used to address the issue of defining and measuring English language proficiency needs in various professions and trades.

This report summarizes the CLB work done to date in Manitoba that has provided documentation of the language proficiency levels needed to be successful in training courses and on the job. Red River College has been a leader in the field of applying the CLB to occupations and college courses.

Manitoba Labour and Immigration has supported the use of the Canadian Language Benchmarks. In addition to the CLB applications summarised in this report, the CLB has been implemented in all government funded Adult English as a Second Language (ESL) programs in Manitoba.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS

The Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) are a set of national standards for English as a Second Language (ESL). They describe what people can do in English at 12 levels of competency in the four skill areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

They describe communication and performance tasks through which the ESL learner can demonstrate application of language knowledge (competence) and skills (performance). The CLB enable learners, teachers and others to form a picture of general language abilities of individuals.

The CLB scale has three proficiency stages. The stages are parallel in that they have the same structure. The basic, intermediate and advanced stages derive from a combination of three factors:

- progressively more demanding communication tasks;
- progressively more demanding communication contexts; and
- progressively higher expectations and quality of communicative performance.

In each stage there are four benchmarks.

Overview of Canadian Language Benchmark Levels

Stage 1 - Basic Proficiency (Benchmarks 1-4) is the range of abilities required to communicate in common and predictable contexts and within the area of basic needs, common everyday activities, and familiar topics of immediate personal relevance.

Stage 1 - Basic Proficiency	
CLB Level 1	May be able to copy text accurately in order to fill in personal information forms. Can perhaps recognise single vocabulary items or short phrases. May be able to recognise and say the numbers and letters in order to identify themselves. May be able to answer basic questions about personal information. May respond to familiar greetings.
CLB Level 2	
CLB Level 3	Simple structure is mastered at this level. Messages are short and are limited to very basic, daily routine situations. There are frequent errors and often a need for clarification and repetition. Can read and write very short simple texts with recognisable spelling and punctuation. Vocabulary is quite limited.
CLB Level 4	

Stage 2 - Intermediate Proficiency (Benchmarks 5-8) allows a person to participate more fully in a wider variety of contexts. It is the range of abilities required to function independently in most familiar situations of daily social, educational and work-related life experience, and in some less predictable contexts. Someone at Benchmark 8 is considered ready for post secondary training in an English environment.

Stage 2 - Intermediate Proficiency	
CLB Level 5	At this point, the second language learner can handle familiar, everyday situations in the community or at the workplace. They are able to ask for explanations, clarify their meaning, listen to short talks or read about a variety of subjects. Errors in pronunciation, grammar, spelling and punctuation may cause misunderstanding at times.
CLB Level 6	
CLB Level 7	Learners have mastered the more complex grammatical structures and have expanded vocabulary to speak and write on a wide variety of everyday topics. They can identify levels of formality and adjust their language to familiar situations. They can offer opinions and advice properly. They can read texts of up to 10 pages on familiar topics or follow complex instructions. They are beginning to use language for academic purposes.
CLB Level 8	

Stage 3 - Advanced Proficiency (Benchmarks 9-12) is the range of abilities required to communicate effectively, appropriately, accurately and fluently in most contexts, topics and situations, from predictable to unfamiliar, and from general to professionally specific, in the most communicatively demanding contexts. Benchmark 12 captures the highest level of English fluency.

Stage 3 - Advanced Proficiency	
CLB Level 9	Learner is no longer learning to read, write and listen; rather s/he is reading, writing and listening to learn. This is the area identified by Red River College for many of its training programmes. The learner is conscious of how language is used to persuade and influence and can begin to develop an appreciation for literary style and nuance. This is the level of many high school English courses.
CLB Level 10	
CLB Level 11	Learner uses English at a very high level, higher than average mainstream speakers of English. Able to cope with academic, business, social and technical situations. Can negotiate and manage conflictive situations, write proposals, persuasive articles, research papers and abstracts, read and view authentic materials for pleasure. Can evaluate and revise the writing of others
CLB Level 12	

Other Features of the Canadian Language Benchmarks

Communicative competence is defined in the CLB as more than just linguistic competence. Although the linguistic features of vocabulary, pronunciation, etc. are important, communication is viewed in much broader terms to take into account sociocultural competence (tone, level of formality, appropriateness, etc.) as well as discourse and strategic competence (for example, repairing a conversation that has broken down).



