

DARTMOUTH LEARNING NETWORK

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



Dartmouth
Learning Network

DARTMOUTH LEARNING NETWORK
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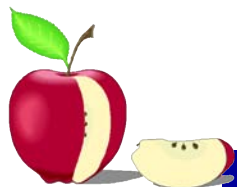
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Some Useful Websites

LEARNING TO USE THE COMPUTER

www.jigzone.com/ On-line jigsaw puzzles at many levels to help click and drag skills.

E-Mail

<http://hotmail.com> or <http://mail.yahoo.com>

SOME HIGHLY RECOMMENDED SITES:

The National Adult Literacy Database

www.nald.ca

Links to endless educational resources which are free to download.

Literacy Nova Scotia

www.ns.literacy.ca Free to volunteers.

This is the home of an interactive newspaper for adult learners in Nova Scotia with some text to speech functions: **The Learning Beacon**. Experience **Text to Speech Function** on this site. You will find news of free upcoming PD opportunities.

HALIFAX COMMUNITY LEARNING NETWORK

www.hcln.ca Your local network site and link to an on-line document listing many tutor resources including many websites.

English and Math Sites

www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise Materials for both English and Math plus useful tutoring tips.

Learning Differences www.allkindsofminds.org/ Reflects the work of Dr Mel Levine.

NOVA SCOTIA SCHOOL FOR ADULT LEARNING

go.nssal.ca

NS Skills and Learning Branch Curriculum and Tips for Practitioners

<http://instructors.gonnssal.ca> Login: **adulted** Password: **nssal**

Many tutoring ideas in the instructors website and you are welcome to use this section. Especially recommended are Number Sense and Mental Math, by David Pilmer
Learning Software Programs Especially Relevant to Adult Literacy Learners

Word Q; SpeakQ Word Prediction Software: Can download free for 30 days use.

<http://www.wordq.com/cgi-bin/download/download.pl> Available at the library.

Reading Horizons --- systematic phonics instruction program for those with trouble decoding print. <http://www.readinghorizons.com/>

For Lessons: www.theteacherscorner.net



Mission Statement

Dartmouth Learning Network provides opportunities for adults to improve their literacy skills, free of charge.

History

In 1985 discussions were held between members of various community groups to address a need for basic adult education opportunities for citizens of Dartmouth and surrounding areas. The organization, Dartmouth Literacy Network, was formed as a result and became a non-profit, registered charity in 1991.

In 2006, the Dartmouth Literacy Network underwent a name change in response to the stigma many learners felt was attached to the word *literacy*. This name change, to the *Dartmouth Learning Network*, was spearheaded by a classroom learner and was supported by many of the learners involved in several of our programs.



What We Do



Tutoring

Our volunteer, community based tutoring program serves many students each year offering them informal assessment, program planning, resources and their own one-to-one volunteer tutor. There is no cost to the student. Tutoring takes place in various public locations in the Dartmouth area. Volunteers assist the organization as literacy tutors, computer tutors, Board Members, special event volunteers, fundraisers or even with technical support.

Classroom Teaching

We also offer small Level 1 and 2 classrooms as well as other group sessions on such topics as computers, health and well being, job readiness and life skills, to name a few.

This valuable learning opportunity for adults is made possible by the volunteer commitment our community has given and continues to give.

The Dartmouth Learning Network is a “Learner” driven organization, which means that:

- ▶ we show respect for the dignity and capability of the individual;
- ▶ we believe that people who approach us are motivated to learn;
- ▶ we support continuous improvement and personal renewal;
- ▶ we promote economic development by improving the literacy and life skills of our learners;
- ▶ we recognize and celebrate achievement;
- ▶ we respectfully recognize the generosity of the surrounding community;
- ▶ we honour the individuality of every human being with consideration to the rights and freedoms necessary to maintain personal dignity;
- ▶ we see each learner as a person with individual needs: it is our to become aware of those needs allowing the learner to benefit the ;
- ▶ we believe learning is a personal process of acquiring knowledge and life skills through activities and experience;
- ▶ adult literacy is a flexible yet structured process involving tutors and learners.

What You Do Job Description

- ▶ **Meet** one-to-one with an assigned adult learner once or twice a week at an arranged time and location to tutor reading, writing, math or other skills.
- ▶ **Prepare** lesson plans, which are appropriate to the learner's reading levels, needs, goals, and interests.
- ▶ **Keep** written records of the learner's progress and submit them regularly to the coordinator.
- ▶ **Attend**, when interested and available, volunteer educational training sessions to stay current on tutoring strategies and approaches.
- ▶ **Notify** the office (464-3444), as soon as possible, if unable to attend any tutoring session.
- ▶ **Notify** the office if a permanent change is required in meeting time or location.
- ▶ **Sign** and adhere to the terms of the Dartmouth Learning Network *Tutor Contract*.



