

Newfoundland and Labrador
Laubach Literacy Council Inc.

Serving Newfoundland and
Labrador since 1986

Essential Skills Literacy Training: Tools for Older Adults

Findings Report

Newfoundland and Labrador Laubach Literacy Council Inc.

Report prepared by

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Public Consultation Facilitator, NLLLC

August 28, 2009

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INTRODUCTION

Essential Skills Literacy Training: Tools for Older Adults Project

The following is a report of the findings from the Essential Skills Literacy Training: Tools for Older Adults project, which documents the work carried out by the Public Consultation Facilitator for NLLLC under the guidance of a steering committee comprised of representatives from public and private stakeholder groups. Research was conducted by conducting focus groups and administering questionnaires throughout the province with a participation of 206 attending focus group sessions and 200 completing questionnaires.

Project Goal: To grow Newfoundland and Labrador Laubach Literacy Council's capacity to adapt to and address gaps in the current tutor training which will enable us to more effectively and efficiently address the needs of future learners.

To meet the project goal a province wide consultation was carried out to meet the following objectives:

- A. Gather information from Laubach tutors to identify specific essential skills topics which are not addressed by current tutor training
- B. Gather information from older adults which will identify specific essential skills topics which they feel can be addressed in a one-on-one environment
- C. Gather information from employers, educators, labour, government representatives, community development workers, workforce development professionals, and community organizations which they feel are specifically essential skills needs of older adults
- D. Gather materials from various resources about the specific essential skills topics from previous research activities
- E. Determine how essential skills needs identified can be translated into tools for one-on-one tutoring
- F. Increase our organizations profile in the communities where local Laubach Literacy Councils exist and across the province and country
- G. Encourage collaboration and participation from stakeholders throughout the project
- H. Promote life-long learning and the importance of essentials skills development which empowers people to act.

All of these objectives have been met through the consultation process with the following aims being fulfilled:

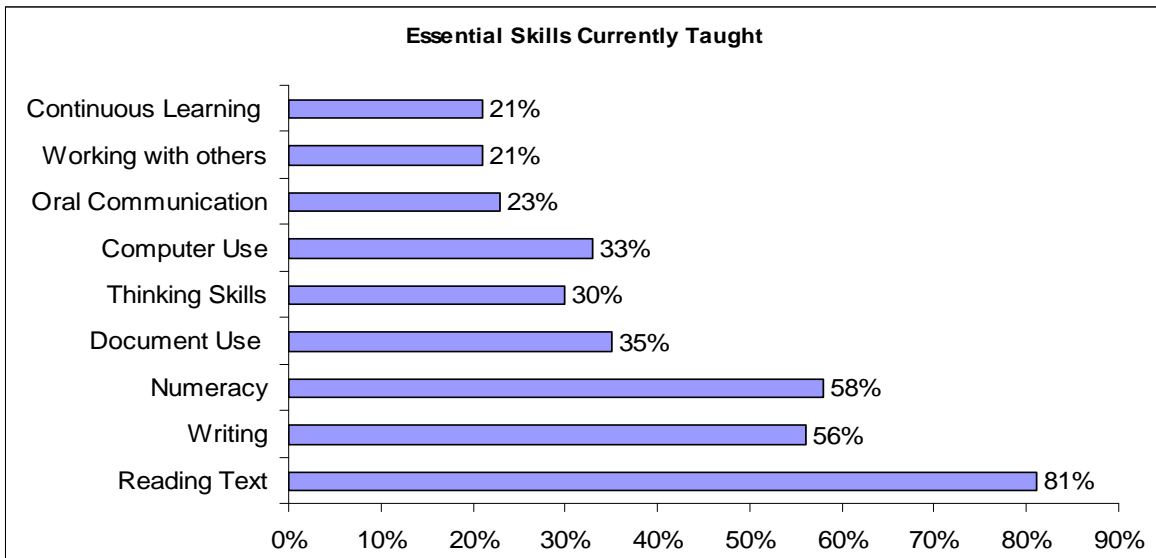
- A. To obtain feedback from key stakeholders to
 - Identify if/where/how essential skills needs are met
 - Identify needs for essential skills development
 - Identify gaps in the current system
- B. To gather information to determine how to best meet essential skills training needs and incorporate it into the current training offered by NLLLC.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Summary of Findings – Questionnaires

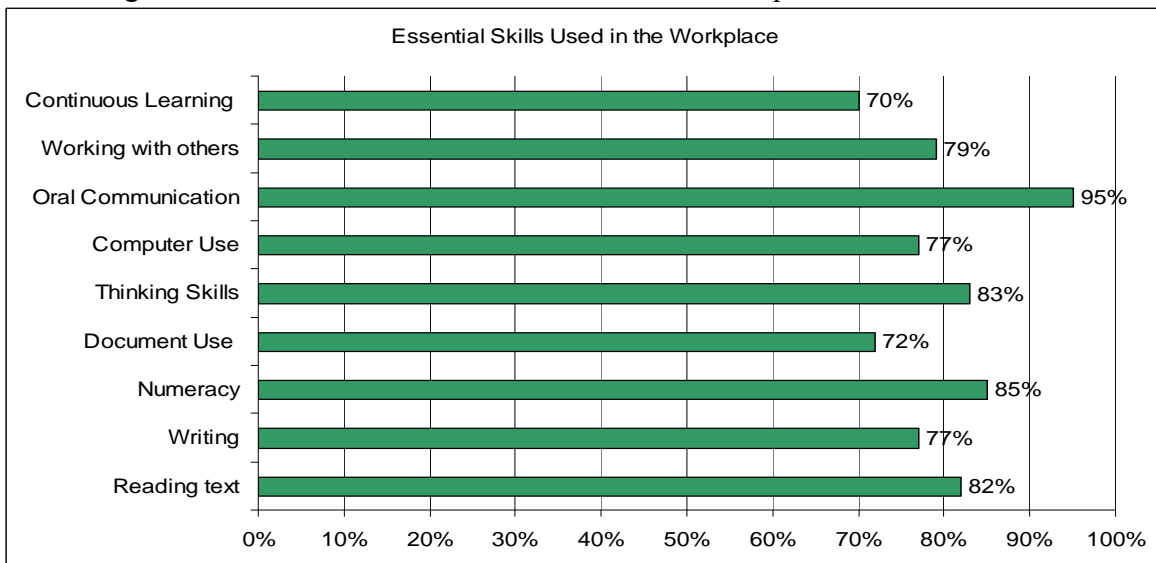
This section contains the main overall findings from the research and is followed by detailed findings from each individual group.

This chart indicates Essential skills currently *taught* by Tutors and Trainers:



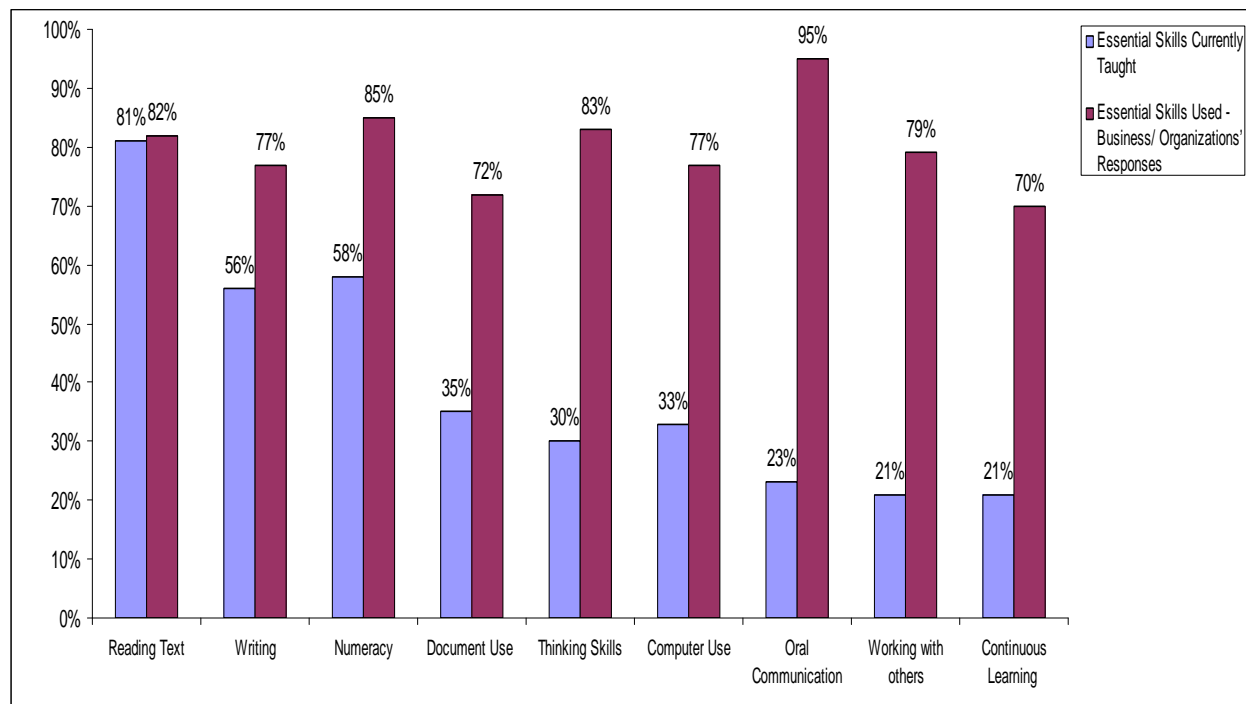
Main Essential Skills currently taught: Reading Text, Numeracy, and Writing.

The following chart indicates Essential Skills *Used* in the Workplace:



Businesses and Organizations report a high rate of usage of *all* Essential Skills.

The following chart indicates the Essential Skills being *taught* in comparison with the Essential Skills *used* in today's workplace.



- Currently tutors and trainers are mainly teaching Reading Text, Numeracy, and Writing.
- Businesses and Organizations report a high rate of usage of *all* Essential Skills.
- By comparison, Essential Skills used in the workplace rate much higher than those being taught in the current program, with the exception of Reading Text which rates the same for both.

According to the comparison of Essential Skills being *taught* and Essential Skills *used* in the workplace, focus needs to be placed on training in all nine Essential Skills in order to adequately prepare adult stakeholders for entry/re-entry into today's workforce.

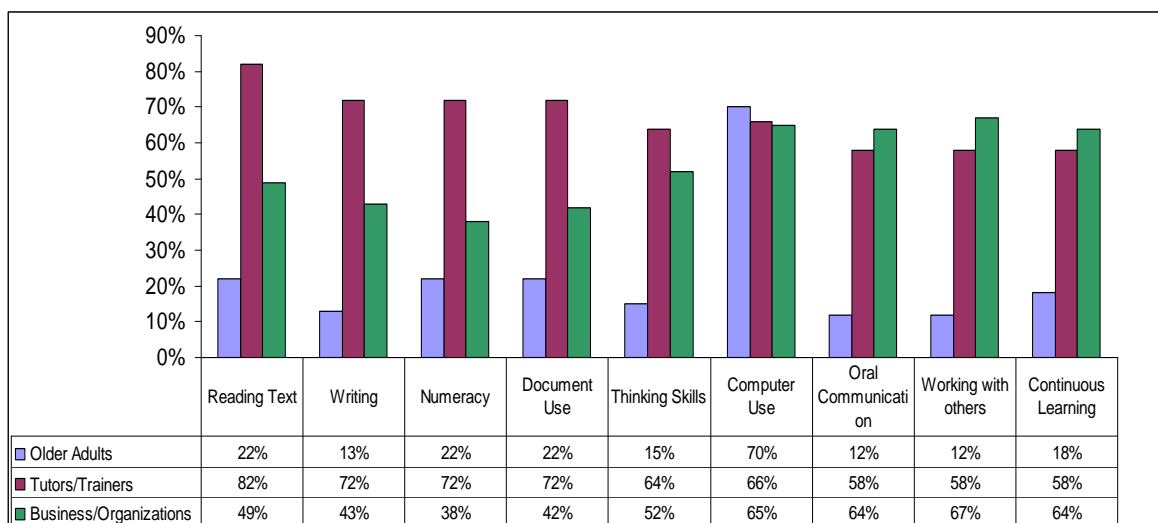
The following table shows comparisons between groups as to what Essential Skills are lacking (as indicated by Older Adult Stakeholders, Tutors, and Trainers) and required Essential Skills for Older Adults entering/re-entering the workforce.

Essential Skills Lacking compared with Essential Skills **used** (in percents):

Essential skills	Older Adult Stakeholders	Tutors/ Trainers	Essential Skills Used in the Workplace
Reading text	22%	19%	82%
Writing	13 11 77		
Numeracy	18 39	85	
Document Use	22	4	72
Thinking Skills	15 11	83	
Computer Use	70	23 77	
Oral Communication	12	59	95
Working with others	12	8	79
Continuous Learning	18	7	70
Highest rated	Computer Use	Oral Communication	Oral Communication
Second highest rated	Reading/Document Use	Numeracy	Numeracy

Older Adults and Tutors indicate that Adult stakeholders are lacking in Essential Skills as indicated. All Essential Skills are used in the workplace (70 – 95%) depending on the type of work; therefore it is necessary to upgrade Essential Skills training to meet workplace demand.

The chart below indicates Essential Skills needs as indicated by Older Adults, Tutors, Trainers, and Key Stakeholders in order to work effectively in today's workforce. All groups are in agreement about the need for Computer Use. Data from Older Adult Stakeholder Focus Groups indicated a similar need of Essential Skills development with **Computer Use** being the main one lacking at 58%.



Essential Skills training that would benefit older adults/employees/volunteers/clients:

Older Adults rated the following:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Computer Use | 70% |
| 2. Numeracy, Reading, Document Use | 22% |
| 3. Continuous Learning | 18% |

The majority of Tutors and Trainers indicated that adult learners would benefit from training in **all nine** Essential Skills.

The top three indicated are:

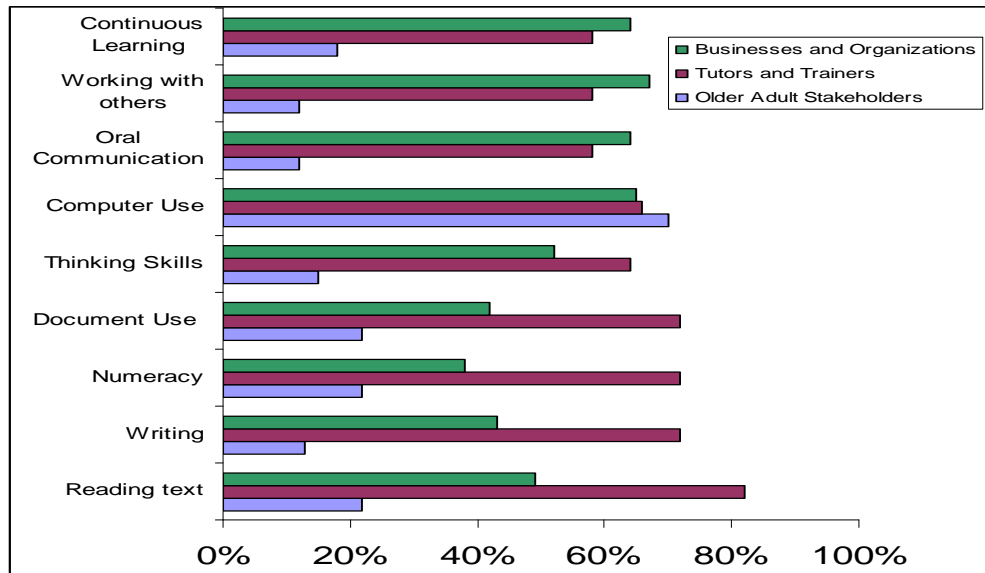
- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Reading | 82% |
| 2. Numeracy, Writing, Document Use | 72% |
| 3. Computer Use | 66% |

Key Stakeholder respondents indicated that employees would benefit from training in all nine Essential Skills, depending on the job/situation.

The top three indicated are:

- | |
|--|
| 1. Working with Others – 67% |
| 2. Computer Use – 65% |
| 3. Oral Communication, Continuous Learning – 64% |

The following chart indicates the training recommended by all three groups.



- Computer Use rated in the top three by all groups
- Numeracy, Reading, Document Use, and Continuous Learning rated in the top three by two groups.
- Writing, Oral Communication, and Working with Others rated in the top three by one group.
- Thinking Skills did not rate in the top three for either of the three groups.

Gaps in the present system:

NLLLC currently offers Basic Tutor Training as well as ESL Training for its tutors and members. Data collected via Interviews and Focus Groups with tutors and trainers indicate that there are many gaps in the present system; however, the means of addressing those gaps depends on the needs and learning level of individual learners. While some tutors are content with the status quo, the majority are looking for more resources to offer their students. Some of the main gaps identified were:

- Appropriate material to suit the level of the student
- Outdated material and need for updated training and training/tutoring materials
- Computers and computer training, instruction in technology (e.g. ATM use, cash registers)
- E.S.L. and Life Skills - Practical application of skills learned
- Self-esteem/confidence issues
- Diagnosing and addressing Learning Disabilities
- Awareness of services – P. R.
- Workshops and sharing sessions for tutors and learners

The main gaps indicated by Key Stakeholders were:

- Awareness and access
- Need for computer skills/on-site learning (computers, cash registers)
- Attitude/lack of interest
- Time and pay to attend training
- Thinking skills – problem solving ability
- Document Use – filling out forms, job applications, resumes
- Continuous learning – need for follow-up in the workplace

Tools (resource materials) to help with teaching Essential Skills

In order to fill the gaps, respondents had various suggestions on what tools they need to help them in their tutoring. The following are the main tools indicated in order of importance:

- Updated material/Essential Skills material similar to LWRS
- Computers/computer skills/programs
- Documents used in everyday life (various forms, applications, resumes, cheques, etc)
- Resources for ESL learners on social/cultural issues
- Resources for budgeting/teaching time/nutrition
- Audio aids – speech sounds, Talking Thesaurus, audio books/pens
- Oral Communication skills – attitude/etiquette
- Training for tutors and learners

“Updated materials, computer access, and documents which are specific to the individuals’ culture and location”

Key Stakeholders indicated they would like to see the following tools incorporated into a training that would address Essential Skills development:

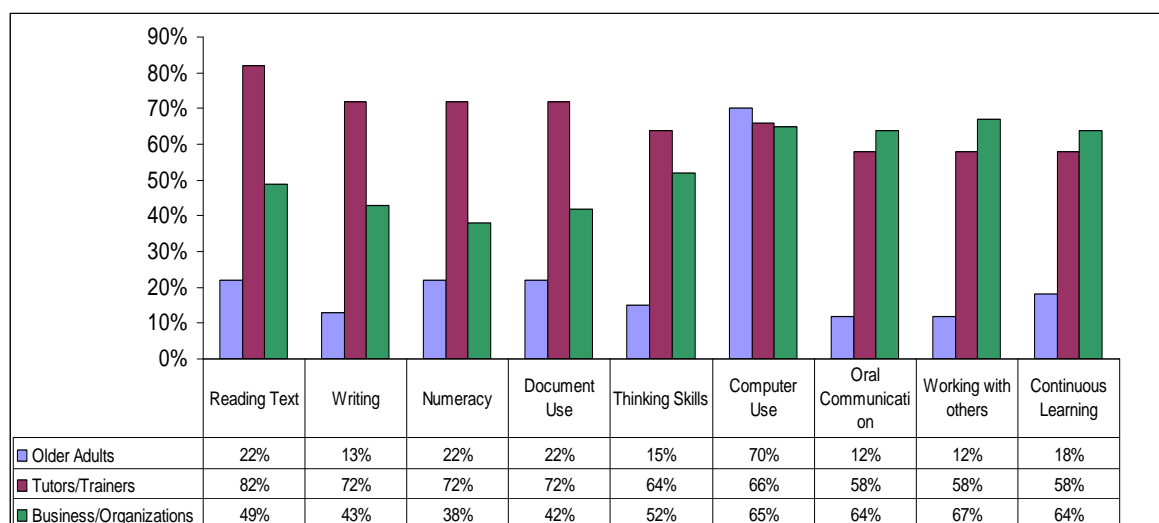
- Documents/various forms – employment/loan applications, invoices, pension forms....
- Computer Use
- Communication/Telephone skills
- Writing skills – resumes, reports, letters
- Thinking skills – problem solving
- Bookkeeping/record keeping
- Professional development/self-help
- Sensitivity and awareness training for disabilities

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Older Adults and Tutors indicate that Adult stakeholders are lacking in Essential Skills as indicated. All Essential Skills are used in the workplace (70 – 95%) depending on the type of work; therefore it is necessary to upgrade Essential Skills training to meet workplace demand.



The above chart contains data compiled from Interviews and Questionnaires. Data from Older Adult Stakeholder Focus Groups indicated a similar lack of Essential Skills with **Computer Use** being the main one lacking at 58%; Numeracy rated number two at 45%.

Focus groups with Key Stakeholders indicated **Computer Use**, **Thinking Skills**, and **Document Use** as number one in Essential Skills lacking, all at 100%; Working with Others and Oral Communication rated number two at 80%.

Essential Skills training that would benefit older adults/employees/volunteers/clients:

Older Adults rated the following:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
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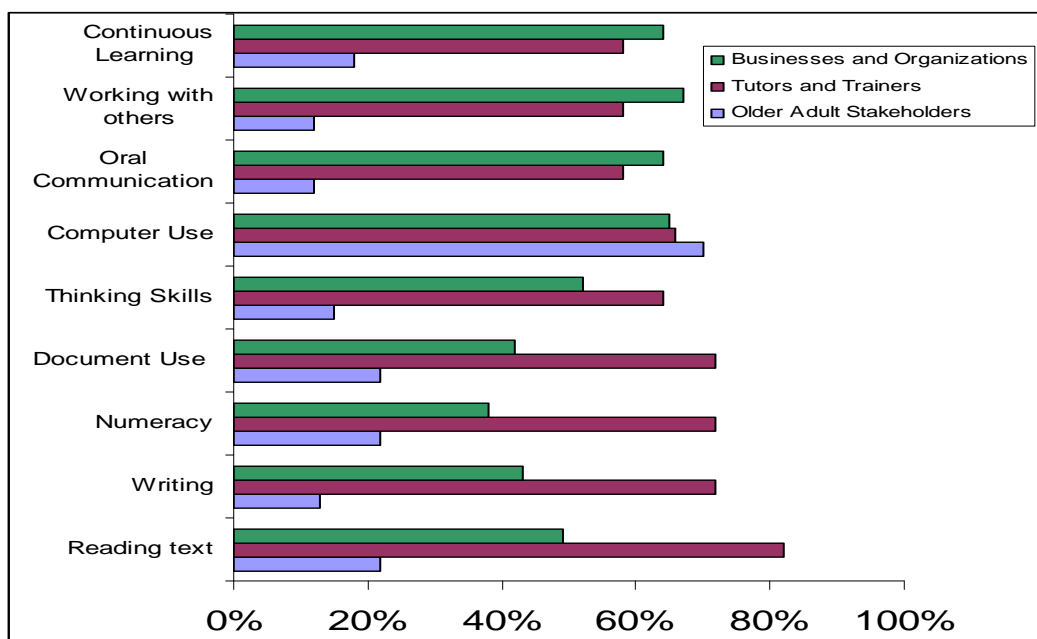
The top three indicated are:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Reading | 82% |
| 2. Numeracy, Writing, Document Use | 72% |
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Key Stakeholder respondents indicated that employees would benefit from training in all nine Essential Skills, depending on the job/situation.

The top three indicated are:

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|--|
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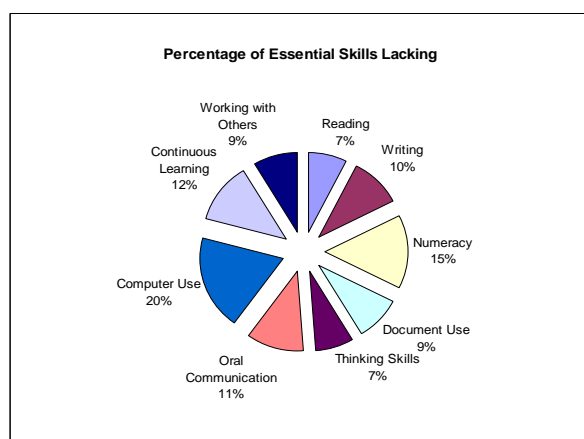


- Computer Use rated in the top three by all groups
- Numeracy, Reading, Document Use, and Continuous Learning rated in the top three by two groups.
- Writing, Oral Communication, and Working with Others rated in the top three by one group.
- Thinking Skills did not rate in the top three for either of the three groups.

Summary of Findings – Focus Groups

Over the course of this study, a total of 16 focus groups were held throughout the province. 108 individuals participated in Older Adult/Adult Learner Focus Groups; 48 participated in Tutor/Trainer Focus Groups; and 50 participated in Focus Groups for Key Stakeholders (Businesses and Organizations). Locations included Western - Corner Brook and Stephenville, Central – Grand Falls-Windsor and Bishops Falls, and Eastern – Carbonear, Harbour Grace, and St. John's.

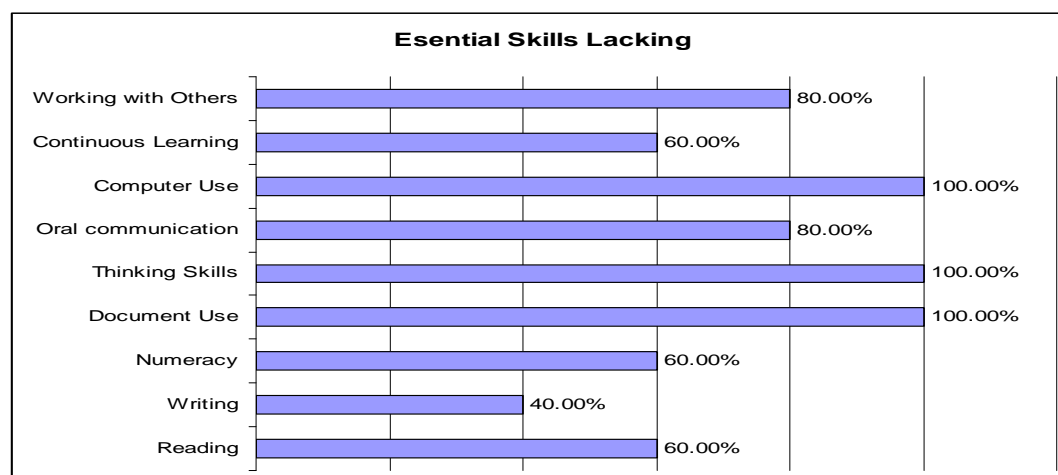
This chart indicates Essential Skills lacking on a percentage basis in relation to one another. The main lack of Essential Skills identified by Older Adults/Adult Learners is Computer Use at 20%; second is Numeracy at 15%.



Key Stakeholders indicated that the majority of employers look for the following main requirements when hiring employees:

1. Positive attitude
2. Good communication skills
3. Good problem-solving ability
4. Willingness to learn
5. Computer skills
6. Ability to work with others
7. Honesty

Representatives from five Key Stakeholder focus groups responded that their employees/ volunteers/clients lacked Essential skills as indicated in the chart below, with the greatest deficiency occurring in Computer Use, Document Use, and Thinking Skills.



“Many don’t see the importance of teamwork and getting along in public and how it is perceived by customers”

The main barriers that prevent individuals from taking advantage of training as identified by Focus Group participants were:

1. Availability/access to training
2. Work commitments
3. Family obligations
4. Awareness of training available
5. Finances
6. Fear/embarrassment
7. Transportation

Main gaps identified by all groups: Need for student-appropriate, up-to-date material; availability of computers and training in computer use; document use – forms, applications, budgeting; practical application of skills learned from theory; and more one-on-one tutoring.

Tools suggested to fill those gaps: Documents used in everyday living (applications, forms, resumes, cheques); resources for use with budgeting/recipes (workbooks, store flyers); computers; updated resource material; audio aids; job-specific training/marketable skills; role playing.

INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Findings from Interview Questionnaires – Older Adults (Target Group)

A total of 75 questionnaires were submitted by older adults from across the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. An analysis of data collected follows.

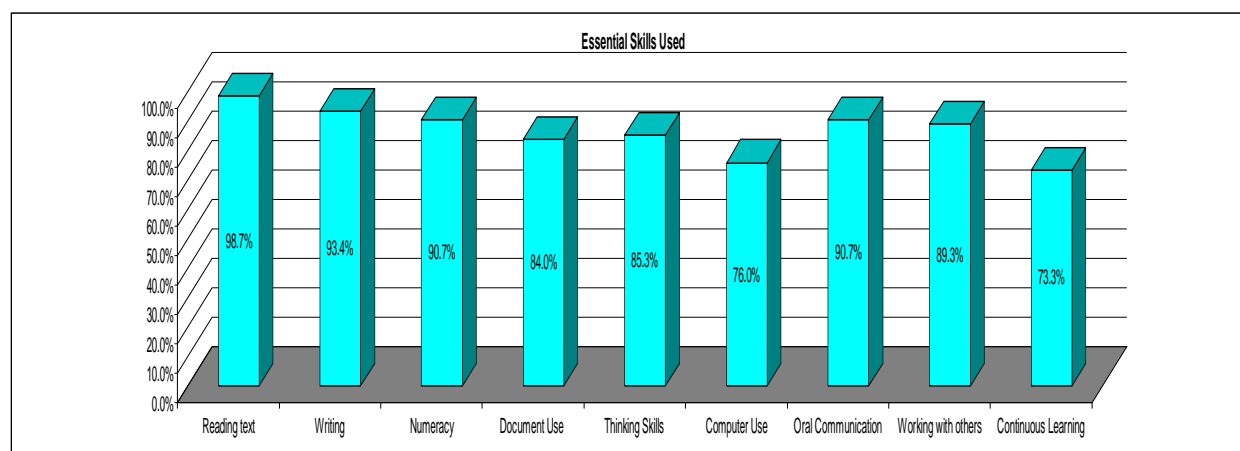
Question 1. Which Essential Skills do you use?