The Canadian Language Benchmarks are learner-centred. They stress what a person can do in English, i.e., how successful they are at accomplishing communication tasks. Although the CLB was written to benefit learners, the document is written for the ESL professional (teacher, language assessor, test developer, researcher, materials developer) and uses vocabulary and concepts familiar to Adult ESL teachers.

At Stage 2, the examples of tasks and texts are delineated between community tasks, study or academic tasks and tasks that may be required in the workplace. The CLB competencies are directly observable and measurable performance outcomes.



The CLB document is not a test or a curriculum. It reflects clear underlying principles of language teaching and learning, providing a useful and informative basis for curriculum and syllabus development, lesson planning, materials development, resource selection, student assessment and placement. The CLB does not define ideology, policy, content or process of instruction. Any Adult ESL program type can use the CLB document.

There are also French language benchmarks. For more information contact: www.language.ca

Why the Canadian Language Benchmarks were Developed

Before the introduction of the CLB in 1996, each ESL program in Canada used its own standards for defining language levels. One program might have a number system (levels 1, 2 3, etc.) another a naming system (basic, intermediate, advanced) and still another might have defined levels such as low beginner, upper level, etc. It was difficult, confusing and frustrating for ESL speakers to understand the system. Transferring from one program to another program may have involved additional testing and trial and error placement. ESL speakers had difficulty defining their level of proficiency when applying for jobs or training programs. ESL speakers were often denied jobs because their English was not good enough. It was difficult to be clear about what level of English was needed for the job. ESL speakers knew they needed 'more English' but were left wondering exactly what was required and in what skill areas, speaking?, writing?.

Before the implementation of the CLB, teachers in the Adult ESL field did not have a common language to talk about the proficiency levels of their students.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) embarked on the CLB initiative to remedy the situation. CIC held a series of consultations and formed a national working group made up of ESL experts, learners, administrators and other stakeholders to develop the CLB. At first, the incentive to develop the CLB may have been driven by a need to account for the funding of Adult ESL programs but the impact of the CLB has been tremendous in a number of areas. The adult ESL teaching community has benefited by the introduction of standards. Immigrants themselves can now provide documentation of their language abilities to enable them to move forward in their academic or career goals.

For a complete history and background information on the Canadian Language Benchmarks and the ancillary products and projects, see: www.language.ca

Primary Users of the Canadian Language Benchmarks

English as a Second Language (ESL) learners are the primary beneficiaries of the CLB. They can use the CLB for goal setting and making informed decisions regarding training and employment. By knowing and understanding what level one is currently at and what level one needs to have to access a job or training program, an ESL learner is able to set realistic goals.

With the CLB, ESL speakers are able to describe their abilities and provide documentation of their language abilities to employers and registrars.

Language training programs are able to expedite the training by consistent and reliable placement testing.

ESL teachers and programs use the CLB as a basis for placement, curriculum development, lesson planning, materials development, resource selection, student assessment and reporting.

You can direct questions about services for newcomers to:

MANITOBA DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR AND IMMIGRATION

Immigration and Multiculturalism Division

5th floor - 213 Notre Dame Avenue, Winnipeg MB R3B 1N3

Phone: 945-6300 Fax: 948-2148

Web site: www.immigratemanitoba.com

ASSESSMENTS

Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessments

The CLB has provided the basis for the development of assessment tools. The following tools are generic, i.e., they are used primarily for placement in language training programs.

In Winnipeg, CLB tests are administered at:

The Assessment and Referral Centre, Adult Language Training Branch
5-213 Notre Dame Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 1N3

For an appointment, phone: (204) 945-6300. For more information about CLB testing, call (204) 945-5473.

Results of CLB assessments are considered valid up to 6 months. For CLB Levels 1 – 8, the following assessment tools are available:

CLB Placement Test
CLB Assessment
CLB Literacy Assessment

For higher level Canadian Language Benchmarks (Levels 7-11), CanTEST versions for the CLB can be used.

Post secondary colleges and universities often use standardized tests as a prerequisite for admission. The most common of these tests are the CanTEST and the TOEFL. Both tests have been compared to the Canadian Language Benchmarks.

