

**COMMUNICATIONS
ENERGY &
PAPERWORKERS
UNION OF CANADA**

**LITERACY LEARNING
NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

FINAL REPORT AND FINDINGS



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was written by Nancy Steel, Centre for Career Advancement, Bow Valley College, in cooperation with Ian Thorn, Coordinator, Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union National Literacy Project.

The Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union National Literacy Project wishes to acknowledge and thank the Local Unions and companies who contributed their ideas to this report. A listing is provided in the Appendix.

The Communication, Energy and Paperworkers Union also wishes to thank Brigid Hayes, [National Literacy Secretariat](#) for funding support and ideas.

THE CEPU NATIONAL LITERACY LEARNING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

"Canada and other industrial nations are undergoing a period of economic and social transformation in which knowledge and information are becoming the foundation for the organization and development of economic and social activity. In this knowledge-based economy and society, the capacity to learn and accumulate skills and competencies is increasingly becoming an imperative-for individuals, to access employment and adapt to changing circumstances and for an economy, to innovate and achieve growth."

"Transition to the Knowledge Society: Policies and Strategies for Individual Participation and Learning". Applied Research Branch Bulletin Volume 6, No. 1 (Winter-Spring 2000). Human Resources and Development.

BACKGROUND

The Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEPU) has a history of advocating for lifelong learning opportunities for its membership. It has done so by supporting joint CEPU-employer education committees, by placing education on the bargaining table, by offering a variety of learning opportunities to CEPU officers, shop stewards and rank and file members, and now by having established the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union's National Literacy Project.

The goals of the project are twofold: to raise the awareness of the need to refresh and develop literacy skills in order to manage change, and to find out what literacy learning needs members most want to address and strengthen.

A 1999 survey of CEPU members across Canada revealed that many members perceived some need to develop essential skills in the face of rapid change in their various workplaces. Overall, 33% of those surveyed perceived some need to improve writing skills for the six work-related tasks such as note taking and report writing. A similar percentage, 34%, perceived a need to improve math skills for work-related tasks such as calculating volumes and ratios. If one third of the national CEPU surveyed workforce readily identifies a need to improve work related essential skills that suggests an interest in developing those essential skills, but clearly more information was needed.

THE NATIONAL CEPU LITERACY LEARNING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The National Literacy Learning Needs Assessment was a way to acquire more detailed information about members' perceptions of their literacy learning needs. The strategy that was employed to acquire the information was consistent with union values of equality and collectivity, and was endorsed by the National Literacy Project Steering Committee.

PLANNING TOGETHER

Many literacy needs assessments conducted for unions across the country have been carried out by education consultants who generally create questions, interview workers, union officials and the employer, and analyze the findings for the final report. However the CEPU National Learning Needs Assessment was conducted a bit differently, in a way that is consistent with the union values of collectivity and self-determined working and living. Instead of the education consultant conducting the needs assessment, eight National Representatives met in June with the consultant to plan the strategy for the needs assessment, to review and collectively adjust the questions for the assessment and to review interview and group discussion techniques. (Please see appendix for that workshop content). This participation prepared the Representatives to be able to conduct the needs assessment with members, union officials and employers in their regions, and because of the bi-lingual nature of the constituents, all documents were made available in both French and English.

THE LEARNING NEEDS ASSESSMENT RESEARCHERS:

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That important meeting also clarified both the nature of the research process and the nature of the data that would be collected. The process undertaken is called Action Research, which is a "systematic inquiry that is collective, collaborative, self-reflective, and is undertaken by the participants in the inquiry." (McCutcheon and Jung, 1990). The process that the researchers go through allows for empowerment and a building of knowledge and skills. The process is in many ways as important as the data collected.

Depending on the type of information sought, the data gathered may or may not be quantitative. In this needs assessment the questions generated by the National Representatives produced data that was rich in narrative and meaning, though not quantitative in a significant way. Essentially, the representatives asked questions of members to gain their perception of their literacy learning needs in the face of changes in the workplace and in society. The representatives talked to union officers to understand how union leaders saw the role that unions could play in supporting members' learning. And finally, the representatives interviewed employers to talk/ask about change and the impact of that change on workers' use of skills and the need to improve and learn new skills. Since the impact of change on skills

and the use of skills was not measured, but rather simply discussed to gain people's perception, the resulting data is not quantitative except to indicate consensus of opinion. However, the very process of asking people to think about, discuss, and voice their views, raises the level of awareness in a national way that few "campaigns" might manage to achieve. Each focus group discussion, each one-to-one interview, afforded an opportunity for workers, unions and employers to take ownership for the issue by virtue of having expressed their ideas about it and having those ideas recorded. Moreover, each discussion and each interview also contributed to the broader CEPU National Literacy Project effort.

MEMBERS TALK TO MEMBERS

Because National Representatives conducted the needs assessment in their region as members talking to members, they evoked a higher richer level of response than is perhaps usual for such surveys in which information is sought by a consultant external to the environment and organization. The National Representatives collected three types of data: demographic data to profile the locals and the companies which participated; response data in answer to the specific questions asked; and a body of "quotes", things people said in relationship to the questions that added depth to their answers. Each interview and discussion group was facilitated by the National Representative who provided the participant(s) with a written outline of the questions so that they might have a chance to think about their answers and ideas. A separate recorder/notetaker was present so that the facilitator could focus on listening and guiding the discussion. The recorder/notetaker was briefed beforehand so that they might understand better that their role was to focus on writing down peoples' ideas, and to refrain, at least for the time being, from entering the discussion and hence losing valuable comments from others.

All of the ideas put forward by the members and union officials remained confidential so that no one remark would ever be attributed to any single individual. However, because some of the quotes that accompanied responses were so revealing and resonant, permission was asked to use them in the report, and people were always agreeable to that.

EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ASSESSMENT

Employers contributed to the needs assessment in two ways. Some, although not all, employers allowed focus group discussions with workers to be conducted on company time, allowing up to 2 hours for the activity. This contribution of time demonstrates a recognition that workers' ideas about their own learning are valuable, and worthy of the investment of employer time.

The other contribution that employers made was to engage in the needs assessment discussion, providing their perspective of workplace change and how it impacts workers' use of essential skills and the need to develop those skills to equip employees to keep pace with change. Their perceptions and insights, as the findings show, are not dramatically different than the workers' and union officials, and noting common threads may reveal the common agenda for essential skill development among Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union members.

A SECONDARY APPROACH TO GATHERING INFORMATION

While the focus group discussions and interviews produced rich narrative information that is reflected in this report, this approach to acquiring the information limits the number of people who can contribute ideas about learning because of the travel, time and logistical constraints of gathering people together to talk. Consequently, a supplemental questionnaire was developed for mailout to all of the local unions across the country, thereby soliciting additional information from members, union officers, and employers.

The set of questions used for the discussions was repeated in the mailout questionnaire to ensure some consistency of responses. The format chosen was question-multiple selection. The response choices were selected from common responses generated by the focus group discussions and interviews. Respondents also had an opportunity to add in any other ideas they might have that were not included in

the range of choices provided, and to add any comments they had related to the issue addressed by the question. (Please see the appendix for a copy of the mailout questionnaire). While the questionnaire did not elicit the same rich narrative information as the discussions and interviews did, it proved effective for providing more people with an opportunity to contribute ideas, defined the range of responses, and allowed for tabulation of the data.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

THE EFFECT OF CHANGE ON WORKERS' USE OF ESSENTIAL SKILLS

The first two questions posed to employers and union members during the needs assessment deal with the issue of change, and the effects of change on workers' use of essential skills. During focus group interviews and on the questionnaire employers and union members identified similar changes: computerization and technology, market competition and customer demand, safety and other regulatory systems, and the aging of the workforce. While the change challenges are common across industries represented by this union, they vary in their impact in different industries. Understanding how each change affects workers in the various industry types can provide an effective backdrop to the comments that people who were interviewed made about how change was impacting the use of essential skills.

TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

Technological change in the communications and telecommunications industries

CEPU members in the communications and telecommunications industries represent a diversity of occupations that includes those workers in the telecommunication field, commercial printing field, the field of journalism and broadcasting, and computer operators, just as an example. And yet despite the diversity across occupations in the industries there are common "change drivers" that are impacting how the workers are using literacy skills on a daily basis.

Technological change is pervasive today, touching every aspect of the nearly 21,000,000 adult Canadians' lives at home, in the workplace and in the community. But it is in the communications and telecommunications industries that the growth of technology has been so strongly evidenced and every union member in every occupation in this industry has experienced the effects of that growth. For example, in the telecommunications occupations, which include telecommunications installation and repair workers, customer service workers, telephone operators, technical sales specialists, and electronics assemblers, fabricators and testers, the convergence of several technologies complicates further the introduction of new wireless and broadband technologies.

CEPU members in the communications industry who were interviewed identified tech change as the primary influence on their use of skills, and need to acquire new skills:

"You have to go online to apply for a new position, now."

"Used to be your manager would tell you about changes, but now they tell you stuff over video-conferencing"

"Ninety-nine percent of the employees are affected by the change in the billing system - some employees learn faster, some slower."

"Everything is on line, versus on paper." "Training for new equipment is now on-line"

Employers in this industry agree with employees that tech change has a significant effect on skill use:

"Lots of employees with good technological skills have retired and we have fewer managers with technical backgrounds..."

"There is more reading required because of the way we communicate now."

Technological change in the energy industry

CEPU members in the energy industry, particularly in the oil and gas industry whose occupations range from process operators to skilled trades, to technologists and technicians, also experience technological change, but of a slightly different nature than those in the communications industries. While the communications industries experience the introduction of brand new technology on the job, energy industry workers experience an increasing sophistication of an existing technology that improves yields and ensures that environmental and safety standards are met.

Members in this industry talked about technical changes they are experiencing and the implications for use of skill and need to learn:

"There are more reports to read, and they are so much more technical than they used to be"

"We need more in depth training on the computers we now use. We get a quick ½ hour."

Oil and gas industry employers also commented on the technology change:

"With the new and different equipment comes some change in compliance to safety regulations."

"New processes and new products and new technology have meant that employees need to take on new learning, read new manuals, write new procedures and have the skills to do all this well."

"A strong back is no longer the essential"

Technological change in the paper industries

A similar type of technological change/sophistication is experienced by those workers in the pulp and paper industry, whose business focuses may range from the production of wood products to pulp, to newsprint production to building board and paperboard production. Occupations represented within these focuses are just as varied, ranging from machine operators to lumber graders and a full scope of tradespeople and many labourers. The industry profile⁽¹⁾ for the Pulp and Paper industry focus states "Increasingly mills are using more sophisticated technologies in mills, including an increase in the application of computer and information technologies. This will have implications for the organization of work and skill requirements." The profile for the Wood Products focus echoes this statement: "Increasing use of information technologies is evident in recent years, particularly in regard to planning and the use of logs in sawmills. These technologies have changed both the organization of work and the human resource requirements." Clearly, workers in the pulp and paper industry are experiencing technological changes that affect their use of essential skills and their need to refresh and acquire new skills.

1 Industry profiles are available at <http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/sector/english/industryprofiles/prsearch.shtml>

Workers interviewed during the national needs assessment confirmed this:

"Secondary education doesn't seem enough once in the workplace."

"There are people who cannot read, write ... how can they know what button to press?"

"Retirees are not being replaced. As people go out machines come in and take the jobs."

Employers in this industry, too, recognize the impact of technology change on work and workers:

"There is more paperwork than physical work."

"The modernization of our existing equipment requires the retraining of employees"

Although differences in the type of technological change exist between the various industries the resulting effect of that change remains the same. These new or enhanced technologies increase workers' need to have flexible sound essential skills so that they can take on new learning associated with the changes.

During the needs assessment process the related issues of technological change and computerization were identified by both the employer and the union members as the most significant of all the changes identified across all industries. Not only that, but also both members and employers were explicit about how this key change affected the use of essential skills. The questionnaire data demonstrates that 67% of union members note an increase in their need to use these skills in order to communicate by email and use computer software programs. Another 66% noted an increased need to use these skills in order to operate computerized equipment safely.

Employers agreed that technology has impacted workers' use of these skills. Of the employers who completed questionnaires, 97% cited an increased need for workers to use computers on the job, and when asked about future changes and the effect of those predicted changes on workers skills 90% of employers indicated that the use of computers within company operations would increase appreciably. Another 77% anticipate that operational equipment will continue to become increasingly sophisticated.

The cumulative effect of technology on workers' use of skills has been to require them to read more, write more, use math in new ways, communicate with others more effectively and more often than ever before, and to acquire computer skills, often without formal training. In other words, workers truly need to be prepared to take on new learning in order to keep pace with change.

Other technology -related changes and trends

Other changes associated with technology shifts have affected workers use of essential skills on the job. For example, CEPU members in all industries commented that because of increased skill requirements imposed by the introduction of new technology and the improvement of existing technology job security became an issue for many.

"Many employees with 20 years or more seniority don't have the education or skills to advance."

"If we don't get up to speed on data we might lose our jobs".

"With the changing job market you need to be educated on the new technologies."

"Modernization is what is causing all the job cuts."

The exact impact of technological change on jobs and job security is still being examined and contested by labour market analysts. However, for the purposes of the CEPU National Needs Assessment it is important to acknowledge that CEPU workers perceive that technological change has impacted not only how they do their jobs, but how secure they feel about their jobs in light of skill requirements for technological change.

Employers also acknowledge the impact of technological change on skill requirements, particularly as it relates to job recruitment and career shifts in their companies:

"We have higher company standards for recruitment and job performance. The average employee here is not equipped to deal with the increased use of computers, unless he has learned at home or is young and newly hired."

