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"...the literacy resource for school board personnel and adult education teachers"

QLWG Turns 31!

"QLWG, a group of people who could meet for as little as four hours to plan large undertakings, and who, through "thick'n thin", tended the fire they had lit, working in concert, always excited, often tired but constantly filled with the significance of the endeavour."

Gerry Bleser,
 ALERT newsletter, March 1995

The Back-to School Issue!

Coming back to school can be stressful for any adult, but it is particularly difficult for the adult with low literacy skills. Many adults who struggle with their reading, writing and math remember school as a negative experience. Even the *smell* of a school can invoke unpleasant memories!



Adults with low reading, writing and numeracy skills may have kept this hidden their entire lives, *even from their closest friends and family*. In addition, they can be very creative in hiding the problem (gleaning information from television and passing it off as 'something they have read'; 'forgetting' their glasses; depending on a trusted spouse or secretary to fill out paperwork, etc.). When they finally come into our adult education centres, many adults may not tell us that they have difficulty reading and writing. **Do you know the signs to look for?**

- * Does the adult seem angry? frustrated?, embarrassed, ill at ease?
- * Does the adult have difficulty making eye contact?
- * Does the adult ask for help filling out forms or tell you he/she will 'fill it out at home'?
- * Does the adult have difficulty following directions and instructions?

It can take *years* for an adult to reach out for help once they have recognised the need to improve these skills. And often, one busy staff person; one referral too many; one unaccompanied placement test, can be enough to send them scurrying right back out the door. The Quebec Literacy Working Group can help your staff (SARCA, RAC, receptionists and guidance counsellors) identify the signs (*) of an adult with low literacy skills. Want to know more? Contact us at: <http://www.nald.ca/qlwg/>

(*) DEAAC Training Sessions on the Reception and Referral of Adults With Little Schooling

QLWG's Working for You:

The QLWG Skills for Life Series

QLWG Skills for Life Series now Available on-Line!

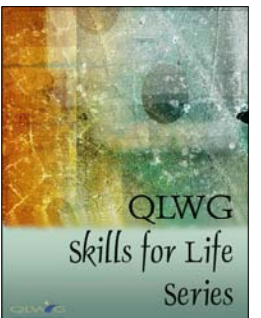
Teachers! Want to download units of the *QLWG Skills for Life Series* for your adult learners? Our units are now available on line at <http://www.nald.ca/qlwg/>.

QLWG: Contact Details

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Skills for Life Goes Virtual!

The Quebec Literacy Working Group is currently in the process of converting our *QLWG Skills for Life Series* units to an e-learning format. The process is a costly one and we have only received funding to convert the first 14 (of 30) units. We are currently awaiting news about our funding so that we can convert the remaining 16 units. The company carrying out this work for us will shortly be sending us the first draft of our e-learning units for review. **Want to be involved in unofficially piloting the units?** Contact your local QLWG rep for details! (see the list of our members at <http://www.nald.ca/qlwg/>.)



Low-Health Literacy Rates Across Canada

A Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) report, [Health Literacy in Canada: Initial Results from the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey](#), indicates that an estimated 60% of adult Canadians are believed to possess low health-literacy rates.

Health literacy refers to individuals' ability to access and interpret information relating to their own health, and the capacity to make well-informed decisions about their basic health. This can include the ability to read and act upon written health information

(such as the appropriate use of prescription medications), the proper skills to communicate their health needs to physicians, or sufficient listening skills to understand the instructions they receive.

The CCL report State of Learning in Canada; No Time for Complacency/ Report on Learning in Canada 2007 indicates that "55% of Canadian adults come in below suggested health literacy levels. Even more shocking (...) is the fact that that figure sky-rockets to 88% for Canadian seniors".

15% of Canadians have been tested at the lowest reading level: 42% overall fall under the suggested 'average' reading level. The numbers are even higher for Quebec.

For more details, visit this site:

<http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/Newsroom/Releases/20070919ReleaseHealthLiteracy.htm>



QLWG's Working for You ...continued

The QLWG Skills for Life Series (Continued from page 1)

Training for Teachers

The Quebec Literacy Working Group is anxious to share our completed *QLWG Skills for Life Series* units — 30 in all — with our teachers. Want to attend a workshop to learn more about how this exciting series can be used in the classroom, via traditional distance education or as part of an e-learning initiative within your board? Contact your local QLWG rep at <http://www.nald.ca/qlwg/> for details.

Working With the Youth Sector

Many of the units in the *QLWG Skills for Life Series* would suit high school students struggling with their literacy skills. For example, our *Learning to Learn* unit is a great tool for students wanting to identify their competencies, set goals and learn how to stay interested. Want to work more closely with the youth sector of your board through the use of the *QLWG Skills for Life Series*? **Contact Patti Moore, QLWG Coordinator, and let us know your specific training needs: moorep@cgsb.qc.ca.**



Upcoming Awards for Adult Learners—Don't Miss the Boat!