The Canadian Test of English for Scholars and Trainees (CanTEST)

The Canadian Test of English for Scholars and Trainees (CanTEST), paper-based version, was benchmarked in 1999 by Lucy Epp and Mary Stawychny of Red River College. Additional research was undertaken to further the relationship between the CanTEST and the CLB by the University of Ottawa and completed in January 2001. The University of Ottawa researchers concluded that a dual test system would offer the best way to serve the needs of all Benchmark stakeholders. They proposed a system that would include a test for academic and professional purposes (CanTEST) and another for settlement and vocational purposes (the CLBA), with scores from both tests being referenced to the Canadian Language Benchmarks. Candidates would be directed to one test or the other, depending on the purpose for which they are being tested: placement in ESL classes, vocational training, immigration applications, university admission or professional accreditation.

The following table provides results from the Red River College study:

Canadian Test of English for Scholars and Trainees (CanTEST)		
	CanTEST Scores	Benchmark Levels
Listening	4.0	7/8
	4.5	8/9
	5.0	9/10
Reading	4.0	7/8
	4.5	8/9
	5.0	9/10
Writing	4.0	8
	4.5	9
	5.0	10
Speaking	4.0	7
	4.5	8
	5.0	9

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) was benchmarked in 1999 by Lucy Epp and Mary Stawychny of Red River College.

TOEFL is widely used around the world. It does not include a speaking component. There are paper based as well as computer based versions of the test. Its purpose is to test academic English proficiency as opposed to the everyday language used in the CLB assessment tools.

Generally, results in the range of 550 to 580 (paper-based version) and 213 (computer-based version) are most commonly considered successful for undergraduate admission to college/university studies.

According to the Red River College study, a comparable score to the paper-based 550-580 range is CLB 8/9.

Degrees of Reading Power (DRP)

The Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) test was benchmarked in 2000 by Lucy Epp and Mary Stawychny of Red River College. The DRP is presently used at some colleges to assess reading readiness of ESL students for career programs.

The following table provides results from the Red River College study.

Degrees of Reading Power (DRP)	
DRP Range	Benchmarks Reading Levels
35-53	5
40-60	6
45-68	7
48-84	8

EMPLOYERS AND THE CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS

Employers and regulatory bodies have recognized the potential for CLB to define the communicative competence required by workers in their professions and trades. Benchmarking occupations may reduce artificial barriers and allow easier access for immigrants into the professions/ trades.

The projects summarized in this report are first attempts at creating a broader understanding of the CLB and its applicability in defining the communication levels required in various occupations.

In cooperation with various industries and professional associations, the CLB has been used to assess the level of English required to perform tasks in specific jobs safely, effectively and successfully.

ESL professionals have analyzed the communicative competence required in the specific trades and professions. In general, language specialists shadowed workers at their worksite, taking notes of all work-related communication. Samples were taken

of materials that had to be read or written on the job. Language assessments were conducted with ESL speakers who were successful on the job. The data was then analyzed using the descriptors in the CLB document (1996 edition with three skills: Listening/Speaking, Reading, Writing and 2000 edition with four skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing) and resulted in the determining of the language levels needed to enter the job.

It is hoped that the language levels are seen as only one indicator of success. The CLB was meant to open doors, to allow immigrants to access professions and trades that may have been denied to them due to an unclear expectation of the level of English language proficiency required. Other factors considered when hiring non-native speakers of English that will compensate for lack of ESL skills are:

- the skill level in the trade or profession;
- the ability to learn the English required on the job, either in a formal language class outside of work or on the job; and
- the opportunity to use the first language (mother tongue) on the job.

The trades and professions that have been benchmarked in Manitoba represent only a part of CLB work being done across the country. The Manitoba projects are relatively small and have not been validated nationally.

The researchers of these projects are nationally recognized experts in the Adult ESL field. The methodology is sound. Even though the sample sizes were small, the results are informative.

In some situations, researchers have expressed results as a range of CLB levels (for example 6/7) to indicate that one CLB level was not predominant. The range reflects that the communicative demands observed and analyzed were equally represented by two levels. Researchers have agreed that for practical purposes, readers can defer to the lowest number (for example, if 6/7 were the result for listening, 6 would be acceptable).

See Appendix 1 for a summary of CLB Levels for Occupations. Full reports on the following Manitoba projects are available from Red River College and Manitoba Labour and Immigration.