"We now use aptitude tests to judge reading and writing because we realized applications were being completed at home by someone else."

"The increased need for computer training has changed the requirements for new hires."

"The increased growth has meant career changes for many people who have moved into different areas of the site, where there are different skill requirements."

MARKET COMPETITION AND CUSTOMER DEMAND FOR QUALITY

"Two of every five jobs created in Canada since 1993 are export-based and some 3 million workers owe their jobs directly to foreign markets."⁽²⁾

This statistic alone is clear evidence of the impact of a global market on Canadian jobs. While it is noteworthy that so many *new* jobs are tied to international markets, it cannot be overlooked that a significant number of *existing* jobs may well also have been changed by global competition. Jobs found in the Communications, Energy, and Paperworkers Union industries will certainly have been affected given that Canada's main export products include metals and minerals, softwood lumber and sawn timber and natural gas.⁽³⁾, all products of this union's workforce.

The effect of globalization on our economy has been to raise the bar on market competition, which means that Canadian workers and workplaces must be responsive to change in order to keep pace with the increased competition and the fluctuating demands for products and services. Like technology as a change driver, global competition varies in its impact across all industries.

Global market competition in the pulp and paper industry

While at one time our vast, renewable forest resources positioned Canada as extremely competitive in the world forest products market, that advantage is diminishing today. A recent Federal Government Task report ⁽⁴⁾ details the reasons why this is so, citing a number of factors having to do with rising costs that in the end affect competitiveness, productivity and profitability in a global market. Furthermore, the report

² "Working with Canadians to increase Canada's share of global trade". Industry Canada. Government of Canada. 2000/11/10.

³ Industry Profiles, National Analysis. <http://www.hrdc.gc.ca/sector/english/industryprofiles/national.shtml> See National Profile

⁴ "Productivity and Innovation: A Competitive and Prosperous Canada". A Report of the Standing Committee on Industry. Industry Canada. April 2000.

asserts, "the introduction of new technologies over the past 10 years has changed the skill sets of employees and for industry workers must now include more of those in biotechnology, chemistry, wood engineering and other specialized fields."⁽⁵⁾ One apparent effect of globalization and market competition has been to devalue low skilled workers and demand that workers in this industry have a more sophisticated set of skills to do the traditional jobs.

Participants during the needs assessment activity underscored this point. In a one-to-one interview at the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union Year 2000 Convention in Montreal a union member with over 20 years in the lumber industry elaborated on this point. He explained that many of the older workers were finding it hard to keep pace with the changes that the company felt were necessary in order to remain competitive; that the changes required greater use of essential skills that older workers simply lacked.

Globalization of markets has also had another effect: domestic mergers and acquisitions; foreign takeovers; purchases of U.S assets by Canadian companies. This structural change has not gone unfelt by union members in the forest industry, who throughout the needs assessment remarked that the inevitable effect of mergers has been to undermine their confidence in themselves and the security of their jobs.

"The ownership change has resulted in an attitude change: increased stress levels of workers. The union spirit has diminished. People are afraid to support the union."

"The new employer knows he has a whack of people who can't read, but they are good at what they do for the time being so there's no need to do anything about it."

The lack of security and confidence in their jobs may be directly tied to their lack of confidence in their skills, in their ability to withstand the organizational shifts within the forest product industry.

Their worry may not be unfounded. One employer in the forest industry remarked:

"Because of a merger the new employer is comparing mills with a shutdown in mind."

The conclusion is clear. Workers whose essential skills are underdeveloped may be at risk in this industry that is presently undergoing organizational shifts because of global market competition.

Global market competition in the energy industry

Globalization in the energy industry looks significantly different and appears to be less threatening to the average CEPU member than those in the forest products industry.

For one thing, Canada's position in the world energy market is relatively secure. A discussion of the oil and gas industry states that "...in 1990 we were in the bottom half of our class looking around the world and in North America. But over the 1990's through process changes, capital investment, and the use of technology we have changed our competitive position such that we are now in the top half relative to other players in the world."⁽⁶⁾ Moreover, this industry is not being buffeted in the same way as the forest industry by mergers, acquisitions and those kinds of influences. Rather, the oil and gas industry's future will be influenced by product demand and environmental constraints.

⁶ "Productivity and Innovation: A Competitive and Prosperous Canada". A Report of the Standing Committee on Industry. Industry Canada. April 2000.

However, the union members in the energy industry are not confined to oil and gas operations. Indeed, many members work in a manufacturing environment and that industry is suffering in today's global marketplace. The "Productivity and Innovation" report offers evidence that Canadian productivity in the manufacture of goods relevant to CEPU workers, such as chemicals and chemical products, and refined petroleum and petroleum products lags behind the United States significantly. This impacts on the companies and workers, as we heard during the needs assessment activity. One employee remarked:

"We know all about globalization. We are a bankrupt company because of it."

An employer, when asked about the effects of globalization on his operation stated:

"With the merger, we are just a number and at risk."

The intense need for productivity gains to remain competitive is the single greatest impact of globalization in the energy-manufacturing industry. Such productivity gains, which spell job security for CEPU members, are reliant upon having the competitive advantage, have streamlined processes and new marketable products. One employer sums up the situation this way:

"New processes and new products have meant that people need to take on new learning, read new manuals, write new procedures ... and have the skills to do this well."

Global market competition in the communications and telecommunications industries

Globalization has impacted the communications and telecommunications industries in two significant ways: it has increased the number of mergers and acquisitions, and created an intense, competitive demand for specialized skilled labour.

The mergers and acquisitions taking place in the communications industry are in part related to the convergence of computers and communication technology as companies strive to compete in a rapidly changing product market. As the market expands and contracts at the same time with companies either downsizing or expanding as they merge, the effect on workers' skill use is to demand that they have the ability to take on new learning and flexibility of skill use. As the profile for this industry states, "Job security in the midst of restructuring and downsizing continues to be a high priority issue, particularly for telephone operators in recent months."⁽⁷⁾ Job security is in part related to skills, and often to the match between the skills in demand and those that a worker has. Training is clearly the key if a worker is to remain in secure employment. However, during the needs assessment several communications workers expressed concern over the availability of skill development and training:

"It's up to you to search out new courses. Our managers don't do that anymore - I don't even know what is available."

"The company can only afford to send one person from the group, and most times that person doesn't share the learning."

"There is a lack of training - the company will pass over existing employees and hire people with the skills."

The latter union member's quote validates labour market information that indicates that the other effect of a competitive global market on this industry has been to create a high demand for specialized skilled

⁷ Industry Profiles, National Analysis. <http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/sector/english/industryprofiles/E07/busenv.shtml> See Telecommunications Industry.

workers. Observes the Industry Profile: "The emergence of a North American labour market under NAFTA labour mobility rules has increased pressures on Canadian employers to compete for top talent ...". Obviously, it would be prudent for companies, then, to enhance the skills of its existing pool of workers, but as the profile also observes: "The same study indicates that most training is just in time which is appropriate for project-based needs, but is not the sort of training that helps companies attract and retain key employees. The needs assessment survey participants confirm, with their comments, current labour market analyses and indicates that at a time when training might enhance workers' employability in a dynamic labour market it just isn't happening at the level required in this industry.

Customer demand for quality

Related to the issue of increased market competition is that of customers' demand for quality products and services. Customers today are increasingly more knowledgeable and more assertive about their requirements for goods and services, and have increasingly greater choice as the market broadens and becomes more competitive. This market factor is consistent across all of the industries represented by the Communication, Energy and Paperworkers Union, although workers in the communications industry certainly had greater contact with customers by virtue of their occupations.

While both union members and employer identified "customer service" as a significant factor of change, employers were more likely to provide commentary around the issue:

"Customers are presenting more of a challenge-they are much better educated about the product and put pressure on us to remain competitive. This means that the workforce must change - not for change sake but to remain competitive."

"We are doing a "charm course" for installers that gives them some basic people skills."

"We want it [the product] faster, higher quality and right the first time. Any wrong input is related directly to the customer. Errors are transparent, and there is competition out there."

As two of these employers point out a stepped-up demand by customers for quality products and services is directly linked to workers' skill sets. Having a highly skilled workforce that can deliver timely and error-free products and services is critical to a company's competitive position, and clearly both union members and employers interviewed understand this.

THE AGING WORKFORCE

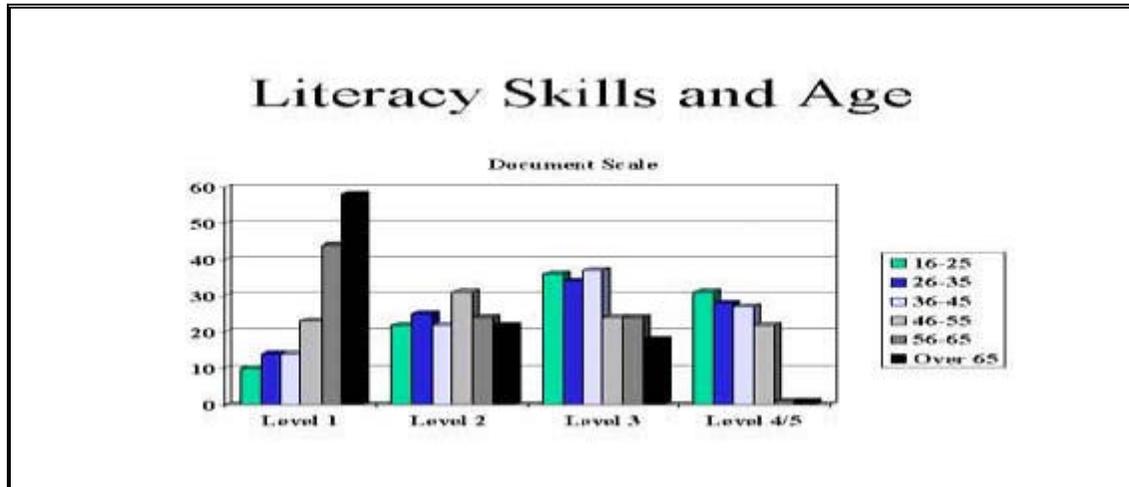
The aging of Canada's workforce was another labour market factor noted by both employers and union members alike during the needs assessment activity, but while a large percentage of people did cite it as a change factor, few commented on the issue much.

The aging of the workforce is currently the subject of much research in both Canada and the United States, and indeed internationally. According to a recent discussion paper issued by Industry Canada, the median age of the workforce in Canada will increase from 35 to 45 over the next four decades⁽⁸⁾. That will place a significant number of workers in the 50-60's age range. The reason that this is of concern is because of the link between age and productivity. A recent international survey, conducted by the international human resources research firm Watson Wyatt, found that 88% of CEO's from several industrial nations, including Canada, made the link between age and productivity. The Industry Canada

⁸ "Determinants of Canadian Productivity Growth: Issues and Prospects. Industry Canada. December 1999.

discussion paper agrees, and concludes that "Simply put, a labour force full of 55 - 60 year olds will produce a lot less than a labour force full of 40-50 year olds.

While that statistic may be true, productivity is of course also tied to skill levels and use. Data from the International Adult Literacy Survey demonstrates that older workers are more likely to struggle with essential skills:



In interviews during the needs assessment activity, union members occasionally commented on their perception of older workers' use of essential skills on the job:

"Older hands have a tougher time with the computers."

"Every machine has 3 or so books and a lot of fellows who were trained on the old machines can't be re-trained on the new ones because they can't read."

"Some of the older workers bring forms to their buddy to fill out for them."

Employers too acknowledged the issue of their workforce:

"We hired, on a replacement basis, employees in the 25-35 age group, and these employees are more literate than the current workforce."

"The average employee is not equipped to deal with the increased use of computers, unless he is young and newly hired."

"The average age of employees is increasing, and yet we are not getting the younger, skilled workers."

The issue of an aging workforce is not a momentary one. A recent study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) observes: "OECD labour markets have adapted to significant shifts in the age structure of the labour force in the past. However, the aging projected over the next several decades is outside the range of recent historical experience."¹⁰ The same report offers

¹⁰ "Workforce Ageing: Consequences and Policy Responses". Working Paper in "Maintaining Prosperity in an Ageing Society". Organization for Economic and Cooperation and Development. ND.

advice: "...proactive strategies, emphasizing the skill base with which workers enter the later stages of their careers, are likely to be more effective than remedial measures after older workers have encountered employment problems. Thus, the training and other personnel practices of employers, as well as the career planning of workers, need to begin now to face the prospect of an aging workforce." This pivotal document on the topic offers this conclusion; "The productivity of older workers, including their ability to learn new skills, will be an important determinant of their employability and earnings.

SAFETY AND OTHER REGULATORY CHANGES

Safety regulations and other industry specific regulations also contribute to a pressing need for workers to have sound essential skills.

Safety regulation changes

The increase in the number of safety regulations and the strict adherence to the regulations is common across the many occupations of workers in the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union.

The strongest evidence of the importance of safety for both employers and workers was revealed when people were asked about the type of training that is available, both through the company and as offered by the union.

Of the employers who responded to the questionnaire, 100% cited safety training as available to all employees. Of the union officers surveyed, 62% indicated that their local offered this training to members (recognizing that not all of the local unions are in a position to offer training to members because of their size and therefore resources) and of the union members who completed the questionnaire 72% indicated that they had recently taken a safety course with their employer and 20% indicated they had taken this training through the union.

Increased awareness of and diligence toward safety requires that workers be able to read and understand the often-complex language of the regulations. Not all workers feel confident that they do so well. When asked what reading they might find difficult to understand readily, 29% cited safety regulations as challenging to grasp.