75 responded out of a total of 75: 100% response rate

Responses	# of times listed	Percentage
Reading text	74/75	98.7%
Writing 70/75		93.4%
Numeracy 68/75		90.7%
Document Use	63/75	84.0%
Thinking Skills	64/75	85.3%
Computer Use	57/75	76.0%
Oral Communication	68/75	90.7%
Working with others	67/75	89.3%
Continuous Learning	55/75	73.3%
*Listening	1/75	1.3%
*Spelling	1/75	1.3%
*Grammar	1/75	*1.3%

**Written on form by participants as Essential Skills used. Since these are not included in the nine Essential Skills, they do not appear in the chart below.*

Majority checked use of **Reading, Writing, Numeracy and Oral Communication** as Essential Skills used. Lowest checked Essential Skills used were **Computer Use and Continuous Learning**.



The response from this question is an indication that most Older Adults recognize the “everyday” common “literacy” skills that are used; least common were checked less.

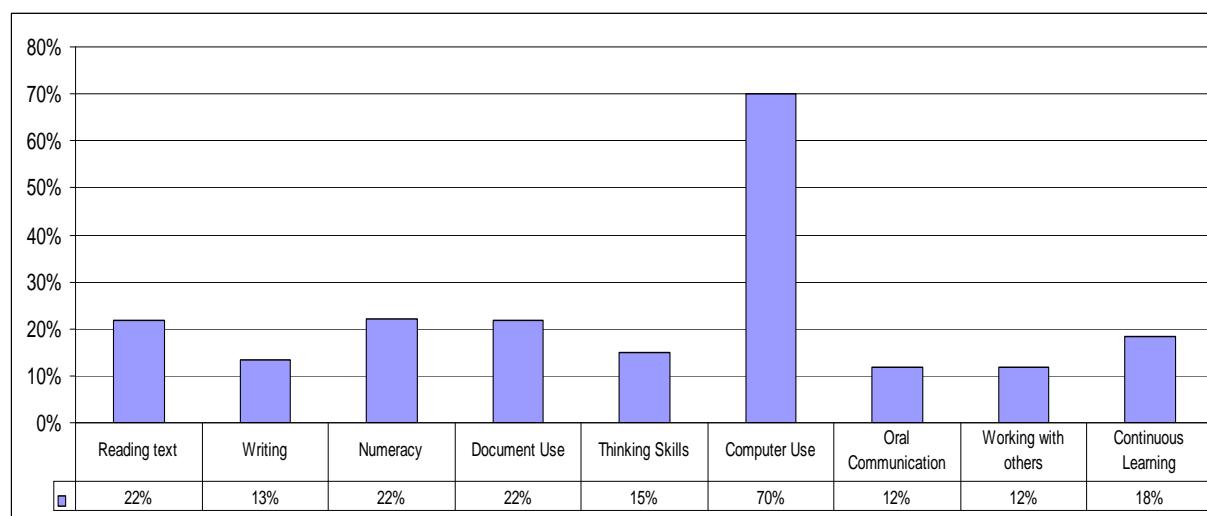
Question 2. Which Essential Skills do you lack in your everyday life?

60 responded out of a total of 75: 80% response rate.

Responses	# of times listed	Percentage
Reading text	13/60	21.7%
Writing	8/60	13.3%
Numeracy 13/60		21.7%
Document Use	13/60	21.7%
Thinking Skills	9/60	15.0%
Computer Use	42/60	70.0%
Oral Communication	7/60	11.7%
Working with others	7/60	11.7%
Continuous Learning	11/60	18.3%
*Listening	1/60	1.7%
*English	1/60	1.7%
*Neither	1/60 1.7%	

*Written on form by participants as Essential Skills lacking. Since these are not included in the nine Essential Skills, they do not appear in the chart below.

Essential Skills Lacking based on a response rate of 80%:



Respondents indicated their main lack of Essential Skills was

1. Computer Use – 70%
2. Reading Text, Numeracy, and Document Use – 22%
3. Continuous Learning – 18%

The perception of many respondents as to what Essential Skills they may be lacking is reflected in the following quote:

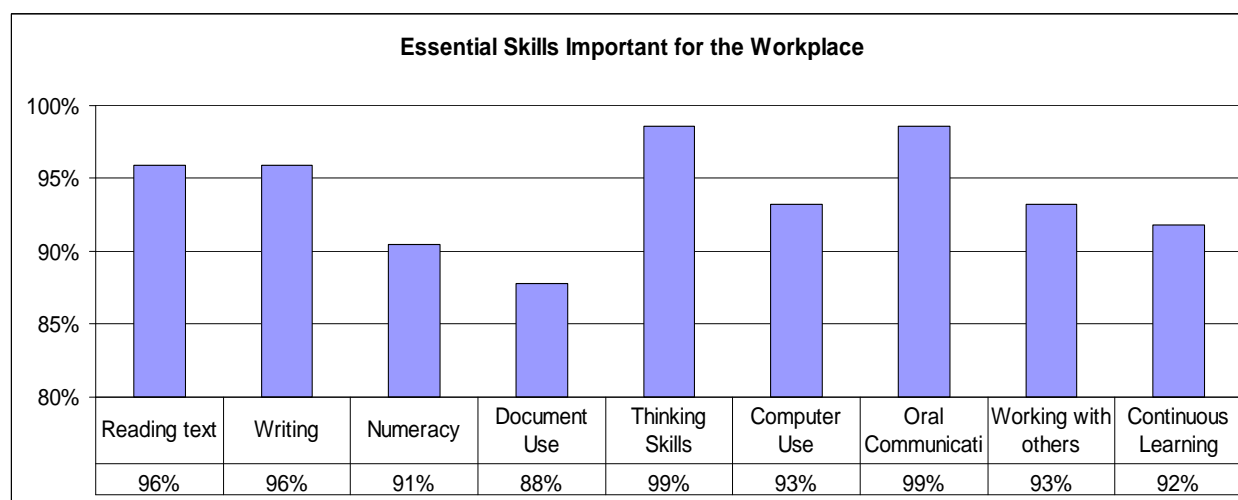
“It’s not so much that I lack Essential Skills as I would like to improve/refine them”

Question 3. NLLLC currently offers training for its tutors and members which enables them to tutor adults (free of charge) in basic reading, writing, and math skills. However, individuals who seek our services have needs beyond this. **Which Essential Skills do you consider important for the workplace?**

74 responded out of a total of 75: 98% response rate.

Responses	# of times listed	Percentage
Reading text	71/74	95.9%
Writing 71/74		95.9%
Numeracy 67/74		90.5%
Document Use	65/74	87.8%
Thinking Skills	73/74	98.6%
Computer Use	69/74	93.2%
Oral Communication	73/74	98.6%
Working with others	69/74	93.2%
Continuous Learning	68/74	91.8%
*Creative thinking – outside the box	1/74	1.4%

**Written on form by participant as an essential skill important for the workplace. Since this is not one of the nine Essential Skills, it does not appear in the chart below.*



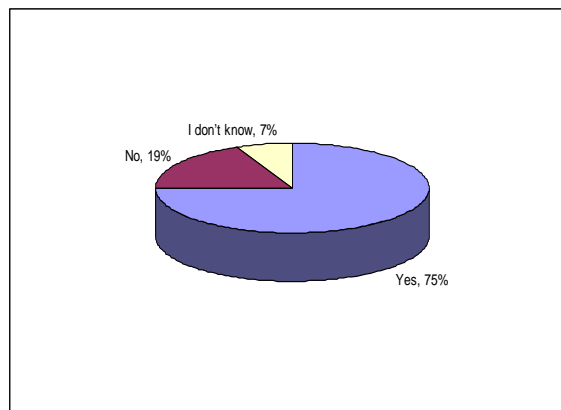
The majority felt that all listed Essential Skills are important for the workplace with Thinking Skills and Oral Communication receiving most checked selections; Document Use received less.

“Depends on workplace”

Question 4. **Would training in Essential Skills benefit you? If yes, which courses in Essential Skills would you be interested in taking? Please number in order of importance with #1 being most important.** *75 responded out of a total of 75: 100% response rate. (Note: Although response rate is 100% for the first part of this question, not everyone answered the second part; many who did answer, did not list order of importance)*

Would E.S. Training Benefit You?

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Times listed</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	56/75	74.6%
No	14/75	18.6%
I don't know	5/75	6.7%



Essential Skills rating in percents re level of importance (Those who indicated “No” to benefiting from training did not rate or check importance)

Essential Skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	No Response	Checked - No order of Imp.
Reading Text	5%	3%	1%	5%	0%	0%	0%	3%	3%	72%	7%
Writing	0	3	3	1	3	1	1	5		73	7
Numeracy	3	4	4	1	3	4	3	0	0	70	8
Document Use	0	3	5	5	0	1	4	3	3	64	12
Thinking Skills	1	1	3	0	4	3	5	4	0	73	5
Computer Use	17	4	4	3	3	1	0	4	1	31	32
Oral Communication	1	4	4	4	5	5	0	1	0	72	4
Working with others	1	5	0	1	3	3	3	3	4	73	4
Continuous Learning	7	7	3	1	4	0	5	1	4	56	12

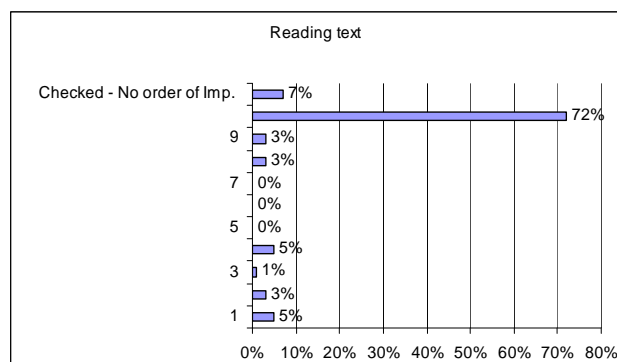
- *Computer Use* rated highest order of importance for course interest over all other Essential Skills; also checked as important more often than other Essential Skills; also received the lowest amount of **No Response**.
- *Continuous Learning* rated second highest order of importance for course interest; *Continuous Learning* and *Document Use* checked as important second highest; *Continuous Learning* also second lowest amount for **No Response**.
- Highest number of **No Response** in *Writing*, *Thinking Skills*, and *Working with Others*.
- One person assigned #10 to *Reading Text* and #2 to *Listening Skills*
- One person added *Training as facilitator* (not rated)
- Some people placed check marks but did not rate level of importance; others rated only some and possibly rated the most important to them when checked, which would indicate interest in those Essential Skills only.

Essential Skills in order of importance for course interest as indicated in responses to Question 4 (#1 being most important)

Reading Text

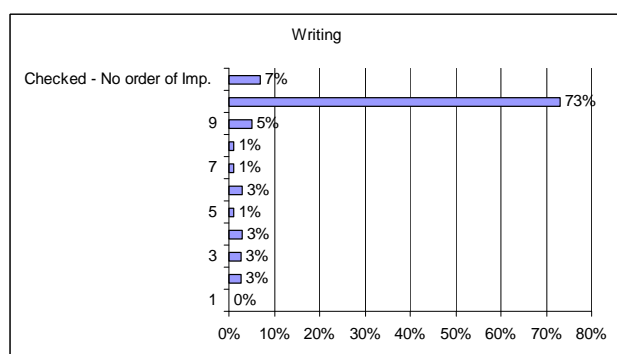
#1	5%	# 6	0%
#2	3%	# 7	0%
#3	1%	# 8	3%
#4	5%	# 9	3%
#5	0%	#10	1%
No response			72%
Checked – no order			7%

(One person rated *Reading Text* as #10 and assigned #2 to *listening skills*)



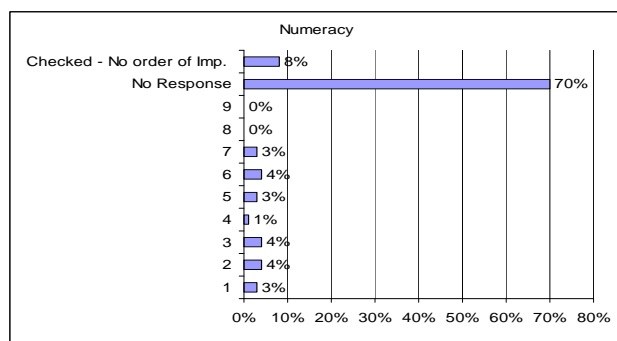
Writing

#1	0%	#6	3%
#2	3%	#7	1%
#3	3%	#8	1%
#4	3%	#9	5%
#5	1%		
No response			73%
Checked – no order			7%



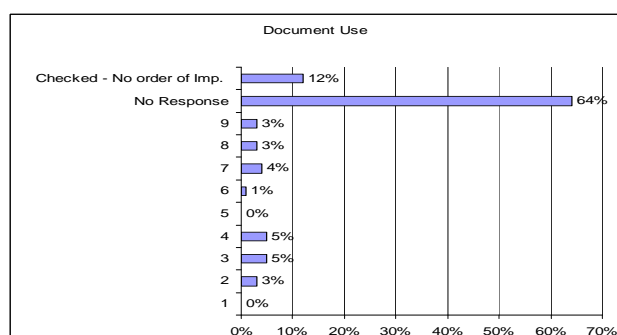
Numeracy

#1	3%	#6	4%
#2	4%	#7	3%
#3	4%	#8	0%
#4	1%	#9	0%
#5	3%		
No response			70%
Checked – no order			8%



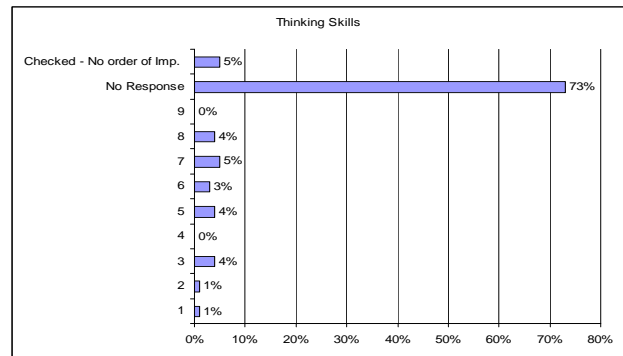
Document Use

#1	0%	#6	1%
#2	3%	#7	4%
#3	5%	#8	3%
#4	5%	#9	3%
#5	0%		
No response			64%
Checked – no order			12%



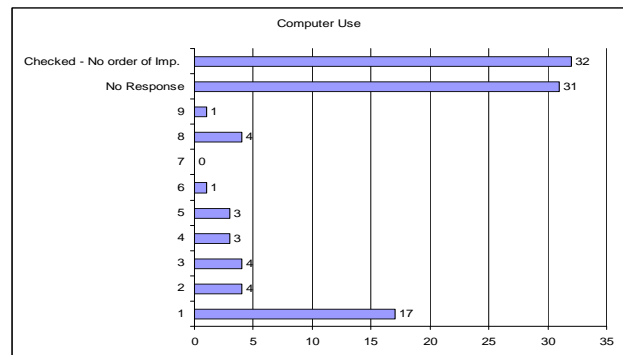
Thinking Skills

#1	1%	#6	3%
#2	1%	#7	5%
#3	4%	#8	4%
#4	0%	#9	0%
#5	4%		
No response			73%
Checked – no order			5%



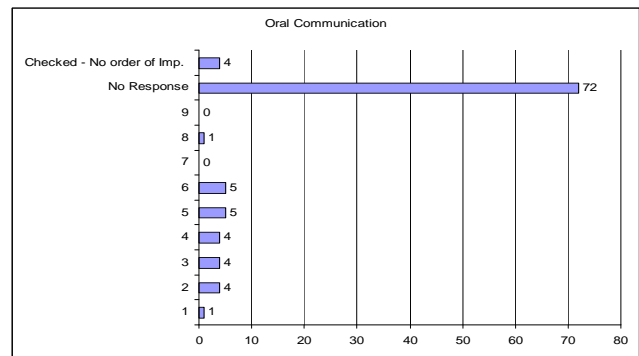
Computer Use

#1	17%	# 6	1%
#2	4%	# 7	0%
#3	4%	# 8	4%
#4	3%	# 9	1%
#5	3%		
No response			31%
Checked – no order			32%



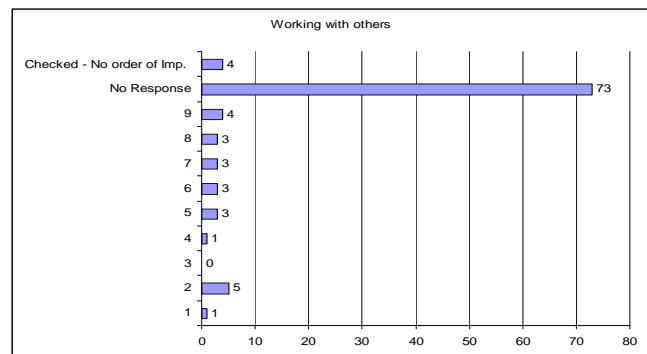
Oral Communication

#1	1%	# 6	5%
#2	4%	# 7	0%
#3	4%	# 8	1%
#4	4%	# 9	0%
#5	5%		
No response			72%
Checked – no order			4%



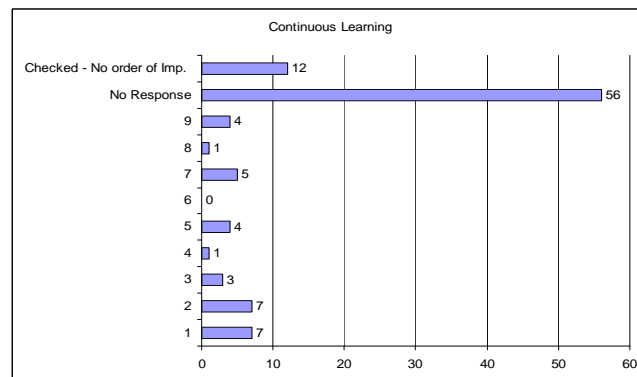
Working With Others

#1	1%	# 6	3%
#2	5%	# 7	3%
#3	0%	# 8	3%
#4	1%	# 9	4%
#5	3%		
No response			73%
Checked – no order			4%



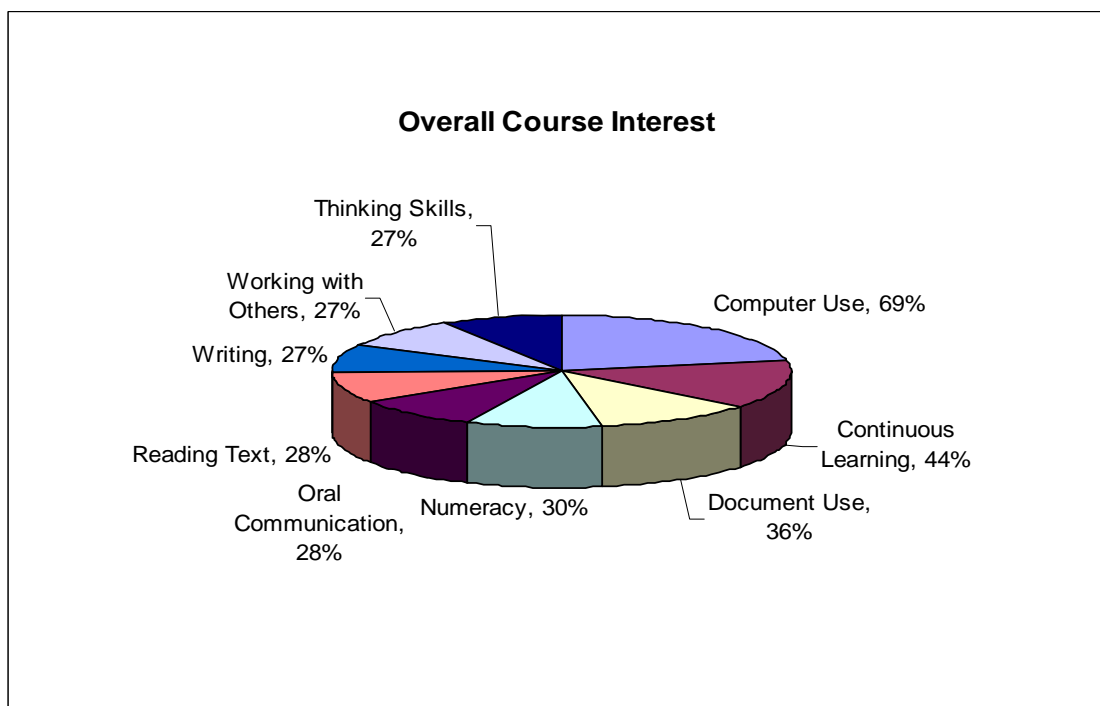
Continuous Learning

#1	7%	# 6	0%
#2	7%	# 7	5%
#3	3%	# 8	1%
#4	1%	# 9	4%
#5	4%		
No response			56%
Checked – no order			12%



Essential Skills by percentage of overall course interest

This chart indicates percentage level of overall course interest by older adult stakeholders - rated and unrated.



It is interesting to note that while adult stakeholders consider all nine Essential Skills important for the workplace rating from 88% to 99% in importance (Question #3), respondents' main interest in knowledge expansion is in Computer Use - 69%, Continuous Learning - 44%, and Document Use - 36%.

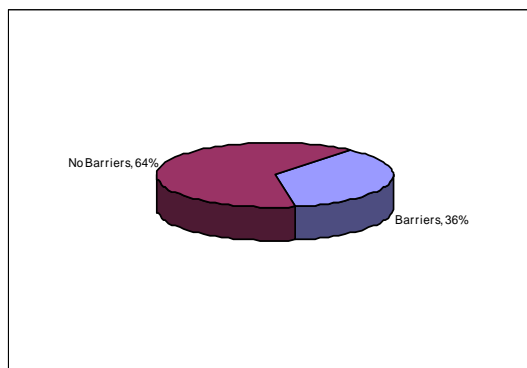
Obviously, the majority of respondents feel confident that their knowledge of the other six Essential Skills is at an adequate level of proficiency to function productively in today's workplace.

Question 5. Is there anything that would prevent you from taking advantage of Essential Skills training? If yes, please list reasons.

67 responded out of a total of 75: 89% response rate

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Times listed</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	24/67	35.8%
No	43/67	64.2%

- 64% of 67 responded – No barriers
- 36% of 67 responded – Barriers (multiple responses given by some participants)



Barriers Identified:

Responses	Times listed out of 24	%
Work commitments	8	33
Transportation	6	25
Home commitments/child care	6	25
Finances	5	20
Already attending education program	4	16
Time to commit	3	12
Conflict in schedules time offered/timing	2	8
Accessibility for disabled	1	4
No access to internet at local literacy council	1	4
If offered in area	1	4
Lifestyle (gone 2 months/year)	1	4
Unaware of available program	1	4
Not necessary	1	4
Inflexible institutional learning not accommodating for adult learners	1	4

“The inflexibility of institutional learning is not accommodating for adults. NL Laubach Literacy is. The Each one, Teach One principle is extremely important”

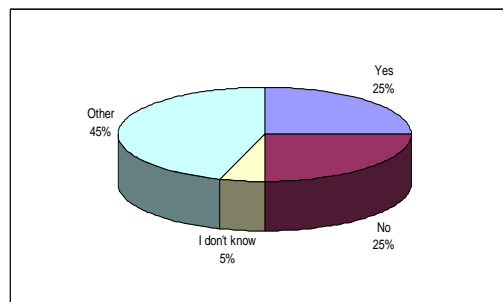
For those who said that there would be barriers to participating in Essential Skills training, most seemed to indicate that work commitments tended to interfere with the ability to participate. As the above quote indicates, available programs do not accommodate adult learner lifestyles. Other major issues include home commitments, financial barriers, and transportation. Overall, sense that flexibility of program offered limits participation as “time” offered seems to interfere with adult learner lifestyles.

Question 6. If you are employed, does your workplace/organization have a training program? If so, does the current training program address Essential Skills development? If yes, which Essential Skills are being taught? How?

57 responded out of a total of 75: 76 % response rate

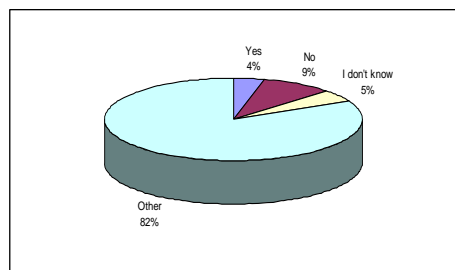
Current workplace training program?

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Times listed</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	14/57	24.6%
No	14/57	24.6%
I don't know	3/57	5.3%
*Other	26/57	45.6%



*No response/not applicable/retired, not working

Is the current workplace training program addressing Essential Skills development?



<u>Responses</u>	<u>Times listed</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	2/57	3.5%
No	5/57	8.7%
I don't know	3/57	5.3%
*Other	47/57	82.5%

*No response/not applicable/retired, not working

If yes, which Essential Skills are being taught? How?

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Times listed</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Times listed</u>
Reading text	0	Com puter Use	4
Writing	0	Oral Communication	1
Numeracy	0	Working with Others	1
Document Use	1	Continuous Learning	4
Thinking Skills	0	Other technology	1

Employee (in house) training: Job specific (3 responses)

Employee (outside house) training: Employer brings awareness of programs/opportunities to workers (1 response)

- Majority of respondents were unemployed or did not respond to the question because they did not feel that it applied to them.
- Of respondents, it was a 50/50 split for workplace-provided training.
- The majority of those 57 indicated No response.
- Of those who indicated Yes/No, most indicated that Essential Skills were not addressed.
- It seems that interpretation may have been a contributing factor – any “on the job” training seems to be considered as Essential Skills training.

“[Workplace training is] Not consistent and not when needed. Too often any training is after the fact. Employees, it seems, and not the employer, is responsible”

Question 7. I am (please check all that apply): a student employed retired
 unemployed, looking for work unemployed, not looking for work
 I would like more information on tutoring services, please contact me

74 responded out of a total of 75: 98.6% response rate

Students	23	31%	Unemployed, looking for work	8	11%
Employed	21	28%	Unemployed, not looking for work	8	11%
Retired	26	35%			

More information on tutoring services: 25 left contact information, but not all checked for receipt of information.

- Multiple selections made by some.
- Majority of the 74 respondents who are retired, not working, did **not** indicate whether they were looking for work or not.
- Almost equal amount of students and employed.



Question 8. Comments *24 responded out of a total of 75: 32 % response rate*

Comments generally re showing appreciation for being able to participate in this survey. Only significant comments regarding Essential Skills is the indication by several people that they would liked to participate in a program focused on being tutored in Computer Use.

“When I interviewed for my present job, I realized I was lacking computer skills necessary in today’s employable workplace. I was fortunate enough to have other skills that enabled me to self-teach”

“Got to have Grade 12 to get by just to pump gas these days”

Findings from Interview Questionnaires – Tutors

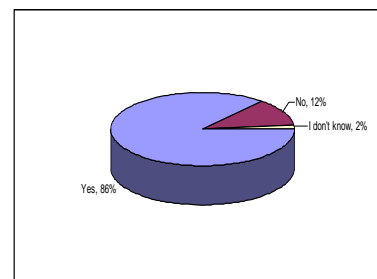
A total of 46 questionnaires were submitted by current and past tutors throughout the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. An analysis of data collected follows.

Question 1. As a tutor, are you teaching Essential Skills? Which ones? How?

43 responded out of a total of 46: 93 % response rate

Responses Times listed Percentage

Yes	37	86%
No	5	12%
I don't know	1	2%

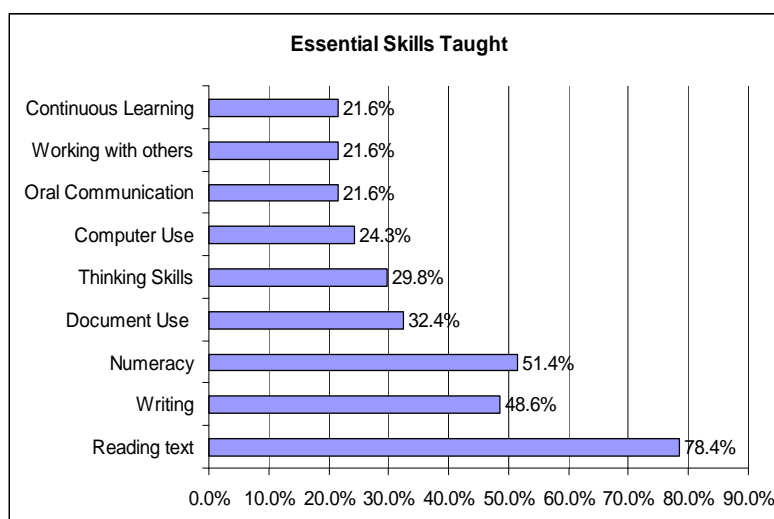


Responses	# of times listed of 37	Percentage
Reading text	29	78.4%
Writing 18		48.6%
Numeracy 19		51.4%
Document Use	12	32.4%
Thinking Skills	11	29.8%
Computer Use	9	24.3%
Oral Communication	8	21.6%
Working with others	8	21.6%
Continuous Learning	8	21.6%
Social Skills	1	2.7%
Budgeting 1		2.7%
ESL 1		2.7%
Organizational skills	1	2.7%
Time Management	1	2.7%
Listening skills	1	2.7%
Life skills	2	5.4%

Other responses were Social Skills, Listening skills, ESL, Budgeting, Organizational skills, Time Management and Life skills.

