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INTRODUCTION

What is the purpose of the BRIGANCE® Diagnostic Employability Skills Inventory?

The *Employability Skills Inventory* contains an extensive selection of criterion-referenced assessments that provide opportunities to evaluate reading, writing, speaking, listening, comprehending and computing skills needed when seeking employment. The *Inventory* also serves as a curriculum guide, providing teaching sequences for pre-employment and employability skills.

Who might take assessments from the Employability Skills Inventory?

The *Inventory* is appropriate for use in a variety of programs in which a major focus or requirement is assessing job-seeking and employability skills: adult basic education, English as a second language, secondary special education, vocational education, programs using curriculum-based instruction, and programs specialising in job training and placement.

Why do you need the Inventory?

There are many tests available that give norm-referenced scores to compare individuals' knowledge with that of other individuals. Although this is necessary information, it is only one part of a learner profile. In order to meet instructional needs for individuals, you must know precisely what each learner already knows, as well as what he or she still needs to learn.

The *Inventory* gives specific feedback on curriculum needs, allowing instructors and learners to plan, monitor and assess individual learning growth.

When and how do you use the Inventory?

The assessments in the *Inventory* can be used whenever and as often as an instructor deems necessary or a program requires. Instructors in different programs—in coordination with learners' needs—can choose which areas to assess, when to assess, how much to assess, and which assessment format to use. Assessment results can then be used for curriculum planning and teaching.

Who can give the assessments in the Inventory?

Instructors and tutors will find the assessments easy to administer, with no special training necessary and no additional materials required. Testing should be done under the supervision of a professional.

How are results recorded and tracked?

An individual record-keeping system—the *Learner Record Book*—enables progress to be recorded on an ongoing basis. The record-keeping system includes a simple management format that allows easy tracking of assessment dates and results. This record of progress is then readily available to communicate to learners, instructors and others who may need the information.

Are other Inventories available?

This *Inventory* is one of a series in the BRIGANCE® System. Some other *Inventories* included in the BRIGANCE System and the population served by each *Inventory* are as follows:

- a. The *Life Skills Inventory* may be used as a companion piece to this *Inventory*. It was designed for use with secondary school and adult populations if a major focus or requirement is the assessment of functional life skills in the context of everyday situations.
- b. The *Inventory of Essential Skills* is for use with secondary school and adult learners mainly to assess basic academic skills along with a variety of applied skills.
- c. The *Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills* is for use with most English-speaking students from prep to Year 8.

HOW DOES THE INVENTORY MEET YOUR NEEDS?

Comprehensiveness

The *Employability Skills Inventory* is comprehensive. It includes assessments of the skills required when seeking a job and/or for retaining employment. Assessments in the various sections range in difficulty level from Year 3 to Year 12. Many assessments provide the opportunity to respond either orally or in writing.

Adaptability

The assessments in the *Inventory* can be adapted to meet the needs of your program. As the assessor, you are in control of the testing situation. You determine what assessments to give, how many to give, and when to give them. You can even add questions that are relevant to your particular program or geographic location.

Time Requirements

You can spend as little or as much time assessing as you deem appropriate for each learner. Individual assessments take from 10 to 20 minutes each to complete, depending upon the learner. Because you choose which assessments to give to yield the information you need, you control the total time spent assessing. Certain assessment areas also provide the option for group-administered tests, decreasing the amount of time needed to obtain results for several individual learners.

Material Requirements

The *Inventory* requires no special materials. The *Inventory* itself, copies of learner pages, a *Learner Record Book* and pencils or pens are all you need to test and record information.

Easy-to-Follow Format

The *Inventory* uses an easy-to-follow assessment format that provides the tester with complete information at a glance. The instructor page contains specific directions for administering the test, a copy of the learner test page, background testing notes, instructor verbalisations for directing the test, and teaching objectives. For individual testing, the test pages are opposite the instructor pages so that instructor and learner can face each other, if desired, during the assessment.

Range of Testers

While testing under the supervision of a professional is recommended, administering assessments in the *Inventory* does not require any special training. This means that tutors and aides can give the tests and record the results, freeing instructors to instruct and manage.

Criterion-Referenced Versus Norm-Referenced

Norm-referenced tests are standardised tests that measure the learner's score against those of other learners who have taken the same test. A norm-referenced score is important in order to determine how well or how poorly the learner compares to peers. This information allows an instructor to know which learners need the most help. The score can also help an instructor observe individual growth when post-testing after instruction. The drawback is that the test gives a numerical score, not specific information about what the learner actually learned and still needs to learn.

Criterion-referenced tests measure the learner's knowledge. The *Inventory* provides criterion-referenced assessments. This kind of test tells precisely what the learner has mastered and what still needs to be learned. The criterion-referenced test is designed to help determine the curriculum needs of the individual. Post-testing will indicate more than just growth; it will show what the learner has learned and what remains to be mastered. Then teaching can start with the assurance that no time will be wasted presenting what the learner already knows. The learner also can participate in the learning process by helping to set learning goals and by observing the progress made.

Both types of tests are necessary in a successful educational program. Many programs mandate a norm-referenced, or standardised, test. This does not eliminate the need for criterion-referenced testing; rather it accentuates the need for more specific information about the learner that can be provided most efficiently by a criterion-referenced instrument such as the *Inventory*.

While the criterion-referenced assessments in the *Inventory* do not provide "scores", instructors in programs can develop their own scoring based on the expectations in their particular programs.

Management System

The *Inventory* has a built-in management system that can be used over time to track test results, to record goals for learning, and to provide information for conferences with other instructors, with the learner, or with the learner's family if appropriate. The *Learner Record Book* is used to record results of repeated testing. This makes it an economical piece of a learner's ongoing file.

Rating Scales

Rating scales in Section D provide the opportunity for evaluating items that are too subjective to be assessed, such as attitude or aptitude. These scales can be completed by the instructor and/or the learner to provide a full range of information that is useful in the learning situation.