Occupations that have been Benchmarked

Aircraft Maintenance Engineer

Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
8	8	9	7

- Funding provided by Manitoba Aerospace Human Resources Coordinating Committee.
- Project was completed in April 2001.
- Researchers were Lucy Epp and Chris McInnis, Red River College.
- Observation of aircraft and maintenance personnel at Air Canada and Fast Air in Winnipeg.
- Participants were shadowed at each site.
- Due to safety concerns, assessors were unable to observe two-way radio communication during aircraft engine runs and system checks.

CNC Machinist at Bristol Aerospace

Listening/Speaking	Reading	Writing
6	6	3

- Funding provided by Manitoba Aerospace Human Resources Coordinating Committee and the Adult Language Training Branch.
- Project completed in June 1997 by Grace Eidse and Margaret Pidlaski.
- Once benchmark levels of Listening/Speaking, Reading, Writing had been determined by analyzing tasks observed, an immigrant machinist who was successfully doing the job was assessed to verify results.

Early Childhood Educator Level II

Listening/Speaking	Reading	Writing
5/6	5/6	5/6/7

- The Manitoba Prior Learning Assessment Centre in partnership with and with funding from Manitoba Family Services and Housing and Red River College initiated the study.
- Project was completed in January 2000.
- Researchers were Judith Hayes, Judy Johnson and Lisa Petit of the Adult Language Training Branch.
- Four day care centres (small, medium and large facilities) in Winnipeg participated in the project.
- Interviews were conducted with supervisors and ECE II staff. ECE II staff were observed on the job. Reading and Writing materials were collected. A focus group of ECE II workers was also conducted.

Midwife

Listening/Speaking	Reading	Writing
9-11	9-12	9-11

- Project dates: August - December 1998, 1999.
- Project was completed by Lisa Petit of the Adult Language Training Branch.
- The results of CLB assessment were for a dual purpose: to establish base lines of competency for admission to upgrading and to lay the groundwork for the development of a customized curriculum.
- Information was gathered from course textbooks and binders, instructors' handouts and related internet sources as well as interviews and a focus group with practising midwives, both independent and nurse midwives in hospitals.
- An approximate level of CLB 7 was recommended for entry into the English for Specific Purposes program.
- The CLB level at completion of the Midwife upgrading program was determined to be CLB 9,10.

Motor Vehicle Mechanic

Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
6	6	7	5/6

- Project was completed in May 2002.
- Researchers were Lucy Epp and Chris McInnis, Red River College.
- Mechanics were observed in dealerships as well as non-specialized garages. The facilities varied in size (from 4-16 bays) and location (urban and rural).
- Language skills task checklists found in *Language at Work, A Job Analysis Guide* (Bow Valley College, 1998) were completed for each of the sites

Occupational Therapist

Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
9	8/9	8/9	8

- This project was completed with the cooperation of the Association of Occupational Therapists of Manitoba who provided direction for the project and arranged for observation sites.
- The project was completed in June 2002 by Lucy Epp and Chris McInnis, Red River College.
- Occupational therapists were observed. Interviews were carried out with supervisors as well occupational therapists, some of whom spoke English as a second language.
- The CanTEST was administered to second language Occupational Therapists working in the profession.

Pharmacist

Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
8/9	8/9	9/10	7/8

- This project was completed in July 2003 by researchers from the Adult Language Training Branch (Joanne Pettis) and Red River College (Paz Bowman), in cooperation with the Manitoba Pharmaceutical Association and employers.
- Interviews were carried out with practising pharmacists, four of whom were English as a second language speakers. An interview was conducted with one supervisor. Pharmacists were observed on the job and language tasks noted.

Sheet Metal Mechanic at Ancast Industries

Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
not assessed	not assessed	4-8	not assessed

- Project was completed in May 1997 by Lynn Campbell of the Adult Language Training Branch and Millie Kroeker.
- The goal of this project was to identify training program barriers and make recommendations to allow ESL employees greater success in the training programs.
- Second language Hunter machine operators at Ancast Industries were observed. Their language levels were assessed with Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment. The workers English proficiency varied significantly and ranged from 5-8 in speaking and listening, 2-6 in reading and 3-8 in writing.
- The materials used for the training module for Hunter machine operators were benchmarked for their reading levels.

