

# Essential Skills - At Work in the North

## What are essential skills?

Skills people use at work, for fun, and in their daily lives. Essential skills help people live a full life, grow, and adapt to change.

### There are nine essential skills.

- ✓ **Reading:** Read books, pamphlets, information sheets, newspapers, magazines, and other documents.
- ✓ **Document Use:** Understand and use documents that have text, graphs, symbols, numbers, and colours.
- ✓ **Writing:** Fill out forms or a cheque. People can write things like a letter, a list, a recipe, a story, or an email.
- ✓ **Numeracy:** Use and understand numbers and money. People can measure weight, volume, and size.
- ✓ **Oral Communication:** Talk to others to give or get information or directions, and to share stories.
- ✓ **Thinking:** Solve problems, make decisions, plan and organize tasks, use memory, and find information.
- ✓ **Working with Others:** Cooperate with other people to carry out tasks and work as part of a team.
- ✓ **Computer Use:** Use computers and software, and get information from the Internet.
- ✓ **Continuous Learning:** Learn and use new knowledge and skills throughout life. People look for new challenges and experiences. They share their skills and knowledge with others.



Trapper



Community Health Representative



Heavy Equipment Operator



Underground Mine Worker



Early Childhood Educator



Environmental Monitor

Meet Gladys Edwards

Community Health Representative

Gladys works for the Beaufort Delta Regional Health Authority.

She promotes healthy lifestyles in her community. She educates people about things like diabetes, safety on the land, or elders' safety.



4 examples of essential skills Gladys uses at work:

- ✓ **Oral Communication:** Gladys talks on the radio, does school presentations, and interprets for elders at the local health centre.
- ✓ **Working with Others:** Gladys works with community people and groups, and other CHRs and health professionals.
- ✓ **Computer Use:** Gladys sends emails, does research about health issues, and produces public education materials and a newsletter.
- ✓ **Continuous Learning:** Gladys learns new computer software to write the newsletter and gets her certificate as a dental therapist.

Gladys also uses the 5 other essential skills.

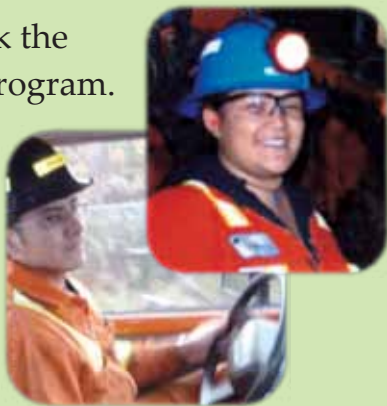
Training and skills are helpful on the journey to being a Community Health Representative

- ☒ Community Health Representative, 6-month program with Aurora College. Applicants: 18 years, grade 10 English or equivalent. Pass the program - get a Certificate.
- ☒ Having community trust, wisdom, and maturity.  
☒ Knowing some of the 9 essential skills.

Meet Calinda Football and Ryan Lafferty

Underground Mine Workers

Calinda and Ryan took the underground miner program. They learned about mining theory and how to operate mining equipment. They now work at a northern mine.



4 examples of essential skills Calinda and Ryan use at work:

- ✓ **Reading:** Calinda and Ryan study mine safety, mining methods, geology, and the mining life cycle.
- ✓ **Oral Communication:** Calinda and Ryan participate in safety meetings; discuss concerns and solve problems with co-workers.
- ✓ **Writing:** Calinda and Ryan take notes on site safety and write emails to their families when they're at the mine site.
- ✓ **Continuous Learning:** Calinda and Ryan update mine rescue knowledge, and renew certificates like first aid and CPR.

Calinda and Ryan also use the 5 other essential skills.

Training and skills are helpful on the journey to being an Underground Mine Worker

- ☒ Underground Miner Training, 14-week program with Aurora College. Applicants: 18 years, may be tested depending on education level. Pass the program – get a Record of Achievement.
- ☒ Being physically fit; willing to work with noise and in enclosed spaces.  
☒ Knowing some of the 9 essential skills.