Qualifications:

- Be 19 years of age or older.
- Have high school completion, or the equivalent, with good reading and writing skills.
- Be caring, nonjudgmental, patient, and responsive to the needs of the learner.
- Be comfortable explaining basic reading, writing and/or math skills.
- Meet with the Tutor Coordinator and review basic policies and procedures.
- Provide two personal references.

Tutors are encouraged to further develop their skills through participation in ongoing development, both formal and informal.

Some Statistics Literacy and You

There are many definitions of literacy. However, debates about literacy, which concentrate only on levels of reading and writing, can be misleading. The real issue is whether people possess the education and skills necessary to function fully and productively within their life and society.

In Atlantic Canada:

▶ Level 1:

At this level an individual has difficulty dealing with any printed material. Approximately 1 in 4 or 25% of Atlantic Canadian adults are at this level of literacy.

▶ Level 2:

Those who can use written material that is clear and well laid out and only for performing easy tasks such as spotting a familiar word in a simple text or identifying articles on a grocery list. This level includes 27% of Atlantic Canadians.

▶ Level 3*:

Those able to use reading material in certain situations as long as it is clear and the tasks to be performed are simple. People in this level may still tend to avoid situations where they are required to read. 33% of Atlantic Canadians are found in this level.

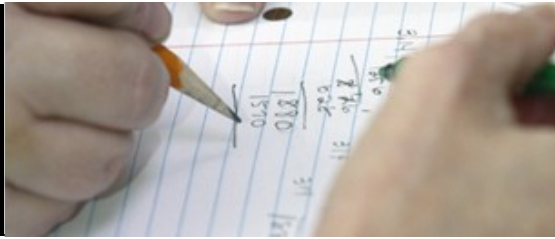


▶ Level 4:

Those able to understand and use increasingly complex written material and are capable of fulfilling most reading requirements. Individuals in this level make up only 15% of Atlantic Canadians.

*Minimum Level, experts believe, is required for adults to function well in today's knowledge and information based economy. This means that in Nova Scotia, about 50% of the population is functioning at lower levels of literacy than is required for daily life.

Benefits of Volunteer Tutoring



1. You will directly assist an individual to **increase both literacy skills and self esteem** and may enhance his/her pursuit of economic and/or personal goals.
2. You will have the opportunity to **participate in training**, special projects, and social events.
3. You will develop new skills and will make a **valuable contribution to your community**, which may be a positive addition to your resume.
4. You will meet interesting and **committed people** who want to make changes in their lives.

Please know that without you, the Dartmouth Learning Network could not provide this service to over 70 individuals a year. Thank you for your hard work!

Adult Learners

Facts



As people who are fluent readers, tutors sometimes make the mistake of comparing adults who are learning to read to children. The fact is that a learning adult knows far more than a learning child due to life experience.

Some challenges in working with adults are:

Adult learners:

- ▶ may have had a bad school experience and may be very skeptical about becoming involved in a learning environment again;
- ▶ may not be able to envision their own success at the beginning;
- ▶ are usually not looking for a teacher - they are looking for someone who can help them to learn as a peer;
- ▶ often have other issues in their lives that may have hindered their learning success in the past and may do so again. For example poverty, disability, and social isolation can all be obstacles to learning.

Remember adult learners:

- want to be respected for their experience and knowledge;
- are never too old to learn;
- want to be involved in all aspects of their learning, planning, program delivery, and evaluation;
- generally know what it is they want to learn. They often have a goal in mind such as; employment, getting a driver's license, reading with children, etc;
- have made it through life without strong reading and writing skills. They have often developed other skills and strategies such as memorization and visualization. These are very important strengths upon which to build.



About Volunteering

Tutor



- **Respect** your learners' right to confidentiality; don't identify him/her by name or other clear give-aways if you discuss his/her case with your friends.
- **Be natural** and as easy as you can be - rely on your good will and common sense.
- Try to find out the answer to a problem - **don't be afraid** to admit that you don't know something.
- Remember, as a volunteer you've made a **commitment** - you're being counted on by learners, staff and other volunteers for your time, energy and commitment - don't let them down.



- **Ask for help** if you need any resources, debriefing or have any concerns about your match.
- Expect your learner to **respect** your time and effort given.
- Try to **think** things through and not be pressured into hasty action.

Intake Process



1. DLN recruits through advertising and word of mouth.
2. Those interested in tutoring call the Tutor Coordinator to set up a meeting time.
3. The new Tutor meets with the Coordinator and fills out an application, learns more about the learning Network.
4. The Dartmouth Learning Network checks 2 personal references.
5. Tutor training is recommended but not mandatory and is offered free by the province.

The Tutor Coordinator is there for you. She/he provides:

- Site relocation
- Intermediary services for messages to and from your Learner, e.g., cancellations
- Learning materials and professional development
- Feedback on progress reports and/or other learning concerns
- Debriefing on a Learner's personal issues that are sometimes divulged during a tutoring session.

The Tutor Coordinator matches you with a Learner based on your preference for:

- Where you want to tutor
- What skills you have
- Your availability
- Your compatibility