The strict adherence to safety regulations also increases the need for workers to document processes and incidents more often and more accurately. Of the union members surveyed by questionnaire, 70% reported that they have noted a need for increased written documentation as one way they have been impacted by change, and 29% indicated that they find the writing of reports challenging for them. It is clear that not only must workers be increasingly responsible for knowing safety information, they must use essential skills more often and must do so well in order to comply with the regulations.

Environmental regulations

The energy industries and pulp and paper operations are called upon to manage business with strict regard for environmental regulations, practicing what is now referred to as Eco-efficiency to ensure sustainable development. According to Industry Canada, eco-efficiency refers to "the delivery of competitively-priced goods and services that satisfy human needs and bring quality of life, while progressively reducing ecological impacts and resource intensity throughout the life cycle to a level at least in line with the Earth's estimated carrying capacity". To achieve that vision, companies will have to build capacity in technology and production processes, monitor and evaluate their progress, and integrate sustainable development into daily decision making.

Many of the companies included in the needs assessment activity have recognized this responsibility and have responded by establishing policies and procedures accordingly. Abitibi Consolidated, for example, has a Sustainable Forest Management Policy that states, in part, a commitment to "meet or exceed

applicable legislative regulatory and policy requirements". In the energy industry, Suncor Energy has in place a Greenhouse Gas Management Plan that attempts to manage gas emissions while increasing production.

Other regulatory systems

Workers in the communications and telecommunications industries have been impacted by the on-going work and changes of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission. (CRTC). The CRTC regulates and supervises Canadian broadcasting and telecommunications as governed by the Broadcasting Act and the Telecommunications Act. This organization regulates over 5,900 broadcasters, which includes television, cable distribution, AM and FM radio, pay and specialty television, Direct-to-Home satellite systems, Multipoint Distribution Systems, Subscription television, and Pay Audio. It also regulates over 61 telecommunications carriers including major Canadian telephone companies.

Given the dynamic nature of the telecommunications and broadcasting industries the CRTC must diligently respond to changes by creating new acts and regulations and amending existing ones. While these changes in regulations are at a more global industry level they do impact the workers whose responsibility it becomes to be aware of and carry out procedures accordingly. Throughout the assessment activity many union members in this industry reported that the way they conduct business today is reliant upon the regulatory changes of the CRTC.

In fact, the cumulative effect of regulatory change of any kind has been the same for all CEPU members, regardless of industry: the need to have flexible essential skills so that they can read and understand the changes, provide appropriate documentation as required by the changes, communicate the changes to others using both speaking skills and perhaps computer skills.

REORGANIZATION OF WORK

The reorganization of work, while not addressed directly in the questions posed to employers and employees, emerged as a change item while technology was being discussed, while market competition and customer service was being discussed, and while safety and other regulatory changes was being discussed.

The reorganization of work is chiefly characterized by a broadening of workers' responsibilities. More than simply requiring multi-tasking however, the reorganization of work involves increased decision making, accountability and reporting on the part of the worker. In fact, 48% of the union members who completed the questionnaire cited an increased need to make more decisions as one of the ways that the changes have affected them on the job.

Surprisingly, however, employers reported the increase of employee responsibility more frequently than did the union members interviewed on a one-to-one basis. Employers remarked:

"There is more of a burden on the workers. Employees are getting more involved in decision-making."

"Workers have been required to re-think what is involved in their jobs."

"There needs to be a greater understanding of, and responsibility for, the process."

"There is increased documentation, more reports."

"It used to be a manager who examined the work process; now employees are asked to analyze the information."

"We are moving away from an autocratic structure to one that invites increased participation in decision-making from employees, which means they need to know how to express their ideas."

"There is increased responsibility and accountability for the business of the employees' area."

"At the beginning of every shift employees at a workcentre prepare a lesson and orally present it to fellow workers, for example perhaps to improve lockout skills or maintenance skills. These are our one-minute lessons."

"Our Innovative Ideas program allows employees to suggest changes to improve our product, safety, etc. They get recognition for good ideas."

"We now have self-directing employees communicating with management more."

"Employees know the problems and are learning to put it on paper."

"Employees are now invited to make decisions about improving productivity."

"People are now self-administering their savings plan, pensions plans."

Of employers who completed the questionnaire, 77% responded that workers now need to use higher skills like critical thinking, decisions making and problem solving. Moreover, 53% reported that change will increase employees' workload, and another 50% noted an increased need for employees to do more documentation and reporting than ever before, constituting part of the heavier workload.

Some union members also commented upon the reorganization of their work during one-to-one interviews:

"I really notice an increase in the need for me to have decision making skills."

"The company seems to have cut their supervisory staff to the point that operators do and make decisions that were once done by a foreman, thus operators now run their departments."

"There is a lot more participation in decisions now - now there is input from the floor, which means the need to use verbal skills, read, write do math."

"Everything is self-taught now." "There are more roles and responsibilities given to us."

"We are required to "fight" for pay increases; meanwhile, more and more workload and responsibilities that are not necessarily our own work."

Of union members who responded to the questionnaire, 70% noted an increased need to use essential skills for documentation, reporting, reading and writing procedures, completing forms and generally dealing with job and union print information. Clearly, the implication of the reorganization of work for employees is apparent: workers find themselves taking on responsibilities that require them to use essential skills like reading, writing, math, oral communications and computer skills more often, and perhaps in ways that they have never before had to use them. For example, if a worker is required to become more autonomous for his area he may be faced with a new need to manage budgets, to schedule tasks, to communicate with management and co-workers. The single new responsibility entails a host of tasks that demand sound essential skills.

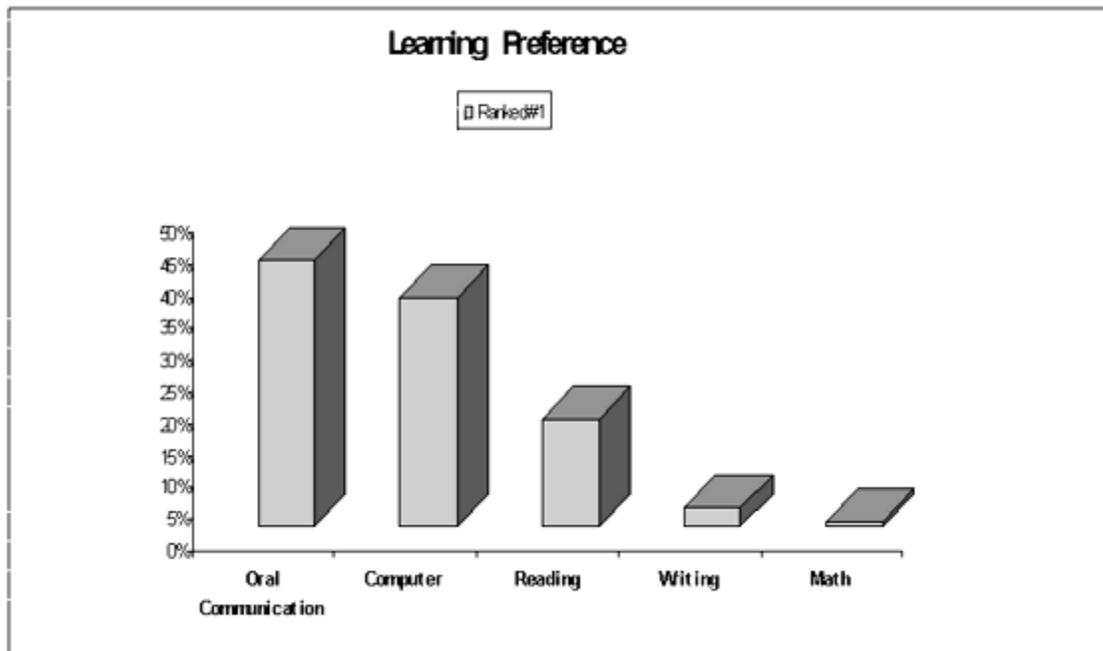
UNION MEMBERS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR ABILITY TO USE ESSENTIAL SKILLS EFFECTIVELY

Throughout the focus group discussions and in their responses on the questionnaire members were candid about their ability to employ essential skills in their daily lives. Each questionnaire respondent individually, and each focus group collectively, ranked essential skills learning needs. The cumulative ranking, and the discussion about each essential skill area, offers an opportunity to learn what essential skills CEPU members believe they need to strengthen, and why.

MEMBERS RANK ESSENTIAL SKILL LEARNING PREFERENCES⁽¹¹⁾

Respondents' selection of "Number one" learning preference.

Priority	Learning Need	Percentage
1.	Oral Communications	43%
2.	Computers	35%
3.	Reading	19%
4.	Writing	2%
5.	Math	1%



¹¹ The number of respondents was 207. Of these, 55 questionnaire responses were invalid and 11 were from the discussion groups whose consensus was recorded as single responses.

ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Oral communications emerged as the number one learning preference for members of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union. When asked to describe oral communication situations that they find challenging and which create a need to improve skills, participants in focus group discussions spoke in general and specific terms. Some general comments they made were:

"I am shy. I don't like to speak to a group of strangers."

"Speaking to a group makes me nervous."

"Public speaking is difficult - I rarely have to speak in public, but it feels very uncomfortable."

"I need to get the ability to get my point across better when I speak."

"When I explain legal matters I need to be able to talk sensibly and confidently."

Sometimes during discussions participants cited specific situations that they found uncomfortable:

"I have problems speaking at staff meetings."

"I find union-management meetings difficult."

"Talking to irate customers face to face or on the phone is a challenge."

"Employees may ask another to carry a message for them, for fear of speaking."

"At staff meetings it is always the same people who talk and the same people who don't talk because of a lack of confidence - nervousness."

"I feel inferior to the bank manager and the lawyer."

"Union meetings are difficult situations - making motions, asking questions."

"The challenge is not reacting in a negative way when confronted with a difficult customer."

"Higher educated management people are trained to intimidate. When you speak up you are quickly shot down."

"It is hard to get the point across when trying to instruct or train."

Questionnaire responses echoed the sentiments of those who spoke out during discussions. The chart below reveals the percentage of respondents who identified with the speaking challenge described.

Table 1 Oral Communication Challenges

30	Any public speaking
31	Conflict with co-workers - explaining how I see things
27	Speaking up at a shop meeting or union meeting
22	Talking to management about an issue
21	Dealing with difficult customers
14	Giving instructions for how to do something to others

In addition to selecting their choices above, respondents also added their own thoughts:

"Some support staff have difficulty speaking up, whether to peers or to administration."

"Public speaking is my weakness, but I communicate well in small groups."

Judging by the comments and the high percentage of CEPU members who identified oral communications as an issue, they appear to be very aware of the importance and value of that skill area.

Employers too attached great value to oral communication skills. When asked the question regarding how change will impact employees use of essential skills, 77% indicated that there is an increased need for good oral communication skills and interpersonal skills.

But despite the weight and value that both employees and employers attach to this skill, only 27% of employers surveyed indicated on the questionnaire that they currently offered oral communications training. Unfortunately, union training agendas also fall short in addressing this training need. Only 16% of the local union executives who responded to the questionnaire indicated that public speaking is a course available to their members. And so, while CEPU members identified this skill area as a training priority, it has clearly not been so for either the union or the employer. There is clearly a gap between employees' learning needs and the training being offered to address those needs.

COMPUTER SKILL DEVELOPMENT

When asked to identify a number one learning preference, 35% of the union members who responded to the questionnaire and who participated in discussions selected computer skill development.

The questionnaire information reveals that members' desire for computer training may have less to do with specific skill development as it does with having the opportunity to practice and extend skills.

Table 2 Computer Skill Challenges

53 %	Having time to practice and extend my skills for computer use at work and at home
40	Using software for word processing or spreadsheets
36	Knowing how it functions inside when I press different buttons on computerized equipment at work
24	Using email

Comments from members both in discussion groups and on the questionnaires support the fact that if computer skill development is confined to single task training, or is one-time only with little follow-up practice time, it leaves employees short of the skills in this area that they feel they need:

"Most employers limit their computer training to job tasks - so workers are unsure of how to deal with anything out of the ordinary."

"We are only trained to use the computer to the extent it is used on the job, but I would like to be able to use the computer at home and practice with the kids and grandkids."

"There is not time (nor computers) throughout the day to use what we already know and have learned on our own time."

Employers acknowledge the pervasive use of computers. On the questionnaire 90% of employer respondents cited it as a trend that would continue into the future. Unlike their offering of oral communications training, however, the majority of employers do offer both basic computer training (63%), and software training (43%). Nevertheless, union members' ranking of computer skills as a priority training need means that while some training has been done, more needs to be done. Many employers, 43% of those surveyed, who do not currently offer computer courses would like to, so perhaps were they more aware of employees' high interest, then additional resources might be allocated for this type of training.

READING SKILL DEVELOPMENT

When asked to identify a number one learning preference, 19% of the union members who responded to the questionnaire and who participated in discussions selected reading skill development. When asked about challenges they experience in this area, focus group discussion participants made comments that addressed the issue of reading comprehension, reading with good understanding:

"Very technical language is a challenge - and there is more of it and it is more sophisticated than ever."

"I can't fix the new equipment. I must read the manual. But it takes me so long to read the manual, and I get frustrated because they want it back in Operations, but I can't fix the equipment until I read the manual."

"Every machine has three or so books and a lot of fellows who were trained on the old machines can't be re-trained on the new ones because they can't read well enough."

"There is no one to explain the meaning when I read something difficult."

"Some of our staff are Francophone and so their reading of English material is difficult, but we help each other."

"Most of the material that I get I read, but find either boring or not easily understandable or confusing - especially procedures in manuals."

Sometimes the comments made about reading challenges did not have to do with skill, but rather address the issue of having time to complete reading tasks:

"There is too much information and I don't have time to read it."

