



PAROLES DE TUTRICES

JUNE/JULY 2007

NEWS

Literacy skills lower as people age

A new report released by Statistics Canada entitled, “Gaining and Losing Literacy Skills Over the Lifecourse » analyzes the findings of the 1994 International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and the 2003 Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL). It has brought to light the fact that literacy skills lower as people age. This report was written primarily through the lens of economic development and the effect of skill loss on the Canadian economy. It explains that “the presence of significant literacy skill loss in adulthood, [is a] loss that would seem to be concentrated in

“...while a person's age and gender play a role, their participation in the labour market, their level of educational attainment, their participation in further education and training, and their engagement in literacy activities at work and at home are all related to their literacy skills.”*



adults from lower socio-economic backgrounds.”* With this known, the report suggests that in the interest of Canada’s economic growth and stability, adult education and skill conservation should be a priority.

Since the government is constantly aiming for a more prosperous society, it would seem important to invest in adults maintaining their skills throughout adulthood. Instead, the government has cut millions of dollars from adult literacy programs, in favour of preventative, childhood literacy programs. Certainly prevention and strong school systems are fundamental to ensuring high literacy rates later in life, however, without constantly reinforcing these skills – which is not an option at many workplaces or for many lifestyles – literacy skills can be lost. The investment in adult literacy benefits Canada in more way than one – it places it competitively within the global market, as well as increasing quality of life and community participation.

* Taken from source : <http://www.statcan.ca/english/research/89-552-MIE/89-552-MIE2007016.pdf>

TUTOR TALK

By *Morgen Patterson*

I haven’t had the best luck as a tutor in the Words for Women program.

After training in March, I met my first learner, and was eager to begin

this new experience. I used the first meeting as an assessment, to determine what my learner’s needs were and what goals she hoped to attain through the program. The second meeting happened two weeks later, and I left hoping that I would be able to help her meet her goals. However, our meeting the following week was cancelled at the

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last minute, as was the one next week, and the week after that. A long time passed, and I started to feel de-motivated and frustrated – I didn’t know what was wrong or what I could do to improve the situation. I

finally contacted the Resource Person to let her know what was going on, and she helped find me another learner for the summer. I was definitely looking forward to starting again, and arranged the first meeting. I showed up. The learner didn’t. At this point, I was ready to pack it in, but my learner called me and we arranged another meeting. Happily, she showed up, and I hope that we will meet on a fairly consistent basis for the rest of the summer.

Although I haven’t learned a lot about tutoring itself (such as lesson planning, or how to communicate the difference between “to” and “too”), I have learned about patience, understanding and persistence. What is most important in this program, I think, is letting the women who participate know that the support is there if they want it.

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PAROLES DE FEMMES WORDS FOR WOMEN



INTERESTING RESSOURCES

For research, reading material and educational material:

The CDÉACF (Centre de documentation sur l'éducation des adultes et la condition féminine) has a very good selection of books regarding literacy. You can visit their database at :

www.alpha.cdeacf.ca/rayonalpha



For help with numeracy:

The ABC Canada Math Literacy web page is a good start to understanding numeracy. It has many different tips to help people with basic math skills.

http://www.abc-canada.org/math_literacy/

UPCOMING EVENTS

Quebec Social Forum:

August 23rd and 24th

Discussion Workshop: Girls, Women and Power

Exact date and time of YWCA's workshop to follow!

Drawing from our experiences with marginalized girls and women, this workshop will seek to explore various elements and strategies for consciousness raising, capacity building and mobilization around social/environmental issues our participants identify as being of concern.

For more information regarding the Quebec Social Forum, follow the link below:

<http://www.er.uqam.ca/nobel/social//2007/>

Literacy Centre Open House!

Words for Women and ABC en famille

September 6, 2007—3pm to 6pm

**YWCA Montreal—1355 René-Lévesque Blvd West
Room 411**

MESSAGE FROM THE LITERACY CENTRE

Many tutors meet with their learner once or twice a week and the learner's progress is not always quick or obvious. Here are some learner's successes that show what some of our current learners have accomplished through the *Words for Women* program either over a long or short period of time.

- One learner has begun the process of obtaining her citizenship and has been studying the citizenship test questions and learning the answers with her tutor.
- One learner found a job in retail sales.
- Another learner learned how to read a metro map.
- One learner learned the names of parts of the body in order to help her when she goes to the doctor.
- One learner has begun to read books to her little girl.
- Two learners have learned how to use the computer—they have learned how to use the mouse, how to draw on the computer and how to type short words.
- One learner has learned how to multiply.

All these accomplishments come from the hard work, patience and determination of our tutors and learners who put in the time together to make these small steps that add up to real successes. It is important to keep in mind that no matter how small the accomplishment, this is a new skill that has the potential to grow into something greater.

THANK YOU TO ALL TUTORS WHO HANDED IN THEIR PROGRESS REPORTS!

Free Books!

The Literacy Centre at the YWCA has books to give away. Next time you are at the Centre, look for the boxes with "Please Take!" written on them and help yourselves. There are children's books (great for your learner's children!) as well as novels and a couple of resource books.

Click here to check out a great campaign highlighting the difficulties people with low levels of literacy face...

http://www.abc-canada.org/public_awareness/stuck_campaign.asp



Visit to the Musée des beaux Arts

Le 11 juillet, 2007



Tutors and learners visited the Musée de beaux arts this past July for a guided visit of the Oceanic, Ancient African and Art Deco exhibits. We were a small group and everyone came from a different part of the world, so the guide kindly added a few more exhibits to our tour and we visited exhibits that interested our group —such as carpets from Iran. The activity was challenging and fun. The learners all speak English as a second language and had to pay close attention to understand the guide, which was great practice for them. Everyone had to participate in drawing the artifacts, which no one was comfortable with at first, but after the first couple of pencil strokes, the artist in everyone came out and beautiful drawings were made. This was an excellent activity that we hope to organize again soon!

