



## **Essential Skills Needed For Rapidly Changing Occupations**

Do you know that over 40% of Canadian workers do not have the essential skills required for basic entry-level jobs? Essential Skills include the fundamental skills of reading, writing, math training as well as training in communicating effectively with people at work, using documents and using computers. Essential Skills help people perform the tasks that are required by their jobs and other activities in their daily lives. They are not technical skills or job specific task skills. Essential Skills are the velcro that all skills stick to.

Ahms Tah Ow School staff and VanAsep (Vancouver Aboriginal Skills Employment Program) Training Advisor Walter Paul have become more familiar with Essential Skills concepts through recent professional development activities at Ahms Tah Ow School.

VanAsep training advisors, Jennifer Charlie and Bob Whitaker offered Essential Skills and TOWES (Test of Workplace Essential Skills) training to community members on September 25<sup>th</sup> at Ahms Tah Ow School.

At Ahms Tah Ow School we realize the potential of providing TOWES assessments along with Essential Skills training as a means of helping our students gain access to meaningful training and educational opportunities in our community and throughout our province. We view the TOWES as an important tool in identifying basic strengths and weaknesses in our students.

Research indicates that students who participate in Essential Skills training show improvements in self-confidence, increased motivation and improved job prospects. We are currently in the process of fine tuning our model for using Essential Skills training for educational programming and work force development. When we look at training in the context of the knowledge-based economy, it is important that our students continue to upgrade their skills so that they can keep up with rapidly changing occupations. It is important for our students to understand that they will have to continue to develop their skills to keep their jobs and progress in the workplace.

For more information on TOWES assessments and Essential Skills please contact Walter Paul at 604 483-1731 or Gerry Brach at 604 414-4675.