The main Essential Skills being taught by tutors are:

#1 – Reading	78.4%
#2 – Numeracy	51.4%
#3 – Writing	48.6%



Trends identified in how Essential Skills are being taught by respondents:

- By using the Laubach Way to Reading/other material supplied
- By helping with word recognition, reading aloud, and comprehension
- By using a dictionary
- By practicing simple math
- By helping with personal work projects
- By using computers
- By using resource materials such as cookbooks, menus, various forms
- Depends on the needs and skills levels of the student

“Reading, writing, numeracy, document use, oral communication, working with others, continuous learning – from the Laubach books (not much there)”

The majority of tutors seem to be concentrating on the 3 R's. Given the needs of our clients we may need to concentrate on developing the majority of our materials for use with Laubach Way to Reading Series Skill Books 1 and 2.

Question 2. Do you have or have you had adult learners that could benefit from training in Essential Skills? If yes, which Essential Skills?

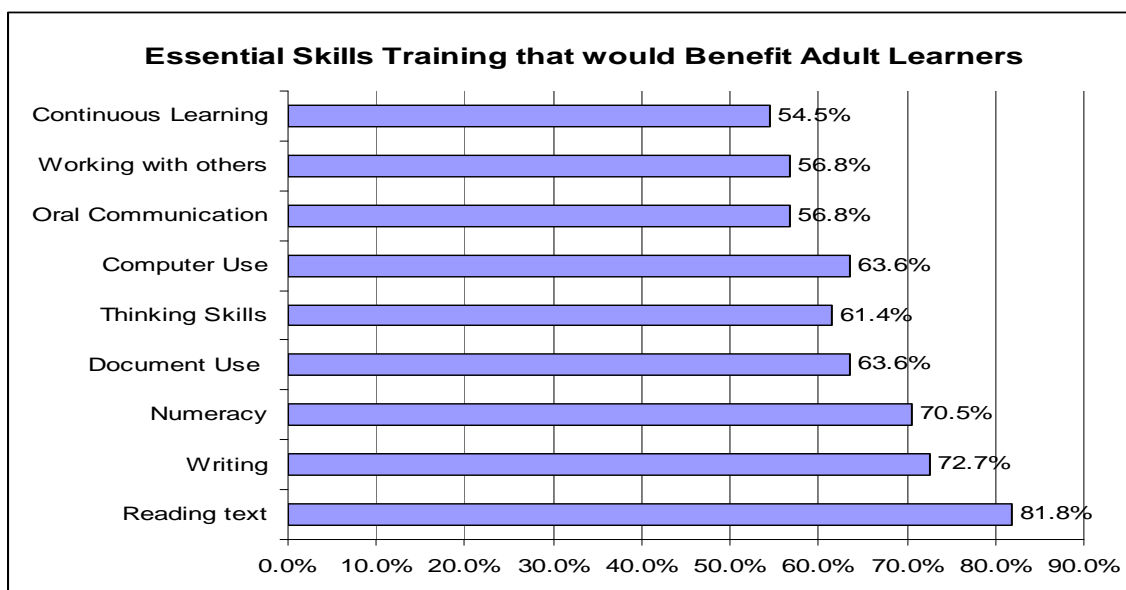
45 responded out of a total of 46: 98% response rate

	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Times listed</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	44		97.8%
No		1	2.2%

Responses	# of times listed of 44	Percentage
Reading text	36	81.8%
Writing 32		72.7%
Numeracy 31		70.5%
Document Use	28	63.6%
Thinking Skills	27	61.4%
Computer Use	28	63.6%
Oral Communication	25	56.8%
Working with others	25	56.8%
Continuous Learning	24	54.5%

Respondents who indicated 'yes' to this question indicated that adult learners would benefit from training in all of the Essential Skills. The following received the highest rating (to the nearest percent):

- Reading Text 82%
- Writing 73%
- Numeracy 71%



Question 3. NLLLC currently offers Basic Tutor Training, as well as English as Second Language (ESL) Training for its tutors and members. These training programs focus primarily on providing tools for tutors to work with low-level readers; however, individuals who seek our services have needs beyond this focus. **What gaps do you see in the present system?**

41 responded out of a total of 46: 89% response rate

Respondents who answered this question indicated many gaps in the present system. The main ones identified in order of importance were:

- Appropriate material to suit students' level
- Need for updated material
- More training for tutors
- Awareness of services
- Computers and computer training
- E.S.L and Life skills (practical application)
- Self-esteem/confidence
- Not sure
- Testing for Learning Disabilities
- Bridge before students enter self-directed ABE
- Basics need to be taught in school
- Need to upgrade math skills
- Suitable for all age levels
- Must be motivational
- Each Council needs a paid coordinator

Answers to this question are as varied as the tutors. Several mentioned that we serve basic needs, others indicate that we need to expand. Essential skills may be more than some are ready for while others welcome it.

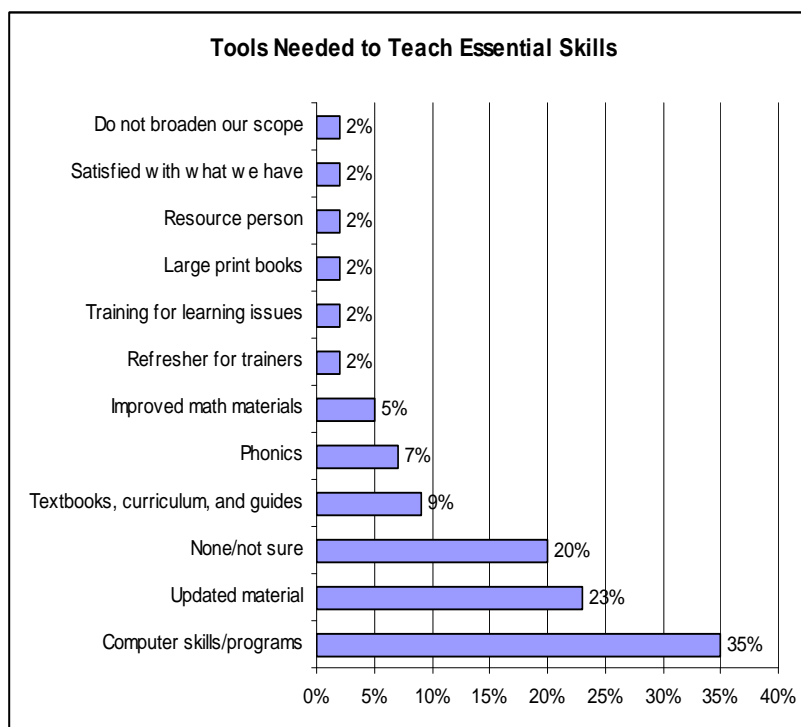
“You always have to use material to suit the level and always use material that is motivational!”

Question 4. What tools (resource materials) for teaching Essential Skills do you need that would be of use to you in your tutoring?

43 responded out of a total of 46: 93% response rate

Responses were as follows:

- Computer skills/programs
- Updated material
- None/not sure
- Textbooks, curriculum, and guides
- Phonics
- Improved math materials
- Refresher for trainers
- Training for learning issues
- Large print books
- Resource person
- Satisfied with what we have
- Do not broaden our scope



As indicated by the responses to this question, there is a need for Essential Skills' training in basic Computer Use as well as a need for more updated resource materials for adult learners that would address a variety of requirements.

“Computers – with technology as it is today all learners should learn the basic use of computer skills. This will definitely help with the writing aspect and the reading. It will also keep the student interested”

“Updated materials, computer access, and documents that are specific to the individuals' culture and location”

“Even the lowest level learners have some computer literacy and once you get them beyond the initial fear of the technology, they find it a fun way to learn and a motivator”

Question 5. Which courses in Essential Skills would you be interested in having your adult learner(s) avail of? Number 1 – 9 in order of importance (1 being most important).

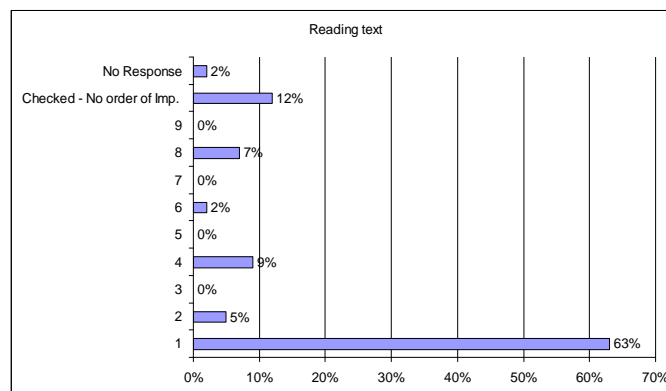
43 responded out of a total of 46: 98% response rate

*Note: Although 43/45 answered this question, some checked or rated not **all** of the Essential Skills; therefore some essential skills received ‘No Response’.*

Essential skills in order of importance for adult learners’ course interest as indicated by tutors (#1 being most important)

Reading Text

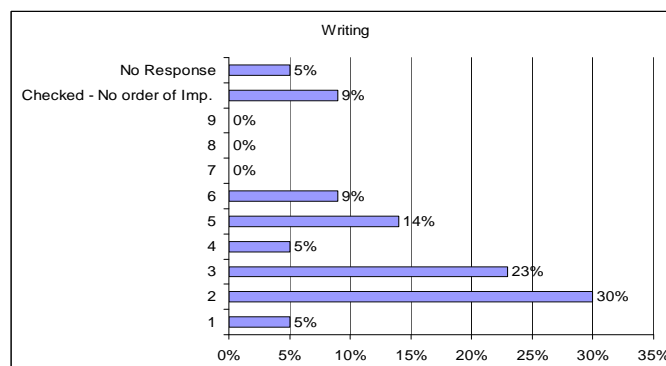
#1	63%	#6	2%
#2	5%	#7	0%
#3	0%	#8	7%
#4	9%	#9	0%
#5	0%		
No Response			2%
Checked – no order			12%



Reading Text rated #1 level of course interest for adult learners at 63%

Writing

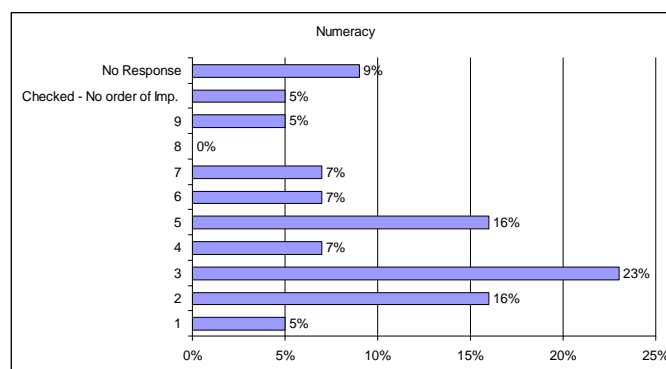
#1	5%	#6	9%
#2	30%	#7	0%
#3	23%	#8	0%
#4	5%	#9	0%
#5	14%		
No Response			5%
Checked – no order			9%



Writing rated #2 level of course interest for adult learners at 30%

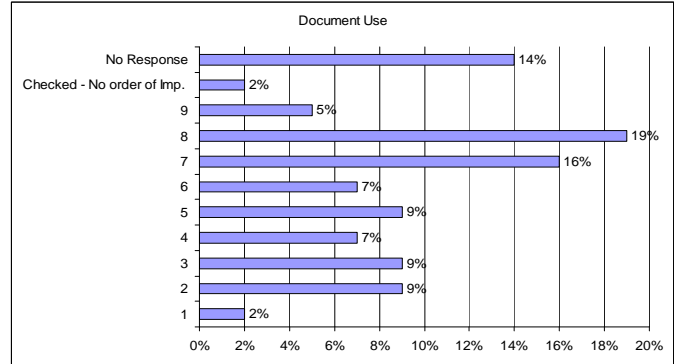
Numeracy

#1	5%	#6	7%
#2	16%	#7	7%
#3	23%	#8	0%
#4	7%	#9	5%
#5	16%		
No Response			9%
Checked – no order			5%



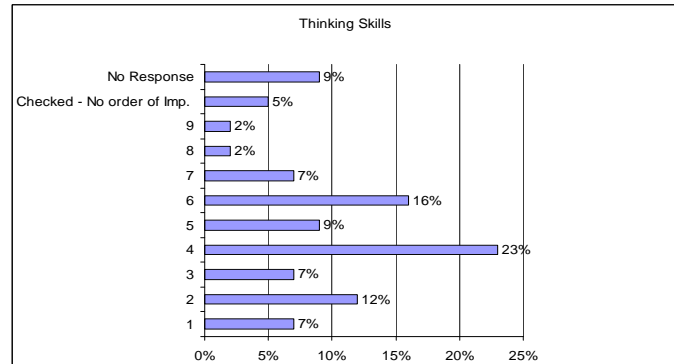
Document Use

#1	2%	#6	7%
#2	9%	#7	16%
#3	9%	#8	19%
#4	7%	#9	5%
#5	9%		
No Response			14%
Checked – no order			2%



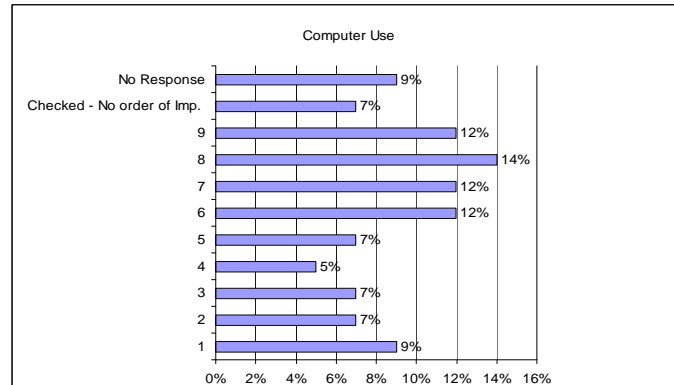
Thinking Skills

#1	7%	#6	16%
#2	12%	#7	7%
#3	7%	#8	2%
#4	23%	#9	2%
#5	9%		
No Response			9%
Checked – no order			5%



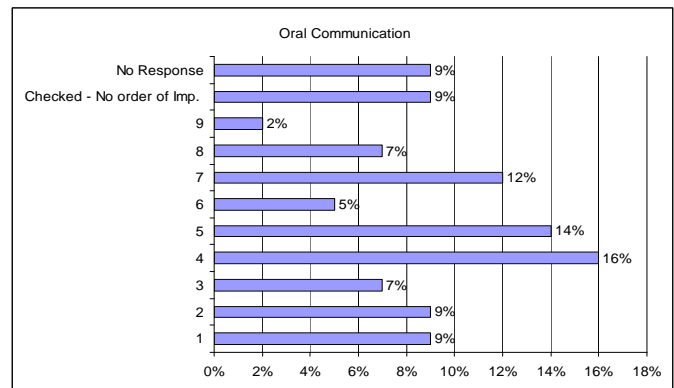
Computer Use

#1	9%	#6	12%
#2	7%	#7	12%
#3	7%	#8	14%
#4	5%	#9	12%
#5	7%		
No Response			9%
Checked – no order			7%



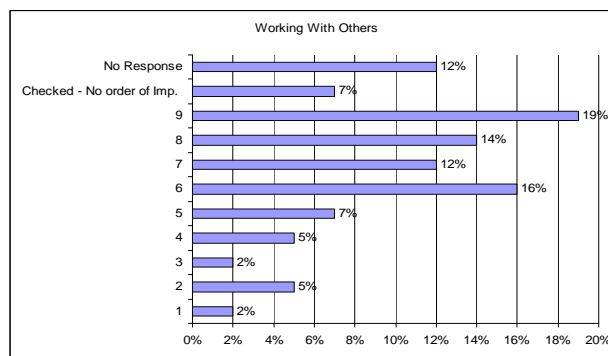
Oral Communication

#1	9%	#6	5%
#2	9%	#7	12%
#3	7%	#8	7%
#4	16%	#9	2%
#5	14%		
No Response			9%
Checked – no order			9%

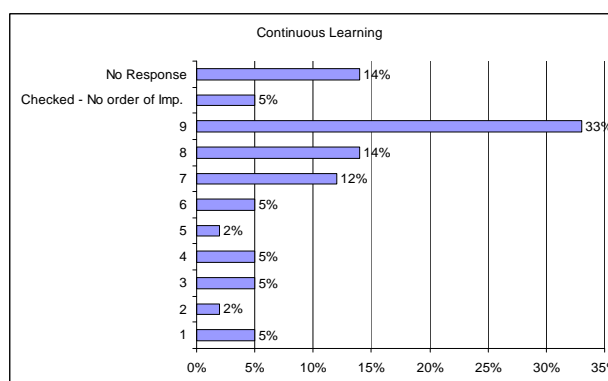


Working With Others

#1	2%	#6	16%
#2	5%	#7	12%
#3	2%	#8	14%
#4	5%	#9	19%
#5	7%		
No Response			12%
Checked – no order			7%

Continuous Learning

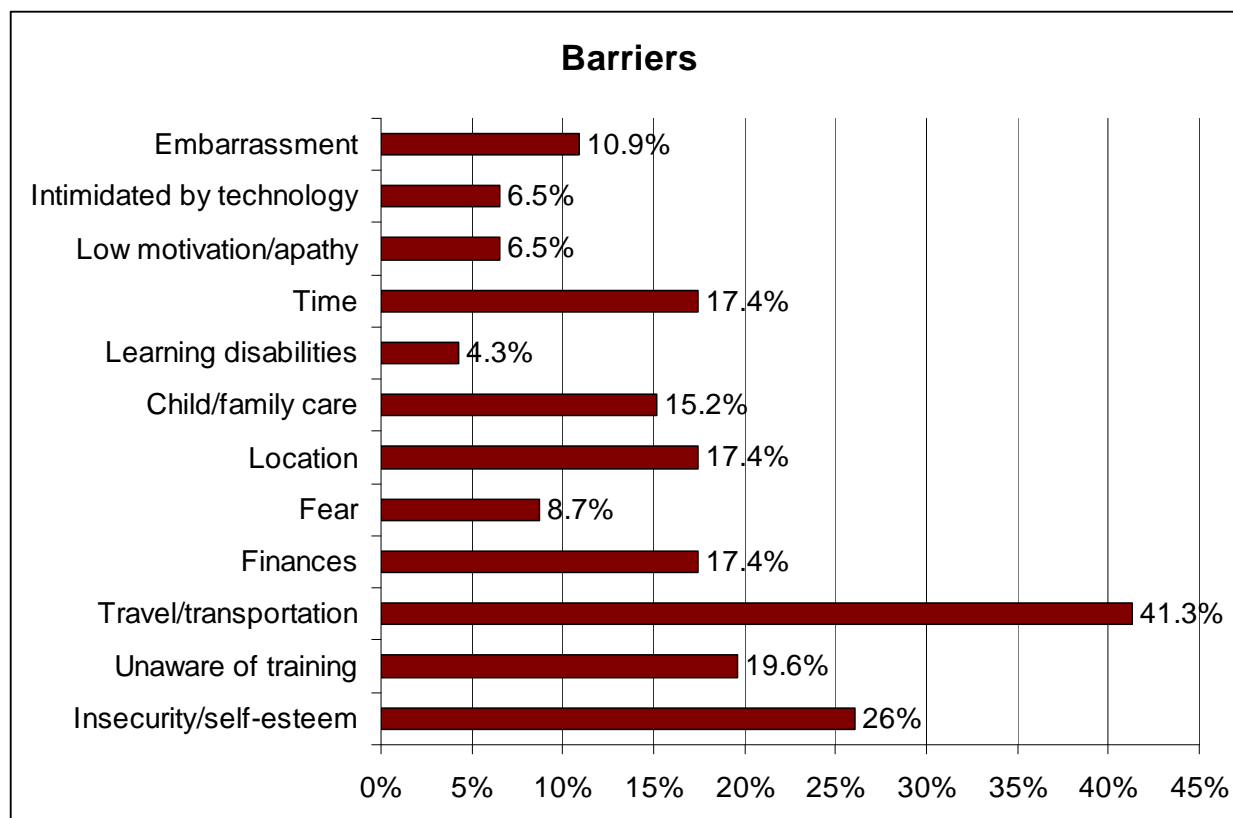
#1	5%	#6	5%
#2	2%	#7	12%
#3	5%	#8	14%
#4	5%	#9	33%
#5	2%		
No Response			14%
Checked – no order			5%

Essential Skills by percentage of overall course interest

- Reading text rated top choice for level of importance 63%
- Oral Communication and Computer Use rated second choice 9%
- Writing rated first choice in #2 rating 30%
- Numeracy rated second choice in #2 rating 16%
- Continuous Learning rated least important - #9 rating 33%
- Reading, Writing, and Numeracy rated top choices that tutors choose for adult learners as indicated by respondents.

Question 6. What do you think would prevent adult learners from taking advantage of Essential Skills training? Please list as many reasons as you can.

46 responded out of a total of 46: 100% response rate



Main barriers identified (to nearest percent):

1. Travel and transportation – 41%
2. Insecurity and self-esteem issues – 26%
3. Unawareness of training available – 20%
4. Finances, Location of training, Time – 17%

Responses indicate that one-to-one tutoring would work best with adult learners. This type of tutoring, which could be confidential, would be at a mutually agreed-upon time and place to accommodate the lifestyles of both tutor and learner.

“The adult learner may be scared to venture into something ‘new’. May perceive himself/ herself to be inadequate – e.g. not smart enough to engage in the continuous learning process, especially if younger people are present”

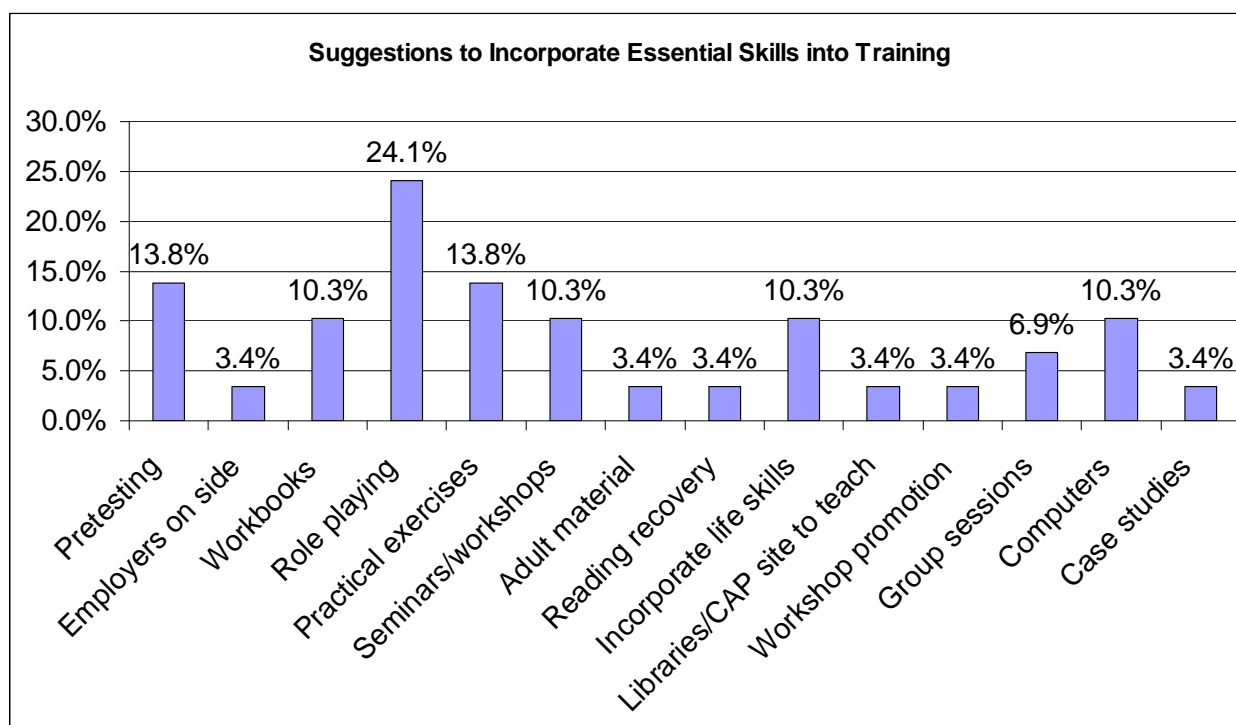
“I think the fear of the unknown, such as what exactly they are getting involved in. Also, being unfamiliar with the options available to them”

Question 7. Please list suggestions on how you would incorporate Essential Skills into training.

29 responded out of a total of 46: 63% response rate

Suggestions indicated were:

Pretesting Em ployers on side
 Workbooks Role playing
 Practical exercises Se minars/workshops
 Adult material Reading recovery
 Computers Incorporate life skills (cooking, shopping, etc.)
 Workshop promotion Case studies
 Use libraries/CAP site to teach Group sessions



Role playing was the number one suggestion. The main theme identified by responses is that incorporation would depend on the needs of the student being tutored.

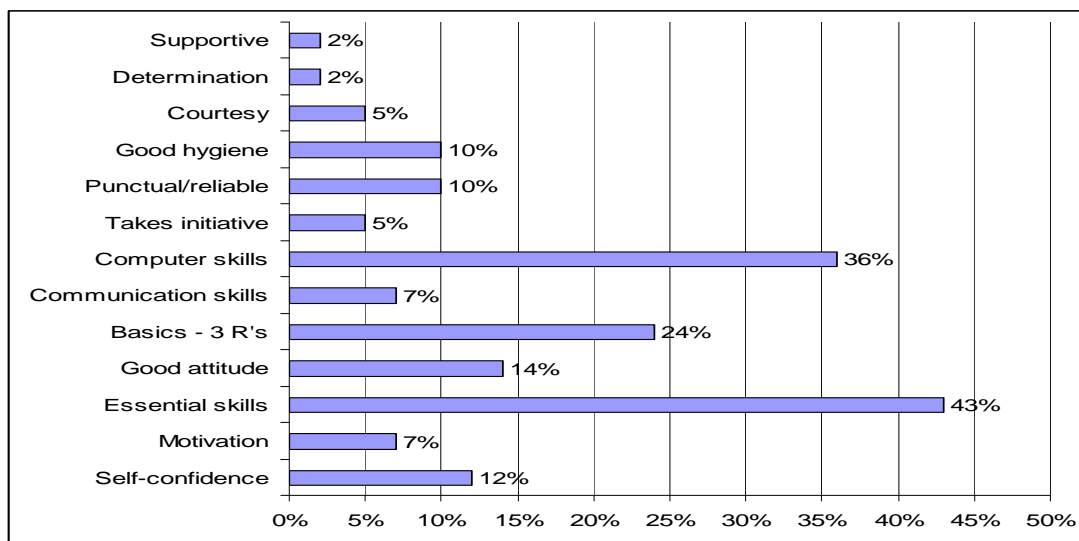
“Student workbooks, role playing, discussions, lots of practical work – writing resumes/forms/public speaking”

“Through communication with the learner. Through choosing materials that would reinforce the skills needed”

“Trips to the grocery and department stores, use of flyers for price comparison, how to use ATMs, teaching to read road signs and labels”

Question 8. What skills or characteristics do you consider important assets for adult learners to possess in order to find gainful employment in today's workplace? Why? Please list in order of importance.

29 responded out of a total of 46: 63% response rate



Essential Skills were rated as number one at 43%

Computer skills rated second at 36% (this number is not included in the top category - Essential Skills, 43% - which listed *all Essential Skills* by respondents). Communication skills were also rated separate from the top category. Taking this into consideration, overall ratings for computer use and oral communication would be higher.

Why skills or characteristics are considered important assets for adult learners to possess in order to find gainful employment:

- Employers appreciate employees who do not need constant supervision
- Being motivated makes employees want to learn
- To understand information and training
- To develop self-worth and a strong financial base
- Computer skills are required for most jobs for research and production
- Comprehension in order to understand and communicate effectively
- Presentable and having a positive attitude.

(Although respondents answered the first part of the question, many did not elaborate on “why” the skills or characteristics indicated were considered important assets.)

“Presentable appearance, positive outlook, ability to express themselves and interact positively. [This] will enhance the learner’s position to gain employment because first impressions matter!”

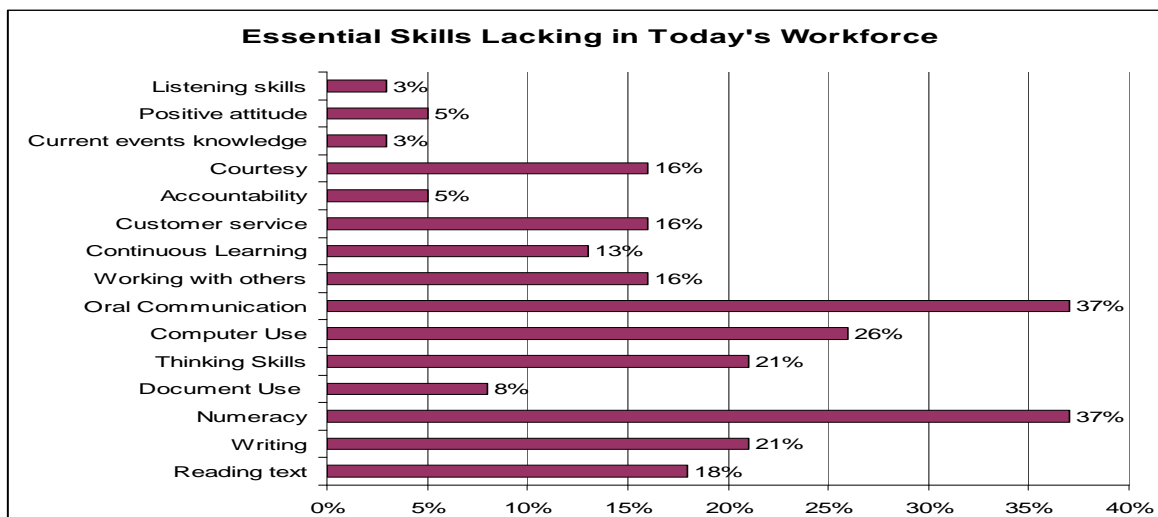
“I believe all of the Essential Skills are needed and all are of equal importance. Learning is a multifaceted strategy that needs to be addressed thoroughly”

Question 9. What lack of Essential Skills have you observed in today's workforce that could be addressed through Essential Skills development training?