Sheet Metal Mechanic at Bristol Aerospace

Listening/Speaking	Reading	Writing
6	6	3

- Funding provided by Manitoba Aerospace Human Resources Coordinating Committee and the Adult Language Training Branch.
- Project completed in June 1997 by Grace Eidse and Margaret Pidlaski.
- Sheet metal mechanics from different departments at Bristol Aerospace, Winnipeg were observed and supervisors were interviewed.
- Once benchmark levels of Listening/Speaking, Reading, Writing had been determined, an immigrant sheet metal mechanic was given the Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment (CLBA). Assessment results confirmed that the CLB level of second language workers successful in their jobs was comparable to the levels arrived at in the observations and analysis.

The Nursing Profession and the Canadian Language Benchmarks

The Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks has embarked on a multi-phased project to benchmark the nursing profession and develop a specialized English language proficiency assessment tool for internationally educated nurses. The process involves the following four steps:

1. A feasibility study (completed in 2001)
2. Phase I: *An Analysis of the Language Demands of the Nursing Profession Across Canada* (completed in 2002)
3. Phase II: *The Development of a Nursing-Specific Language Assessment Tool (CELBAN)* (completed in 2003)
4. Phase III: Implementation of the *CELBAN*

The outcome from Phase I: *An Analysis of the Language Demands of the Nursing Profession Across Canada* was the establishment of the following Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) levels necessary for entry into the nursing profession in Canada:

CLB Levels			
Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
9	8	8	7

In Phase II: *The Development of a Nursing-Specific Language Assessment Tool (CELBAN)* an assessment tool was developed with content that reflects the language demands of the nursing profession in Canada. The *CELBAN* measures the English language proficiency of nurses in four separate areas: Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing. The desired outcome for candidates is to achieve scores that reflect the required levels for entry into the nursing profession in Canada. The *CELBAN* was pilot tested with internationally educated nurses and nursing students at six locations across Canada. Statistics were analyzed and feedback was considered carefully to ensure the reliability and validity of the test. The process of test development was comprehensive, rigorous, and inclusive, utilizing extremely valuable assistance and feedback from an excellent test development team, and a wide range of stakeholders. The result is a thorough assessment of the English proficiency of the candidates in Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing articulated in terms of Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) levels. Not only do candidates receive their scores in the four skill areas, they also receive written feedback from the assessors regarding their strengths and weaknesses in the productive skills, speaking and writing.

With Phase II now completed, the test development team recommends that the CCLB proceed with Phase III: Implementation of *the CELBAN across Canada*. Further information about the nursing project can be obtained at www.language.ca

TRAINING PROGRAMS AND THE CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS

Some post-secondary institutions use the CLB to determine what language levels are required for success in skills programs. The results serve as a basis for discussion as ESL speakers register for programs. Opportunities are not denied to people, but the identified levels enable students to make informed decisions about the challenges that may be encountered in the course if they do not have the determined language level upon entering. Individuals entering the skills program without the recommended CLB levels may have compensatory attributes to ensure success. Motivation, access to ESL learning opportunities and content background knowledge and experience may enable ESL speakers to succeed even if their CLB levels are lower than recommended.

With funding from Manitoba Labour and Immigration, Red River College has benchmarked college courses and programs to assess the levels required for ESL learners to be successful in those courses and programs. With appropriate entry levels defined, ESL students can have further confidence in successful completion of the course.

The methodology used to benchmark college programs involves gathering data by examining instructional and textual materials, observing lectures and labs and interviewing department chairs, support staff, instructors and students. The information collected is then analyzed and referenced to the levels described in the Canadian Language Benchmarks document.

To validate the benchmark results, Red River College is currently tracking Adult ESL learners who have taken the courses. Full reports of the benchmarking of these courses and programs are available from Red River College Language Training Centre, Audrey Bonham, Abonham@rrc.mb.ca, (204) 945-6151 or Manitoba Labour and Immigration, (204) 945 2434.