"The information is so thick and we have to sit at our desks to read it, and yet still answer phones."

"The requirement is to read all the information that comes in our daily life, and we need to read it quickly and digest it and understand it."

The discussion group participants' comments reveal that the issue of reading skill is not so straightforward or black and white as "can read - can't read". Rather, "reading well" is relative to the context and demands of the situation. In his publication *Reading, But Not Reading Well - Reading Skills at Level 3: a Report From the Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Daily Activities* (1993), Stan Jones remarks that "Public discussion of adult literacy has often been unproductive because it has recognized only two categories: literate and illiterate." Mr. Jones argues that Level 3 readers¹², which according to the International Adult Literacy Survey represent 22% of the population, may or may not encounter reading difficulty depending on the familiarity and complexity of the reading tasks presented "To the extent that new work - whether in an existing job or in a new job - requires new reading tasks, Level 3 readers will have some difficulties. "

The union-based definition of literacy developed by the Canadian Labour Congress affirms literacy (and for our purposes here, reading) as a context -based skill:

"Literacy is now defined as a continuum of skills that range from quite limited to very high, as employed in daily activities at home, at work and in the Union and the community for the development of one's knowledge and potential and for the realization of individual and collective goals."

Clearly, "reading well" has a direct relationship to the uses for reading in a given situation. The focus group discussion participants who described reading challenges did so in the context of their working and living situations, and in light of these comments there appears to be a gap between their skill levels and the members' confidence in their abilities to meet the demands of their situations.

Questionnaire respondents were asked to identify reading materials that they found challenging. Their responses will be of particular interest to Union leaders:

¹² According to the International Adult Literacy Survey report, "Canadians at this level can use reading materials in a variety of situations provided the material is simple and clearly laid out."

Table 3 Reading Comprehension Challenges

43 %	Collective agreement
33	Reading procedures in manuals
33	Union bylaws
31	Reading to learn and remember (for courses)
31	Regulations
30	Memos and reports sent out by engineers or management
30	Technical reading material
30	Legal material
29	Materials, supplies and equipment information
29	Safety instructions and regulations

Nearly half of the respondents indicated that reading the collective agreement was a challenge. One third struggle with reading the union bylaws. While acknowledging that agreements and bylaws are not everyday reading materials, if members have difficulty understanding these union documents it surely implies that their access to information about their rights and their organization is limited, and by association their involvement in the union is limited.

WRITING SKILL DEVELOPMENT

When asked to identify a number one learning preference, 2% of the union members who responded to the questionnaire and who participated in discussions selected writing skill development. Upon examination of the narrative information collected during the focus groups, and the feedback on the questionnaire, it appears that the low interest in writing as a learning preference may have more to do with the lack of need to use the skill than any lack of need to improve the skill.

The low level of need to use the skill is reflected in some of the comments made during discussions about writing:

"The job doesn't require me to write letters so I am out of practice."

"I haven't used writing skills in a long time so everything to do with writing is a challenge"

The latter statement, in particular, demonstrates a relationship between people's perceived ability to write and frequency of use of the skill. This perception is an echo of the "Use it or lose it" phenomenon best described in a report entitled "Literacy Utilization in Canadian Workplaces (Krahn and Lowe, 1998). This report essentially suggests that people in the Canadian workforce may have generally good literacy skills ... but that through disuse (no demand for them to use the skill) they may over time experience a diminishing ability to use those skills effectively.

Whether this phenomenon is true of CEPU workers as a whole is difficult to gauge. Certainly some of the comments support the fact that workers are experiencing a diminishment of skills because of non-use, but on the other hand, questionnaire data indicates that 50% of workers who responded noted an increased need to produce written documentation:

Table 4 Use of Writing Skills on the Job

70 %	Increased need to read - procedures, documentation, union information, job information
67	Increased need to use these skills for email, documentation, forms
66	Increased need to use these skills for operating computerized equipment
55	Need to learn job skills because doing more tasks on the job
50	Increased need to write (reports, documentation)
48	Increased need to make more decisions
43	Increased need to communicate verbally with more people
22	Less need to communicate verbally because of email
15	Less need to write
10	Increased need to use more sophisticated math

Need for use aside, it is interesting to note that for those members who did perceive some difficulty using writing as a skill, the chief area of concern was composing and mechanics, as opposed to the ability to employ specific formats of documents.

Table 5 Writing Skill Challenges

37 %	Getting ideas down on paper from my head (composing notes, letters, memos)
30	Using good grammar and proper punctuation
29	Reports
27	Procedures
23	Notes at meetings
21	Instructions and manuals
14	Proposals to Shop Steward/Bargaining Committee, and to customers
13	Notes explaining things to co-workers (shift reports)

Where format was identified as an issue, report writing seems to be the primary area of difficulty.

While writing remains a low learning preference for the surveyed CEPU population, the increasing frequency of use (50% as show in Table 4) suggests that a writing skills program might be an attractive learning option for some.

MATH SKILL DEVELOPMENT

When asked to identify a number one learning preference, 1% of the union members who responded to the questionnaire and who participated in discussions selected math skill development. Moreover, 52% ranked it last as a learning preference. Like writing, the low ranking as a preference may have more to do with less need to use math on the job as compared to, say, reading. As the questionnaire data in Table 4 reveals, the impact of change on workers' need to use more sophisticated math than in past has been noted by only 10% of respondents.

The questionnaire data reveals too that there is little discrimination between the types of math tasks respondents identified as challenging to do:

Table 6 Math Skills Challenges

29 %	Imperial - Metric conversions
28	Trigonometry
24	Checking paycheque deductions
23	Percentages
23	Basic calculations, using division, multiplication
21	Problem solving using math
18	Fractions
17	Budget math

The comments that people made both in discussion groups and on the questionnaires reveal both a dislike of math and an infrequency of use:

"I do not do math at work."

"Math is challenging because I don't do it enough."

"Math was never my strong suit, language skills are."

"Though math is required by my job occasionally, I hate numbers!"

"I am not strong in any area of math - we mainly use mathematics for daily practical matters, for example groceries, bill payments."

The ranking and discussion of learning preferences by union members leaves little to doubt. Oral communication and computer skills are far and away the learning priorities. The 16% difference between those two front-runner and the next choice, reading, is significant, and further, the mere 2% and 1% preference accorded writing and math demonstrates that these are clearly perceived by the majority of respondents as having less priority.

While acknowledging the clear learning preferences of members across industries and across the country, it cannot be assumed that this ranking of learning is necessarily indicated at the local or regional level. For one thing, certain occupations may experience change specific to that industry that places a new demand upon the use of a particular essential skill. Moreover, different occupations routinely demand a different criticality and different frequency of use of essential skills. While the national ranking of learning preferences offers an excellent picture of what essential skills members might want to develop, a learning needs assessment at the local level should be conducted before implementing programming, if for no other reason than to validate the findings at the national level.

THE CURRENT PROVISION OF TRAINING -- AND RELATED ISSUES

When queried about what they perceived to be their level of awareness of essential skills as a learning needs issue, 53% of the employers professed to be very aware, and talked about their awareness:

"The company has to be very aware of employees' skill levels because we run a very automated process and employees need to have skills."

"We are very aware of the issue and understand the difficulty in job changes. The employee is being displaced by automation - so we need employees with different skills, and the company understands the difficulty and stress this causes for employees who have to change jobs. Worker mobility means more training for different skills."

Further, these were the results when they were asked what essential skills initiatives they had undertaken:

Table 7 How Employers Support Essential Skill Development

43 %	Promote lifelong learning for everyone in the company
37	Computer literacy courses
17	None yet
17	English/French as a second language
13	Incorporate essential skills education as part of EAP service
11	Support for community literacy project
10	Establish employee learning centre
10	One-to-one confidential peer tutoring
7	GED courses
3	Plain language courses

Some activity to address essential skills learning needs is evidenced, the computer courses and one-to-one tutoring for example, and some of the learning centres indicated may offer essential skills training to employees who indicate a wish for that learning.

When asked what prevented them from offering essential skills programming, these reasons ranged from staffing issues to a perceived lack of value for this type of training:

Table 8 Reasons Why Employers Do Not Offer Essential Skills Development

23 %	Lack of staff to fill in for people taking this training
20	Uncertain of essential skills learning needs of employees
20	Not a company priority
13	Employees do not require this training
10	Lack of money to do this training
3	No return on investment for company for this kind of training

Many of the comments made on the questionnaire and in discussions centred on the second reason, the uncertainty of employees' essential skill learning needs:

"It is necessary to do an internal needs analysis before developing a program."

"There is no lack of awareness, nor a lack of training dollars; it is a matter of not being sure of where the needs lie."

"We would need to do an assessment to see where the staff is at. This would be a starting point to determine what level people are at, and what help they need to move forward."

Other comments revealed that this kind of training is simply not a company priority:

"The jobs are being done and it is not perceived as necessary."

"Some things have to get done before others."

"It is up to the individual to identify their own lacking."

"We have never heard anything about this issue. We figure the company doesn't think it has a problem."

Union officers were more conservative in gauging their level of awareness of essential skills as an issue. The majority, 49%, assessed their awareness as "some" while 34% assessed their awareness as "high". Their comments reveal their conservative assessment of awareness:

"It isn't talked about that much; ten years ago it was a bigger issue".

"We know there is a need, but when we survey the members there is always more immediate needs expressed."

"Members don't see a role for the union to play on this issue."

"The only information we get about the issue is from the National CEPU office."

"Among the executive the awareness is very high, but not among the membership. Many of the members have put themselves in jobs that do not demand reading or writing so they don't perceive a need for more education."

When asked what literacy or essential skills initiatives their local has supported, union officers were frank, with 46% acknowledging that to date they have not addressed the issue at all:

Table 9 Local Unions' Essential Skill Development Initiatives

46 %	None, as yet
26	Promoting skills development among the members
9	One-to-one peer tutoring program
7	High school or adult upgrading
3	Drop-in learning centre for members

Union officers discussed issues and reasons related to the level of involvement they have had with the issue:

"The union should be involved in the issue because of employer's hiring practices."

"We have not really had an opportunity before now to get involved,"

"Awareness of the issue will increase activism around it."

""Technology in our industry is increasing. We know as an Executive that literacy skills are so important, but not all the members see the benefit."

And the union officers reflected on benefits of essential skills education for the Union Local:

Table 10 Benefits of Essential Skills Development for Local Unions

59 %	Increased confidence among members
57	Greater understanding of the Union by members
57	Better understanding of the contract with employer
55	Increased participation and activism by members in union business
51	Increased job advancement opportunities for members
49	Increased job security for members

They also commented on some of the concerns they had for members if essential skills education were left unaddressed:

"Some people don't or can't read the collective agreement."

"Some people sign the safety handbook without clearly understanding what they have read."

"One member retired instead of taking Total Quality Management training."

"The lack of essential skills intimidates members to the point of not attending union meetings."

"When families get older workers get more uncomfortable with the limits of their skills."

"It would help people better understand the real issues between the company and the union."

So while union officers are aware of the issue, aware of the benefits, and aware of the implications if the issue is left unaddressed, it appears that Local officers need some support in presenting the issue to the membership to raise their interest and understanding of essential skills training.

When asked what support they needed, union officers were decisive:

Table 11 Support Unions Require to Forward Essential Skills Development

51 %	Financial support and partnership with employer
41	Awareness Kit to bring to Local meetings
38	A needs assessment to help decide people's learning needs
38	On-going information about the issue, newsletters and such
26	Visit to union-sponsored essential skills program
20	Guidance to help set up a learning centre or essential skills program

Comments they made included:

"Send us awareness kits and make presentations at local membership meetings."

"It is not something that is always talked about, but we need to get the information so that we can begin talking about and talking constructively - make a plan."

"We need someone to give us a kick to get us started and on the way."

"We need to get the Executive to talk about it first, and if we had a presentation to begin the discussion that would be great. Then we could use the same process to raise the awareness of the membership."

However, Local Unions also believe that they have some resources that position them to undertake or contribute to a partnership with an employer to provide essential skills development:

Table 12 Local Unions' Resources Toward Essential Skill Development Initiatives

42 %	Ability to negotiate and bargain for education and training with the employer
29	Interested members who could be trained to tutor other members
28	Contact with the National CEPU Literacy project
26	Promotional vehicles like newsletter, web page etc.
25	Facilities for learning
12	Partnerships with community agencies

The Local Unions' resources are a rather convenient fit with the resources that employers say they require to implement essential skill development. When asked what they needed to move essential skills training forward in their organization 53% of the employers cited Local Union support, and 63% cited "a clear understanding of need areas among employees in order to justify investment". It seems apparent that union-employer partnerships to forward essential skills development would have mutual benefits because Local Unions are in a position to bargain with employers and to help clarify learning preferences of members. Moreover, members have expressed their support for the local officers to enter into such negotiations. When members were asked what role their union could play to help ensure that members have access to the essential skills learning they might require, 62% said "Negotiate training, including paid release time to attend."

In the meantime, local union officers who were surveyed had any number of ideas for increasing awareness and activism among the membership, taking it to the bargaining table being only one:

Table 13 Ways to increase awareness and activism among the membership

45 % Raise the issue with members at union meetings

- 38 Take the issue to the bargaining table
 - 35 Learn how to identify and approach members who we know need help with their skills
 - 26 Make sure the EAP program is aware of the issue and is able to help members
 - 14 Start a program
 - 13 Set up a confidential "Helpline" for people who want to improve skills
 - 12 Establish a sub-committee to take on the issue
 - 9 Link up with community groups who offer essential skill education in the community
-

They had this to say:

"It is important for our members to see that someone is doing something about the issue, and that someone cares."