Many awards are available to deserving adult learners throughout the year. It is important to keep in mind that these awards are for low literacy learners, and not for ESL (English Second Language) students. ESL learners *may* qualify if they have low literacy skills in their mother tongue, however. See your local QLWG rep. if you are not sure whether your students qualify:

- * **Prix du COF:** This award, a medal, is provided by the provincial Ministers of Education. The Quebec Premier presents this award to the winner from Quebec, in Quebec City. Further details not yet available. **Tentative deadline: April or May 2010**
- * **2010 Canada Post Community Literacy Awards:** Acknowledges the achievements of Canadians who have made a special effort or an important contribution to literacy. Two categories: Individual Achievement Award and Educator Award. Nomination forms can be found at: <http://www.canadapost.ca/cpo/mc/aboutus/default.jsf>. **Deadline May 2010**
- * **Adult Literacy Recognition Awards:** Recognises a tutor and a student from the community-based sector and a teacher and a student from the school board sector. Details and date yet to be announced.
- * **PGI Cooperators Learner Achievement Award:** Presented to an outstanding Adult Basic Education learner, as part of the annual Peter Gzowski Invitational Golf Tournament activities. Further details not yet available: **tentative Deadline: June 2010.**



Who is the QLWG Rep in Your Board?

CQSB: Patti Moore (moorep@cqsbc.gc.ca)
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WQSB: Warren Halligan (whalligan@tlb.sympatico.ca)



QLWG Partner Boards

Central Québec School Board
 Eastern Shores School Board
 Eastern Townships School Board
 English Montreal School Board
 Kativik School Board
 Littoral School Board
 Lester B. Pearson School Board
 New Frontiers School Board
 Riverside School Board
 Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board
 Western Quebec School Board

Or check us out at: <http://www.nald.ca/qlwg/>

What Do You Know About Learning Disabilities?

Many adults with learning disabilities are not aware that the difficulties they encountered in school, and the problems in their relationships or their jobs, are due to learning disabilities.

A learning disability is a disorder that affects people's ability to either interpret what they see and hear or to link information from different parts of the brain. Although the individual with a learning disability has an average or above-average IQ, the disability becomes evident in both academic and social situations.

Learning disabilities affect approximately 10 per cent of the population. This means more than 3 million Canadians.

Common Signs and Characteristics

(No individual will manifest all of the difficulties listed below)

- Difficulty reading, writing, spelling. Inability to complete a job application form.

- Cannot follow written direction and/or remember several verbal directions.
- Problems putting thoughts down on paper.
- Feelings of anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem.
- Difficulty finding or keeping a job.
- Difficulty budgeting and managing money.
- Time management difficulties.
- Short attention span, restlessness or hyperactivity.
- Difficulty in remembering and following a sequence of instructions.
- Difficulty in understanding appropriate social behaviour.
- Poor coordination and spatial disorientation.
- Difficulty with problem-solving strategies.

Source: *The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada Web site:* <http://www.ldac-acta.ca> (printed with permission)

Upcoming Training for Teachers

QLWG Has Knowledge to Share!

The Quebec Literacy Working Group will shortly be offering on a variety of literacy-related topics:

- * **The QLWG Skills for Life Series**
- * **Professional Learning Circles**
- * **Training for new literacy teachers**

Do you have adult literacy training needs? Let us know!

Contact QLWG Coordinator, Patti Moore at moorep@cqsbc.gc.ca or find the name of your local QLWG rep. <http://www.nald.ca/qlwg/>



Useful Sites

Learning Links

This page is a must-have for adult literacy teachers! Created by teachers, for teachers, this site includes interactive, printable activities on interesting topics without having to search through numerous sites: multimedia resources, videos, puzzles, information, quizzes, interactive materials, references, lesson plans and games organized for easy use.

Go to <http://www2.recitfga.qc.ca/learninglinks/> for details!

National Adult Literacy Database (NALD)

The NALD Library is made up of three main collections: Research Materials, Learning Materials and Resources Available for Purchase. Go to <http://library.nald.ca/> for details!

Quebec English Literacy Alliance Web Site

The QELA site includes hundreds of printable teaching materials for the adult literacy classroom. We also have a great student newsletter (new publications on hold due to lack of funding). Go to: <http://www.qela.qc.ca> for details!

Movement for Canadian Literacy

The learner area of the MCL Web site includes written and verbal instructions on various topics of interest to adults with low literacy skills, such as 'how to vote' or 'how to write a letter'.

Go to <http://www.literacy.ca/themes/mcl/learners/index.html> for details.



Welcome to our 'useful Sites' section! We intend to make this a regular feature of our QLWG Vox newsletter.

There are a variety of great sites for literacy teachers and for adult learners.

Have ideas to share? Let us know: moorep@cqsbc.qc.ca

ESL or Literacy?

We recognise that not all literacy learners are necessarily English mother tongue learners. *Many second-language learners have struggled to learn to read and write in their own language for a variety of reasons.* However, an adult who has learned to read and write; who may even hold a university degree in his/her mother tongue — cannot be qualified as a 'literacy' learner. True literacy learners often feel out of place in a classroom with adults who have already 'learned how to learn' and end up dropping out. ESL learners can feel frustrated with the slower pace of the adult literacy learners in the classroom. **See your local QLWG rep for more information!**

AROUND THE PROVINCE

The Centre for Literacy, based in Montreal, will be celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. While teachers from Montreal-based school boards may borrow documentation from this resource centre at any time, did you know that The Centre for Literacy also has **travelling resource trunks** for teachers and practitioners living anywhere in Canada? Trunks include books, kits, audiocassettes, CD's, DVD's, etc. Contact The Centre at <http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/>

Have Your Say

We would love to hear from you!

Tell us what you think of QLWG Vox! Suggest articles you would like to see in the future!

Send us your thoughts and comments and we will try to incorporate them in our next newsletter.



"The highest result of education is tolerance."

Helen Keller



"...the literacy resource for School Board Personnel"