



TUTOR TALK NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2006

NEWS

How important is literacy?

“Canada’s New Government—Getting things done for all of us”*

The Conservative government’s slogan does not seem to be ringing true after the cuts to Human Resources and Skills Development in October slashed over 17 million dollars of funding towards adult literacy programs. In a possible attempt to make up for this, the Honorable Diane Finley (pictured on the left), Minister of *Human Resources and Social Development Canada* proudly announced investing 2.5 million dollars into new literacy programs in early November. Human Resources and Skills Development announced this new funding with this explanation:



"Literacy is one of the essential skills which are required for work and life. Literacy enables people to adapt to changes that happen in their workplace and improve their general quality of life," stated Minister Finley. "It gives me great pleasure to announce, on behalf of Canada's New Government, investments which will be of direct benefit to Canadians."*

Five new literacy organizations will be stronger because of this funding, but it is still unfortunate that the initial cuts have left many other literacy groups with little hope for survival. It will take time for the new programs to take shape and the old, under-funded ones to close their doors. It will be interesting to see the impact that these changes will have. Hopefully, if the government truly supports the statement above, an effort will be made to reinstate the funding to support literacy efforts on every level and for all ages.

*Quote and Image of Diane Finley from: <http://www.pm.gc.ca/eng/bio.asp?id=64>

*<http://news.gc.ca/cfmx/view/en/index.jsp?articleid=254089>



Diane Marrata, Choon Ja Chai, Kyung Wan Myung, et Sarah Campbell during an English conversation workshop.

CONVERSATION WORKSHOPS IN FULL SWING!

The French and English Conversation Workshops are going very well. Both workshops have some regular participants, but they could always use more! Please remind your participants that these workshops are a great way to meet people and practice speaking. French Conversation: Wed at 10 am
English Conversation: Wed at 4 pm

A TUTOR’S PERSPECTIVE - THE PERFECT BOOK

We all know the joy of reading a “perfect” book – the type where we taste every sentence with pleasure, we’re excited to know what will happen, we wish the story would go on forever, and we want to start the book again as soon as we’ve come to the end. How I would love to create that experience for my literacy student.

Over my years as a tutor, finding that perfect book has been my biggest challenge. Kay, a Level 2 reader, loved fantasy stories. Friends had given her *The Hobbit* and later, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. She started each book with a sparkle in her eye, but became discouraged after five pages of *Charlie* and less than a page of hobbits. We read some of the Level 2 books in the library, but the closest we came to success was *Elvira’s Family*, written from the viewpoint of a cat. Kay said she liked it, but the sparkle was missing. Jen, a Level 3 reader, wanted to read a Harlequin romance story that her employer had read and passed on to her. By the third paragraph, we both learned just how many difficult words appear in a Harlequin romance! I searched in vain for a Level 3 romance story.

I have had occasional successes. Lorna read *Jennie’s Story* (Level 3) twice and cried each time. Lorna enjoyed a good cry. Perfect. It even inspired her to write her own story (*Bouncing back*).

My new student – an ESL learner at Level 1 – spoke often of her granddaughter in our first meetings, so I looked for Level 1 books about children. But *My Name is Rose* was too violent for her taste, and while she was proud of finishing and understanding *Little Voice*, I noticed that the “amusing” ending did not make her smile. Clearly not the perfect book for her.

I know there are ways to make a difficult story manageable for a literacy student, but I live in hope of finding that perfect book at the right reading level that will make my student’s eyes sparkle, keep her turning the pages, and make her say at the end:

“Wow! That was really great! Let’s read it again.”

By Linda Dyer



MESSAGE FROM THE LITERACY CENTRE

Welcome to all the new tutors!

I would like to welcome all the new tutors to *Words for Women*. In the past month we have trained a total of 16 new tutors who are eagerly taking on new learners. As the learners continually come in for help, it is great to have such dedicated and caring people ready to help them. We had eight tutors at the last Tutor Workshop and it was great to see the more experienced tutors exchange with the newer ones. I encourage all the tutors to make it out to the tutor workshops to share your experiences and learn from the other tutors.

Again, WELCOME to all the new tutors!

Chelsea Kirkby, Resource Person

UPCOMING EVENTS

Holidays

The Literacy Centre will be closed from December 22nd till January 2nd.

The YWCA is still open so tutors wishing to use the centre are welcome to, just please inform us so we can inform the reception.

Tutor and Learner Pot-luck

To start off the New Year

January 25, 2007

Family Literacy Day

January 29, 2007

INTERESTING LEARNING TOOL

“Raconte-moi une histoire” is a great game to play with your learner. It is a game that promotes creative story-telling with the help of images on cards. You, or your learner picks a card and tells a story about the picture. Then the other person continues the story by picking another image and linking it to the story. This game is very fun and imaginations run wild. We are hoping to get one at the literacy centre soon, games like this can be found at Renaud Bray, or you can make your own game by cutting pictures out of a magazine.



BOOKS FOR ALL LEVELS

Come check out the books at the Literacy Centre's Library at the YWCA. There are books for all learners of all levels!

Beginner (Level 1):

When I was Small by Scott Buzzell

A story about a young boy who fought a lot but learned as an adult to stop.

Level 2:

Along a Rocky Shore by Judith Renard

This is a book with many photos and simple text describing the ocean shore.

Level 3:

Postcards from Montreal by Gordana Jovanovich

A great story that is written about a visit to Montreal.

POETRY CHALLENGE

The Center for Literacy for Quebec has put out this notice:

Start early to prepare for the 2007 Poetry Challenge to be held the last week of April. Our partners are the Quebec Writers Federation, Maisonneuve Magazine, and the Dawson College Creative Arts, Literature and Languages. This is an opportunity for young and old, individuals and class groups, to celebrate poetry and raise funds for community arts and literacy.

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

LINKS AND RESOURCES

New online database:

New database for the *Initiatives fédérales-provinciales conjointes en matière d'alphabétisation (IFPCA)*.

This site is managed by Espace-Alpha and the CDÉACF (Centre de documentation d'éducation des adultes et la condition féminine)

<http://espacealpha.cdeacf.ca/ifpca/recherche/index.html>

Online learning tools:

RÉCIT

(réseau de personnes-ressources pour le développement des compétences des élèves par l'intégration des technologies.)

<http://www6.cssmi.qc.ca/fga-fp/?lang=fr>