**Summary of CLB Levels for Training Courses and Programs Offered at
Red River College**

Course or Program	CLB Levels				Date
	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	
Aerospace Related Courses					
• Dimensional Metrology	9		10	9	Mar-98
• Metallurgy and Heat Treatment	9		10	9	Mar-98
• Geometrical Dimensioning	9		10	9	Mar-98
• Manufacturing Practices	9		10	9	Mar-98
Aircraft Maintenance Engineer					
• Canadian Aviation Regulations	8/9		9/10	6/7	Apr-01
• Basic Electricity	8		9/10	6	Apr-01
Automotive Technician	8/9		8/9	7/8	Mar-00
Business Administration Program	8/9		9/10	8/9	Mar-98
Civil Technology	8	8/9	9	7/8	Oct-00
Computer Accounting Technician	8/9		9/10	8	Apr-98
Computer Aided Drafting Technician	8/9		9	7/8	Mar-98
Computer Analyst/Programmer	8/9		8	7/8	Jun-00
Culinary Arts	8/9		8/9	7/8	May-99
Developmental Service Worker	8	8/9	8/9	8	Oct-00
Early Childhood Education	8	8/9	8/9	8	Oct-01
Electrical (Certificate)	8		9	7/8	Jan-00
Electrical Engineering Technology	7	8	8/9	7	June-01
Gas Turbine Engine	7/8	8	8/9	7/8	Dec-01
Health Care Aide	7/8		7/8	6/7	Jun-00
Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanic	8/9		8/9	7/8	Mar-00
Hotel / Restaurant Administration	9		9/10	8/9	Mar-98
International Business	8	8	8/9	8	Jun-02
Manufacturing Technician	8/9		7/8	8	Mar-98
Nursing	9		9/10	9	May-99
Nursing Refresher	8/9	8/9	9	7/8	Oct-00
Piping Trades	8		9	7/8	Jan-00
Professional Truck Driver Training	7		7	6	Oct-99
Sterile Processing Technician	7	7/8	7/8	6/7	Jun-02
Welding	8		8	7	May-99
Wood Processing Technology	8/9		8	7/8	May-99

The Language Training Centre at Red River College offers a number of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses to prepare students for further training or employment in their chosen field. For example, English for Technical Purposes, English for Business Purposes, English for Professional Purposes, English for Nursing Purposes, English for Nursing Refresher, English for Health Care Aides and Canadian Communication for Physicians Trained Abroad have been developed for ESL students.

Training Programs that are Using the CLB for Entrance Requirements

Appropriate CLB levels have been identified for the following training programs. There is coordination between the Assessment and Referral Centre of the Adult Language Training Branch and the programs.

Immigrants interested in participating in these programs can have their language assessed using the Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment tools at:

The Assessment and Referral Centre, Adult Language Training Branch
5-213 Notre Dame Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 1N3

For an appointment, phone: (204) 945-6300. For more information about CLB testing, call (204) 945-5473.

Adult ESL schools also provide CLB results to students at the end of the school term.

Course	CLB Levels			
	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Reimer Express Driver Training Institute Inc.	6	6	6	6
Taxicab Board Training Program	5	5	5	3
Health Care Aide Course at Red River College	7	7	7	6
Health Care Aide Course at Herzing	6	6	6	5
Health Care Aide Course at Robertson International	6	6	6	5
English for Health Care Aide at Robertson International	4 or 5	4 or 5	4 or 5	4
Health Care Aide Course at R.B. Russell	6	6	6	6
Health Care Aide Course at St. Boniface Technical College (either of these sets)	5	5	5	5
	6	6	6	4

REGULATORY BODIES THAT ARE USING THE CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS

