

Transitions: Adult Learner Transition Stories and Learning Activities

**A project of Enhancing Transitions for Adults to Further Education,
Employment and Training
and
The Manitoba Adult Literacy Strategy**

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Transitions: Adult Learner Stories is published as part of the project “Enhancing Transitions for Adults to Further Education, Employment and Training” led by Adult Learning and Literacy of Manitoba Advanced Education and Literacy (AEL) in partnership with Workplace Education Manitoba. The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Adult Learning and Literacy.

Three adult learner stories provide real life examples of adults attending adult literacy programs and adult learning centres. The stories are accompanied by Stage level learning activities that can be incorporated into daily programming. The learning activities will provide adult learners with transition topics for Stage 1 and Stage 2.

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Enhancing Transitions for Adults to Further Education, Employment and Training

In 2009, the federal government announced a two-year Strategic Training and Transition Fund to be administered in Manitoba by Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade through the existing Labour Market Agreement and Labour Market Development Agreement. Adult Learning and Literacy submitted a proposal and was approved for a two-year project that would support the Manitoba Adult Literacy Strategy.

The goals of the *Enhancing Transitions* project were to enhance adult learners’ transitions:

- from adult programming to meaningful, long-term employment
- to further education and training to support their lifelong career and personal goals.

Enhancing Transitions was administered by Adult Learning and Literacy in partnership with Workplace Education Manitoba. A collection of tools and resources was developed by a project team. The development and testing of transition related materials, structures, tools and lessons was based on research in four case study communities.

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Good Friends



My name is Angella.

Today I have class at 1:00.



But there are dishes to wash.



There are bills to pay.



There are problems to deal with.



Today is not a good day to go to class.



But the phone rings and it is Kim.



Next the buzzer goes and it is still Kim.



**Kim says it's time to go to class.
She says that I need to take a break from my home and
my problems.**



**Our classes are fun.
We laugh, talk, visit, and learn.**



**Last class I phoned Kim.
Last class I rang her door bell.**



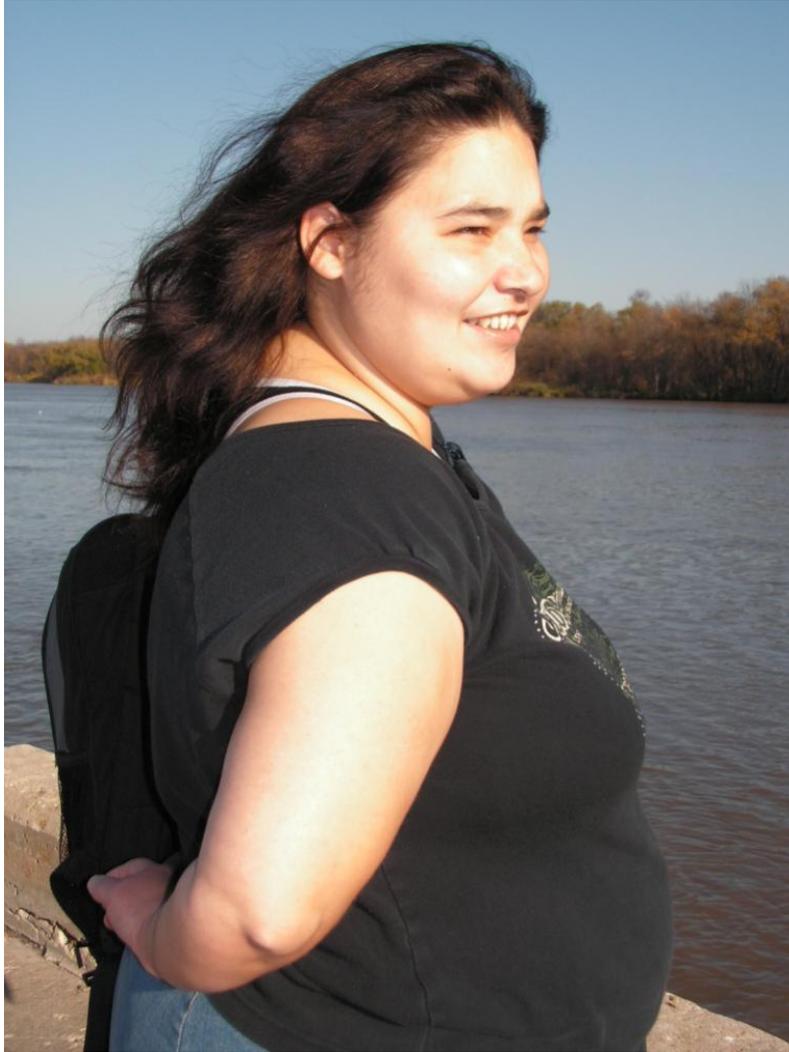
**Last time, I said it was time to go to class.
It was my turn to be a good friend.**



We know that there are always things to do, and problems to deal with.



**We get each other to go to class anyway.
We are good friends.**



For two years, Angella and Kim have attended the Selkirk Adult Learning Program. Last spring, Kim created her Igniting the Power Within Portfolio.



Last spring, Angella won the Student Achievement Award. She won the award because she comes to class and works very hard.