"Raised education and awareness is needed through out our Local. We need to help people develop the skills necessary for the job and for homelife."

"Pick one or two people and have them trained on literacy issues. They could be the experts that the membership could go to."

"We need to get Executive to talk about it first, and if we had a presentation to begin the discussion that would be great. Then we could use the same process to raise the awareness of the membership."

It appears, then, that Union Officers are prepared to take on the issue, are prepared to involve and encourage activism among the membership and are prepared to work with employers who indicate support for essential skills development. Do members want to learn? The answer is yes, and the reasons they supply and the comments they made are convincing:

Table 14 **Reasons Why CEPU Members Want to Learn**

71 %	To feel a sense of personal growth
64	To perform the job better
49	To feel more confident in my life
42	To improve job security
40	To get a better job or to advance

"If this job goes down then I will have some skill to look for other well paid jobs."

"Knowledge is power."

"There's more to this than literacy ... it's about people moving themselves forward, getting grade 12 or more, giving it a crack."

"If I have more confidence in myself, I become more fulfilled and I accomplish my work better. I am less anxious, and a barrier then has fallen."

CEPU members' enthusiasm for learning is further evidenced by both the number of formal education initiatives that they have pursued on their own time, and by the skills they have developed as a result of self-teaching and volunteer activities.

When asked if they had recently participated in any formal education or training on their own time, 37% indicated "Yes", representing about a third of the population that completed questionnaires.

People's choices for extending their personal learning and growth ranged from crafts courses, to arts courses, to courses that have some relationship to their career, for example, St. John's Ambulance, computer courses, and welding and machining courses. Computer courses were the most frequently cited courses with 32% of the respondents indicating this had been their choice. Given that computer skill development was the learning preference of 35% of the people who completed the needs assessment questionnaire it is worth noting that many opt to pursue this skill development on their own time.

CEPU members who completed the questionnaire are also very aware that learning is acquired in informal ways by virtue of their experiences as adults. When people were asked if they had some recent experiences that developed their skills, 49% of the people who completed questionnaires said "Yes". Experiences that people described include sports team coaching (12%), committee work (31%), union work (18%), and any number of other volunteer positions, such as Scouts/Cubs/Brownie/Girl Guide leadership (27%). All of these activities have served to develop people's skills in one way or another, some members having explained this during focus group discussions:

"I urge anybody to sit on a committee - it's a learning experience for how to handle conflict, present new ideas and get respect."

"I have learned how to deal with people as a result of being a shop steward."

One way of describing what CEPU members have been engaged in is "lifewide learning", a phrase recently coined by the Organization for Economic Development and Co-operation. "Lifewide learning" not only implies that people learn from birth to death, it also suggests that learning is gained both by experience and by formal education systems, is multidisciplinary, is facilitated by any number of individuals and may be demonstrated and used in any variety of ways.

SUMMARY

The CEP National Literacy Project Steering Committee and our national and local union literacy activists will utilize this report as they draw conclusions and recommendations from the information acquired from members, union officers and employers. Some observations can be made here that summarize key themes and issues that emerged.

One key theme is that any need for CEP members today to enhance their reading, writing, math, oral communications or computer skills is driven by change, whether it be technological change, market change, or management change. While several common changes were identified by both members and employers it is important to note that the nature of the common changes varies from industry to industry, and so too then will the impact on essential skill use, and on therefore on the learning needs. Local or regional needs assessments are critical to effective programming.

Another key theme involves learning preferences of CEP members. The gap between two choices ranked first by many members, and the remaining three choices makes clear that oral communications and computer skill learning is far and away a pressing learning need among members. Related to that theme is a critical issue. Neither union locals nor employers offer a significant training in oral communications development, the number one learning preference of most CEP members.

Another key issue is that of negotiating programs. Union officers and members both see essential skill training as belonging on the bargaining table. Employers are decidedly reluctant to have it there.

A theme that rings throughout the report is that CEP members are not reluctant learners. Many engage in lifewide learning opportunities both as offered by the company and union or as personal interest or personal development opportunities on their own time. The enthusiastic response to the focus group discussions and the questionnaires is evidence too that learning is much on the mind of members of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union.

PRELIMINARY OUTCOMES

The Organizational Needs Assessment not only suggested recurrent themes that warrant attention, but also suggested some directions for Phase Two of the CEP National Literacy Project. Some activities for Phase Two as suggested by the Learning Needs Assessment discussions and questionnaire results include:

- Create a Literacy Activist's Kit, as requested by 41% of union officers surveyed
- Promote and facilitate "Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition". The 49% of people surveyed who acknowledged acquiring skills and learning through experience indicates that there is an awareness of the value of this type of learning, and may wish to engage in a prior learning

assessment.

- Develop regional/provincial literacy committees and/or other structures for the purpose of raising awareness, promoting and assisting in the development of Union based literacy programming. This direction is suggested throughout the Learning Needs Assessment in various places and was primarily expressed by union officers, members and employers as a "need to know more about the issue".

APPENDIX CONTENTS

- Focus Group Interview Questions for Employers
- Focus Group Interview Questions for Union Members
- Focus Group Interview Questions for Union Officers
- Demographic Overview of Questionnaire Returns
- Questionnaire Results - Employers
- Questionnaire Results - Union Members
- Questionnaire Results - Union Officers

CEP Organizational Needs Assessment



Interview Questions for Employers



Write

Provide a handout of these questions so that your interview candidate can read and anticipate what information you are looking for. Record the responses to the questions on the notetaking sheets provided.



Explain

Explain the goal of the needs assessment

1. Explain that the goal behind these discussions with union members and employers is to collect information about learning needs of CEP members across Canada.
2. Explain that you will take notes during the interview. Indicate that you may wish to use quotes from the discussion, but that the quotes will be anonymous in the report - names will not be attached. Using quotes is an effective way to give "flavour" to a report. Ask permission to use quotes.
3. The ideas and outcomes of these discussions will be presented in a report, and they will be able to have copies of that report if they want.



Ask

Ask if the candidate has any questions before starting the discussion. Ask this again at the end of the discussion.

1. What changes in this workplace have you observed in the past 5 or so years?
2. How do you think these changes have affected workers' use of reading, writing, math, oral communication or computers? (Need to use more/less; differently how?)
3. What changes do you anticipate in the near future that might affect the need for workers to have better essential skills?

4. What training is currently available through the company for workers?
5. Who are your partners, if any?
6. What training programs would you like to see for your workers in addition to what you currently offer?
7. How would you describe your company's awareness of essential skills as an issue affecting some workers today?
8. What, if any, initiatives has the company supported to address the issue of basic skills? (Training, plain language documentation efforts, referrals to education providers in town ...?)
9. If you have not engaged in any initiatives, particularly programming, why is that? (lack of awareness, lack of training dollars, not sure how to initiate) ...)
10. What do you need that might allow you to initiate essential skills programs to improve workers' reading, writing, math, oral communication and computer skills?
11. In what ways might the union assist you to offer programming for workers wanting to improve their skills?
12. Would you like to be kept informed of essential skills efforts by other employers and unions in your region?

CEP Organizational Needs Assessment

Focus Group Discussion Questions



Write

Write the questions on a blackboard, flip chart or handout so that people can read and anticipate what information you are looking for. Write the responses to questions on the notetaking sheets provided.



Explain

Explain the goal of the needs assessment

1. Explain that the goal behind these focus group discussions is to collect information about learning needs of CEP members across Canada.
2. Explain that you will listen and take notes about their ideas about the different questions.
3. Assure people that confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed. But, if you wanted to use a quote in the report, without indicating who said it, would that be all right with them?
4. The ideas and outcomes of these discussions will be presented in a report, and they will be able to have copies of that report if they want.



Ask

Ask participants if they have any questions before starting the discussion. Ask them again at the end of the discussion.

1. What **specific changes** have you experienced or seen on the job in the last few years?
2. How have the changes affected your use of reading, writing math, communication and computer skills?
3. Let's talk about your use of essential skills like reading, writing, math, communication and computer skills, and the challenges that these might present for you and other members of your union.

- What kinds of materials and documents do you find a challenge to read and understand at first glance?
 - What kinds of things do you find tough to write?
 - What kinds of math do you have to do that you find challenging?
 - What kinds of speaking situations do you face that you find challenging?
 - In what ways do computers present you with a difficulty?
4. What training or education have you taken through your employer in the last 5 years? Through your union?
 5. What barriers do you face when it comes to taking training?
 6. What are some reasons why you might like to take further education courses or training?
 7. What learning have you acquired in addition to that mentioned, either on a formal or informal basis? (Prior Learning)
 8. What kind of learning model best suits your local members' needs and why?
 - Classes on worksite or union hall.
 - Drop-in learning centre
 - One-to-one peer tutoring
 9. What can your union do to make it easier for you to take education or training?
 10. In terms of essential skills, how would you prioritize members' needs on and off the job?
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Math
 - Communication
 - Computers

What about other courses like safety training high school equivalency (GED)?

11. What other comments about members' learning needs do you have?

CEP Organizational Needs Assessment

Questions for Local Union Officers



Write

Provide a handout of these questions so that people can read and anticipate what information you are looking for. Write responses to the questions on the notetaking sheets provided.



Explain

Explain the goal of the needs assessment

1. Explain that the goal behind these focus group discussions is to collect information about learning needs of CEP members across Canada.
2. Explain that you will listen and take notes about their ideas about the different questions.
3. Assure people that confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed. But, if you wanted to use a quote in the report, without indicating who said it, would that be alright with them?
4. The ideas and outcomes of these discussions will be presented in a report, and they will be able to have copies of that report if they want.



Ask

Ask participants if they have any questions before starting the discussion. Ask them again at the end of the discussion.

1. What education and training does your local union support, and who are your partners, if any?
2. How would you describe your local union's level of awareness about literacy (essential skills like reading, writing, math, oral communication and computers) as a labour issue?
3. What, if any, worker literacy initiatives has your local union been involved with?
4. In what ways might it benefit the local union to improve members' essential skills, like reading writing, math, oral communication and computers?

5. What resources does your local union have to promote and provide worker literacy programs, either independently, or jointly with an employer?
6. What ideas do you have for increasing your local union's activism for the support of worker literacy learning, and what support or resources do you need to accomplish these ideas?

Demographic Features of the Communication, Energy and Paperworkers Union National Learning Needs Assessment

Features of Focus Group Discussions

Participation rate:

Group discussions:	58
People who contributed ideas	161
Employer representatives	24
Union members	68
Union officers	69

Union locals which participated (34)

1-S	84	707
7	141	728
8-1	153	773
20	155	777
26	210	823
31X	341	826M
37	401	830
40	434	1093
43	523-N	1118
55	576	2000
60N	649	
74	650	

Occupations of members who participated

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telecommunications Sales Associate • Telecommunications Sales Representative • Telecommunications Assignment Centre Clerk • Quality Controller • Telecommunications Service Centre Technician • Welder • Press Operator • Machinist • Electrician • Heavy Equipment Operator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Office Technician • Stock Runner • General Labourer • Operator Assistant • Residence Service Representative • Janitor • Control Centre Clerk • Central Office Toll Clerk • Central Office Technician • Maintenance Staff • Underground Miner • Mill Staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Front Desk Clerk • Waitress • Restaurant Hostess • Business Representative • Administrative Assistant • Project Service Technician • Customer Representative • Logger • Welder • Security Guard • Truck Driver • Process Operator • Painter/Insulator |
|---|--|---|

- Extraction Process Operator
- Printer/Operator
- Warehouse
- Accountant
- Production Worker
- Tally Packer
- Packer
- Housekeeping Staff
- Production worker
- Millwright

Employers represented: (13)

- Abitibi Consolidated
- ABT Canada
- Bowater Mersey
- Canadian Salt
- CKF
- GATX
- IKO
- Island Tel
- Nadeau Shermag
- Newtel Communications
- Owens-Corning
- Sasktel
- Suncor Energy

Geographic distribution of all participants:

Fort McMurray	AB	East River	NS	Orangeville	ON
Calgary	AB	Liverpool	NS	Sudbury	ON
Edmonton	AB	Pugwash	NS	Thorold	ON
Red Deer	AB	Wolfville	NS	Charlottetown	PEI
Vancouver	BC	Cornerbrook	NFLD	Regina	SK
Portage la Prairie	MB	Stephenville	NFLD	Saskatoon	SK
Winnipeg	MB	Brampton	ON		
Baker-Brook	NB	Georgetown	ON		
St. Francis	NB	Mississauga	ON		
Brooklyn	NS	Niagara	ON		

Features of Questionnaire Returns

Response Rate

Union members	225
Local union officers	69
Employers	30
Total returned questionnaires	324

Union locals represented: (60)

4N	85-M	446	697	1207
6	98	514	707	1403
28	112-N	515	728	1492
29	123	523-N	773	1532
30	132-Q	550	789	1990
39	159	561	800	1997
52-A	176	592	823	2000
53	181	603	907	2001
76	251	630	914	
77-Q	305	649	1119	
79-M	404	650	1120	
80	410	677	1123	
85	437	681	1132	

Employers represented (30)

Please note that of the 30 employers who returned completed questionnaires, two did not identify themselves or their company name.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aimtronics Corporation • Basell Canada Inc. • Bowater Pulp and Paper • Canadian Broadcasting Corp. • Centre de conversion et distribution Rolland • Corporation Flexia • CTV Television • Domtar • Entourage Solutions Technolgies • Fraser Papers Inc. • General Electric Canada • Husky Energy • IKO Industries • International Wallcoverings Company | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irving Paper • J. D. Irving Ltd. • Newfoundland Containers Ltd. • Newtel Communications • Nexen Chemicals • Northern Telephone • Pacifica Papers • Radisson Hotel Saskatoon • Sask Energy • Shermag Inc. • Sifto Canada • South Shore Community Service Association • Suncor Energy • Unibeton |
|--|---|