Meet Twyla

Heavy Equipment Operator

Twyla learned to drive large machines like a loader and a big truck. She thought about the pipeline going through and wanted to get a good job. It's not only a man's world out there.



4 examples of essential skills Twyla uses at work:

- ✓ **Reading:** Twyla studies equipment manuals, safety information, regulations, and work orders.
- ✓ **Document Use:** Twyla works with WHMIS (workplace hazardous materials info system) labels; she uses equipment inspection forms.
- ✓ **Numeracy:** Twyla reads and understands oil, temperature, and pressure gauges; she fills out her time card for the hours she works.
- ✓ **Continuous Learning:** Twyla learns new technology for computer controlled equipment and updates her licence.

Twyla also uses the 5 other essential skills.

Training and skills are helpful on the journey to being a Heavy Equipment Operator

- ☒ Heavy Equipment Operator, 5-month program with Aurora College. Applicants: 18 years, grade 9 or 130 English, class 5 driver's licence, driver's abstract, medical certificates. Pass the program – get a Record of Achievement.
- ☒ Willing to work with noise, in a small space, sitting for long periods of time.  
☒ Knowing some of the 9 essential skills.



### Meet Mary Ann Vital

#### Early Childhood Educator

Mary Ann is the coordinator at the Deline preschool. She and three other staff work with 11 three- and four-year-old children. Each month the program has a new theme. They do reading, numbers, colours, and other activities in English and Slavey.



#### 4 examples of essential skills Mary Ann uses at work:

- ✓ **Reading:** Mary Ann reads stories to children, notes from parents, and info from other staff.
- ✓ **Oral Communication:** Mary Ann listens and talks to parents, and other staff; she teaches and speaks Slavey with the children.
- ✓ **Numeracy:** Mary Ann teaches time and numbers, measures things for cooking, and calculates the cost of materials.
- ✓ **Continuous Learning:** Mary Ann does family literacy training, and computer research to develop new programs.

Mary Ann also uses the 5 other essential skills.

#### Training and skills are helpful on the journey to being an Early Childhood Educator

- ✓ Early Childhood Development, 13 courses with Aurora College. Applicants: 18 years, ABE English 140 and Math 130 or equivalent. Pass the program – get a Certificate.
- ✓ Love being with children, helping them grow and learn.
- ✓ Knowing some of the 9 essential skills.

### Meet Environmental Monitoring Students

Students learn in the field and the classroom. They may do a bird



survey, measure water quality, or investigate a fuel spill.

#### 4 examples of essential skills students use at work:

- ✓ **Reading:** Students read land use permits, field guides, and drinking water guidelines.
- ✓ **Working with Others:** Students work as part of a team, especially in the field.
- ✓ **Writing:** Students learn to take good field notes and write good reports; they record numbers and coordinates from GPS work.
- ✓ **Continuous Learning:** Students learn from elders and keep up with changes in the environment; they may consider upgrading to the environmental technology program.

The students also use the 5 other essential skills.

#### Training and skills are helpful on the journey to being an Environmental Monitor

- ✓ Environmental Monitor, 5-week program with Aurora College. Applicants: grade 8 math and English or equivalent. Pass the program – get a Record of Achievement.
- ✓ Respecting the land and animals, spending time outside at any time of year, teamwork.
- ✓ Knowing some of the 9 essential skills.

### Meet some Trappers at a Workshop

About 700 NWT residents trap for a living; they harvest and market wild furs.

In 2008 trappers sold \$1.3 million worth of furs. Trappers use many of the same skills as in the past, and some new ones too.