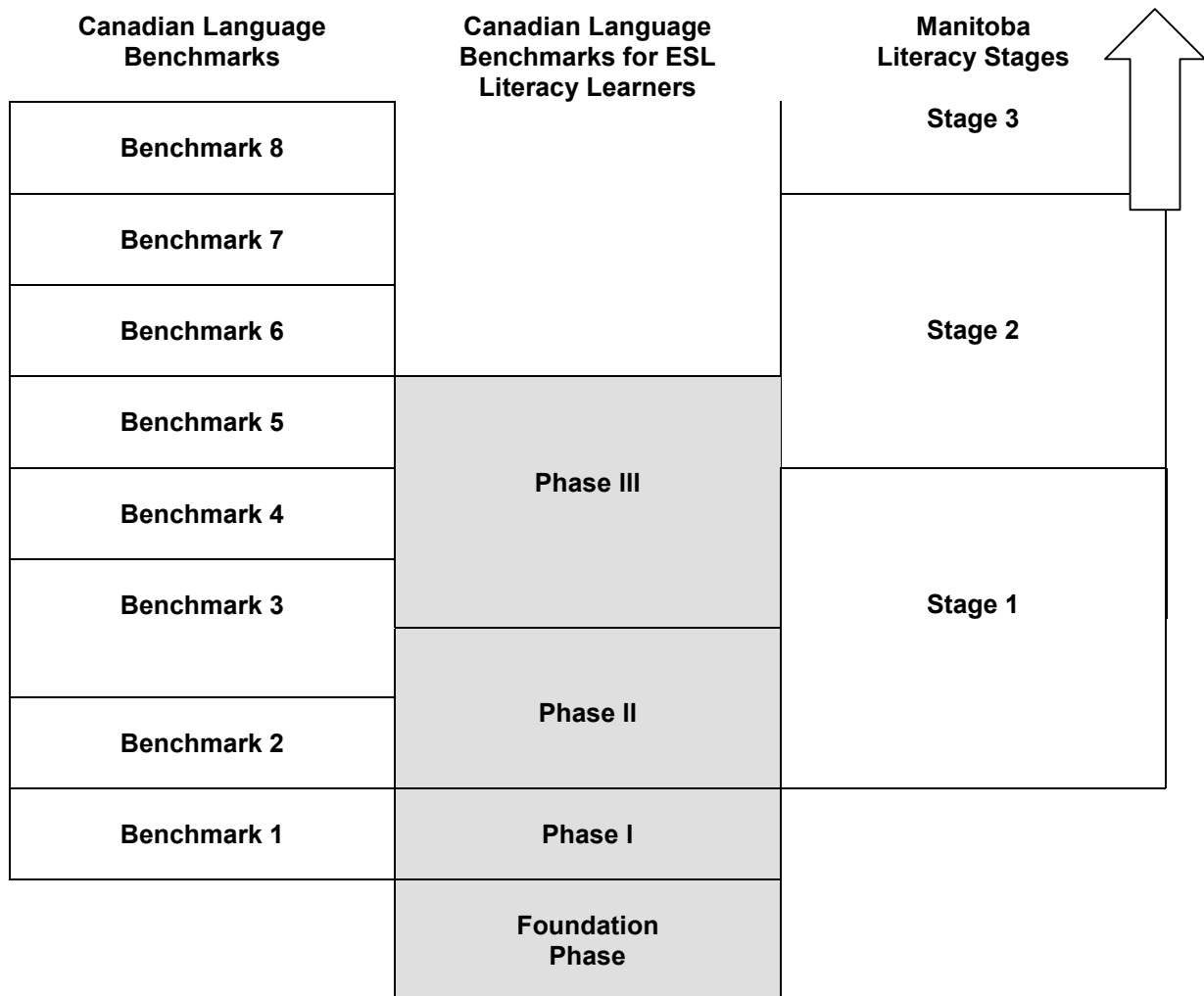
The **College of Licensed Practical Nurses** has recognized the CLB. The College recommends that internationally trained nurses are at benchmark 8 before writing the certification exams but they allow individuals at Benchmark 7 to work as a Licensed Practical Nurse graduate (under direct supervision) while upgrading their language level and preparing for the exam.

The **Residential Care Licensing Office** has adopted the CLB as a measure of language readiness to work in the field. The following table identifies the requirements of the licensing office for employment as a residential care worker.

	CLB Levels			
	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Residential Care (either of these sets)	6	6	6	6
	5	5	6	7

THE MANITOBA LITERACY STAGES AND THE CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS

The following diagram illustrates the correlation between the CLB, the CLB for ESL Literacy Learners* and the Manitoba Literacy Stages**. This comparison was developed with practitioners at several workshops in the winter of 2003 and is considered an initial draft.



*Canadian Language Benchmarks, ESL for Literacy Learners lays out the progression of reading, writing and numeracy skills for ESL adults who have little or no literacy skills in their first language.

** Manitoba Advanced Education and Training, Adult Learning and Literacy offers a Certificate in Literacy and Learning at three different stages. Information about the Record of Achievements Manuals for each stage can be obtained from literacy@gov.mb

THE ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND THE CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS

Essential Skills is a tool developed by Human Resource Development Canada (HRDC) and is used by individuals exploring employment opportunities. It is used to identify occupational examples of skills; their frequency of use, and their levels of complexity. The 9 Essential Skills are:

- Reading Text
- Document Use
- Working with Others
- Numeracy (Math)
- Thinking Skills
- Oral Communication
- Writing
- Computer Use
- Continuous Learning

A Comparison of Canadian Language Benchmarks and HRDC's Essential Skills was written by Shelley Bates in December 2001 for the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB). In the upcoming year, the CCLB will be conducting further analysis of the two sets of standards and how they complement one another.