38 responded out of a total of 46: 83% response rate

Responses	# of times listed of 38	Percentage
Reading text	7	18%
Writing 8		21%
Numeracy 14		37%
Document Use	3	8%
Thinking Skills	8	21%
Computer Use	10	26%
Oral Communication	14	37%
Working with others	6	16%
Continuous Learning	5	13%
Customer service	6	16%
Accountability 2		5%
Courtesy 6		16%
Current events knowledge	1	3%
Positive attitude	2	5%
Listening skills	1	3%

Other responses were indicated to this question in addition to the Nine Essential Skills. The number one rated lack of Essential Skills was Oral Communication and Numeracy. Computer Use rated second in Essential Skills lacking.



“In today's workplace many workers, especially recent school graduates, are very proficient in technology skills but very lacking in literacy skills such as grammar, spelling, reading, etc.”

“There is a general lack of customer service skills/accountability and common courtesy in today's workforce that can be attributed to lack of said skills by the management sector”

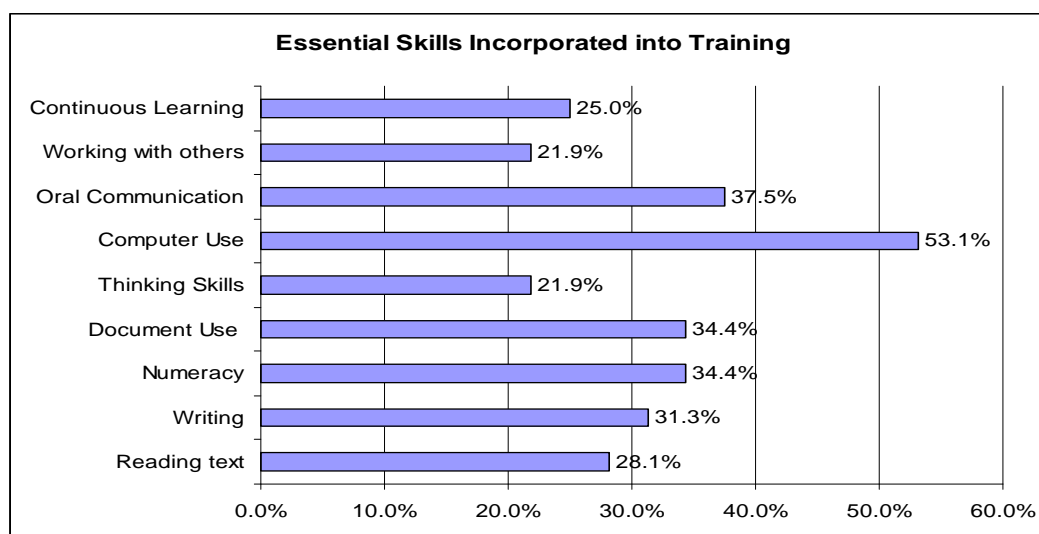
Question 10. As a tutor, what Essential Skills would you like to see incorporated into the present training program?

32 responded out of a total of 46: 70% response rate

Responses	# of times listed of 32	Percentage
Reading text	9	28.1%
Writing 10		31.3%
Numeracy 11		34.4%
Document Use	11	34.4%
Thinking Skills	7	21.9%
Computer Use	17	53.1%
Oral Communication	12	37.5%
Working with others	7	21.9%
Continuous Learning	8	25.0%
*Answers do not include Essential Skills	9 28.1%	

*Other responses were:

Life skills, good human relation skills, practical applications, role playing, coping skills, sensitivity awareness, job etiquette, and dependent on the individual learners' needs.



Respondents would like to see Essential Skills incorporated into the current training program as indicated. The main Essential Skills rated in order of importance were:

1. Computer Use
2. Oral Communication
3. Numeracy and Document Use

“If you are to prepare an unprepared person for the workforce, I think they’ll need all of these [Essential Skills] to a greater or lesser degree depending on the job requirements”

“I would like to see real life situations incorporated into the present training program. For example – balancing a chequebook, reading a recipe”

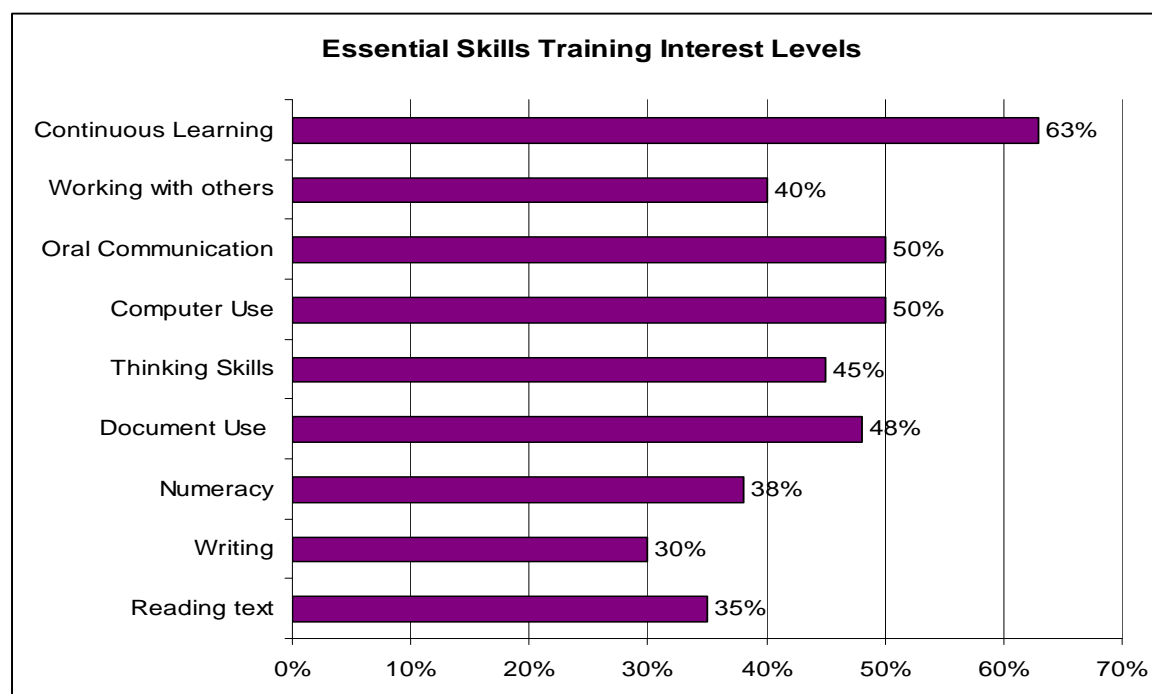
Question 11. Would you, as a tutor, take advantage of Essential Skills training if it were offered? Check all that apply.

40 responded out of a total of 46: % response rate

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Times listed</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	35	87.5%
No	5	12.5%

Responses	# of times listed of 40	Percentage
Reading text	14	35%
Writing 12		30%
Numeracy 15		38%
Document Use	19	48%
Thinking Skills	18	45%
Computer Use	20	50%
Oral Communication	20	50%
Working with others	16	40%
Continuous Learning	25	63%

- All respondents indicated they would take Essential Skills training.
- The highest interest was in Continuous Learning at 63%.
- Second in rating were Computer Use and Oral Communication at 50%.
- Document Use followed closely at 48%.



Question 12. Comments

29 responded out of a total of 46: 63% response rate

Respondents offered a wide array of comments including good luck with and praise for the program, concern about overloading volunteers, need for computer skills, necessity of business involvement, interest in taking training/upgrading skills, and the need for essential skills training for adult learners.

“Many adult learners lack the confidence to come forward to learn the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy. Some are ashamed. If you incorporated other skills in the current program, more adult learners would avail of the program and then the distinction between those that need the ‘basic’ skills of reading, writing and numeracy would not be so obvious”

“An adult needs to be able to think for themselves and employers appreciate employees who do not need constant supervision”

“I believe essential skills training is needed in adult learning to aid in a continuous learning process and build a confident individual and a strong workforce”

Findings from Interview Questionnaires – Trainers

A total of six questionnaires were submitted by current and past trainers throughout the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. An analysis of data collected follows.

Part A. As Tutors

Question 1. As a tutor, are you teaching Essential Skills? If yes, which ones? How?

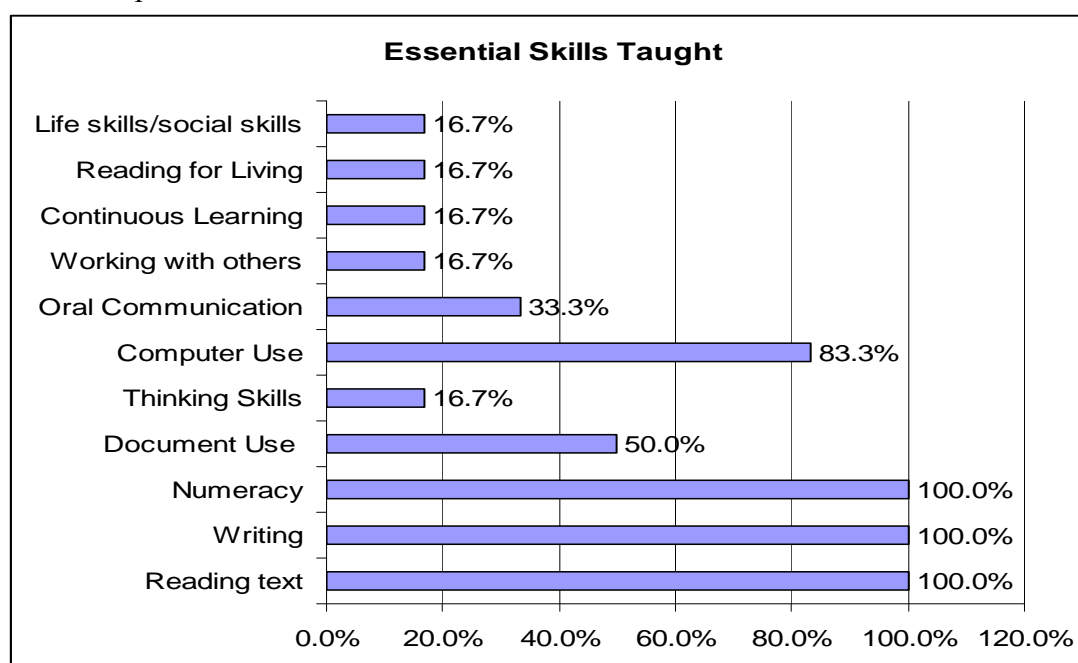
6 responded out of a total of 6: 100 % response rate

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Times listed</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	6	100%

Responses	# of times listed of 6	Percentage
Reading text	6	100.0%
Writing 6		100.0%
Numeracy 6		100.0%
Document Use	3	50.0%
Thinking Skills	2	33.3%
Computer Use	5	83.3%
Oral Communication	2	33.3%
Working with others	1	16.7%
Continuous Learning	1	16.7%
Reading for Living	1	16.7%
Life skills/social skills	1	16.7%

The top four Essential Skills being taught:

- Reading, Writing, Numeracy – 100%
- Computer Use – 83.3%



Trends identified in how Essential Skills are being taught by respondents:

- *Reading for Living* lessons in LWRS
- By developing literacy material around essential skills
- Depends on the needs of the student

“Real life situations that my student(s) have problems with, e.g. writing cheques, application forms”

“Most students want to increase their computer skills and numeracy as well as reading and writing”

Question 2. Do you have or have you had adult learners that could benefit from training in Essential Skills? If yes, which essential skills?

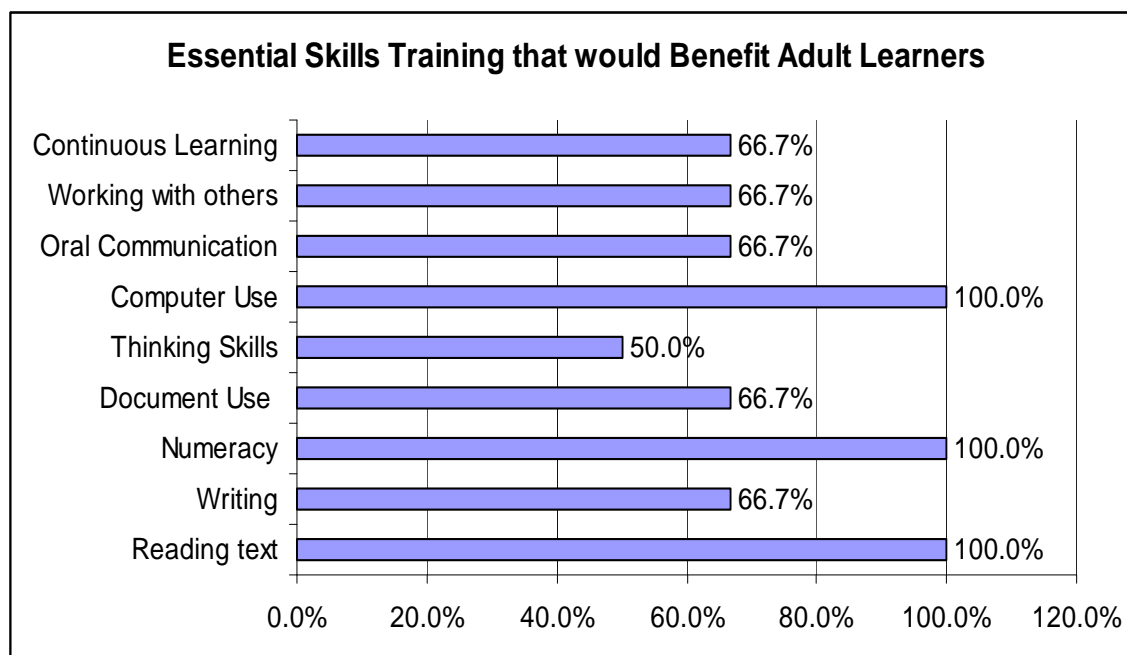
6 responded out of a total of 6: 100% response rate

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Times listed</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	5	83.3%
No	0	0.0%
N/A	1	16.7%

Responses	# of times listed of 6	Percentage
Reading text	5	100.0%
Writing 4		66.7%
Numeracy 5		100.0%
Document Use	4	66.7%
Thinking Skills	3	50.0%
Computer Use	5	100.0%
Oral Communication	4	66.7%
Working with others	4	66.7%
Continuous Learning	4	66.7%

All respondents (100%) indicated that adult learners could benefit from Essential Skills’ training in Reading Text, Numeracy, and Computer Use.

The majority indicated that adult learners could benefit from training in all of the nine essential skills, with Thinking Skills being the lowest at 50%.



Question 3. NLLLC currently offers Basic Tutor Training, as well as English as Second Language (ESL) Training for its tutors and members. These training programs focus primarily on providing tools for tutors to work with low-level readers; however, individuals who seek our services have needs beyond this focus. **What gaps do you see in the present system?**

6 responded out of a total of 6: 100 % response rate

Trends identified were as follows:

- Help diagnosing learning disabilities
- Need for Train the Trainer sessions in Essential Skills
- Need to update current material – ‘Reading for Living’
- Lessons in computer use
- ESL students
- Finances
- Help with easement from one-on-one tutoring to classroom setting

As indicated by the responses to this question, there is a need for new/updated material for Laubach training, which would include essential skills.

“We sometimes need the services of a Learning Disabilities worker to diagnose problems some of our students have or may have”

“We need to update – re-write ‘Reading for Living’ for today’s world”

“There should be something in place [at the college] to ease students into a classroom setting- some sort of orientation program with a tutor present”

Question 4. What tools (resource materials) for teaching Essential Skills do you need that would be of use to you in your tutoring?

5 responded out of a total of 6: 83% response rate

Responses were as follows:

- Essential Skills similar to Laubach Way to Reading
- Computers
- Lessons for each of the Essential Skills – in levels 1-3 of LWR
- Any ideas available
- Inexpensive materials
- Duplicate sets of books for those tutoring ABE, etc.

Conclusion: There is a need for computers and student-friendly Essential Skills material.

“A series of books similar to LWR but devoted entirely to essential skills”

Question 5. Which courses in Essential Skills would you be interested in having your adult learner(s) avail of? Number 1 – 9 in order of importance (1 being most important).

6 responded out of a total of 6: 100% response rate

Essential skills in order of importance for adult learners’ course interest as indicated by trainers (#1 being most important)

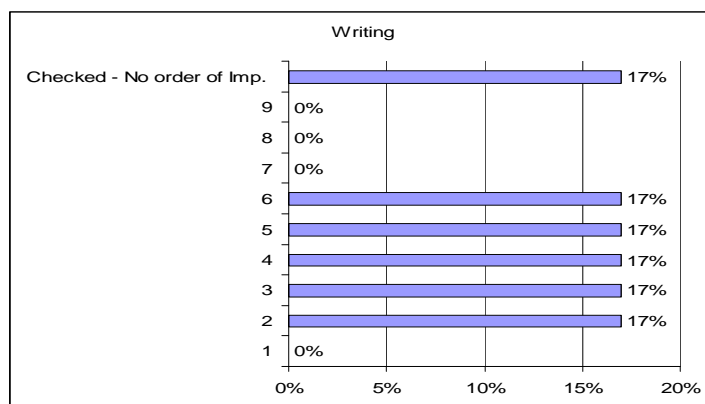
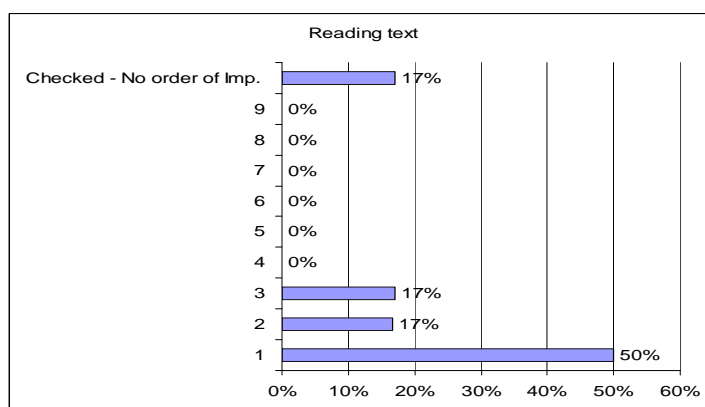
Reading Text

#1	50%	#6	0%
#2	17%	#7	0%
#3	17%	#8	0%
#4	0%	#9	0%
#5	0%		
Checked – no order			17%

Reading Text rated in the top three for level of importance for course interest.

Writing

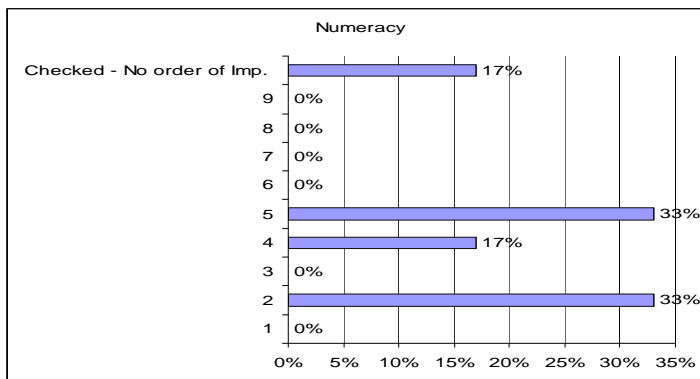
#1	0%	#6	17%
#2	17%	#7	0%
#3	17%	#8	0%
#4	17%	#9	0%
#5	17%		
Checked – no order			17%



Numeracy

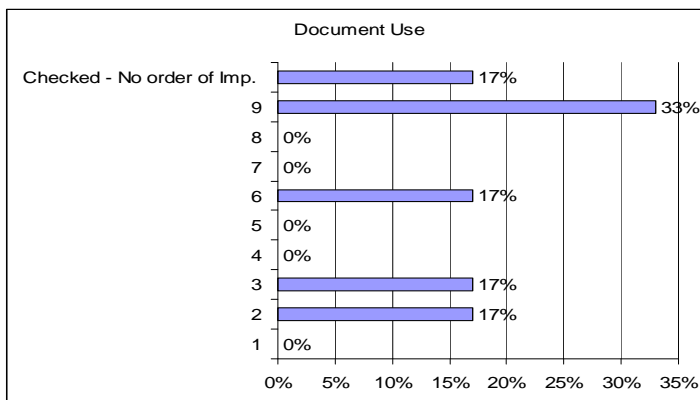
#1	0%	#6	0%
#2	33%	#7	0%
#3	0%	#8	0%
#4	17%	#9	0%
#5	33%		
Checked – no order			17%

Numeracy received top rating in #2 level.



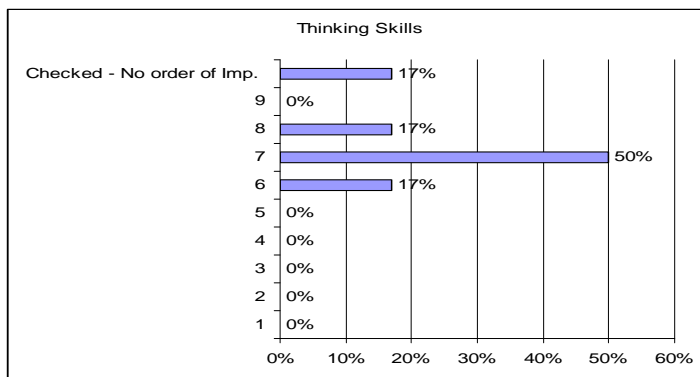
Document Use

#1	0%	#6	17%
#2	17%	#7	0%
#3	17%	#8	0%
#4	0%	#9	33%
#5	0%		
Checked – no order			17%



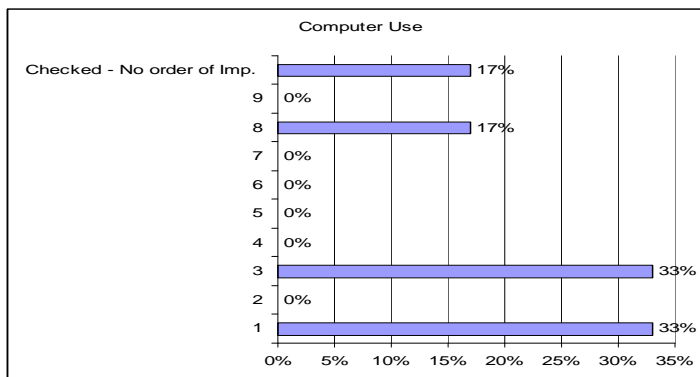
Thinking Skills

#1	0%	#6	17%
#2	0%	#7	33%
#3	0%	#8	17%
#4	0%	#9	0%
#5	0%		
Checked – no order			17%



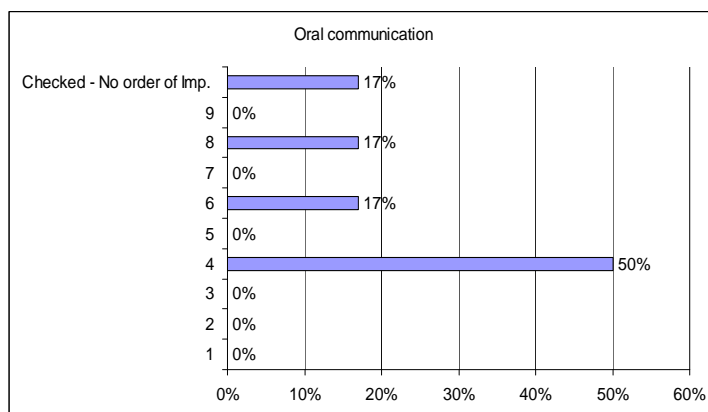
Computer Use

#1	33%	#6	0%
#2	0%	#7	0%
#3	33%	#8	17%
#4	0%	#9	0%
#5	0%		
Checked – no order			17%

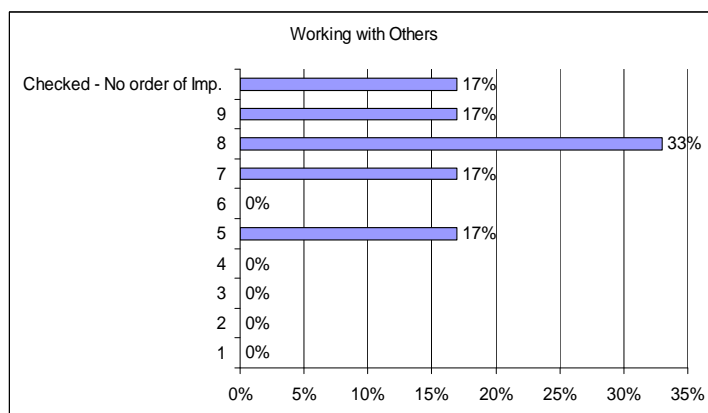


Oral Communication

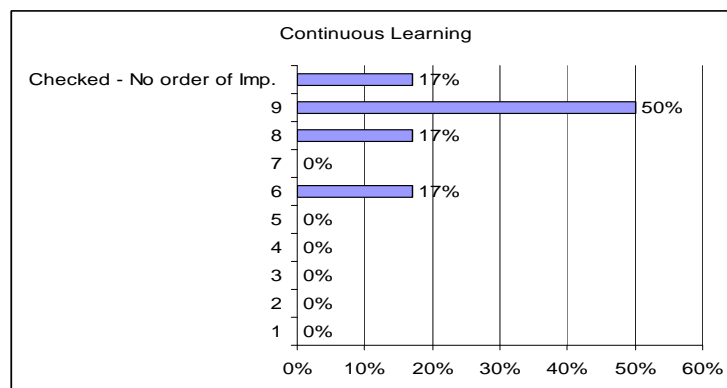
#1	0%	#6	17%
#2	0%	#7	0%
#3	0%	#8	17%
#4	50%	#9	0%
#5	0%		
Checked – no order			17%

Working with Others

#1	0%	#6	0%
#2	0%	#7	17%
#3	0%	#8	33%
#4	0%	#9	17%
#5	17%		
Checked – no order			17%

Continuous Learning

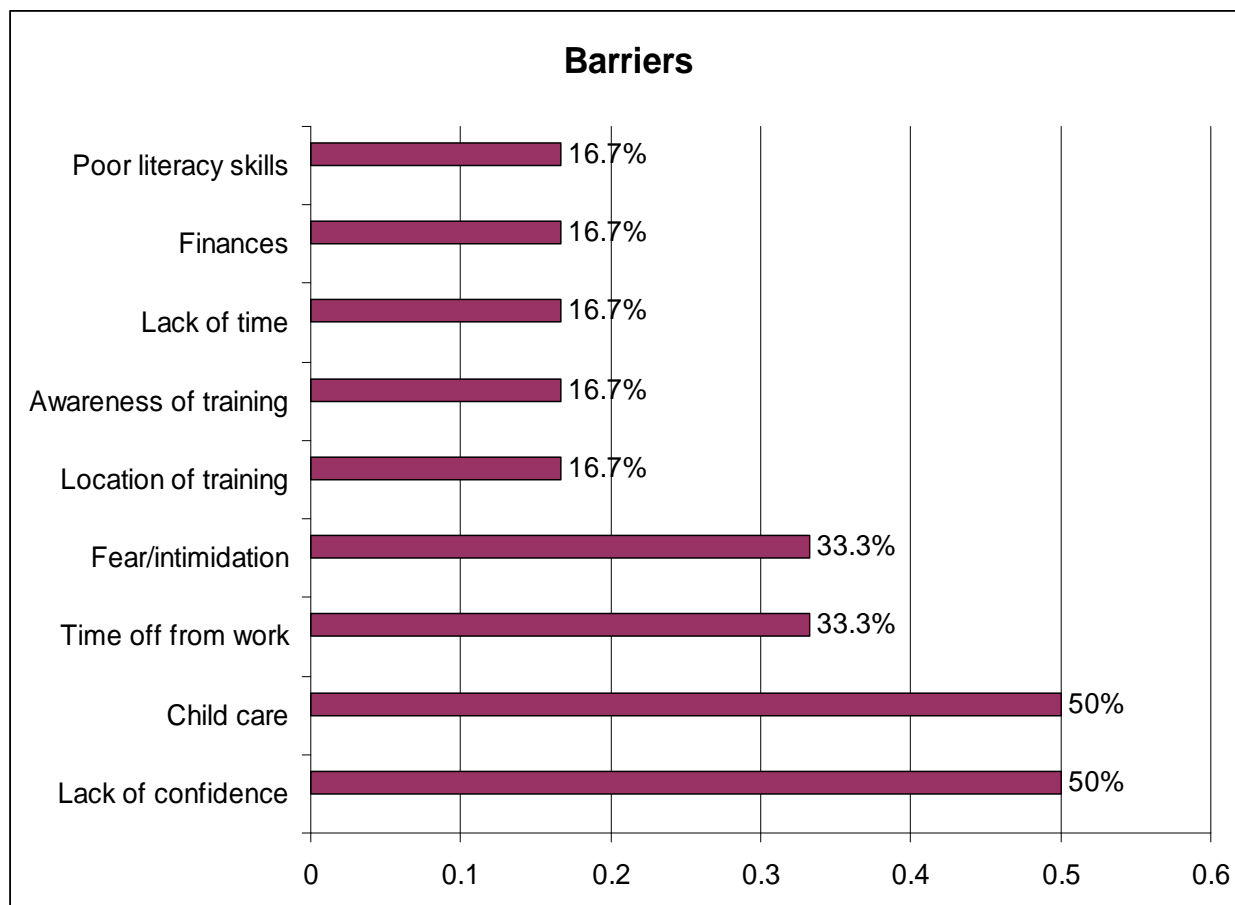
#1	0%	#6	17%
#2	0%	#7	0%
#3	0%	#8	17%
#4	0%	#9	50%
#5	0%		
Checked – no order			17%

Essential Skills by percentage of overall course interest

- Reading text rated top choice for level of importance 50%
- Computer Use rated second choice in level of importance 33%
- Numeracy rated first choice in #2 rating 33%
- Writing and Document Use rated second choice in #2 rating 17%

Question 6. What do you think would prevent adult learners from taking advantage of Essential Skills training? Please list as many reasons as you can.

