



WORKPLACE LEARNING PROGRAM

The Workplace Learning Program at the EKATI Diamond Mine is unique in Canada as it brings workplace learning, Aboriginal content, personal and community interests together with customized learning for individual employees.

After the start up of the mine, BHP Billiton began researching the need and feasibility of running a workplace literacy program. This program was to assist the company in achieving its commitment of hiring northern Aboriginal residents, realize its core guiding principles and ensure a safe, productive workforce.

The Workplace Learning Program focuses on essential skills employees need to do their jobs safely and effectively: reading, writing, math, and oral communication. Employees can also upgrade their skills for trade entrance exams or pursue distance learning through correspondence courses.

Participation in the program is voluntary and confidential and employees receive some work release time to attend the program. Small group learning sessions and individual tutoring are available.

In addition to feeling more confident in their jobs and entering apprenticeships, many employees now read to their children and help with homework. They are making tremendous progress, receiving recognition from government and learning institutions, presenting at conferences, as well as being interviewed by the media and federal government organizations to share their successes.

The Workplace Learning Program also supports off site initiatives and adult educators in Northern communities. Support to other educators is provided through the sharing of resources, facilitating training sessions, and sharing best practices with other businesses and learning organizations at the community, provincial, national and international levels.

BHP Billiton Diamonds Inc. has cultivated a culture of learning founded on principles of respect and cooperative learning.