

# A different kind of skills shortage

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Editor

The skills shortage facing employers in Northern Manitoba and across Canada has grabbed a great deal of attention in recent years.

And while it is often thought that the skills needed stem from post-secondary training, the Flin Flon and District Chamber of Commerce learned Tuesday that this is not always the case.

Guest speaker Marlene Gogal, northern coordinator of Workplace Education Manitoba, said employers are finding that new employees often lack what she called "essential skills."

These skills, identified by employers themselves, are not often taught at college or university and range from oral communication to thinking abilities.

In the modern workplace, Gogal said, the three R's or reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic no longer cut it.

"Really, people need more than those three



PHOTO BY JONATHON NAYLOR

Sandra Garinger and Marlene Gogal detailed the nine essential skills identified by employers.

skill sets in order to be successful in the workplace," she told the 13 attendees at the

Friendship Centre Restaurant.

Gogal said work is underway with employ-

ers and schools to bring the essential skills to the forefront.

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Workplaces where the essential skills are practiced see lower absenteeism, improved productivity and higher morale, among other benefits, she said.

Joining Gogal was Sandra Garinger, an essential skills teacher for the Flin Flon School Division.

She said both she and Gogal are looking to glean input and form partnerships within the local business community.

"The more connections we can make, the better," Garinger said.

Aside from oral com-

munication and thinking skills, the essential skills consist of reading text, document use, writing, numeracy, working with others, continuous learning and computer use.