6 responded out of a total of 6: 100% response rate



Main barriers identified:

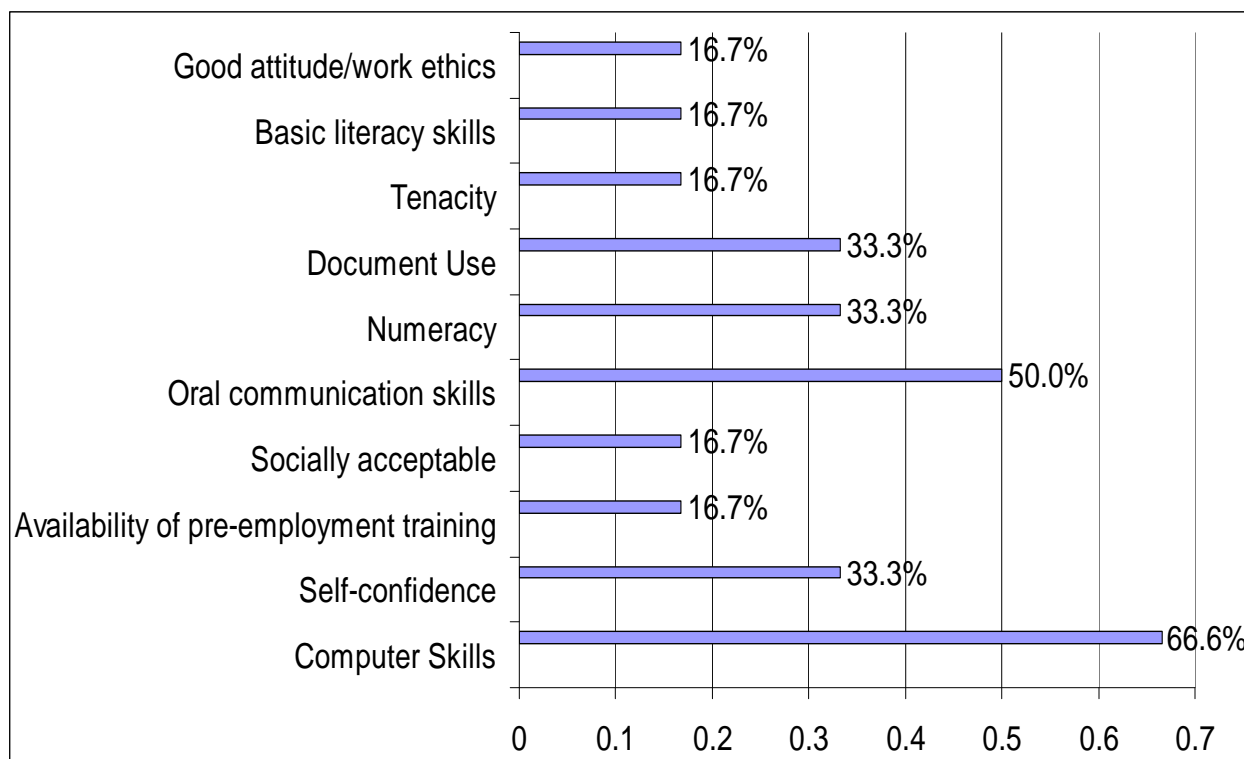
1. Lack of confidence and child care issues – 50%
2. Time off from work and fear/intimidation – 33.3%

As a result of these identified barriers, it would seem that one-to-one tutoring would work best with adult learners, the main reason being that tutoring would be at a mutually agreed upon time and place to accommodate the lifestyles of both tutor and learner.

“Lack of confidence in themselves to come forward”

Question 7. What skills or characteristics do you consider important assets for adult learners to possess in order to find gainful employment in today's workplace? Why? Please list in order of importance.

6 responded out of a total of 6: 100% response rate



As indicated by these respondents, the most important skills/characteristics for gainful employment today in order of importance are:

1. Computer skills – 67%
2. Oral Communication skills – 50%
3. Document use, numeracy, and self-confidence – 33%

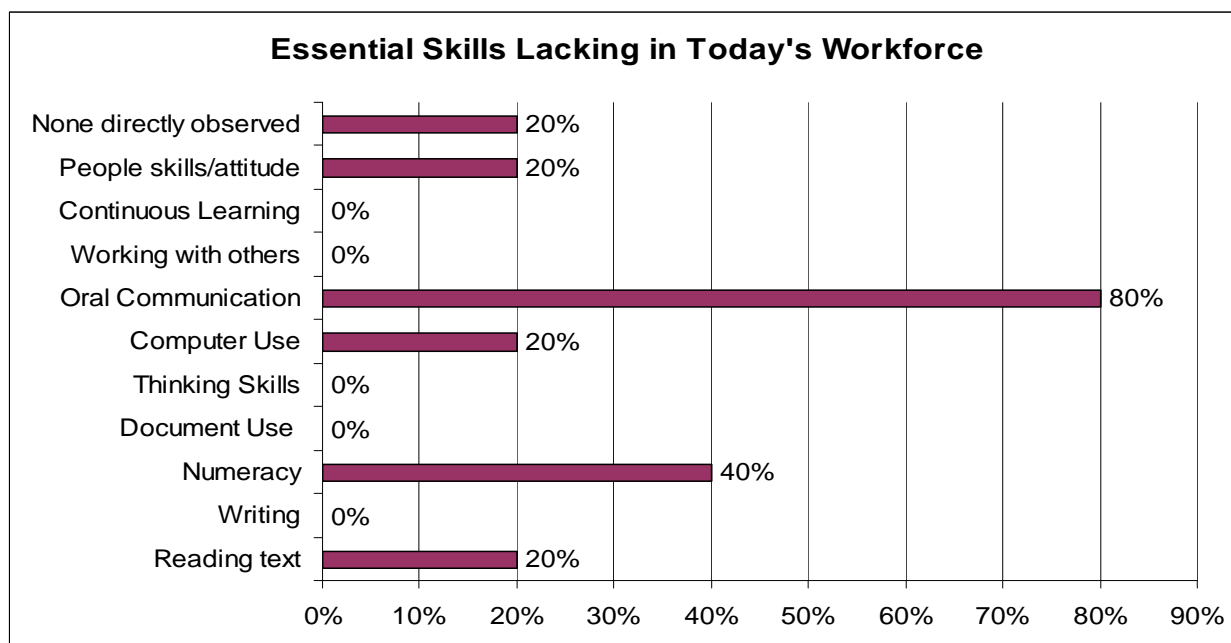
“The one most needed is confidence, but of course, this grows as essential skills are gained, improved, and demonstrated. Computer use is lacking in older workers, but is essential in most modern workplaces. Document use is also lacking in many workers of all ages and work types, but is essential in ensuring a safe workplace”

Question 8. What lack of Essential Skills have you observed in today's workforce that could be addressed through Essential Skills development training?

5 responded out of a total of 6: 83% response rate

Responses	# of times listed of 5	Percentage
Reading text	1	20%
Writing	0	0%
Numeracy 2		40%
Document Use	0	0%
Thinking Skills	0	0%
Computer Use	1	20%
Oral Communication	4	80%
Working with others	0	0%
Continuous Learning	0	0%
People skills/attitude	1	10%
None directly observed	1	10%

As indicated, the number one lack of essential skills indicated by respondents was Oral Communication. Numeracy was second in essential skills lacking.



“Oral Communication – e.g. checkout person not saying ‘Thank you’ or ‘Have a nice day’ – just being polite”

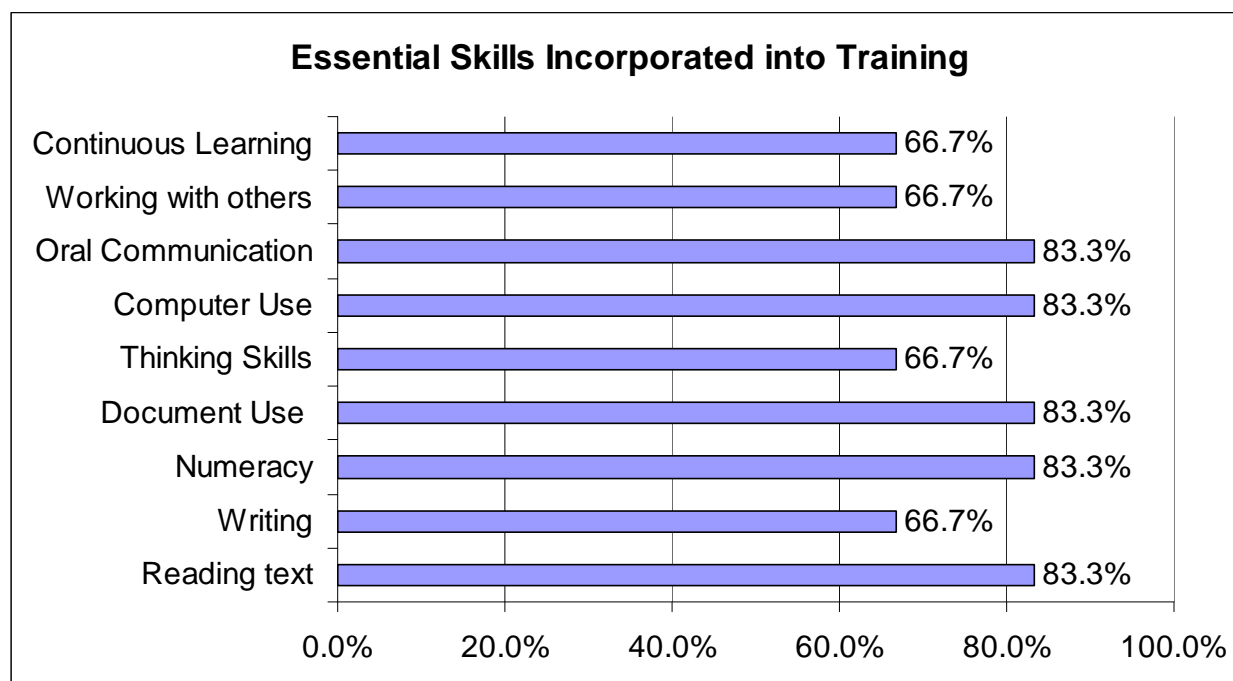
“Numeracy – cashiers, waitresses having difficulty with cash”

Question 9. As a tutor, what Essential Skills would you like to see incorporated into the present training program?

6 responded out of a total of 6: 100% response rate

Responses	# of times listed of 6	Percentage
Reading text	5	83.3%
Writing 4		66.7%
Numeracy 5		83.3%
Document Use	5	83.3%
Thinking Skills	4	66.7%
Computer Use	5	83.3%
Oral Communication	5	83.3%
Working with others	4	66.7%
Continuous Learning	4	66.7%
* Multiculturalism	1	16.7%

*Although not an Essential Skill, the researcher deemed the significance of this response merited inclusion and should be taken into consideration in developing curriculum.



As indicated by the high response rate in the chart, respondents would like to see all of the nine Essential Skills incorporated into the current training program.

Oral communication, Computer Use, Document Use, Numeracy, and Reading Text received the highest rating.

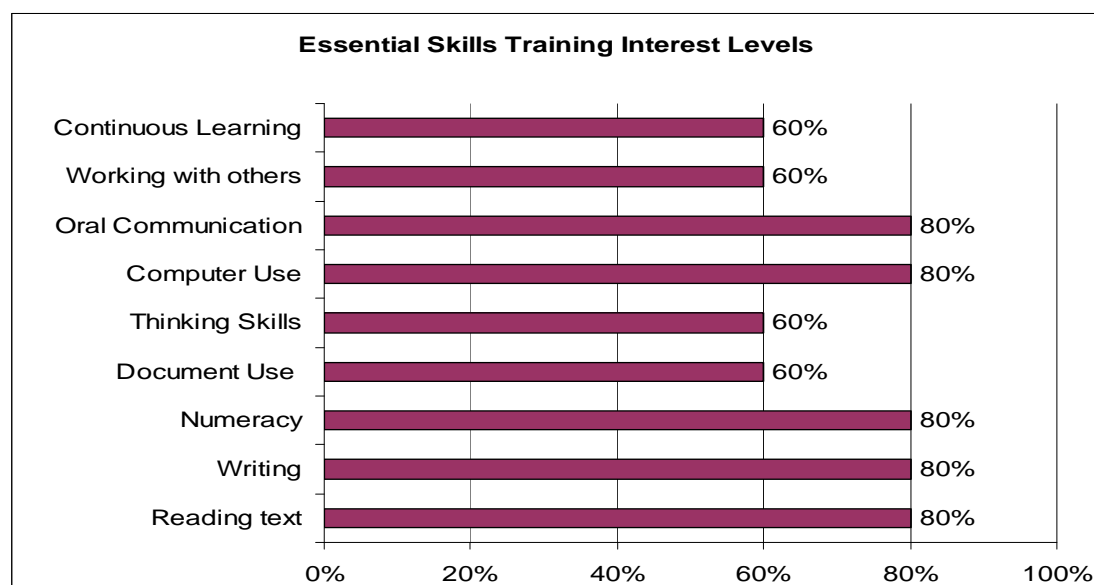
Question 10. Would you, as a tutor, take advantage of Essential Skills training if it were offered? If yes, which Essential Skills?

5 responded out of a total of 6: 83% response rate

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Times listed</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	5	83.3%
No	0	0%

Responses	# of times listed of 5	Percentage
Reading text	4	80%
Writing 4		80%
Numeracy 4		80%
Document Use	3	60%
Thinking Skills	3	60%
Computer Use	4	80%
Oral Communication	4	80%
Working with others	3	60%
Continuous Learning	3	60%
Practical application, depending on student needs	1 20%	

All who responded to this question indicated that they would take Essential Skills training if it were offered. The highest interest was in Oral Communication, Computer Use, Numeracy, Writing and Reading. One person responded that training taken would depend on the needs of the student.



Part B. As Trainers

Question 1. As a trainer, are you teaching Essential Skills in your current training program? If yes, which Essential Skills are you teaching? How?

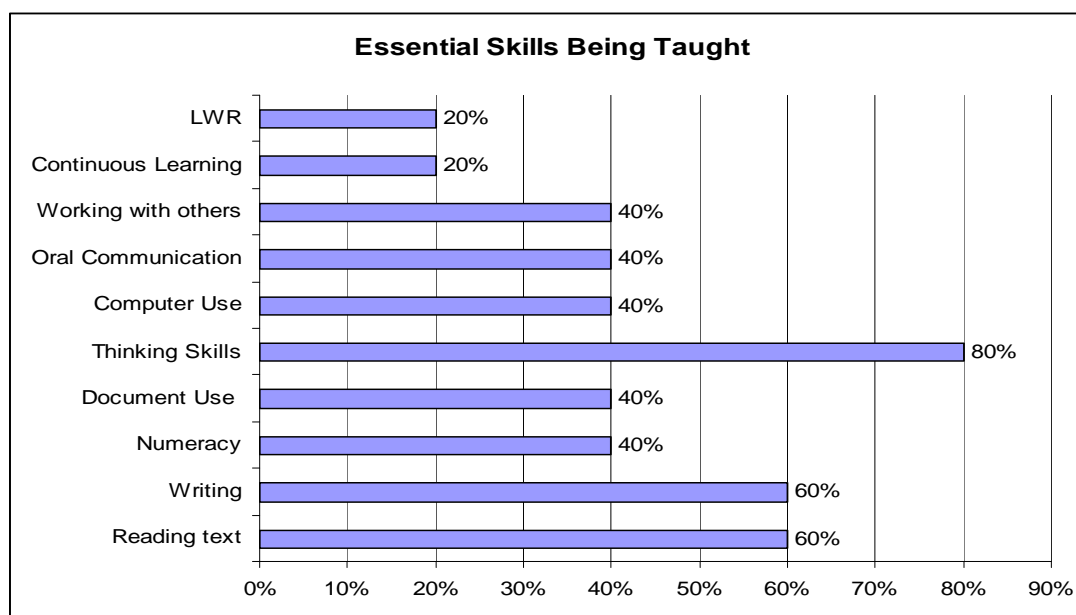
6 responded out of a total of 6: 100% response rate

	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Times listed</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	5		83.3%
No	1		16.7%

Responses	# of times listed of 5	Percentage
Reading text	3	60%
Writing 3		60%
Numeracy 2		40%
Document Use	2	40%
Thinking Skills	4	80%
Computer Use	2	40%
Oral Communication	2	40%
Working with others	2	40%
Continuous Learning	1	20%
Laubach Way to Reading	1	20%

Trainers indicated that Thinking Skills is the main essential skill they teach, with Reading Text and Writing rating second.

- Thinking Skills – 80%
- Reading Text, Writing – 60%



Question 2. What tools for teaching Essential Skills do you need that would be important for you to use in your training?

5 responded out of a total of 6: 83.3% response rate

Responses indicated:

- Computers
- Diagnose learning disabilities
- Real life situations
- Updated training videos
- CD/DVD
- Internet access
- Power point/screen/equipment
- Inexpensive books/materials
- Audio books
- GPS
- ESL & other (French, Spanish) material

As indicated by the response to this question, tutors and trainers are becoming more in tune with keeping up with technology and with practical application of essential skills. The fact that adult learners are demanding such is a determining factor in what training the trainer and tutor require in order to meet the needs of older adults and adult learners in general.

Question 3. Would you be interested in assisting in the development of a new training program that would include Essential Skills development?

5 responded out of a total of 6: 83.3% response rate

	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Times listed</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	4		80%
No	1		20%

If yes, please check one or both of the following and provide contact information.

- Interested in giving input into essential skills
- Interested in serving on the committee to develop the training program

All who responded indicated “**Yes**” to both choices.

Question 4. Additional comments.

“Employers need to demonstrate/explain their needs”

“Practical – hands on experiences”

“My involvement will be determined by amount of time involved”

“I would really like to participate in a ‘train the trainer’ session on essential skills”

Findings from Interview Questionnaires – Businesses

A total of 31 questionnaires were submitted by representatives of organizations from across the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. An analysis of data collected follows.

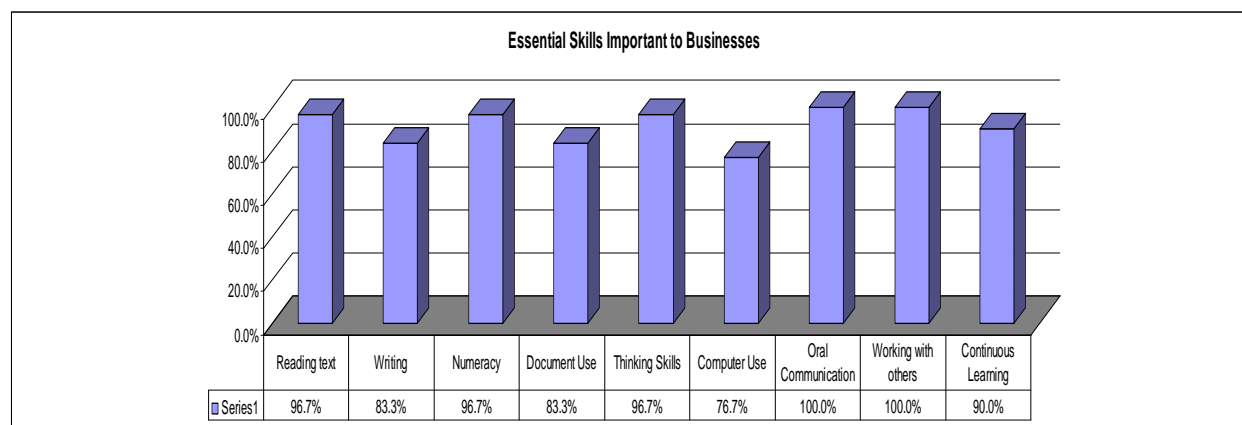
Question 1. Which Essential Skills are important to you in your business?

30 responded out of a total of 31: 98% response rate

Responses	# of times listed out of 30	Percentage
Reading text	29	96.7%
Writing 25		83.3%
Numeracy 29		96.7%
Document Use	25	83.3%
Thinking Skills	29	96.7%
Computer Use	23	76.7%
Oral Communication	30	100.0%
Working with others	30	100.0 %
Continuous Learning	27	90.0%

As evidenced in the above table and the chart below, **all** Essential Skills are of high importance to respondents, rating in the following order.

1. Working with Others and Oral Communication - Response rate of 100%
2. Reading, Numeracy, and Thinking Skills – Response Rate of 96.7%
3. Continuous Learning – Response Rate of 90%
4. Writing and Document Use – Response Rate of 83.3%
5. Computer Use – Response Rate of 76.7%



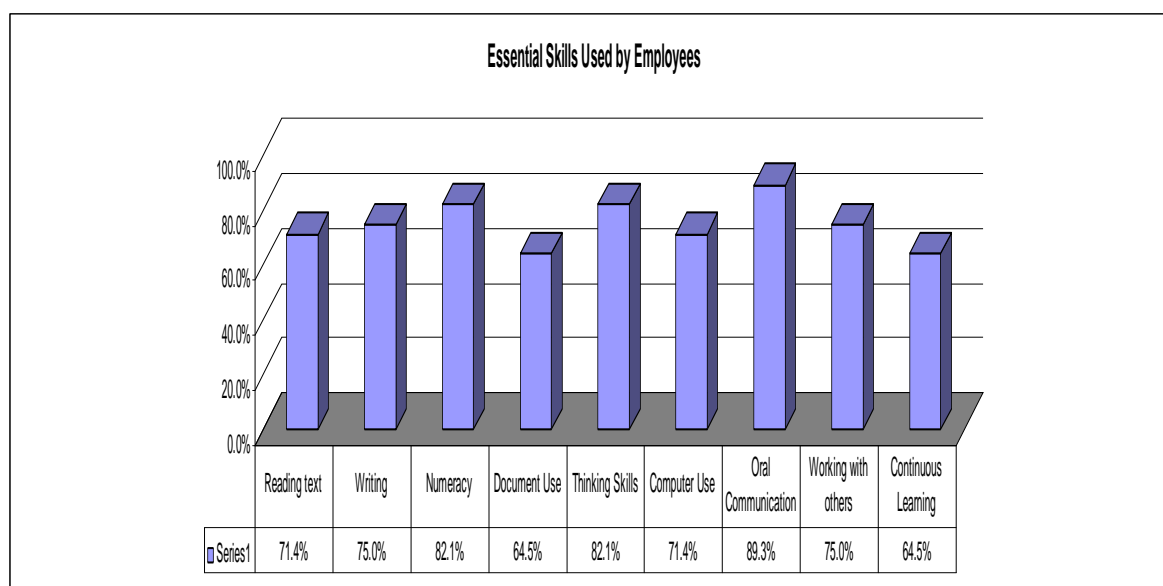
Important note: Although Computer Use was given the lowest rating, the accuracy of this response is questionable. Four of those who did **not** check Computer Use are businesses who have websites – one is a car dealership, one an art studio, one a retail business, and one is a hotel. It's possible that they did not consider hotel bookings/check-ins, bookkeeping, website product information/promotion, and use of cash registers as Computer Use.

Question 2. Which Essential Skills do your employees use? How?

28 responded out of a total of 31: 90% response rate

Responses	# of times listed out of 28	Percentage
Reading text	20	71.4%
Writing 21		75.0%
Numeracy 23		82.1%
Document Use	19	64.5%
Thinking Skills	23	82.1%
Computer Use	20	71.4%
Oral Communication	25	89.3%
Working with others	21	75.0%
Continuous Learning	19	64.5%

All nine Essential Skills were reported as highly used, with Oral Communication being most used.



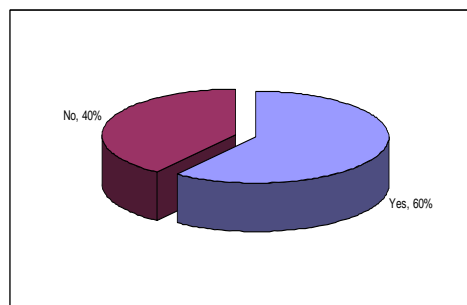
All nine Essential Skills are required at different times and different levels depending on the job situation. Essential skills are used in a variety of ways and on a daily basis in everyday situations such as dealing with the public, using reservation forms, serving customers, following instructions, solving problems, taking measurements, and general hands-on work.

“They use them in everyday situations, whether it is dealing with a supervisor or a customer – how to stock shelves, how to greet people, how to follow instructions, common sense”

**Question 3. Do you have employees that could benefit from training in Essential Skills?
If yes, which Essential Skills?**

30 responded out of a total of 31: 98% response rate

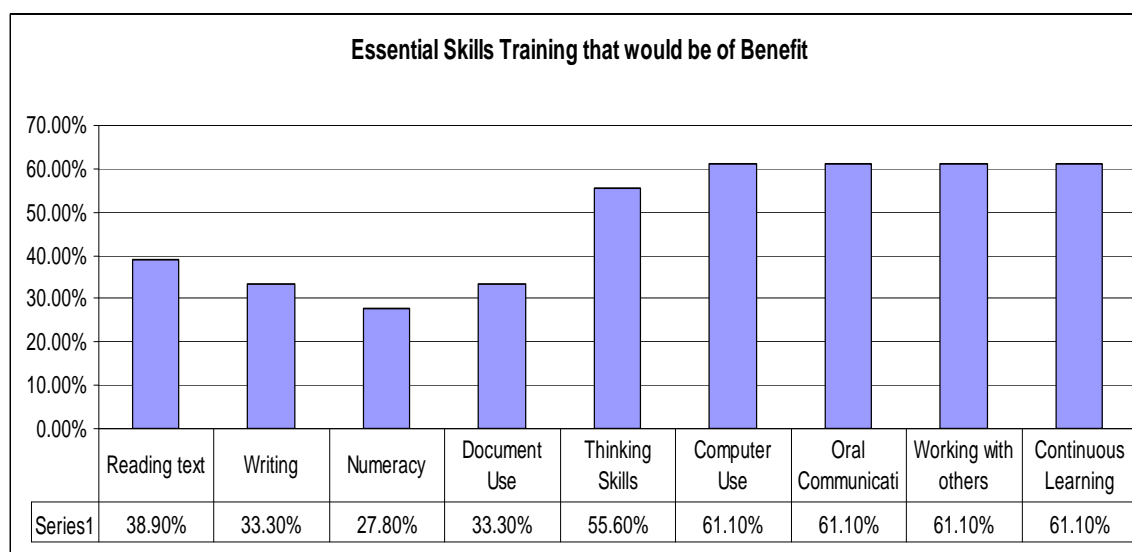
<u>Responses</u>	<u>Times listed</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	18	60%
No	12	40%



Of those who responded “yes”, the following choices were indicated:

Responses	# of times listed of 18	Percentage
Reading text	7	38.9%
Writing 6		33.3%
Numeracy 5		27.8%
Document Use	6	33.3%
Thinking Skills	10	55.6%
Computer Use	11	61.1%
Oral Communication	11	61.1%
Working with others	11	61.1%
Continuous Learning	11	61.1%

All Essential Skills would be of benefit. Respondents who replied “yes” to this question indicated a preference for training in Computer Use, Oral Communication, Working with Others, and Continuous Learning. Training in Thinking Skills rated second highest.

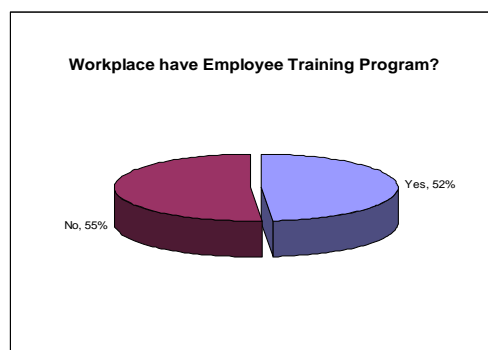


Question 4. Does your workplace have an employee training program?

29 responded out of a total of 31: 94% response rate

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Times listed</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	15	52%
No	16	55%

(Two respondents indicated Yes and No)

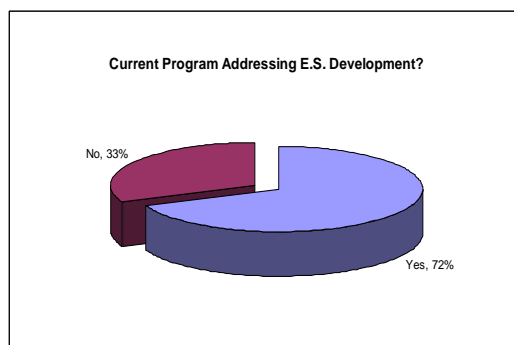


Question 5. Is the current program addressing Essential Skills development? If not, please explain.

18 responded out of a total of 31: 58% response rate

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Times listed</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	13	72%
No	6	33%

(One respondent indicated Yes and No)



Of the 18 who responded, 72% indicated the current workplace training program was addressing Essential Skills development; 33% indicated it was not.

Only three of the six who responded "no" gave an explanation.