Geographic distribution of all returns

Calgary	AB	Agincourt	ON	St. Augustin	PQ
Edmonton	AB	Baden	ON	St. Jerome	PQ
Fort McMurray	AB	Belleville	ON	St. Raphael	PQ
Grande Prairie	AB	Brampton	ON	Trois Rivieres	PQ
Campbell River	BC	Brockville	ON	Victoriaville	PQ
Crofton	BC	Markham	ON	Maidstone	SK
Maple Creek	SK	New Liskeard	ON	St Leonard	SK
New		Oshawa	ON	Moose Jaw	SK
Westminster	BC	Sarnia	ON	Prince Albert	SK
North	BC	Timmins	ON	Regina	SK
Vancouver	BC	Toronto	ON	Shellbrook	SK
Port Alberni	BC	Chicoutimi	PQ	Swift Current	SK
Port Alice	BC	Cap de la		Unity	SK
Port Melon	BC	Madelaine	PQ	Weyburn	SK
Powell River	BC	Dolbeau	PQ		
Prince George	MB	Gatineau	PQ		
The Pas	MB	Granby	PQ		
Winnipeg	NB	Hull	PQ		
Edmunston	NB	Jonquiere	PQ		
Lake Utopia	NB	LaChute	PQ		
Mirimichi	NB	Lebel-Sur-			
St. John	NFLD	Quevillon	PQ		
Mount Pearl	NFLD	Montreal	PQ		
St. John's	NS	Port Cartier	PQ		
Chester	NS	Saguenay	PQ		
Pugwash	NWT	Shawinigan	PQ		
Yellowknife					

Questions for Employers



Participating employers

- Aimtronics Corporation
- Basell Canada Inc.
- Bowater Pulp and Paper
- Canadian Broadcasting Corp.
- Centre de conversion et distribution Rolland
- Corporation Flexia
- CTV Television
- Domtar
- Entourage Solutions Technologies
- Fraser Papers Inc.
- General Electric Canada
- Husky Energy
- IKO Industries
- International Wallcoverings Company
- Irving Paper
- J. D. Irving Ltd.
- Newfoundland Containers Ltd.
- Newtel Communications
- Nexen Chemicals
- Northern Telephone
- Pacifica Papers
- Radisson Hotel Saskatoon
- Sask Energy
- Shermag Inc.
- Sifto Canada
- South Shore Community Service Association
- Suncor Energy
- Unibeton

Location:

- Brampton, ON
- Chester, NS
- Fort McMurray, AB
- Gatineau, PQ
- Granby PQ
- Prince George, BC
- Regina, SK
- St. Jerome, PQ
- St. John's Nfld.
- St. Leonard, NB
- St. Raphael, PQ
- Unity, SK
- Yellowknife, NWT
- Dolbean, PQ
- Sarnia, ON
- Edmunston, NB
- New Liskeard, ON
- Brockville, ON.
- Toronto, ON
- Cap de la Madelaine, PQ
- Lachute, PQ
- North Vancouver, BC
- St. Augustin PQ
- Brossard PQ
- Lebel Sur Quevillon, PQ
- Brockville, ON

Number of Respondents: 30

1. What changes in this workplace have you observed in the past 5 years or so?

97 % Increased use of computers

- 80 Aging workforce
 - 77 Increased market competition
 - 73 Organizational restructuring
 - 73 Changes to operations, work processes
 - 73 Increased safety requirements
 - 67 Increased requirement for team work
 - 67 Increased decision making by employees
 - 60 Introduction of sophisticated equipment
 - 60 Increased rate of production
 - 50 Increased recruitment
 - 50 Financial constraints
 - 47 Increased documentation required
 - 40 ISO 9002
 - 40 Changes to recruitment criteria
 - 37 Organizational downsizing
 - 33 Younger workforce
-

Other:

- La responsabilisation des gens a fournir une expertise juste a maximiser ses operations pour acoutre la qualite et la production afin de faire face ou la competitivite (mondialisation)
- Increased needs in areas of math, reading, writing, documenting by all workers

My comment:

- Continual downsizing, automation, do more with less - increases stress levels for employers.
- Nouvelle division cree en 1998. Transfert de la majorite de la main-d'oeuvres
- Overall the skills and competencies required today are much different than 5 years ago.

2. How do you think these changes have affected employees' use of essential skills like reading, writing, math, oral communication and computers?

93 % Increased need for workers to use computers on the job

- 77 More use of higher skills (critical thinking, decision making)
- 77 Increased need for good oral communication skills and interpersonal skills
- 73 More reading of every kind required
- 57 Increased need for written documentation
- 30 Need for project management skills
- 27 Need for science knowledge
- 23 More advanced math skills required
- 20 Need for budgeting skills

Other:

- Need to know business literacy, need to understand diversity issues, need to understand stakeholder relations
- Need to understand how wastage, inefficiencies and errors are reducing profit margins which affect us all.
- Augmentation de la demande de la capacité d'apprentissage et responsabilisation

My comment:

- For our organization to survive, senior operators and craft personnel must demonstrate technical and business leadership skills. This includes basic engineering, data analysis of information crews and monitoring and accepting a project assignment; developing a scope of work and following through on the work until complete.
- Sophisticated technical equipment results in the need for higher level of skills for employees, and an increased knowledge of what the newest developments are likely to be.

3. What changes do you anticipate in the near future that might affect the need for workers to have better essential skills?

90 % Use of computers will increase

- 80 More on-line learning, self-directed learning
- 77 Equipment will continue to become more sophisticated
- 67 Increased multi-tasking
- 60 Increased customer demand for quality products and services
- 60 Changes in methods of production, or of service delivery
- 53 Increased workload for individual employees
- 53 Changes in the nature of the product or services
- 50 Increased attention to documentation and reporting procedures
- 23 Increased project based work
- 23 E-business

Other:

- Focus on bottom line decision making on a day to day basis

My comment:

- People require skills that will enable them to thrive in our workplace or anywhere of their choosing. To be successful, individuals need to be challenged at a level consistent with their abilities and businesses need people who want to be challenged.

4. What training is available through the company for employees?

100	Safety training
%	Technical training on equipment
83	Orientation for new hires
83	Task specific training
80	Basic computer training
63	Pension and benefits workshops
53	Leadership training
53	Computer software package training
43	Apprenticeships
27	Communication skills
27	Career planning
17	GED
13	Writing skills
13	CAD
10	Reading comprehension
10	Math courses
7	E-business training
3	

My comment:

- The company pays for all continuing education fees and books, including basic skills and ESL
- Beaucoup de formation relie a la tache et aussie une formation sur l'analyse de probleme
- We have some computer software training but have not been able to conduct training successfully due to skill levels of basic computer skills.
- Career planning is available upon request. The company provides full reimbursement of tuition and books to individuals who want to do general upgrading. The company arranges, as required, for specific technical training for key individuals either on site or remote to site.
- We are moving more into training and development with the recent hire of a dedicated H.R. Specialist.

5. Who are your education/training partners?

83 %	Internal company trainers
83	External consultants
83	Vendors of products and equipment
67	Community colleges
53	Communication, Energy and Paperworkers Union
47	Provincial Safety Councils or Associations
33	Universities
17	Industry Sector Councils

My comment:

- Many staff are committed to lifelong learning. We have supported education pursuits related to the Human Services profession.
- Community college courses relevant to our industry are limited.
- I wouldn't call any of those listed "partners" in our training program. We have accessed resources through all of these agencies at one time or another.
- As indicated above, there will be an increased emphasis on training and development of our employees at all levels.

6. Who is most likely to get training on company time?

83 % New hires

83	Those with immediate task specific training needs
70	Managers and supervisors
57	Process or production line employees
47	Maintenance employees
37	Tradespeople
23	Anyone who requests

My comment:

- Anyone can get training as long as it is specific to current or possible future job.
- Toute la formation se donne habituellement durant les heures de travail.
- The biggest training challenge we have is releasing shift personnel to train on dayshifts. To this point in time, the Union has argued against shift shuffles to enable people access to training, even though the Collective Agreement allows it. To this point, management has refused to put on training sessions if the company has to pay overtime for individuals attending.
- We have a tuition reimbursement program to provide incentive to employees who take courses on their own time at the college or university level.

7. What training programs would you like to see for your workers in addition to what you currently offer?

73 %	Change management
57	Team building
53	More technical/equipment training
43	Computer skills
40	Stress management
32	Leadership
30	Oral communications skills
20	Reading, writing and math upgrading
17	More safety courses

Other:

- Business Literacy
- CBT's (under development)
- Customer Service training

My comment:

- Employees need to take the initiative to develop reading, writing and math skills on their own although the company would be willing to reimburse tuition.

8. How would you describe your company's awareness of essential skills as an issue affecting workers today?

53 %	Very aware
47	Somewhat aware
3	Not at all aware

My comment:

- We are in the process of redefining the skill expectations of the positions within the refinery. These new expectations included leadership and technical skills beyond what is currently being demonstrated on the job.

9. What, if any, initiatives has your company supported to address the issue of the need for workers to improve essential skills?

43 %	Promote lifelong learning for everyone in the company
37	Computer literacy courses
17	None yet
17	English/French as a second language
13	Incorporate essential skills education as part of EAP service
11	Support for community literacy project
10	Establish employee learning centre
10	One-to-one confidential peer tutoring
7	GED courses
3	Plain language courses

Other:

- Formations: securite, ronde d'inspection mecanique,
- Literacy Needs Assessment
- First Aid courses
- Revision des normes et contenu du diplome d'etudes secondaire en pates et papiers
- A skill development initiative is currently underway.
- Nous sommes une jeune entreprise de 2 ans d'existence. Nos employes sont formés des l'intreï en relation humaine et dans different domaine regissant notre secteur d'actente. Nous les avons selectionnnes selon notre besoin de formation de lase pour qu'ils puissent comprendre le reste de la formation qui est permanente chez nous.

My comment:

- We are in the process of establishing a learning centre
- We offer 100% reimbursement for all employees who take courses to enhance skills for now or for future positions in the company. We also sponsored 4th Class Stationary Engineering program for Process operators with limited success.
- Nos employes ont tous en minimum le scolarite seconde X

10. If you have not engaged in any initiatives, particularly programming, why is that?

23 %	Lack of staff to fill in for people taking this training
20	Uncertain of essential skills learning needs of employees
20	Not a company priority
13	Employees do not require this training
10	Lack of money to do this training
3	No return on investment for company for this kind of training

Other:

- Necessite un diagnostic plu comlet pour analyser besoins
- We need to do an internal needs analysis before developing a program

My comment:

- The company has initiated technical training for operators and helpers (Press). The budget in 2000 was 40K - we do training in the USA at Gravure Assoc.
- For the last three years the company has evolved but now has a long term future
- Dans cette nouvelle usine tous nos gens ont deja la formation ou l'alphabetisation necessaire pour comprendre le rest des autres formations.
- As an H.R. professional, it is my hope to increase the concep[t that investment in training brings results to the bottom line.

11. What do you need that might allow you to initiate or support essential skills programs to improve employees' reading, writing, oral communication, math and computer skills?

63 % Clear understanding of need areas among employees to justify investment

- 53 Employee buy-in to participate in the training
- 53 Union support
- 47 Financial subsidy or support
- 37 Corporate commitment

My comment:

- Ce qui nous ferait comprendre que nous avons peut-être été fermes quand nos employés ont rempli le formulaire d'emploi? Je ne crois pas!
- Lifelong learning has to become a cultured norm for it to be successfully engrained in an organization. Both management and the union just expect employees/members to continue the learning process throughout their careers. Both sides must set up a framework within which learning is expected and reasonably accessible.

12. In what ways might the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union support efforts to develop employees' essential skills?

73 % Promote lifelong learning among membership

- 63 Develop a partnership to assess learning needs of workers
- 40 Share information about the issue that union receives from sister Labour organizations and local
- 10 Include this kind of training in bargaining agreements

Other:

- Be supportive of changes that must take place for companies to survive and to equip employees with necessary skills.
- C'est vraiment une question de priorite

My comment:

- We need to know how our workers skills are compared to related industry workers. Testing to see where the needs are. Encouraging workers to take initiative - at times, employers are not fully aware of who needs what, individually and individuals need to speak out for themselves that they lack skills in a certain area, would like to learn in order to do the job they desire or want to be promoted to.

13. Would you like to be kept informed of essential skills issues and efforts by other companies who are addressing the issue?

