



TUTOR TALK NEWSLETTER

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2007

NEWS

Canada needs to pull up its socks and sharpen its pencils...

A new report gives Canada a low grade on its literacy skills. It demonstrates the need for literacy programs to encourage those who cannot participate fully in society to gain the skills they need in order to do so. This study, *State of Learning in Canada: No time for complacency* put out by the Canadian Council on Learning this January, highlighted the following weaknesses in Canada's literacy structure:

- While the literacy skills of workers are known to be economic drivers for countries, Canada's overall rate of literacy did not improve between 1994 and 2003
- Canada lags behind other countries in providing workplace training
- One in four children enters kindergarten with a learning or behavioural problem
- Many Canadians are unable to understand the information necessary to deal with their own health, and nearly nine out of 10 older Canadians lack the health literacy skills they need
- Literacy in many Aboriginal languages is in jeopardy

These points are cause for concern and these problems definitely need to be examined and thorough solutions need to be implemented. At the same time it is important to recognize the fact that although literacy levels have not improved over recent years, there has not been a consistent method for measuring these skills, so it is difficult to compare between years. As well, the definition of literacy has changed significantly and someone who had low literacy skills 10 or 15 years ago is very different than someone who has low literacy skills now. With the ever growing dependency on computers and media, one must have skills to decipher information in many different formats to be fully functional (socially, economically, politically, etc.) in society today. To read more about Canadians literacy skills and the suggestions for improving this unacceptable state, please refer to the report in full at www.ccl-cca.ca/solr.

* These points are taken from the summary of the *State of Learning in Canada: No time for complacency*: www.ccl-cca.ca/solr



WORDS FOR WOMEN POT-LUCK!

We had a great pot-luck dinner for the learners and the tutors. We had many deliciously different dishes to share. It was a great opportunity to socialize and to meet the other people who participate in the program. Thanks to all who came out and made it a success that will be repeated!

See page 3 of the newsletter for more photos!

A TUTOR AND LEARNER'S PERSPECTIVE

I am a tutor at YWCA of Montreal and it is my privilege to be a part of this project. I have come to learn with my experience that literacy is not only reading and writing but, it is a source of adapting and learning, in order to create a better world for all. It can also help to bridge the gap between cultures and boundaries.

Literacy is a basic necessity and everyone should have the chance to learn and improve their literacy skills. The YWCA is helping us in achieving this goal.

This is a message from my student who has been participating with *Words for Women* for the last two years.

My name is Yasmeen. When I came to Canada I could not speak a word of English, but now with the help from YWCA I can speak English and have a good life here. I like the people of Canada and specially Montreal because they are nice and friendly. They are honest and helpful. And they are accepting and are warm to the people who have come to Canada to find a new life here. I wish them all a very happy New Year and thank them for their friendship. God bless Canada.
Fauzia Khalid and Yasmeen Moledena



MESSAGE FROM THE LITERACY CENTRE

Things at *Words for Women* have been speeding along since the holidays. We have been busy getting organized for the New Year to keep up with the continuous influx of learners and tutors. We have been lucky enough to have the help from an enthusiastic intern from McGill University's Social Work program to help us with some special projects. With her help we are hoping to create a new and interesting learning tool to help new tutors overcome their anxieties with regards to their first meeting with their learner. We will be filming different tutors and learners who will be discussing their concerns and experiences with regards to their first tutoring sessions.

Chelsea Kirkby
Resource Person

UPCOMING EVENTS

International Women's Day Exhibition and Testimonials

*March 8, 2007, 4:00 pm till 7:00 pm
YWCA - 1355 René-Lévesque Blvd. West*

The YWCA will be hosting an Exhibition of 1000 *Peace Women* to celebrate *International Women's Day*.

Entry is free, but confirmation for the cocktail is required before March 2nd at (514) 866-9941 ext.293

Tutor Training:

English Training: March 17 and 18, 2007

French Training: March 24 and 31, 2007

The next round of *Tutor Training* is fast approaching. If you know anyone who is interested in becoming a tutor, have them contact the Literacy Center at (514) 866-9941 ext. 278 or ext. 249

COLLECTIVE KITCHEN NEWS

Dishes from Near and Far helps women lessen their isolation as they meet new people in a warm and stimulating atmosphere. Women share their cooking know-how and show that healthy meals can be prepared, even on a modest budget!

Collective Kitchen activities are offered twice a month, Wednesdays and Saturdays from 10 am to 3 pm.

The YWCA Montreal offers a warm and welcoming kitchen to women of all ages and backgrounds, who wish to cook healthy low cost meals.

For more information, contact: Laura Martinez at (514) 866-9941 ext. 308 or at lmartinez@ydesfemmesmtl.org.

We have a new *Mini-Library* at the Literacy Center!

The Mini-Library is full of interesting books (mostly fiction) to compliment our library. The books are all different levels and are all French. Please take advantage of this new selection as we will only have it for a couple of months!

LINKS AND RESOURCES

Story of the Week:

This page allows adult learners to share their stories. A new story is put online every Monday. Reading these stories can be a great way to incorporate the computer into your lessons. We have a computer at the YWCA Literacy Center that you can use with your learner.

<http://www.nald.ca/STORY/Story.htm>

The Change Agent:

This link provides interesting reading material from the online magazine, *The Change Agent – Adult Education for Social Justice: News, Issues and Ideas*. Within the magazine, articles can be found that have lessons plans, discussion questions or other useful resources to go with the readings.

<http://www.litwomen.org/tca/lessons.html#timeline>

Learning Activities:

Quebec English Literacy Alliance has a number of activities based on various themes on their site. This is worth checking out if you having trouble thinking up new activities for your learner.

<http://www.qela.qc.ca/Activities.htm>

ADULT LITERACY CHALLENGE

Here is a literacy challenge for learners who are interested in writing their own poetry. This could be a great activity to do with your learner if she is comfortable with writing and expressing herself.

<http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/>

Don't forget we can always use pieces written by tutors AND their learners for the newsletter!



PAROLES DE FEMMES
WORDS FOR WOMEN



Learner and Tutor Pot-luck!



ISABELLE



SHARON AND

learners sharing stories tutors delicious meals good conversation meeting new people



JOAN AND LISA



HABIBA AND HER DAUGHTER