"I rely heavily on the previous knowledge and expertise that an employee brings. The employee is provided with the necessary training for the job required but nothing extra"

"In our business, employees have made continuous learning a part of their lives"

Trends identified (those responding "No")

- Rely on prior knowledge and expertise
- Most training is hands-on and job specific

Quote from respondent who answered both "yes" and "no" to the question:

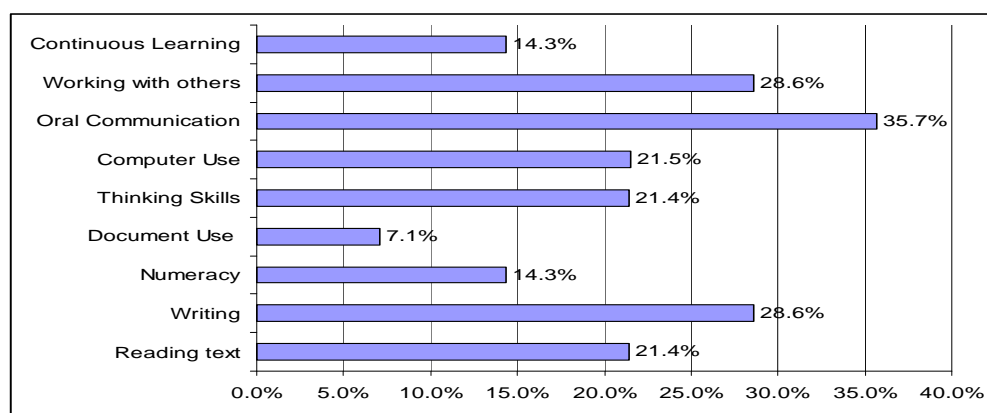
"Only to do the task to which they are assigned – stock clerk to stock shelves, meat cutter to cut meat, etc."

Question 6. Which Essential Skills are being taught to your employees? How?

14 responded out of a total of 31: 45% response rate

Responses	# of times listed of 14	Percentage
Reading text	3	21.4%
Writing 4		28.6%
Numeracy 2		14.3%
Document Use	1	7.1%
Thinking Skills	3	21.4%
Computer Use	3	21.5%
Oral Communication	5	35.7%
Working with others	4	28.6%
Continuous Learning	2	14.3%
Work-related skills	5	35.7%
Safety training	1	7.1%
Customer Service	1	7.1%
Hands-on training	2	14.3%

- There were responses other than the nine Essential Skills.
- Oral Communication and Work-related skills, which is *not* one of the nine Essential Skills, rated number one for skills most taught to employees.
- Working with Others and Writing was second in order of Essential Skills being taught.
- The least taught essential skill was Document Use.



How Essential Skills are being taught

- Information sessions
- Training manuals/videos
- Computer training program
- Hands-on training
- Teamwork
- In-house training in practical skills

“I try to assist my employees whenever it is required. There is no formalized training program”

“How to get the job done as quickly and accurately as possible. Time is money”

Question 7. NLLLC currently offers Basic Tutor Training and English as Second Language (ESL) Training for its tutors and members. These training programs focus primarily on providing tools (resource material) for tutors to work with low-level readers; however, individuals who seek our services have needs beyond this focus. **What tools which you currently use (eg. specific documents and forms) would like to see incorporated into a training that would address development of Essential Skills for employees in your workplace?**

15 responded out of a total of 31: 48 % response rate

Responses to this question were ambiguous as most respondents did not specify actual documents and forms. Responses included in order of importance (determined by recurrence):

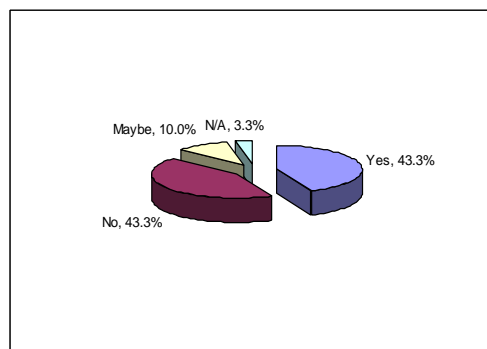
- Documents/various forms – invoices, applications, checklists, payroll deductions
- Computer use – basic and advanced (Word, Excel, WordPerfect)
- Not applicable to type of job
- Bookkeeping/record keeping/data entry
- Continuous learning
- Thinking skills/problem solving
- Phone etiquette, confidentiality
- Job descriptions
- Evaluations
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Professional development/self-help

“Realizing something is out of the ordinary and needs to be brought to a supervisor for review. Even the most mundane jobs can have the highest risk for a business. Mail sent to the wrong person or slowness in getting legal documents to the correct person can be very costly for a business”

Question 8. Would your workplace take advantage of Essential Skills training? Why or why not?

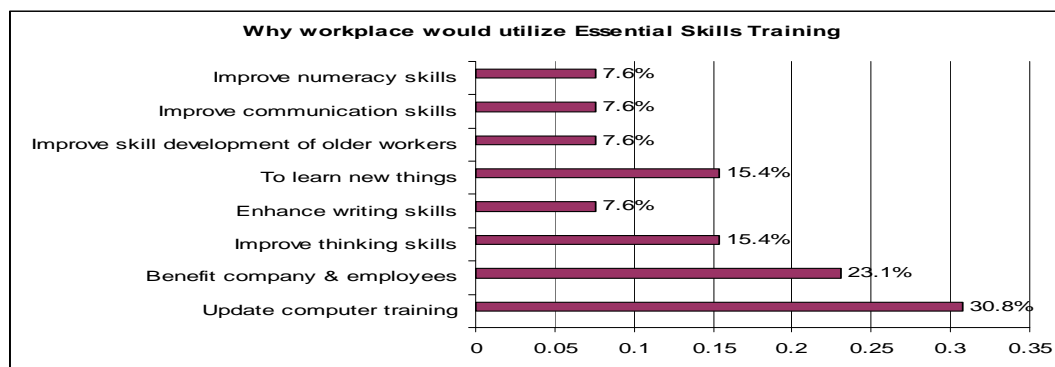
30 responded out of a total of 31 : 97% response rate

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Times listed</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	13	43.3%
No	13	43.3%
Maybe	3	10.0%
N/A	1	3.3%



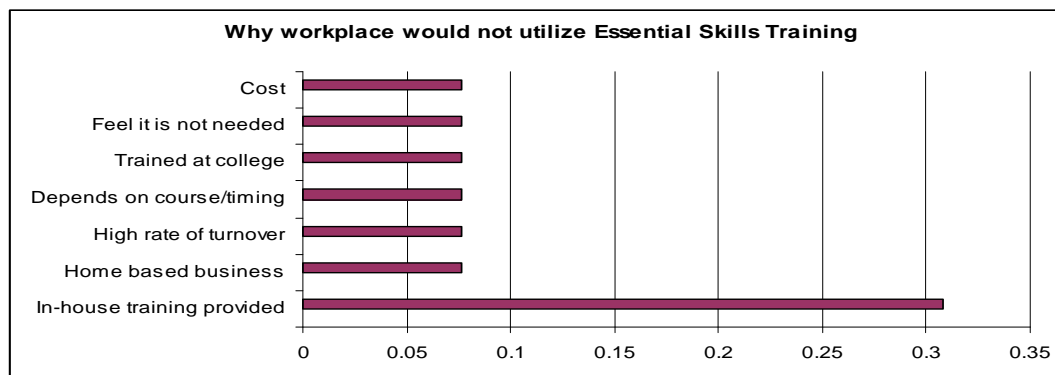
Trends identified why:

#1 – To update computer training; #2 – For the benefit the company and employees



Trends identified why not:

#1 – Because the company or franchise provides its own training



“There has been occasion when an employee who works hard and is dedicated to their job has gotten promoted to supervisory position, however struggles due to their lack of reading and writing skills”

Question 9. Which courses in Essential Skills would you be interested in having your employees avail of? Please check all that apply.

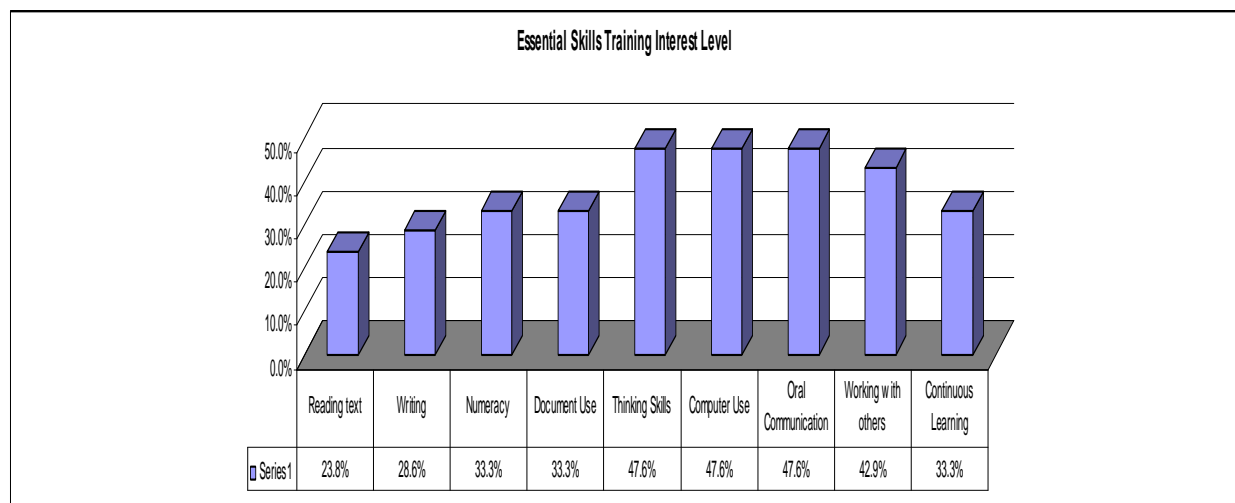
21 responded out of a total of 31: 68% response rate

Responses	# of times listed of 21	Percentage
Reading text	5	23.8%
Writing 6		28.6%
Numeracy 7		33.3%
Document Use	7	33.3%
Thinking Skills	10	47.6%
Computer Use	10	47.6%
Oral Communication	10	47.6%
Working with others	9	42.9%
Continuous Learning	7	33.3%

The main choices as indicated are:

#1 - Thinking Skills, Computer Use, and Oral Communication

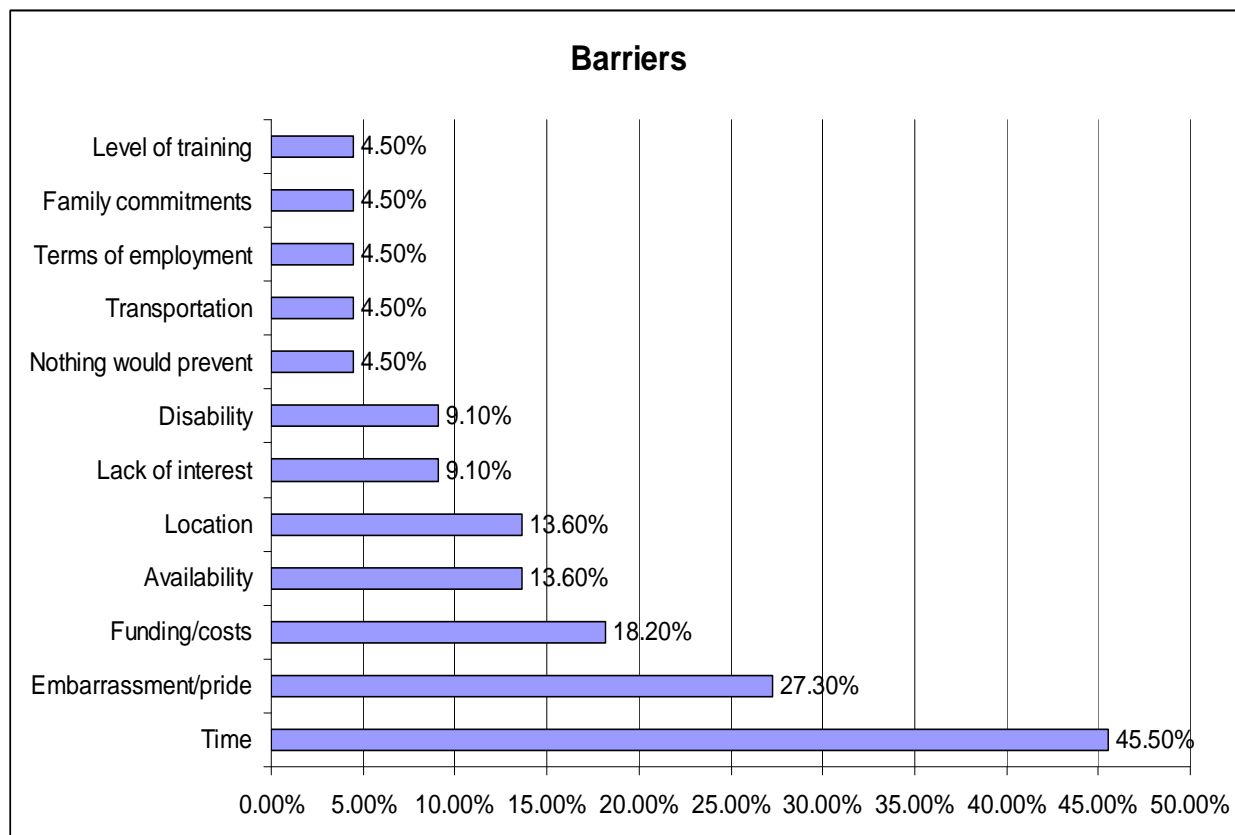
#2 - Working with Others



Four main topics are prominent here: Thinking, communicating, computer knowledge, and teamwork. Oral Communication skills and the ability to work with others go hand in hand with Thinking Skills and Computer Use. It is obvious that most employers are interested in their employees obtaining computer use as well as the communication and thinking skills necessary to be successful in today's workplace.

Question 10. What would prevent your employees from taking advantage of Essential Skills training? Please list in order of importance.

22 responded out of a total of 31: 71% response rate



Main barriers identified (to nearest percent):

1. Time – 46%
2. Embarrassment/pride – 27%
3. Funding/costs involved – 18%

Most listed time as being the main reason that would prevent employees from participating in training. The second reason would be embarrassment or pride, and third in order of importance is finances (loss of wages to attend or cost to employer/self).

“Lack of interest unless it is done on company time during regular working hours”

“Employees would have time from their job to do training if it was felt that this training would benefit job performance”

“Some feel that by taking advantage of these types of skills they are admitting that they are stupid”

Question 11. What skills or characteristics do you consider important when hiring an employee and why?

25 responded out of a total of 31: 81 % response rate

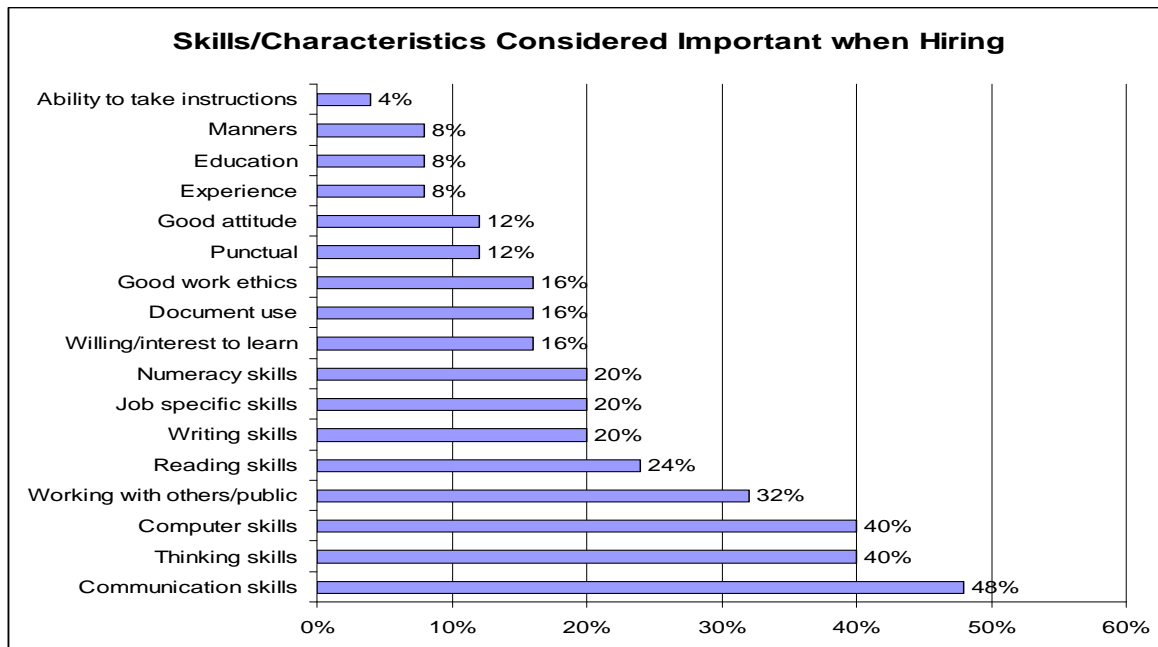
This question received a multitude of responses related to various workplaces. Most of the answers can be applied to any and all businesses, big or small.

The most important skills/characteristics are:

1. Communication skills
2. Computer skills and thinking skills
3. Ability to work with others

“Good oral communication is important in the service industry”

“These would be job specific ranging from physical abilities to do work to computer skills, working with the public, and communication skills”



Why businesses consider these qualities important when hiring:

- To do the job properly.
- Interactive skills are essential – a lot of time spent on the phone
- Good numeracy skills for doing accounts.

Note: Most people listed the skills/characteristics but did not answer why.

Question 12. Additional comments.

8 responded out of a total of 31: 26% response rate

Additional comments touched on:

- The need for Essential Skills training in the workplace
- Training needs for physically challenged employees
- Necessity of common sense/problem solving ability
- The importance of continuous learning
- Employers can benefit from any training that improves productivity

“It is hard to teach common sense but that is essential to our workplace”

“The idea of lifelong learning is the key to Essential Skills training”

“Any training that can benefit an employer is welcomed”

Findings from Interview Questionnaires – Organizations

A total of 42 questionnaires were submitted by representatives of organizations from across the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. An analysis of data collected follows.

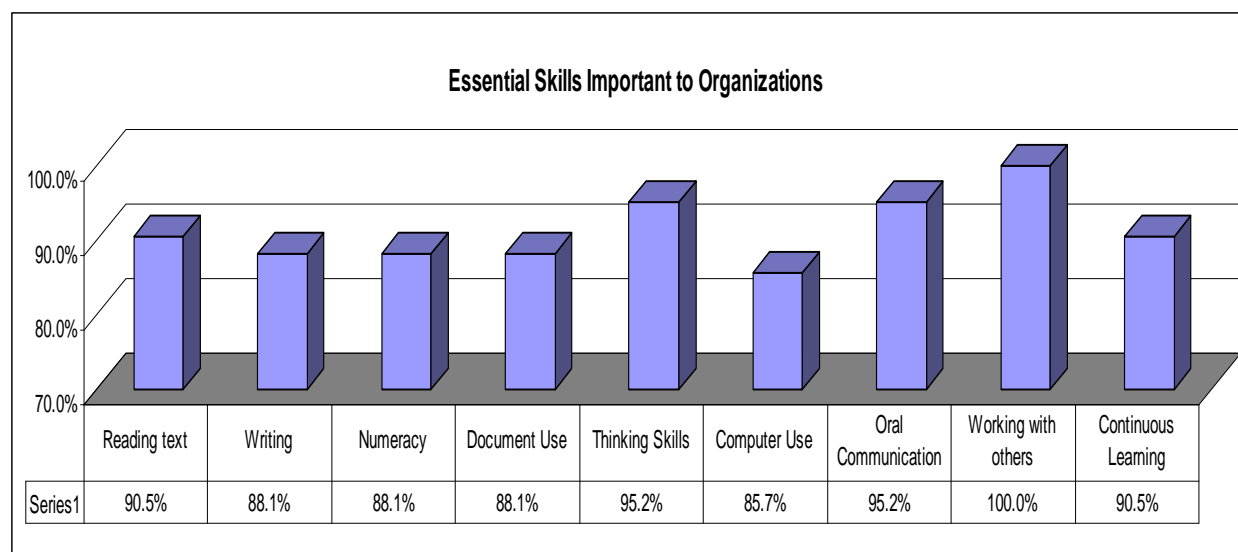
Question 1. Which Essential Skills are important to you in your organization?

42 responded out of a total of 42: 100% response rate

Responses	# of times listed out of 42	Percentage
Reading text	38	90.5
Writing 37		88.1
Numeracy 37		88.1
Document Use	37	88.1
Thinking Skills	40	95.2
Computer Use	36	85.7
Oral Communication	40	95.2
Working with others	42	100.0
Continuous Learning	38	90.5

As evidenced in the above table and the chart below, **all** Essential Skills are of high importance to respondents, rating in the following order.

6. Working with Others - Response rate of 100%
7. Oral Communication and Thinking Skills – Response Rate of 95.2%
8. Reading Text and Continuous Learning – Response Rate of 90.5%
9. Writing, Numeracy and Document Use – Response Rate of 88.1%
10. Computer Use – Response Rate of 85.7%



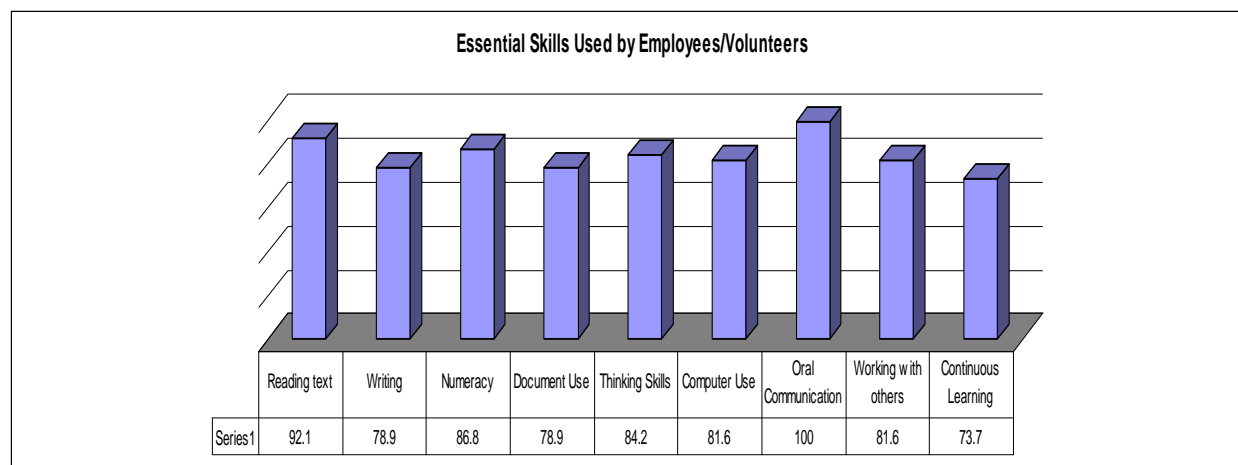
“Our members must always be prepared to learn and think quickly”

Question 2. Which Essential Skills do your employees/volunteers use? How?

38 responded out of a total of 42: 90% response rate

Responses	# of times listed out of 38	Percentage
Reading text	35	92.1%
Writing 30		78.9%
Numeracy 33		86.8%
Document Use	30	78.9%
Thinking Skills	32	84.2%
Computer Use	31	81.6%
Oral Communication	38	100.0%
Working with others	31	81.6%
Continuous Learning	28	73.7%

All Essential Skills were reported as highly used, with Oral Communication being most used and Continuous Learning the least.



All nine Essential Skills are required at different times and different levels. Essential skills are used in a variety of ways – to gather information/research, to compile reports, to communicate with the public/staff/students, to present information, and to prepare and deliver lessons. Most respondents rated all Essential Skills listed as required – may be used at different levels and not all regularly.

“Our organization would focus more on our clients Essential Skills needs rather than our employee needs. We would see that they need to be skilled in all Essential Skills areas”

“Our volunteers would use a lot of oral communication in our [facility] and in community and family services. They also work with others. Some of them must use the cash register. They generally use all of the skills, some more than others”

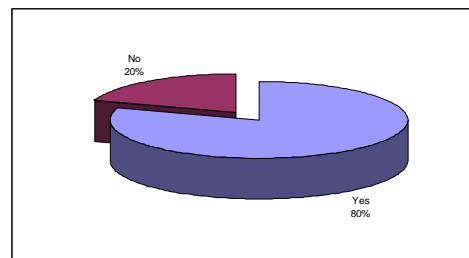
Question 3. Do you have employees/volunteers that could benefit from training in Essential Skills? If yes, which Essential Skills?

40 responded out of a total of 42: 95% response rate

Responses Times listed Percentage

Yes 32 80%

No 8 20%

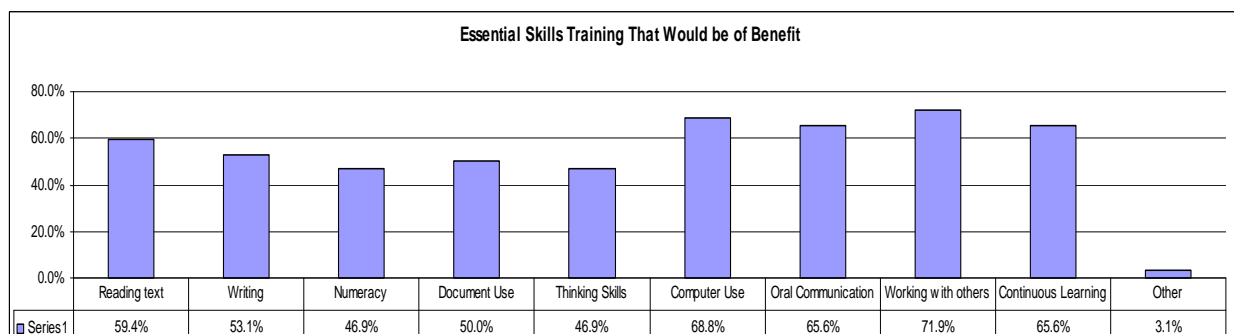


“Definitely enhancement [of skills would be of benefit]”

Of those who responded “yes” the following choices were indicated:

Responses	# of times listed of 32	Percentage
Reading text	19	59.4%
Writing 17		53.1%
Numeracy 15		46.9%
Document Use	16	50.0%
Thinking Skills	15	46.9%
Computer Use	22	68.8%
Oral Communication	21	65.6%
Working with others	23	71.9%
Continuous Learning	21	65.6%
*Other forms of communication (non-verbal, sign language) and devices/aids (Braille, audiovox, zoomtext, TTY, storyboard, co-writer)	1	3.1%

** “Having training on different types of communication skills, not only oral, would be very beneficial, not only to us, but to everyone, as these people are part of the community and are taking part in everyday life with or without support. They may be using other organizations’ resources and if more people/organizations had specific, more diverse communication training, it would be more easily accessed and used!”*

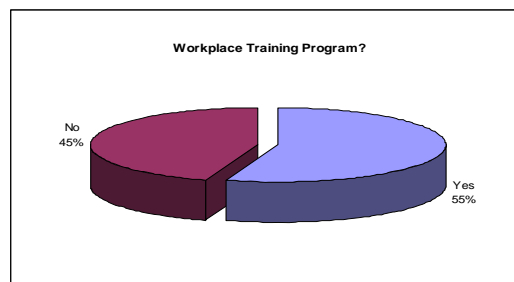


Training in all nine Essential Skills would be of benefit. Working with others rated most important in training, Computer Use rated second most important.

Question 4. Does your workplace/organization have an employee/volunteer training program?

40 responded out of a total of 42: 95% response rate

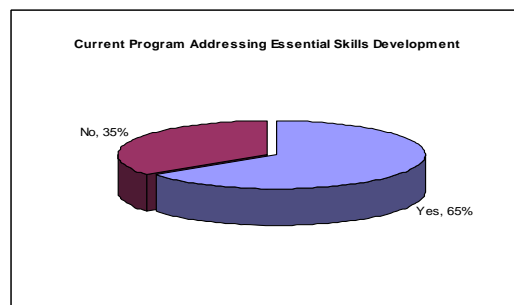
<u>Responses</u>	<u>Times listed</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	22	55%
No	18	45%



Question 5. Is the current program addressing Essential Skills development? If not, please explain.

23 responded out of a total of 42: 55 % response rate

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Times listed</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	15	65%
No	8	35%



Of the 23 who responded 65% indicated the current workplace training program was addressing Essential Skills development; 35% indicated it was not.

"I will say yes, however there is always a need for more resources. There seems to be more needs than resources and it is always a challenge to get students to come forward and identify needs – connect with services"

Trends identified (those responding "No")

- Always a need for more resources
- Seminars in basic sign language and basic assistive devices for those who are non-verbal and do not communicate in traditional ways.
- Job descriptions, on-the-job monitoring/shadowing
- Practical training
- Not all of Essential Skills addressed in training
- Need for continuous updating
- Basic training program offered for volunteers
- ESL school – not directly addressing this issue

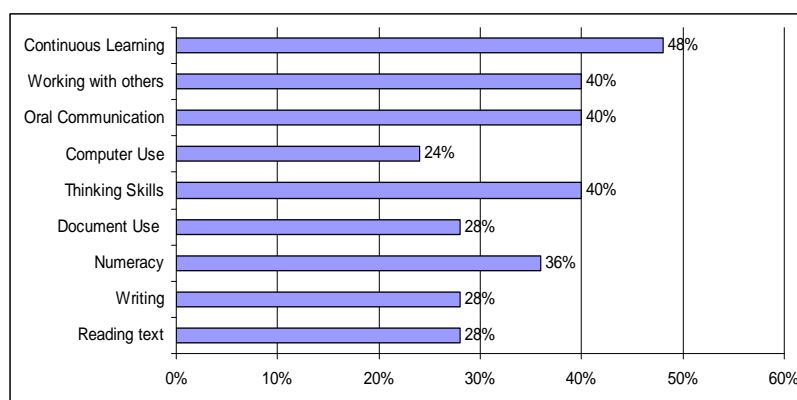
Conclusion: There is a need for more resources, continuous updating, and practical training.