Actual numbers counted:

-
- 19 Yes here is my contact information
 - 6 No thank you
 - 5 No response
-

Questions for Union Members



Locals represented:

80	112-N	515	789	251
53-0	159	305	52A	6
132-Q	123Q	677	404	697
707	176	1207	1403	1120
98	1990	681	514	523-N
77Q	550	773	1123	79M
728	4N	1532	560	603
823	907	1997	181	
437	561	76	592	
2001	2850	446	914	
649	39	1119	1132	

Locations:

Baden, ON	Granby PQ	Port Melon, BC
Belleville, ON	Fort McMurray, AB	St. Raphael, PQ
Brampton ON	Edmonton, AB	St. Jerome, PQ
Calgary, AB	Chester, NS	Saint John, NB
Edmunston, NB	Campbell River, BC	Port Alice, AB
Hazelton, ON	St. Leonard, PQ	St. Augustin, PQ
Hull, PQ	Cap de la Madelaine, PQ	Gatineau, PQ
Lake Utopia, NB	Chicoutimi, PQ	Unity, SK
Maidstone, SK	Weyburn, SK	Regina, SK
Montreal, PQ	Saskatoon, AB	Mirimichi, NB
Moose Jaw, SK	New Liskard, ON	Edmunston, NB
Port Alberni BC	Powell River, BC	New Westminster, BC
Port-Cartier, PQ	Toronto, ON	Prince George, BC
Prince Albert, SK	Lachute, PQ	Yellowknife, NWT
Prince George, BC	Edmonton, AB	North Vancouver, BC
Pugwash, NS	Victoriaville, PQ	Trois Rivieres, PQ
Sarnia, ON	Swift Current, SK	Maple Creek, SK
Shawinigan, PQ	Crofton, ON	Grande Prairie, AB
Shellbrook, SK	Mt.Pearl, Nfld.	
The Pas, MB		

Number of respondents: 225 (of that number 26 people did not reply to questions #3,4,5,6, 7, 15,16) and 4 questionnaires were invalidated)

1. What changes have you seen on the job in the last 5 years?

87 % Introduction of new equipment and technology

84	Computerization of systems and operations
67	New regulations to know and follow
63	Lower morale
57	Aging workforce
50	Increased production
48	Customers more demanding
47	Increased hiring requirements (Education over experience)
46	Downsizing
26	ISO 9001

Other:

- Multitasking
- Nouvelles normes
- Stronger union for support staff
- French Immersion
- More roles and responsibilities given to us.
- Increased number of patrons (school size increased without building physically increased)
- Fewer hours but more responsibility
- Requirement to be bilingual
- There is a definite need to hire people with more education in the role of teacher's assistant. They should at least have their Teacher Assistant Certificate.
- The MPI's should be simplified so that the normal person can understand what they do.
- Il faut toujours donner 150% - on se sent de + en+ Tousses & compresses
- Increased expectation from employer

My comment:

- The additional manpower has created a need for a more learned union executive.
- Il est entendu qu'avec tous ces changements technologiques; il faut chancer nous aussie dans divers domaines
- Nous sommes souvent oblige - de travailler avec de nouveause equipement et technologies snas avoir eu do formation.
- We are required to "fight" for pay increases, meanwhile more and more workload and responsibilities that are not necessarily our own work.
- Because of Atco Gas and TransCanada fees irsing, morale is low as people put all their cheques into subsisting alone.

- I just started in my position so I don't know about the changes.
- With Pay Equity education and experience don't count for anything!
- Les compagnies tres lentes pour l'embauchage ... trop herure pour les travailleurs.

2. How have these change affected your use of essential skills like reading, writing, math, oral communications and computer skills?

70 % Increased need to read - procedures, documentation, union information, job information

- 67 Increased need to use these skills for email, documentation, forms
 - 66 Increased need to use these skills for operating computerized equipment
 - 55 Need to learn job skills because doing more tasks on the job
 - 50 Increased need to write (reports, documentation)
 - 48 Increased need to make more decisions
 - 43 Increased need to communicate verbally with more people
 - 22 Less need to communicate verbally because of email
 - 15 Less need to write
 - 10 Increased need to use more sophisticated math
-

Other:

- Need to learn about computers for programs in our Special Ed class
- We need more "educational inservices" to keep up to date in all aspects of education, just like the teachers.
- More computer inservices in the evening would be great.
- Need to take computer inservice training
- Beaucoup de choses a prendre en jeu de temps - les plus sieux ont moins de facilite a apprendre
- Need more time management skills

My comment:

- Si la voloute veut, tout va! " Avec les nouveaux morjen de communication il y a moin de contact avec mes confreres.
- My job requires continual updating of computer skills " The training helps but there is no time to master the programs.
- People are more stressed because there is less time for good and friendly human contact.
- You need to be an engineer to understand what things mean!
- The more I do on the computer the less need for Customer Service Reps. That's what I am worried about!
- It has meant I have to get good at keyboarding.
- There is more training but we don't utilize the skills learned.
- The company seems to have cut their supervisory staff to the point that operators do and make decisions that were once done by a foreman and so thus are running their own department.

3. What kinds of things do you read, and find challenging to read and understand easily?

43 % Collective agreement

33	Reading procedures in manuals
33	Union bylaws
31	Reading to learn and remember (for courses)
31	Regulations
30	Memos and reports sent out by engineers or management
30	Technical reading material
30	Legal material
29	Materials, supplies and equipment information
29	Safety instructions and regulations

Others:

- Mauvaise traduction
- Souvent en anglais
- Reading instruction to give verbal instructions to others
- Tout ce qui est en Anglais!
- Pour un employe avec un niveau pere elever de scolarite tout devient difficile a lire & a comprendre

My comment:

- We don't have to read much more than memos or newsletters.
- Some of our staff are Francophone so their reading of English technical material is difficult but we help each other.
- Most of the above I read but find either boring or not easily understood or confusing - especially procedures in manuals.

4. What kinds of things do you do, and find a challenge to write easily?

37 % Getting ideas down on paper from my head (composing notes, letters, memos)

- 30 Using good grammar and proper punctuation
 - 29 Reports
 - 27 Procedures
 - 23 Notes at meetings
 - 21 Instructions and manuals
 - 14 Proposals to Shop Steward/Bargaining Committee, and to customers
 - 13 Notes explaining things to co-workers (shift reports)
-

Others:

- None
- Chacun a sa place
- Et aussi foutre d'orthographe
- Applies particularly to second language staff
- Some Teachers Aides must write/prepare programs and exercises for Special Needs and ESL students

My comment:

- Pas de scolarité = pas capable de rédiger, écrire.
- I don't have very good writing skills.
- All of these are a challenge for me.
- Most people, the company and union are reluctant to write proper shift reports.

5. What kinds of math do you do, and find a challenge to do easily?

30 % Imperial - Metric conversions

28	Trigonometry
24	Checking paycheque deductions
24	Percentages
24	Basic calculations, using division, multiplication
21	Problem solving using math
20	Fractions
16	Budget math

Other:

- Algebra
- Time calculations

My comment:

- Lorsque vient le temps de calculer avec des "X" et des "Y", ça devient compliqué
- Aides working with students must help with math, and also prepare and manage library budget
- Math was never my strong suit, language skills are
- I am not strong in any area of math - we mainly use mathematics for daily practical matters eg. Groceries, bill payments
- I hate math!
- Though math is required in my job I hate numbers!
- The calculator is a handy tool.
- Our paystubs are the poorest ever. No one understands them!
- Payroll Department is incompetent and therefore the paycheques are very difficult to read and reconcile.
- I suck at math.
- Most conversions from imperial to metric for adding chemicals to pools are just estimates. There are no conversion tables available.

6. What types of oral communication situations do you find a challenge to be in?

43 % Any public speaking

- 30 Conflict with co-workers - explaining how I see things
 - 27 Speaking up at a shop meeting or union meeting
 - 22 Talking to management about an issue
 - 21 Dealing with difficult customers
 - 14 Giving instructions for how to do something to others
-

Others:

- Etre obligé de motiver mes compagnons du travail.

My comment:

- La parole est la base de tout contact premier avec qui ce soit.
- Si on me demande mon avis, je le donne mais je prends rarement les devants
- Communicating with parents can be a challenge
- Public speaking is my weakness but I communicate well in small groups or in the classroom
- I get a bit nervous in crowds.
- Some support staff have difficulty speaking up, whether to peers or to administration.
- Some people can be very moody, difficult, and after a few altercations you expect the worst from them.
- I am better with people I know.
- Any difficulty is usually due to a loud environment - it's difficult to hear and understand

7. What kinds of things about computer use do you find a challenge?

53 % **Having time to practice and extend my skills for computer use at work and at home**

- 40 Using software for word processing or spreadsheets
 - 36 Knowing how it functions inside when I press different buttons on computerized equipment at work
 - 24 Using email
-

My comment:

- Je me débrouille assez bien avec l'ordinateur mais ça demande beaucoup de temps.
- Tout vient avec l'expérimentation.
- Au travail, je n'ai pas de portable et à la maison, ce sont surtout les enfants qui s'amuse avec l'ordinateur
- Applies particularly to new staff members
- I find that I am called upon by teachers to correct problems with computers used by classes. I load programs, instruct and assist teachers with programs, and maintain the lab.
- There is not time (nor computers) throughout the day to see what we even know and have learned on our own time about technology in general.
- The employer offers adequate computer training.
- Comment utiliser un ordinateur si on a de la difficulté à lire et écrire
- Basically if you are not a computer whiz it can be very confusing to fix a problem on the computer even if you have instructions to follow.
- I wouldn't say email is a challenge - I can use it quite well - other functions are much more challenging.
- I would like to have more training on computers, and more practical experience.
- Can always use more training in this area.
- I am at the age where I missed computers in school and it is not the most interesting tool to use.
- We had a computer purchase program at the, which helped make members more computer literate. It was a very good program.
- If management requires employees to become familiar with computers then company training should be provided.

8. What training or education courses have you taken through the employer or the union?

Employer courses

Union courses

72 % Safety courses	42 % Shop steward courses
52 Job specific courses	21 Grievance Handling
47 Computer training	20 Health and Safety
31 On the job technical training	16 Collective Bargaining
20 Communications	17 Leadership
15 Team building	10 Strike preparation
13 Accident investigation	13 How to run a meeting
10 Supervisory training	9 Pension workshops
10 Customer service training	8 Financial Officers
9 Cross cultural awareness	8 Organizing
8 Aboriginal awareness	5 Public Speaking
6 Loss Control	.04 GED

Other Employer sponsored courses:

- Leadership 2000
- Simdut cher Bell et cher entrouage Norstar et pair Check
- Electricite de base et autres qui ont un lien technique pour mon emploi
- Behaviour management course
- ESL and FSL (2)
- Teacher Assistant Certification (2)
- Literacy In service (for students) (2)
- Building Self-Esteem (2)
- Managing Difficult People
- True Colors
- Autism workshops
- Challenging behaviours
- SIRS conference
- Soldering
- CPI training
- Business writing
- Defensive driving (2)
- Time management
- Stress Management

- Six Thinking Hats
- Effective Listening
- A Woman's Worth
- Life Planning
- ISO
- Teambuilding
- Math courses
- Entrepreneurship
- Asbestos handling
- Safety Audit training
- Conflict Management
- Lumber grading
- Driver training
- Dangerous Goods
- STEC (2)
- Responsible serving

Other Union sponsored courses:

- Security Officers training
- Conflict management
- Officers training, Level I and II
- Stress in the workplace
- Assertiveness/harrassment
- Facing Management
- Union Counselling
- Stress Management
- WSIB

9. Some adults decide to take courses on their own, too, in areas that interest them. For example some take small engine repair courses or sewing courses, at colleges or Technical Schools. This is formal learning done on their own time for personal interest.

What formal learning have you done in the last 5 years?

63 % None

37 Some (Please describe)

- Library & Information course (2)
- Peinture
- Conversation Anglaise
- Cours sur logiciel informatique
- Cours sur composantes Internes D'ordinateur
- Teaching Assistant
- CPR
- Red Cross First Aide & CPR
- Sewing (5)
- Computer courses (12)
- University courses
- Special Needs
- Tole painting
- Tai Chi
- Certification
- Beginning French
- Watercolour art
- Art & Craft for Special Needs children
- St. John's Ambulance
- Lifeguard courses
- Physical activity classes
- Woodworking (s)
- Quilting
- Introduction to Libraries
- High school upgrading
- Materials Handling
- Crafts
- University courses
- Photography
- Small Business Entrepreneur
- French
- English 30
- Cour de le formation pour le programme (PEP)
- Ag Machinery
- Acces base de donnee
- Ceramics
- Teacher Assistant Certification (3)
- RRSP Seminar
- Language Development
- Technology diploma
- Accounting
- Yoga (3)
- Masters in Education
- Knitting
- Girl Guide Leader training
- HTML (2)
- Sign Language
- Make-up Artistry
- Technology & Communication
- Dealing with emotionally and physically challenged children
- Out of school care
- Fine Arts courses (2)
- Writing
- Ceramics
- Tae-Bo
- Medical office Assistant course
- Welding
- Renovation
- Shipping/receiving
- Piano Lessons
- Gardening
- Machining
- Internet
- Public Speaking

10. Some adults have learned skills in informal ways. Often when people volunteer to be on a committee or to be a Cubs and Scouts or Girl Guide Leader, for example, they learn new things even though they are not doing the learning in a classroom.

What kinds of experiences have you had that has allowed you to learn new skills?