#### 4 examples of essential skills trappers use at work:

- ✓ **Reading:** Trappers read trapping regulations, newsletters, market info, and humane trapping guidelines.
- ✓ **Numeracy:** Trappers measure different sizes of drying boards; they calculate the value of furs.
- ✓ **Computer Use:** Trappers research market updates and learn about government programs and resources.
- ✓ **Continuous Learning:** Trappers attend a pelt handling workshop; they join the ‘Take a Kid Trapping’ program.

Trappers also use the 5 other essential skills.

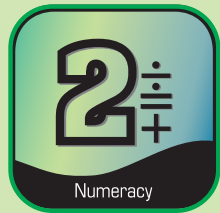
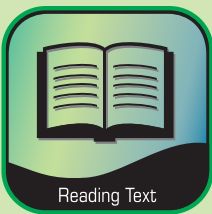
#### Training and skills are helpful on the journey to being a trapper.

- ✓ Learning from another trapper: how to set and care for traps; how to handle pelts; how to market furs.
- ✓ Using the Trapper Education Manual and Genuine Mackenzie Valley Furs (GMVF) programs.
- ✓ Knowing and respecting the land and animals.
- ✓ Knowing some of the 9 essential skills.

# What Essential Skills do you find most interesting?

## I am a person who likes to ...

- ☐ Read books, magazines, reports, or newspapers.



- ☐ Work with numbers: money, measuring, calculating.

- ☐ Talk and listen to others, tell stories, make a presentation, teach a class.



- ☐ Use the Internet for Facebook and YouTube, and learn about different computer software.

## I am a person who likes to ...

- ☐ Follow a map, fill out a form, and use charts and symbols.



- ☐ Write letters, emails, reports, or stories.

- ☐ Solve problems, plan things, make decisions.



- ☐ Do things with other people, be part of a team.

- ☐ Learn new things, share what I know with others.



*How can you best apply your current skills?*  
*What skills do you want to improve or develop?*

## Contacts – More Information

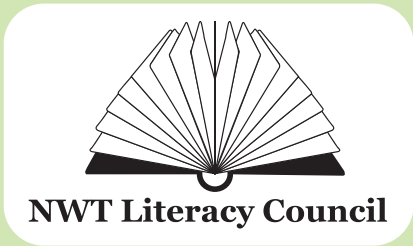
### Apprenticeship and Career Development

Contact regional government offices:

- ☒ Beaufort Delta: 867.777.7365, Inuvik.
- ☒ Sahtu: 867.587.7158, Norman Wells.
- ☒ North Slave. 867.766.5100, Yellowknife
- ☒ Tlicho Community Services Agency: 867.392.3000, Behchoko.
- ☒ South Slave: 867.872.4255, Fort Smith.
- ☒ Dehcho: 867.695.7338, Fort Simpson.

### Adult Upgrading

- ☒ Most communities have an adult learning centre and/or Aurora College campus that offer upgrading and literacy courses.



The NWT Literacy Council produced this paper. Contact us for more information about essential skills. Check out our online tool Essential Skills - At Work in the North.

Phone toll free: 1.866.599.6758

Website: [www.nwt.literacy.ca](http://www.nwt.literacy.ca)

Email: [nwtliteracy@nwtliteracy.ca](mailto:nwtliteracy@nwtliteracy.ca)

The NWT Literacy Council is a non-profit group that supports literacy development in all NWT official languages.

### Essential Skills

- ☒ Human Resources and Skills Development Canada: self-assessment tools and information.  
[www.hrsdc.gc.ca/essentialskills](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/essentialskills)
- ☒ National Occupational Classification (NOC)  
[www5.hrdc.gc.ca/noc/english/noc/2006/Welcome.aspx](http://www5.hrdc.gc.ca/noc/english/noc/2006/Welcome.aspx)

### Aurora College

- ☒ Various programs and courses.  
[www.auroracollege.nt.ca/\\_live/pages/wpPages/home.aspx](http://www.auroracollege.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/home.aspx)

### Nunavut Arctic College

- ☒ Various programs and courses.  
<http://nac.nu.ca/>