Question 6. Which Essential Skills are being taught to your employees/volunteers? How?
25 responded out of a total of 42: 60 % response rate

Responses	# of times listed of 25	Percentage
Reading text	7	28%
Writing 7		28%
Numeracy 9		36%
Document Use	7	28%
Thinking Skills	10	40%
Computer Use	6	24%
Oral Communication	10	40%
Working with others	10	40%
Continuous Learning	12	48%

“Our clients who need skills are referred to another agency for training. We are more in the business of identifying needs”

Most taught Essential Skills were Continuous Learning, Working with Others, Oral Communication and Thinking Skills.



How Essential Skills are being taught

- Through sensitivity training
- Mentoring
- Online training
- Training as tutors
- In-house training as part of on-going professional development
- Referral to agencies who deliver required skills training
- Completion of Access to Training and career sessions (for ABE students)
- Encouraged to self-train/upgrade skills

“As part of [corporation] we avail of training and workshops in-house as part of our on-going professional development”

“We are teaching clients English, so in so doing we are indirectly teaching all of these skills. We do provide computer classes for all clients once a week”

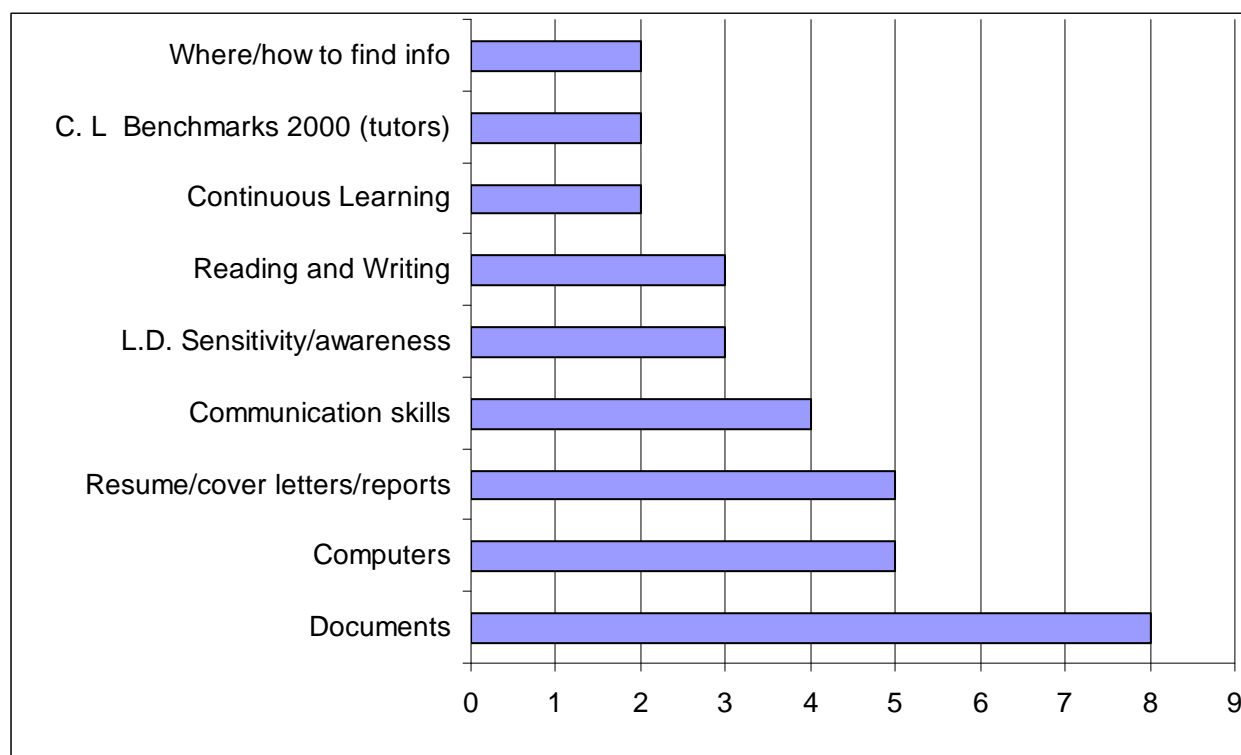
“Additionally, students are trained as tutors, which is a great learning experience”

Question 7. NLLLC currently offers Basic Tutor Training and English as Second Language (ESL) Training for its tutors and members. These training programs focus primarily on providing tools (resource material) for tutors to work with low-level readers; however, individuals who seek our services have needs beyond this focus. **What tools which you currently use (eg. specific documents and forms) would like to see incorporated into a training that would address development of Essential Skills for employees/volunteers in your workplace/organization?**

29 responded out of a total of 42: 69% response rate

Responses included in order of importance:

- * Documents: Various forms, applications (breakdown on next page)
- Computers/internet/email/basic training
- Resume writing, cover letters, report writing
- Oral Communication/speaking/phone skills
- Sensitivity and awareness training for disabilities
- Where/how to find information
- Reading and Writing
- Continuous Learning
- Canadian Language Benchmarks



“The pros and cons of email. The format and proper grammar of personal email vs. professional/workplace email”

Other responses included (in no order of importance):

- Financial information
- Prepared training package
- Numeracy skills
- Cash Register/practical training
- Organization and study skills
- Understanding literacy
- Awareness of post-secondary programs
- Self-assessment guides
- Community economic development
- “Got Skills” package
- TOWES
- Working with others
- Training in identifying learning disabilities
- Format and proper grammar for person vs. work email
- Training for employers and individuals who work with clients who need adaptive equipment

* Documents - many different types of applications/forms were mentioned:

- Disability/pension forms
- Student loan applications
- Post-secondary applications
- Employment applications
- MCP (Medicare forms)
- S.I.N. (social insurance)
- Driver’s licence
- Referral forms
- Application for drug card
- E.I. application
- Self-assessment guides
- Personal information forms (e.g. doctor’s office/hospital forms)

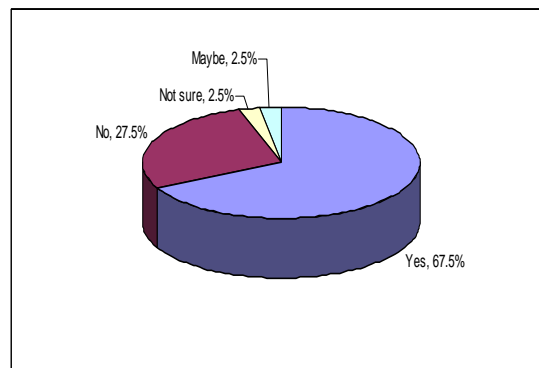
“On-site cash register or other computer training”

“The clients at the [organization] that I work with would need to know how to complete basic forms. For example, personal information, forms at the doctor’s/hospital, etc.”

Question 8. Would your workplace/organization take advantage of Essential Skills training? Why or why not?

40 responded out of a total of 42: 93% response rate

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Times listed</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	27	67.5%
No	11	27.5%
Not sure	1	2.5%
Maybe	1	2.5%



Trends identified why workplace/organizations would take advantage of Essential Skills Training:

- Can never stop learning
- Will take advantage of training but not do training
- For clients, not staff
- To partner with others

“We have numerous clients that require and would benefit from Essential Skills training”

“We can all learn and improve upon the skills we have, as well as we may network with others to better each other’s organizations”

Trends identified why workplace/organizations would not take advantage of Essential Skills training:

- Already have training
- Don’t offer training
- Are volunteers
- Employees are well skilled

“We have in-house training as required to keep up to date on changes that occur in programs and policies we have as part of our organization”

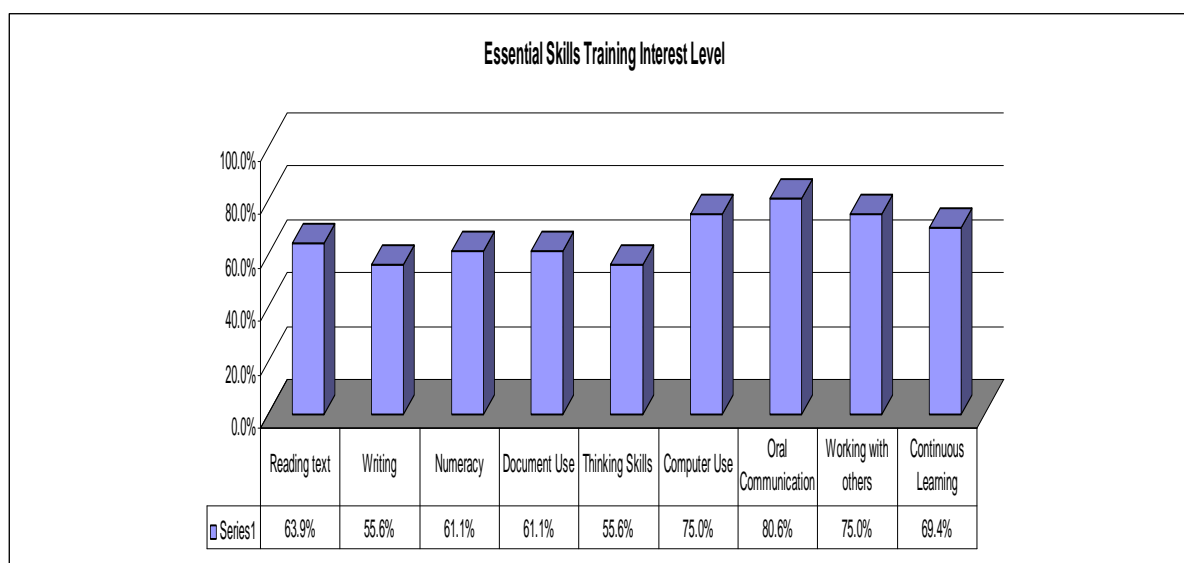
“If specific to ‘teamwork’ and ‘oral communication’ – otherwise probably would not be necessary for our staff”

Conclusion: Many would take advantage of the training but are not prepared to offer the training.

Question 9. Which courses in Essential Skills would you be interested in having your employees/volunteers avail of? Please check all that apply.

36 responded out of a total of 42: 86 % response rate

Responses	# of times listed of 36	Percentage
Reading text	23	63.9%
Writing 20		55.6%
Numeracy 22		61.1%
Document Use	22	61.1%
Thinking Skills	20	55.6%
Computer Use	27	75.0%
Oral Communication	29	80.6%
Working with others	27	75.0%
Continuous Learning	25	69.4%



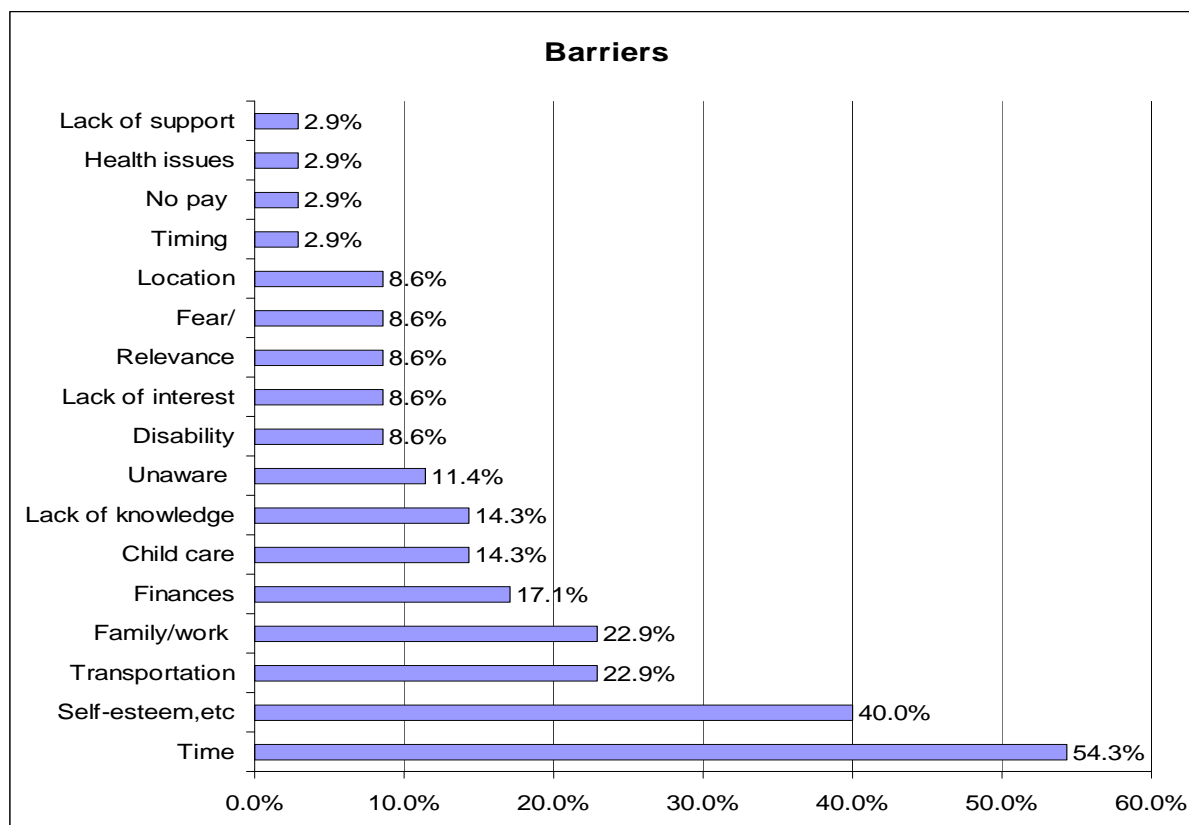
As indicated above, there is a high degree of interest in Essential Skills training.

- #1 - Oral Communication – 80.6%
- #2 - Computer Use and Working with Others – 75%

Conclusion: It is obvious that organizations are interested in their employees and volunteers obtaining better communication and computer skills and be able to work as part of a team. The overall high response rating indicates that they are aware of the value of Essential Skills in today's workplace.

Question 10. What would prevent your employees/volunteers from taking advantage of Essential Skills training? Please list in order of importance.

35 responded out of a total of 42: 83 % response rate



Main barriers identified (to nearest percent)

1. Time – 54%
2. Lack of self-esteem/confidence, embarrassment – 40%
3. Family/work commitments, Transportation – 23%

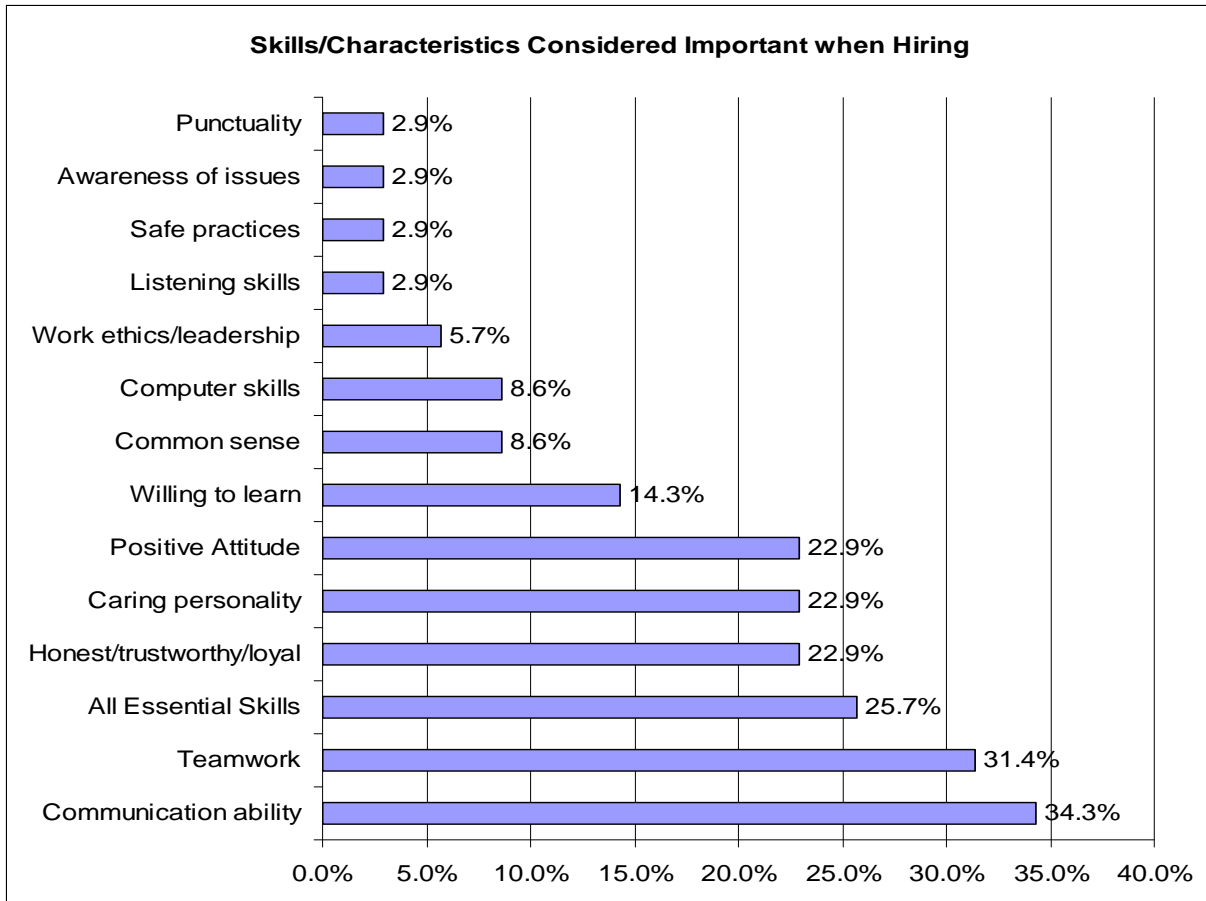
Most listed time as being the main reason that would prevent employees/volunteers from participating in training. Lack of self-esteem is second; third - family/work commitment and transportation. As a result of these responses, it would seem that one-to-one tutoring, rather than structured classes, would work best for these individuals.

Question 11. What skills or characteristics do you consider important when hiring an employee/volunteer and why?

35 responded out of a total of 42: 83% response rate

Communication was the #1 response, but most want those with nine Essential Skills when hiring.

“All Essential Skills, because without these skills how can you work in today’s world?”



Why organizations consider these qualities important when hiring:

- Employees/clients need all nine Essential Skills to succeed
- Skills/characteristics needed vary according to the job
- Communication is important because it is needed to work with others groups/public

Note: Most people listed the skills/characteristics but did not answer why.

Question 12. Additional comments.

13 responded out of a total of 42: 31% response rate

Additional comments ranged from suggestions/needs to offers to help and thanks.

Examples:

- More options for those with disabilities
- Important to have a positive attitude
- Need for ABE Level 1 (especially for clients with learning disabilities)
- The right to a bilingual education
- Post-secondary employees use continuing education to keep up-to-date
- Offers to help/thanks
- Keep up the good work – worthwhile endeavour

“Attitude sometimes stems from lack of Essential Skills”

“Spread the word – far and wide”

“Positive attitude is essential. Would hire a #2 candidate (skills- wise) over a #1 candidate if #1 candidate was lacking in attitude”

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Focus Group Findings – Older Adult Stakeholders (Target Group)

A total of seven focus groups were held with Older Adult Stakeholders throughout the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Total attendance was 108 people.

- The first focus group, which covered Western Newfoundland and Labrador, took place in Corner Brook on November 14, 2008. Nine individuals representing Stephenville, Corner Brook and Grand Falls and surrounding areas attended. Most of this group are enrolled in full-time attendance at a learning facility, the exception being one person who receives one-on-one tutoring twice a week. Learners are using *Essential Skills* but didn't realize it by name until introduced as such at this session.
- The second focus group was held in Stephenville on February 7, 2009. Seven older adults from the Stephenville/Bay St. George/Port au Port area attended this session.
- The third focus group, held on February 19, 2009, occurred as the result of an invitation from the instructor of the *Skills Link* program in Stephenville. Although the age group was younger (18 – 28 years) than the key stakeholder group, the committee felt their participation would give a broader perspective in terms of Essential Skills workplace needs. Seven individuals from the Bay St. George and surrounding area attended this session.
- The fourth focus group was held at the Discovery Centre in Harbour Grace on April 30 with sixteen people attending. These individuals were in full-time attendance at the Discovery Centre preparing to enter or re-enter the workforce.
- The fifth focus group, which covered Central Newfoundland and Labrador, took place in Grand Falls-Windsor on May 5, 2009. Fourteen individuals enrolled in the literacy program at the College of the North Atlantic, Grand Falls campus, attended.
- The sixth focus group on June 10 was again at the request of a program coordinator in the community of Stephenville. This group, comprised of nine individuals from various backgrounds in the Bay St. George/Port au Port and surrounding areas, were enrolled in the *Power Up!* program in the area.
- On May 23, 2009, a focus group session was held in conjunction with a gathering of 46 older adults from various cities, towns and communities from Western, Central, Eastern and the Avalon regions of the province. This group was composed primarily of retired individuals, with a small number being employed.

The following information is based on discussion questions posed to focus group participants throughout the province.

Question 1. What Essential Skills do you use? How?

All seven groups indicated that they used all nine Essential Skills at varying degrees depending on the education, knowledge, careers, and lifestyles of the individuals.

Essential Skills were used in various ways, such as everyday living, in school, at home, at work, or in social situations.

Trends identified were as follows:

Responses
In the home – meal preparation, helping with homework, making decisions, making household budgets, doing everyday chores, looking after needs of family members
At school – studying, doing lessons and tests, learning new skills, reading instructions, using computers, working in groups, doing presentations
At work – serving the public, working in groups, using cash registers and computers, problem solving, filling out forms/applications
Social situations – getting along with people, communicating, interacting
Everyday activities – shopping, banking, making appointments, interacting with others, using ATM's/cell phones and other electronic devices, driving, writing letters/emails, reading signs/newspapers/books, getting medical help.

“I love to learn new things. That’s why I’m here”

“I loved the talk we had, I loved standing and talking to the people”

“I’m a shy person so I think I need to know more about working with others and oral communication”

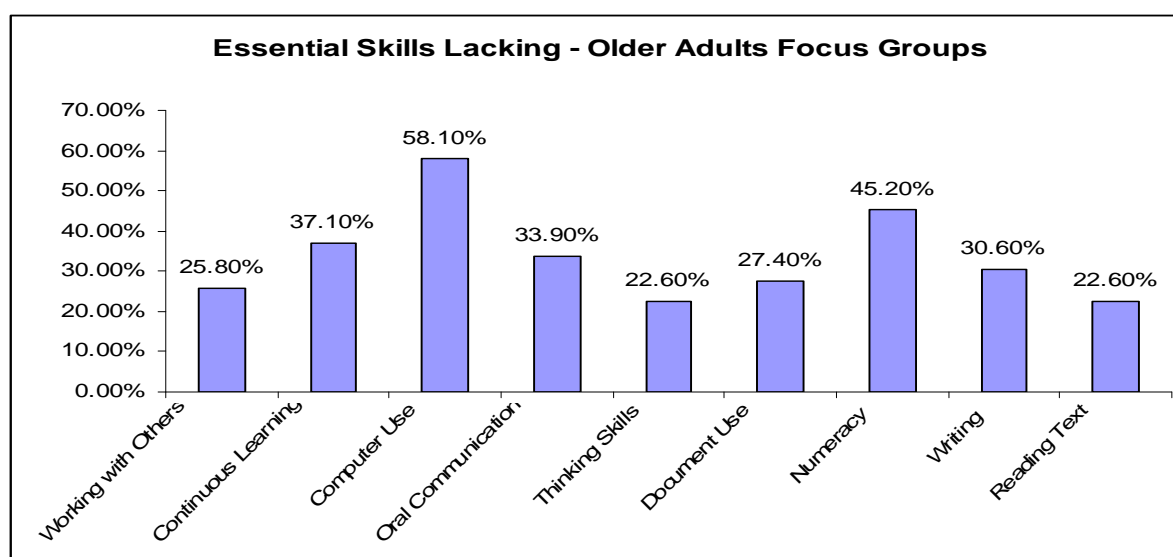
Question 2 - Which Essential Skills do you lack/need?

Figures are based on responses collected from 62 individuals in 6 focus groups.

Essential Skills	Responses (of 62)	Percentage
Reading Text	14	22.6%
Writing 19		30.6%
Numeracy 28		45.2%
Document Use	17	27.4%
Thinking Skills	14	22.6%
Oral Communication	21	33.9%
Computer Use	36	58.1%
Continuous Learning	23	37.1%
Working with Others	16	25.8%

Order of degree of Essential Skills lacking, with Computer Use rating the most lacking and Numeracy Skills the second most lacking in older adults:

1. Computer Use 36 /62 58.1%
2. Numeracy 28/62 45.2%
3. Continuous Learning 23/62 37.1%
4. Oral Communication 21/62 33.9%
5. Writing 19/62 30.6%
6. Document Use 17/62 27.4%
7. Working with Others 16/62 25.8%
8. Thinking Skills 14/62 22.6%
9. Reading Text 14/62 22.6%

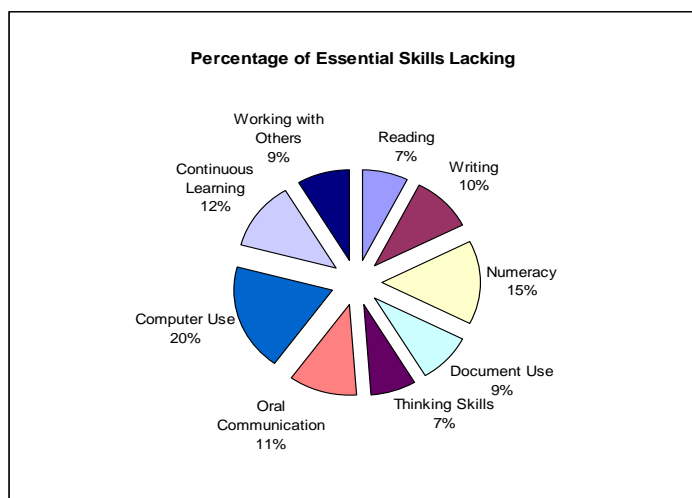


“There should be some tutoring offered in computer skills”

The following chart indicates the percentage of Essential Skills lacking in relation to one another.

Order of degree of Essential Skills lacking on a percentage basis as indicated in the chart:

1. Computer Use	19.15%
2. Numeracy	14.89%
3. Continuous Learning	12.23%
4. Oral Communication	11.17%
5. Writing	10.11%
6. Document Use	9.04%
7. Working with Others	8.51%
8. Thinking Skills	7.45%
9. Reading Text	7.45%



The highest lack of Essential Skills according to Focus Group participants is Computer Use. This is consistent with results received from survey respondents. (Older Adults' Questionnaire, Q. 2)

"You don't realize how essential these skills are unless you don't have them"

Please note: The May 23, 2009 Focus Group of 46 participants is excluded from the above data for Question 2. Individuals in this group ranged in age from 45 to 90 years of age. Feedback representing such a diverse population was deemed to be vital to the accuracy of the project findings. Although extensive discussion was held with this group, it was difficult to get accurate feedback because of the number of individuals, the acoustics/set-up of the large room, and the degree of participation (many appeared reluctant to voice their lack of skills in front of others). To avoid embarrassment and for the sake of confidentiality, participants were asked to complete questionnaires, with the assistance of the public consultation facilitator if desired. Through one on one discussion throughout the weekend, it was apparent that many were lacking in computer skills as well as others to a lesser degree. Twenty-three of the forty-six individuals completed questionnaires.

Results for Essential Skills lacking for this group were as follows:

Computer Use:	10/23 – 43.5%
Numeracy:	2/23 – 8.7 %
Document Use:	2/23 – 8.7%
Continuous Learning	2/23 – 8.7%
(0% indicated that they were lacking in the other five Essential Skills)	

Please note: These figures are included with statistics for Older Adults' questionnaires; therefore they not included in the above charts to avoid duplication of data

Question 3. What gaps do you see in the current system? Suggestions?

Trends identified were as follows:

Responses
More tutors/more one-on-one tutoring
More computer use – basic computers, technology (GPS, cell phones, cash registers)
Computer access
Practical application from theory to everyday activities (numeracy)
Document Use – various forms, applications
Oral communication – more presentations/ role playing
Writing skills – letters, resumes, poems, stories
Knowledge of legal documents (income tax, loan applications, mortgages, etc.)
Oral Communication/thinking skills – speaking/making oneself understood, understanding
Reading/understanding labels (nutrition content, etc.)
Larger print workbooks/resource materials
Lessons on nutrition and budgeting
Information on online shopping/bill payments
Visual aids – hints and tips for studying
Help for persons with learning disabilities

There were many suggestions on what is needed to fill the gaps in the current system. Most prevalent were Computer Use and Document Use using various forms, job applications, and other forms/applications used in everyday living.

“I would like to take computer training for seniors”

“I love everything that pertains to reading and writing. I have trouble with Math”

Question 4. What (if anything) would prevent you from taking Essential Skills training?

Responses
Nothing (50% of participants already enrolled in a program)
Work commitments
Family obligations (child care, senior care)
Time of training sessions
Finances
Transportation

- 50% of respondents were already enrolled in a learning program.
- The main barriers identified were work and family obligations, transportation, finances and time of sessions. This is consistent with responses from surveys (Older Adults’ Questionnaire, Q. 5)

“I am clay – mould me!”

Focus Group Findings – Tutors and Trainers

Between February 7, 2009 and May 28, 2009, a total of four focus groups were held with tutors and trainers throughout the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Total attendance was 48 people.

The first focus group, which covered Western Newfoundland and Labrador, took place in Stephenville on February 7, 2009. Ten individuals from the communities of Stephenville, Stephenville Crossing, Kippens, St. Georges, Robinsons, and Goose Bay (Labrador) representing Bay St. George Literacy Council attended this session.

The second focus group, which covered Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador, took place in Carbonear on April 29, 2009. Seven tutors from the communities of Carbonear, Harbour Grace, and Spaniard's Bay representing Bayshore Literacy Council attended this session.