51 % None

49 Some (Please describe experiences)

- Un cours de spécialiste en téléphone dans un collège
- Président de la CPNDL
- CA Casse populaire
- Ronald MacDonald House
- Scouts (6)
- Book fair coordinator
- Hosted Japanese exchange group
- Being in musical band
- Facilitate group learning (2)
- Volunteer to fundraise
- Union activities (2)
- Committee work (15)
- Travel (2)
- Coaching sports (12)
- Executive positions on committees (9)
- CPR
- Membre CA Association propriétaires Lac Clair
- Volunteer Canvasser (2)
- Housebuilding
- Catechist teacher
- Volunteer Life Skills coach
- Art workshops for kids
- Running Junior Forest Wardens club
- ESL volunteer tutoring
- Performing music on stage
- Hospital volunteer
- Sunday school instructor
- Wrote two books
- Being Santa
- Machine maintenance
- Discussions volontaires avec clients ou autres
- Technicien en électronique
- Radio Amateur
- Premier soin
- English Second Language
- School parent volunteer (3)
- Youth Leadership training
- Religion/Church grp (2)
- Brownie/Girl Guide Leader (7)
- Big Brothers and Big Sisters
- Census taker
- Site union rep (6)
- School Patrol Coordinator
- Media Club Advisor
- Volunteer Coordinator for fundraising
- Secretary for Local
- Community Neighbourhood Association
- Sailing
- Work with challenged adults
- Organizing student events
- Cake designing
- Public speaking on justice/grief
- National Coaching Program Level II
- Owned own business
- Woodworking
- Volunteer at Family Centre
- Dessiner des pages graphiques
- Managed concession stand
- Self-taught Computer (2)
- Safety Co-ordinator

11. Who is most likely to get training in your company?

47 % Supervisors/Management

44	As required by the job (if there are changes, for example)
43	New hires
24	Those hand-picked by supervisors
22	Technical people
19	Tradespeople
12	Engineers
10	Front line workers
5	As seniority indicates
4	Sales people

Others:

- Les plus pres du patron (Teteux)
- On a first come, first served basis
- Teachers (2)
- Those who continually pester management for training
- Anyone who desires in-services can get them. All are fairly treated.
- Clerical staff receive a great deal of training.
- Secretaries, librarians, office staff
- Anyone

My comment:

- It's supposed to be as seniority indicates, however in my case its - promises, promises!
- Mauvaises prepartitious des cours au bon technicien. Peu de cours se donnent
- We get training if it is approved by immediate supervisor. This makes it difficult sometimes because we do not get substitutes for those times. A teacher can say no quite easily. Inservices at night would help.
- La formation sur les nouveaux produit est une giosse lacune autant chez Entourage que chez Bell.
- We are all entitled to training and use it as we need to.
- Anyone can register but there is limited spaces. It is sometimes very hard to get into a computer course.
- I would like to see a First Aid course offered by the company at the plant.
- Open to all the course is necessary for ... this sometimes prohibits people from expanding into new areas.

- Some staff are refused educational opportunities by their supervisors whereas others don't even need to seek permission.
- Training is limited to inservice training. I you want to take outside

courses that can help you on the job you are only entitled to \$300/year. This doesn't even cover one university course - it's pathetic

- People who request training on a regular basis and who management support often get sent for training more often than those who just request training.
- Our company is very open to sending people to training. If a lot of people want to go to the same training they will try to put on multiple classes, but if there is too many then the supervisor will pick.
- I am quite satisfied with the training our company provides
- Training is fair in this company, although they want to hire only senior highly skilled people, and that is not realistic today.
- De plus en plus les employee ne sont pas infomer des changements.
- There is no such thing as job training. It is all learn as you go and take the inservices to help you out.

12. What barriers keep people in your company from taking training?

57 % Lack of time if not done on company time

- 50 Staff to cover when someone is out on training
 - 38 Shiftwork
 - 37 Lack of money if not done on company dollars
 - 31 Travel to out of town training too costly in terms of time and money
 - 23 No company or union budget for training
 - 21 Managers select favorites only
-

Other:

- Limited space available in courses.
- No interest by some employees

My comment:

- Beaucoup de choses, peu d'elus
- Me si je suis des cours pour ma formation personnel, la compagnie en profite et devrait m'aider a les payer.
- There aren't enough advanced levels of computer in-services. The computer aides should have many more in-depth courses.
- Anyone who choses to get training is normally supported by the administration.
- Personally I would like to learn something new. I am very interested in computer skills.
- Pas le manque de budget, mais peut etre un manque de vouloir. Personne plus informer devient a mon asis plus rentable. Avec des quarts de travail de 12 heures tres difficiles de suivre des cours a l'exterieur des heures de travail.
- You can request training stress management for example - but you are put on a waiting list.
- People don't want to do it if it is not on company time.

13. What are some reasons you would like to take more education or training?

71 % To feel a sense of personal growth

- 64 To perform the job better
- 49 To feel more confident in my life
- 42 To improve job security
- 40 To get a better job or to advance

Other:

- To keep up with technology
- To keep up to date with technology. It's strange how you can do a job for say 4 years then take the course that you were supposed to take 2 years earlier

My comment:

- So that if this job goes down I will have some skill to look for other well paid jobs.
- On n'en connait jamais trop
- There isn't much of an incentive to learn more. My skills are already above what my position requires.
- Si j'ai plus confiance en moi je deviens plus epasuie donc j'accomplis mieux mon travail. Je suis moins anxieux et stresse et une barriere prient de tomber.
- Knowledge is power. (Local 649)

14. What way do you like to learn?

82 % In a small group class or workshop with a teacher

31 Computer based learning

29 One to one with a tutor who is a coworker

24 By attending a drop-in learning centre where I work at my own pace

Other:

- By correspondence
- With a Guru

My comment:

- Only some people who are put there to train you can be looked at as mentors. Some co-workers just order around rather than train.
- Les cours que nous recevons a l'exterieur sont beaucoup trop condenses.
- My problems to try to improve and taking time to learn is that I have 3 young children at home and my husband also works shiftwork. I can't get away to take courses because I would have to pay a babysitter which we cannot afford.
- Teachers are very valuable and most taught courses are not suited to computer based training.

15. What can your union do to help your opportunities for learning?

63 % **Make information about education and training opportunities available to people**

- 62 Negotiate training, including paid release time
 - 33 Have an Executive member available to help members find good learning opportunities if they would like to explore that.
 - 31 Have a subcommittee to look into learning opportunities
-

Other:

- Give executive and shop stewards training in their appointed positions.
- Make companies realize that this is important to them and they should make the commitment. It's time companies take responsibility for their employees and become good managers that do their job. We the unions always make the companies screw UP's work, maybe we should quit doing this and let the companies fix it up.
- Set specific hours/year aside for training and benchmark to that

My comment:

- Si le syndicat a un programme d'education et de formation ce serait bien que les membres en entendent parler.
- Oblige l'employeur a fourner les employes en respectant l'auciennete le plus possible
- Negotiating training with the employer is highly unlikely.

16. Please prioritize the essential skills that you think your co-workers might need to refresh, considering the demands placed upon them everyday on the job. Use number 1 for greatest learning priority, and number 5 for least urgent learning priority:

- Priority 1: Oral communications
- Priority 2: Computer skill development
- Priority 3: Reading
- Priority 4: Writing
- Priority 5: Math

Read	Write	Math	Oral Com	Compute
350	382	732	271	292

Questions for Union Local Executive



Locals which participated:

4-N	123	561	914
6	132	592	1207
28	159	603	1492
30	176	650	1532
77	181	677	1990
79-M	305	681	1997
80	410	707	2001
85	437	773	2850
98	515	823	
112	550	907	

Locations:

Calgary	AB	Brampton	ON	Lebel-Sur-	PQ
Edmonton	AB	Brockville	ON	Quevillon	
Red Deer	AB	Oshawa	ON	Montreal	PQ
North Vancouver	BC	Sarnia	ON	Port Cartier	PQ
Port Alberni	BC	Timmins	ON	Saguenay	PQ
Prince George	BC	Toronto	ON	St. Augustin	PQ
Winnipeg	MB	Cap de la		St. Jerome	PQ
Edmunston	NB	Madelaine	PQ	St. Leonard	PQ
Mirimichi	NB	Chicoutimi	PQ	St. Raphael	PQ
Saint John	NB	Dolbean	PQ	Saskatoon	SK
St. John's	NFLD	Gatineau	PQ	Unity	SK
Chester	NS	Granby	PQ		
Pugwash	NS	Hull	PQ		
Yellowknife	NWT	Jonquiere	PQ		
Belleville	ON	Lachute	PQ		

No of Respondents: 69

1. What education or training does your Union Local provide for members?

72 % Shop steward courses

62	Health and Safety
59	Grievance Handling
45	Financial Officers
43	Leadership
35	Collective bargaining
27	How to run a meeting
26	Pension workshop
16	Public Speaking
14	Strike preparation
13	Organizing
8	None

Others:

- Tout ce que le budget permet.
- Arbitration

My comment:

- The Union funds members to attend courses that we hear about - this depends on funds available because we are a very small local with financial difficulties.
- Our local does not offer education/training per se. But we try to offer training through our monthly steward meetings with regard to the grievance procedure, along with the five "W"s. As well, we have sent them to Steward I courses offered by CEP. We keep the stewards informed and updated on issues within our workplace, updates on conferences, etc.
- None at the local level, only outside the local.
- We are a small Local and so we participate in training with other locals when we can afford it but don't offer any on our own.
- A few of the above courses have been handled by Area Council. At this time it's a financial burden for the local to provide courses.
- Il faut noter que notre unite syndicale new les donnent pas personnellement mais dirige et paye les cours appropries aux membres appropries.

2. Who are your partners when you provide education and training for members?

68 % National CEP office
30 District Labour Council
26 Provincial Federation of Labour
20 Canadian Labour Congress
2 Community College

Others:

- Employer
- FTQ

3. How would you describe your local union's awareness of literacy, or essential skills, as an issue affecting workers employability and personal life?

43 % Some awareness
28 High awareness
14 Low or no awareness

My comment:

- The level of literacy was never an issue in the hiring of an employee as long as I can recall (23 years)
- We have been able to inform our members of our National's initiatives on literacy.
- Approximately half of our membership is highly educated. Some are high school drop-outs from the 1950's and 60's. Some are single parents and some are Asian persons who do have difficulty with English. All our members believe in helping each other out. However, maybe some type of program would be more comfortable.
- Le degre de scolarite et la formation des employeurs de mon local sont eleves.
- Mais avec les faibles budget que nous avons nous ne pouvons pas malheureusement pas former nos memberes

4. What literacy or essential skills initiatives has your local union supported?

46 % None, as yet

- 26 Promoting skills development among the members
- 9 High school or adult upgrading
- 7 One-to-one peer tutoring program
- 3 Drop-in learning centre for members

My comment:

- Because of the size of our local we have not initiated any programs, largely due to the cost of such endeavor.
- Going ahead with learning centre scheduled to open April 2001
- Based on the job qualifications workers should be trained before being hired - Government standards - therefore this would not apply.
- We have used the buddy system to help each other out. We tried to interest members to take training offered through the Government or company when it was available before, but there was very little response as most courses were on their personal time. We would have to keep costs to a minimum as we are a small Local with mediocre hourly wage support (\$10-\$15 hly. Rates) with the majority in the \$11.50 range.

5. In what ways might it benefit the Union, do you think, to enhance members' essential skills?

59 % Increased confidence among members

- 57 Greater understanding of the Union by members
 - 57 Increased participation and activism by members in union business
 - 55 Better understanding of the contract with employer
 - 51 Increased job advancement opportunities for members
 - 49 Increased job security for members
-

My comment:

- All of the above. I think employers should be more than willing to educate their workforce for their benefit as well as ours.
- I don't feel essential skills training will benefit the union in the manners listed above because members should already have essential skills based on job requirements.
- As in any union Local we have our group of anti-union activists, and so feel that any education programs (outside of union education training) sponsored by unions would be beneficial.

6. What resources does your Local have to promote essential skills programs or provide essential skills programs?

42 % Ability to negotiate and bargain for education and training with the employer

- 29 Interested members who could be trained to tutor other members
- 28 Contact with the National CEPU Literacy project
- 26 Promotional vehicles like newsletter, web page etc.
- 25 Facilities for learning
- 12 Partnerships with community agencies

Others:

- Literacy Committee at S.S.C.S.A. which promotes the importance of making literacy training available to employees/members.

My comment:

- Our collective agreement leaves room for training of employees, but not in the form of literacy programs as such.
- We are a small union (Local 550) and don't have the money or support from our members at large to afford this.
- Our employer wishes to be the sole provider of any and all training. The problem is to try to get them to do it. Famous words "It's too costly. Employees should take the initiative to take night courses to better themselves." We know this is rather difficult when members are juggling shiftwork, families, and sometimes a second job to ease financial burden

7. What ideas do you have for increasing activism for essential skill education in your Local?

45 % **Raise the issue with members at union meetings**

- 38 Take the issue to the bargaining table
 - 35 Learn how to identify and approach members who we know need help with their skills
 - 26 help with their skills
 - 25 Make sure the EAP program is aware of the issue and is able to help members
 - 14 Start a program
 - 13 Set up a confidential "Helpline" for people who want to improve skills
 - 12 Establish a sub-committee to take on the issue
 - 9 Link up with community groups who offer essential skill education in the community
-

Other:

- Je ne peux répondre
- Le besoin ne semble pas correspondre a nos attentes.
- Find out from the local if if essential skills education is something they wish to address, pursue - as based on job requirements it should not be an issue.

My comment:

- Avec le nombre d'annee d'experience que les membres possedent, its sont militants ou ne le sont pas. Et les plus militants dictent le chemin aux jeunes.
- Sad but true: until a member complains or is having trouble with the employer because of a literacy problem nothing is done to remedy the problem.
- We would like to do all of the above, but how does this Executive get volunteers to volunteer? People want things done but no one wants to volunteer to do them. And our Executive is four people who can only do four things at one time. I suppose this is a typical response, but it's a typical issue.
- Il faut que se souvenir qu l'on ne peut pas forcer quelqu'un donc former un comite qui se poserait les questions comment aborder, expliquer, faire comprendre, etc.

8. What help or resources do you need to increase activism, awareness, and education opportunities for members?

51% Financial support and partnership with employer

- 41 Awareness Kit to bring to Local meetings
- 38 A needs assessment to help decide people's learning needs
- 38 On-going information about the issue, newsletters and such
- 26 Visit to union-sponsored essential skills program
- 20 Guidance to help set up a learning centre or essential skills program

My comment:

- Only members' participation will make a difference once any programs if any are set in place.
- Pas de besoin pour l'instant.
- Thank you for the survey. Our Local would like to be kept informed of the essential skills issue and efforts by other companies who are addressing the issue. As well, any efforts by our National Union or any of its locals would be appreciated. Thanks.