In Bates' report, she states that the CLB is a descriptive scale that focuses on what an individual can do, i.e., communicative proficiency in each skill area for work, school and community. The intent of Essential Skills is to identify the frequency and complexity of a skill's use in an occupation. When comparing the tools, the simplest examples of an Essential Writing Skill (the phone message for example) do not appear until Benchmark 5. In part, this occurs because Benchmarks 1 through 4 focus primarily on non-business environments and skills required for basic everyday activities in a social or home environment. However, the descriptors do suggest that an individual for whom English is a Second Language would, by CLB standards, have difficulty completing the simplest Essential Writing Skills until he or she had achieved at least a CLB level 5 in writing.

Both standards describe complexity as increasing along similar continuums and both describe this process with similar language.

Both tools provide opportunities for discussion of communication as it is used in the workplace. Because of its purpose as an employment-skills resource, Essential Skills provides many more examples than Benchmarks does. Both resources provide users with opportunities to explore real world examples of communication in the work place.

For more information on the Essential Skills, see: <http://www15.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/english/general/es.asp>

CONCLUSIONS

This report summarizes the Manitoba CLB projects undertaken to assist immigrants, employers, program developers and others to understand the language proficiency levels needed for success in some occupations and training programs.

The CLB is **not** meant to be an additional barrier for immigrants trying to access the Manitoba labour market. It can be an indicator of readiness and success in an immigrant's career path.

By matching the real communication needs of a job to the entrance requirements to get into the job, transparent and fair employment opportunities will be created for immigrant workers.

If paper based testing is used as a requirement to get a license or a job, as opposed to demonstration or other forms of competency assessments, the language levels of the tests should be consistent with the language levels required to work effectively, safely and successfully. The CLB can be used to reduce language barriers in tests to allow competent ESL professionals and tradespeople to be successful.

As the following example illustrates, the language proficiency levels of the job may be different from the language levels needed to be successful in a training program in Manitoba.

	CLB Level			
	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
<u>Course</u> Automotive Technician at Red River College	8/9		8/9	7/8
<u>Occupation</u> Motor Vehicle Mechanic	6	6	7	5/6

It appears from this research that the language level needed to be successful in the automotive technician course is much higher than the level needed to work successfully in the field. The discrepancies between the language levels can be explained by the necessity for students to read, write and explain the theoretical and technical aspects of the occupation using English academic terms and conventions.

Internationally trained professionals and tradespeople have met the theory and academic requirements of the training programs offered in their country of origin in their first language. It is unfair, time consuming and frustrating to expect internationally trained individuals (who have the competencies required to do the job) to have the additional burden of improving their English language levels to the point that is consistent with their first language in order to work in Manitoba if that level of proficiency is not required in the job.

On the other hand, some immigrants arrive in Manitoba with gaps in their skills and training that need to be filled in order for them to be safe and effective on the job here, for example, knowledge of Manitoba codes and systems. Training programs that are developed to fill the gaps in competencies can use the CLB to develop the training at a language level consistent with the language level needed on the job.

The CLB was introduced to define language proficiency in a consistent manner across Canada. There is potential for the CLB to become an important link between the various systems that create opportunities for immigrant workers. The CLB can be useful in unlocking the earning potential of immigrants and integrating internationally trained professionals and tradespeople into the economic mainstream of our province.

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF CLB LEVELS FOR OCCUPATIONS

Occupation	Canadian Language Benchmark Levels			
	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Aircraft Maintenance Engineer	8	8	9	7
CNC Machinist at Bristol Aerospace	6		6	3
Early Childhood Educator Level II	5/6		5/6	5 to 7
Midwife	9 to 11		9 to 12	9 to 11
Motor Vehicle Mechanic	6	6	7	5/6
Occupational Therapist	9	8,9	8,9	8
Pharmacist	8/9	8/9	9/10	7/8
Sheet Metal Mechanic at Ancast Industries	not assessed		4 to 8	not assessed
Sheet Metal Mechanic at Bristol Aerospace	6		6	3

**Adult Language Training Branch
Manitoba Labour and Immigration**
5th Floor - 213 Notre Dame Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 1N3 Canada
Phone: (204) 945-6300
Fax: (204) 948-2148
Email: immigratemanitoba@gov.mb.ca
www.immigratemanitoba.com