The third focus group, which covered Central Newfoundland and Labrador, took place in Grand Falls-Windsor on May 5, 2009. Eight tutors from the communities of Grand Falls-Windsor and Lewisporte representing Exploits Literacy Council attended this session.

The fourth focus group was held in Stephenville on May 28, 2009. Twenty-three people from the communities of Stephenville, Stephenville Crossing, St. Georges, and Kippens representing Bay St. George Literacy Council attended this session.

Note: A focus group which was to have taken place in Southern Labrador was cancelled and a second one was held in Stephenville at the request of some tutors who were unable to attend the first session. The Southern Labrador Focus Group did not go ahead due to difficulty obtaining commitment from the business sector to attend focus group sessions for businesses. Also, there has been a decline in the activity of councils in that area over the past year. As a result, it was decided by the executive and the Public Consultation Facilitator that a trip to the Labrador coast would not be feasible at this time.

Summary of Focus Group Findings – Tutors and Trainers

Question 1. What Essential Skills are you teaching? How?

- Past and current tutors teach all nine Essential Skills to a certain degree, but mainly at a basic level. Most are teaching Essential Skills as indicated in the Laubach Way to Reading program, supplemented with documents used in everyday living activities. Many tutors are not proficient in computer use themselves so they are not comfortable teaching basic computer skills, others who would teach computer use do not have facilities available to them outside of their own homes.

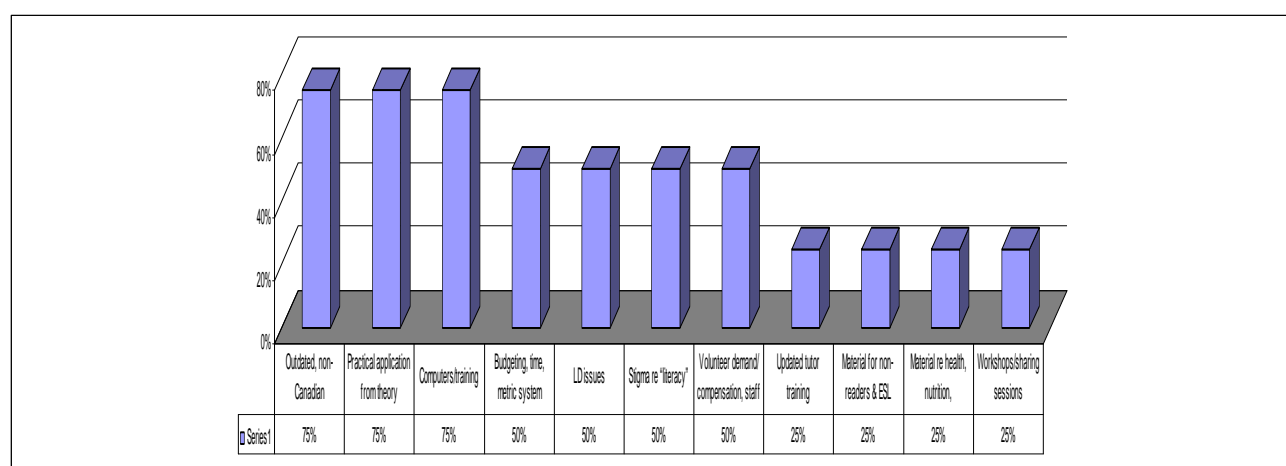
“I’m fully aware that I’m not helping anyone with Computer Use; and I can’t recall focusing on Working with Others or Oral Communication, though I imagine vicariously some of these skills were broached.”

Question 2. What gaps do you see in the present system?

- Trends identified were as follows:

Responses	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Total	Percentage
Outdated material, non-Canadian content.	✓	✓		✓	3/4	75%
Need for practical application of Essential Skills (from theory)	✓	✓		✓	3/4	75%
Availability of computers and computer training	✓	✓		✓	3/4	75%
Lack of material on budgeting, telling time, metric system	✓		✓		2/4	50%
Recognizing and addressing learning disabilities	✓			✓	2/4	50%
Stigma associated with “literacy”	✓			✓	2/4	50%
Demand on volunteers, need for compensation, staff	✓	✓			2/4	50%
Updated training needed for tutors				✓	1/4	25%
Lack of material for non-readers and ESL learners (audio books/pens, talking thesaurus)			✓		1/4	25%
Lack of material on health, nutrition, social values, cultural issues			✓		1/4	25%
Need for workshops/sharing sessions for tutors and learners	✓		1/4			25%

- Main gaps identified were:
 - Need for updated material with Canadian content
 - Need for application of Essential Skills learned from theory to practical
 - Availability of computers and computer training



“Reading for Living lessons in Laubach Way to Reading regarding real life situations are what my student(s) have problems with (e.g. writing cheques, application forms)”

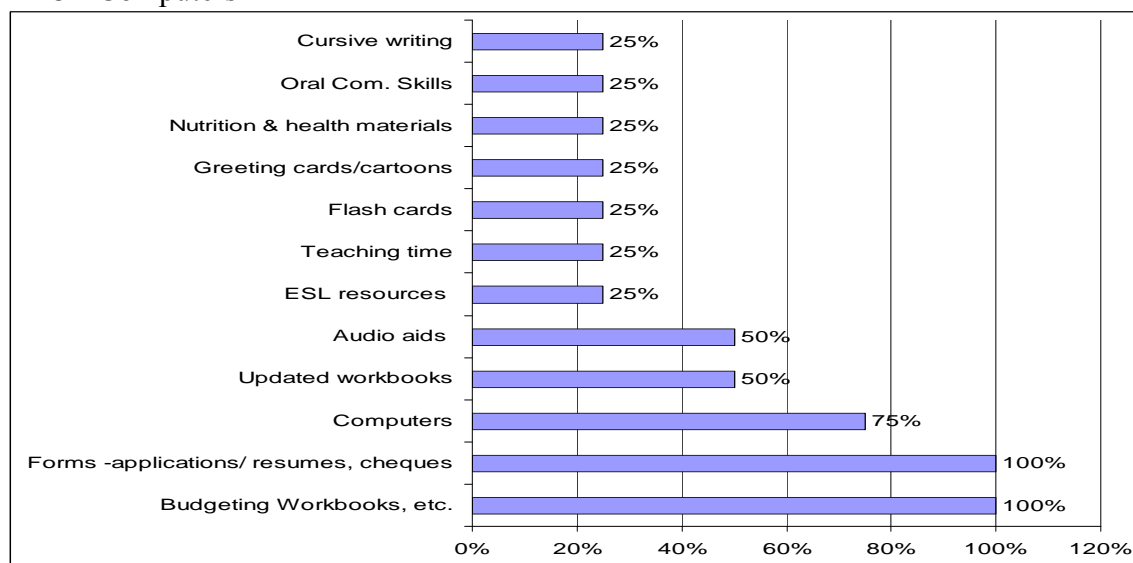
“The basics of everyday living are hard to be taught” (in reference to tutoring ESL learners)

Question 3. What tools (resource material, etc.) for teaching Essential Skills do you need that would be useful in your tutoring?

- Trends identified were as follows:

Responses	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Total	Percentage
Resources for use with budgeting/recipes (workbooks, store flyers)	✓	✓	✓	✓	4/4	100%
Documents used in everyday life (various forms, job applications/resumes, cheques, etc.)	✓	✓	✓	✓	4/4	100%
Computers	✓	✓		✓	3/4	75%
Updated workbooks		✓		✓	2/4	50%
Audio aids – speech sounds, Talking Thesaurus, audio books/pens	✓		✓	2/4		50%
Resources for ESL learners on cultural/social issues				✓	1/4	25%
Resources for teaching time			✓	1/4		25%
Flash cards			✓	1/4		25%
Greeting cards/cartoons			✓	1/4		25%
Material on nutrition & health			✓	1/4		25%
Oral communication skills – attitude, etiquette		✓			1/4	25%
Cursive writing	✓				1/4	25%

- Main responses were:
 - Tools for use in budgeting/calculation
 - Everyday use documents (forms, job applications, cheques, etc.)
 - Computers



“Diverse and wide-ranging integration of Essential Skills ought to be the goal”

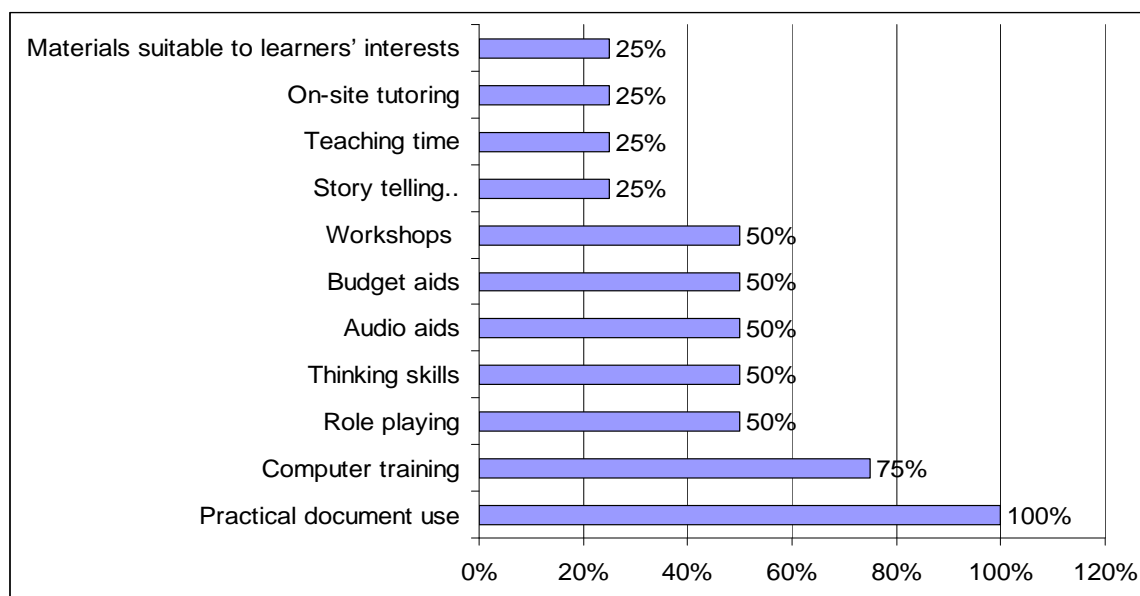
“Essential Skills training is needed in adult learning to aid in a continuous learner process and build a confident individual and a strong workforce”

Question 4. What suggestions do you have on how we can incorporate Essential Skills training into the current program?

Responses	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Total	%
Practical use of documents used in everyday life (various forms, job applications/ resumes, cheques, etc.)	✓	✓	✓	✓	4/4	100%
Computer training (including basic computer use, use of cash registers, ATM's, GPS)	✓	✓		✓	3/4	75%
Role playing	✓			✓	2/4	50%
Thinking skills (implications of signing contracts, sharing personal information, cultural awareness, social skills, etc.)		✓	✓		2/4	50%
Audio aids	✓		✓		2/4	50%
Budget aids (flyers, workbooks, calculators)	✓		✓		2/4	50%
Workshops for tutors and learners	✓	✓			2/4	50%
Story telling/writing/interactive games				✓	1/4	25%
Teaching time			✓		1/4	25%
On-site tutoring	✓				1/4	25%
Using materials suitable to learners' interests/field of work				✓	1/4	25%

Main responses were:

- All groups indicated the need for material for tutoring in practical document use.
- Three of the four groups indicated a need for computer learning, including basic computer use, cash registers, GPS and ATMs.



“Computers are everywhere and learners need to at least know the basics”

“We need more workshops for tutors to get together and share ideas on tutoring”

Focus Group Findings – Key Stakeholders (Businesses and Organizations)

A total of five focus groups were held with representatives of businesses and organizations throughout the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Total attendance was 50 people.

- The first focus group, which covered Western Newfoundland and Labrador, took place in Stephenville on March 27, 2009. Fourteen individuals representing Stephenville/Bay St. George South/ Port au Port peninsula and surrounding areas attended.
- The second focus group, which covered Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador, took place in Carbonear on April 29, 2009. Eleven individuals representing the Trinity-Conception area and St. John's attended.
- The third focus group was held in Stephenville on May 19 with seven people representing Stephenville/Bay St. George/Port au Port attending. (This second group in Stephenville was at the request of individuals who were unable to attend the March 27th focus group session and wanted the opportunity of giving input into discussions on Essential Skills and workplace literacy.)
- The fourth focus group, which covered Central Newfoundland and Labrador, took place in Grand Falls-Windsor on June 2, 2009. Seven individuals representing businesses and organizations in the Grand Falls-Windsor/Gander and various communities in Central Newfoundland and Labrador attended.
- The fifth focus group was held in St. John's on June 22, 2009. Eleven people representing businesses and organizations in Bay Roberts, Bell Island, St. John's and surrounding areas attended.

Note: This session replaced one that was to be held in Southern Labrador, which was not deemed feasible due to difficulty obtaining commitment from the business sector on the Labrador coast. Early into setting up focus group sessions, requests were forthcoming for sessions to be conducted in the capital city. At that time, interested participants were invited to attend previously scheduled sessions in Carbonear to cover the eastern portion of the province. Since many participants were unable to do so, the committee deemed that a session held in St. John's would be a worthwhile endeavour. It was also felt that the population of northeast Avalon area, which is home to the most diverse and concentrated economic activity in the province, would provide a better potential for input from the business community.

Focus Group Findings – Key Stakeholders (Businesses and Organizations)

Question 1. What Essential Skills do your employees/volunteers/clients use? How?

Because of the variety of representation at these sessions, businesses and organizations differed as to the Essential Skills used and how. Representatives in all groups used all nine Essential Skills at varying degrees. Oral Communication was the number one Essential Skill used, followed by Reading Text and Thinking Skills.

They all agreed that the type of skill used in the workplace would be job specific and that computer skills are becoming a necessity in today's workplace. Overall, Essential Skills used were dependent on the situation, whether it is the workplace, school, home, shopping, social situations, or general everyday living activities.

“All Essential Skills used. While basic Essential Skills are needed for entry-level employment, further training is needed to address specific job skills”

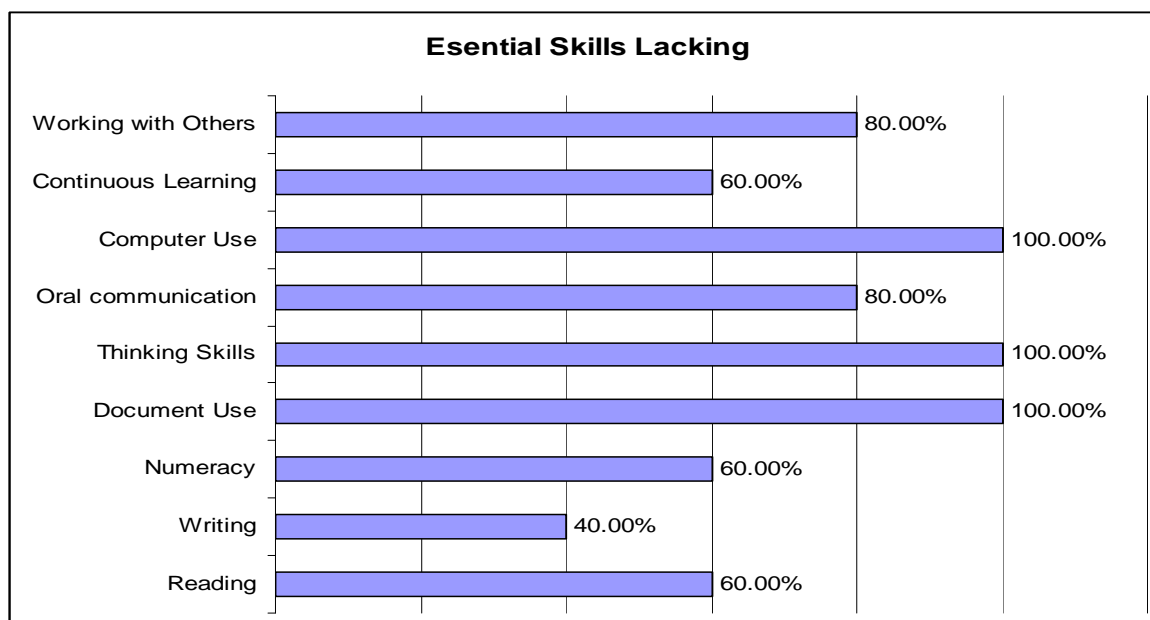
“People may be skilled as workers but lack communication skills”

Question 2 - What Essential Skills do you think they are lacking?

- All five groups agreed that their employees/volunteers/clients were lacking in Document Use, Thinking Skills, and Computer Use.
- Four of the five groups felt that their employees/volunteers/clients were lacking in Oral Communication and Working with Others.
- Three of the five groups felt that their employees/volunteers/clients were lacking in Reading Text, Numeracy, and Continuous Learning.

Essential Skills	Response	Percentage
Reading Text	3/5	60%
Writing 2/5		40%
Numeracy 3/5		60%
Document Use	5/5	100 %
Thinking Skills	5/5	100 %
Oral communication	4/5	80%
Computer Use	5/5	100 %
Continuous Learning	3/5	60%
Working with Others	4/5	80%

As shown in the chart below, representatives from five business and organization focus groups responded that their employees/volunteers/clients lacked Essential skills as indicated, with the greatest deficiency occurring in Computer Use, Document Use, and Thinking Skills.



“May be lacking in all, depending on specific skills needs for the workplace”

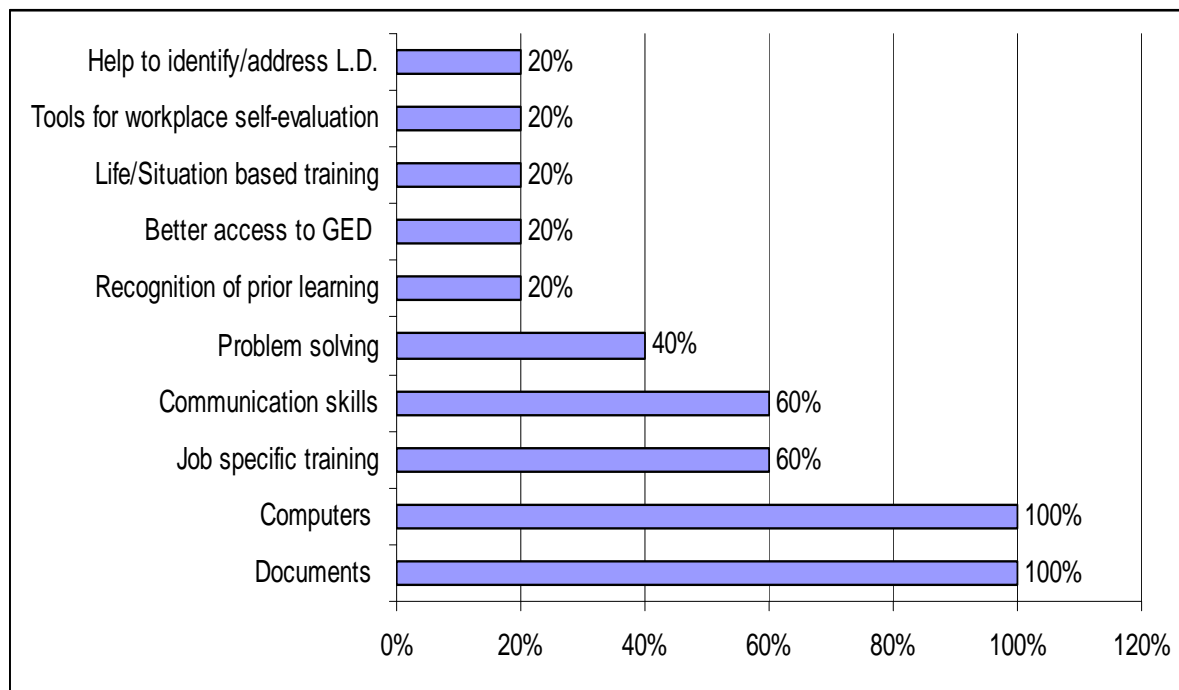
“Many don’t see the importance of teamwork and getting along in public and how it is perceived by customers”

Question 3. What tools would you like to see incorporated into a training that would address Essential Skills development?

- Trends identified were as follows:

Responses	___ of 5	Percentage
Documents <i>*(list attached)</i>	5/5	100%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government forms • Basic forms (e.g. rental applications, job applications, resumes, loan applications) 		
Computers (e.g. computers, cash registers, ATM machines, GPS, cell phones)	5/5	100%
Job specific training/ marketable skills	3/5	60%
Communication skills	3/5	60 %
Thinking skills (problem solving, attitude)	2/5	40 %
Recognition of prior learning	1/5	20%
Better access to GED programs	1/5	20 %
Life/Situation based training	1/5	20%
Tools for workplace self-evaluation	1/5	20%
Help to identify/address learning disabilities	1/5	20%

As shown in the chart below, representatives from five business/organization focus groups responded that they would like the following incorporated into a training that would address Essential Skills' development. Computer Use and Document Use rated top priority.



* Document List	
<p>Applications for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guaranteed Income Supplement • Canada Pension Plan • Social Insurance Number • Birth Certificate • Old Age Security • MCP • Low Income Drug Plan • Employment Insurance • Car loan • Insurance • Bank account • PRHP (NL Housing Corporation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rental agreement Job application Credit card application Resume Telephone calling card Police Records check Forms for workplace self-evaluation Assistive technology for Learning Disabled

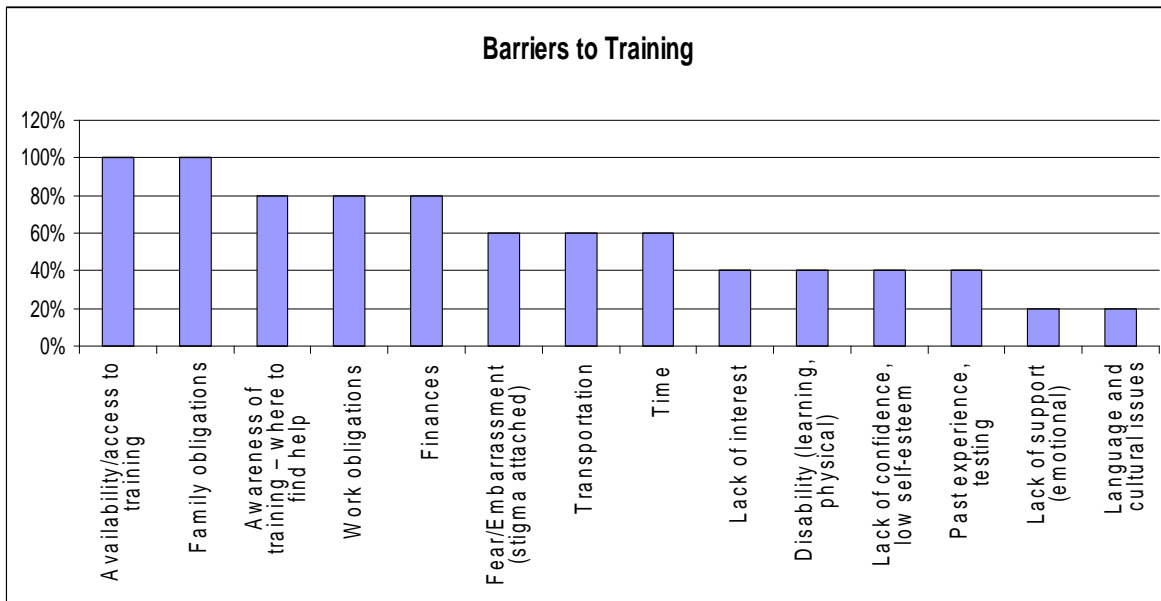
Question 4: What do you think would prevent your employees/volunteers/clients from taking advantage of training?

Trends identified were as follows:

Responses __	of 5	%
Availability/access to training	5/5	100%
Family obligations	5/5	100%
Awareness of training – where to find help	4/5	80%
Work obligations	4/5	80%
Finances	4/5	80%
Fear/Embarrassment (stigma attached)	3/5	60%
Transportation 3/5		60%
Time 3/5		60%
Lack of interest	2/5	40%
Disability (learning, physical)	2/5	40%
Lack of confidence, low self-esteem	2/5	40%
Past experience, testing	2/5	40%
Lack of support (emotional)	1/5	20%
Language and cultural issues	1/5	20%

The main barriers indicated were:

1. Availability and access to training, and family obligations
2. Awareness of training, work obligations, and finances



”Oral Communication is particularly a problem for ESL (English speakers of other languages) whereby workers may have the skills but are hampered by language barriers and cultural differences”

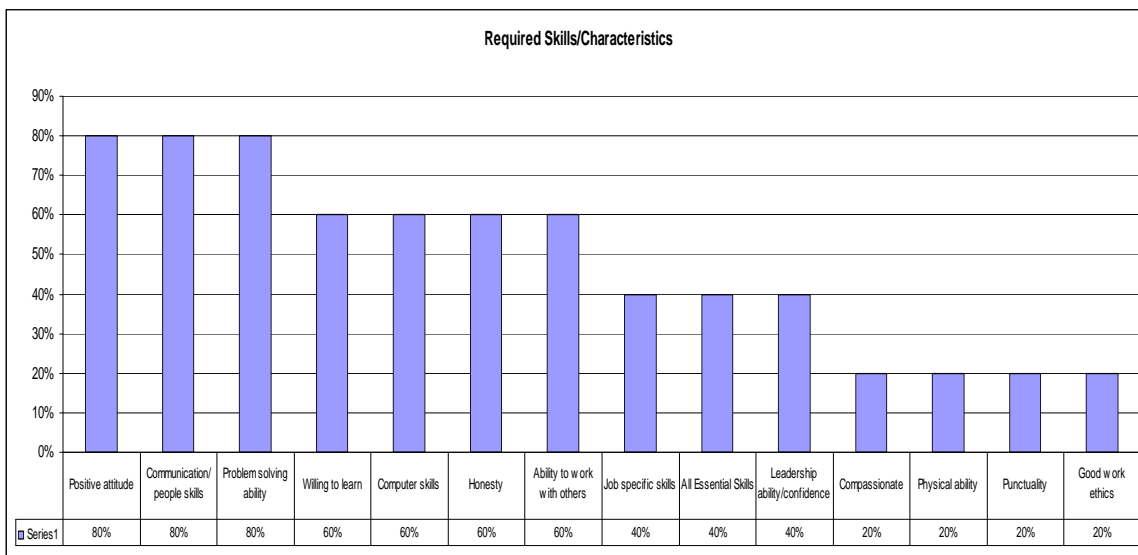
Question 5. What skills or characteristics do you consider important when hiring?

- Trends identified were as follows:

Responses	Total	%
Positive attitude	4/5	80%
Good Communication/people skills	4/5	80%
Good problem solving ability	4/5	80%
Willingness to learn	3/5	60%
Computer skills	3/5	60%
Honesty 3/5		60%
Ability to work with others	3/5	60%
Skills specific to the job	2/5	40%
All nine Essential Skills	2/5	40%
Leadership ability/confidence	2/5	40%
Compassionate 1/5		20%
Physical ability	1/5	20%
Punctuality 1/5		20%
Good work ethics	1/5	20%

Of all the skills and characteristics identified by focus group respondents, the majority of employers look for the following as main requirements when hiring:

1. Positive attitude, good communication skills, and problem solving ability.
2. Willingness to learn, computer skills, ability to work with others, and honesty.



“I would hire someone with a positive attitude over someone with more job specific skills and a poor attitude”

Question 6. What gaps do you see in the present system?

- Trends identified were as follows:

Responses
Getting the word out – awareness of available training
Need for computer skills
Attitude/lack of interest
Access to testing/help for those with learning disabilities
Access to information/where to find information – no “hub”
Time and pay to attend training
Problem-solving ability (thinking skills)
Document use – filling out forms, job applications, resumes
Continuous learning – need for follow-up in the workplace
Need for on-site learning – computers, cash registers, documents
Better access to GED tutoring and testing
Finding information in hard copy, most (government) forms are online

“It is hard for someone with low literacy to find information in the form of brochures and written material. Everything is online, not as many brochures/pamphlets around as there used to be”

“Academic criteria reached [for ABE] but do not have basic Essential Skills to succeed in the program”

GAPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Feedback from all stakeholder group respondents identified the following main gaps in the current system which need to be addressed as soon as possible in order to prepare Older Adults for entry/re-entry into the workforce.

Main Gaps Identified by Respondents

1. Updated, student-appropriate material is needed to prepare learners for today's workplace.
2. There needs to be a documented process in place for tutors and students to learn application of Essential Skills from theory to practical use.
3. There is a need for computer use/training in basic computer skills and use of technology such as cash registers, ATM machines, and other technological tools.
4. Getting the word out - awareness of help available.

Recommendations

To address these issues, the following recommendations have been made:

1. Development of a tutor/learner training package that addresses Essential Skills development which includes a train the trainer guide, tutor handbook, and learning modules should be made a top priority.
2. A documented process for application of Essential Skills from theory to practical should be put into place for universal use by all Laubach literacy tutors.
3. Computer Use/training in basic computer use and other technology use such as cash registers, using ATM machines and other technological tools, should be an aspiration for all Councils. While it is not necessary that all Council tutors be proficient in

computer use, it is important to embrace technology and have tutors and resources available to teach those who seek it.

4. There should be updated training for tutors which includes tutoring in Essential Skills to equip learners to meet the demands of today's workplace.
5. To promote help available for those seeking literacy services, public awareness sessions should be held on a regular basis.

CONCLUSION

This is the completion of Phase II - the research and consultation component - of the Essential Skills Literacy Training: Tools for Older Adults Project. This comprehensive study has obtained feedback from a variety of perspectives – Older Adults/Adult learners, Tutors, Trainers, and Key Stakeholders. Data collected from all respondents indicate that there is a definite need for Essential Skills Development training for older adults, as well as others who are entering or re-entering today's workforce. The next phase of the project is to apply this research to the development of an Essential Skills program to meet the identified needs.