**There is always work to do.
Will Kim get Angella to class?**



Adult Learning Activity – Good Friends

Good Friends

Transition Section Stories	Transition Topic To understand the importance of sticking to a learning goal and finding a person to help support your learning goal.
Essential Skill Focus	Reading, Writing, Document Use, and Oral Communication
Literacy Level	Stage 1 (Beginning)
Materials	Record of Achievement Manual and “Good Friend” Handouts

Method

Section A.

Stage 1 Activities - Learners may apply this story to a variety of learning tasks found in the Record of Achievement Manual as represented below.

Section B.

Stage 1 Supplemental Activities - Learners may use the supplemental activities listed below in section B.

Debrief

Challenges

What challenges did Angella have in the story? What challenges do you have in your own learning story? What got Angella to class? (Angella’s grit and a friend) What are two things that you can use to make sure you continue on your learning journey? Do you have a plan or person to help you out if things get difficult?

Stages and Essential Skills

Which activity did you work on? On a scale of 1 to 10 how easy was it for you? What essential skills did you work on? Do you need to try another similar activity to master this skill? Which activity looked the most difficult? Why? Will you try it? Why or why not?

Reading Text

Stage 1, Reading Text, Assignment 1

What do you need to do?

- Read “*Good Friends*” to find the *details*.
The details should answer as many of the "who, what, where, when, why and how" questions as possible.
- Write the details down in point form.
- How do you show you can find detail in “*Good Friends*”?
- Tell your instructor the details of what you need.

Stage 1, Reading Text, Assignment 2

Re-tell what you have read.

What do you need to do?

- Read “*Good Friends*.”
- Decide on the main points of the text and re-tell them in the right order.
- Write down the main points.
- How do you show you can re-tell what you have read?
- Tell your tutor/instructor the main parts of the story, “*Good Friends*,” in the right order.
- Show your tutor/instructor the main points you have written down.

Stage 1, Reading Text, Assignment 3

Understanding the Meaning of Text

What do you need to do?

- Read “*Good Friends*.”
- Decide what the text is mostly about. What is the *main idea*?
- Write the main idea.
- How do you show you understand the meaning of the text?
- Tell your tutor/instructor the main idea of what you read.
- Tell your tutor/instructor what helped you decide on the main idea.

Document Use

Stage 1, Document Use, Assignment 1

Read signs and labels.

What do you need to do?

- Find the three signs in the story *“Good Friends.”*
- Read and understand each sign in *“Good Friends.”*
- Write down what the signs mean.
- How do you show you can read signs and labels?
- Tell your instructor what the labels say and show you understand what to do.

Stage 1, Document Use, Assignment 2

Read and follow instructions.

What do you need to do?

- Read the instructions in the school letter below.
- Tell your instructor what you need to do.
- Write down what you need to do.
- How do you show you can read and follow instructions?
- Show your instructor you have read the instructions and understand what to do.

**Band Trip
To Winnipeg**

**The Grade 10 Band Class is going on a trip to Winnipeg on December 13th.
Please make sure your child has a:**

- **Bag lunch**
- **White shirt**
- **Black pants**
- **And dress shoes**

**Please make a cheque out to Selkirk Regional High School for \$27.50 to cover
the costs of the bus, and supper.
More information will follow.**

Stage 1, Document Use, Assignment 3

Read and fill out simple *forms*.

What do you need to do?

- Read the “Band Trip” letter.
- Read Angella’s blank cheque below.
- Fill in Angella’s cheque so her child can go on the band trip.
- How do you show you can read and fill out simple forms?

Angella	334
Box xxxx	
Selkirk, MB R1A 2J5	DATE -----
204-222-2222	(D M M Y Y Y Y)
PAY TO THE _____	
ORDER OF	
_____	/100 DOLLARS
MEMO _____	

Writing

Stage 1, Writing, Assignment 1

Write simple lists.

What do you need to do?

- Choose from A or B.
- A) Read “Good Friends”. She has lots to do! Make a “To Do List” for Angella.
- B) Make a “To Do List” for yourself. Write the list with:
 - A title
 - Single words or phrases
 - At least five *items*

How do you show you can read and fill out simple lists?

Stage 1, Writing, Assignment 2

Write short notes, memos, and other messages.

What do you need to do?

- Choose from A or B.
- A) Write a “Thank You Card” to Kim.
- B) Write a “Thank You Card” to a friend that helps you meet your goals.
- Write the card with:
 - A date, greeting, and signature
 - At least 4 simple *phrases or sentences*

How do you show you can write notes, memos and messages?

Stage 1, Writing, Assignment 3

Write journals, logs and friendly letter.

What do you need to do?

- Write a journal that has at least one paragraph. Use the question in the box.

Who can you go to for help during your learning journey?

Edit:

- Check that the *information* is clear.
- Check that the spelling and *punctuation* are mostly correct.
- Check that the correct format has been used.

How do you show you can write journals, logs and friendly letters?

Oral Communication

Stage 1, Oral Communication, Assignment 1

Have a conversation with one person.

What do you need to do?

- Pick a person who will help you on your learning journey.
- Have a *conversation* about your goals. Ask them how they can help you.
- You should:
 - *Greet* the other person
 - Ask questions
 - Show you are listening

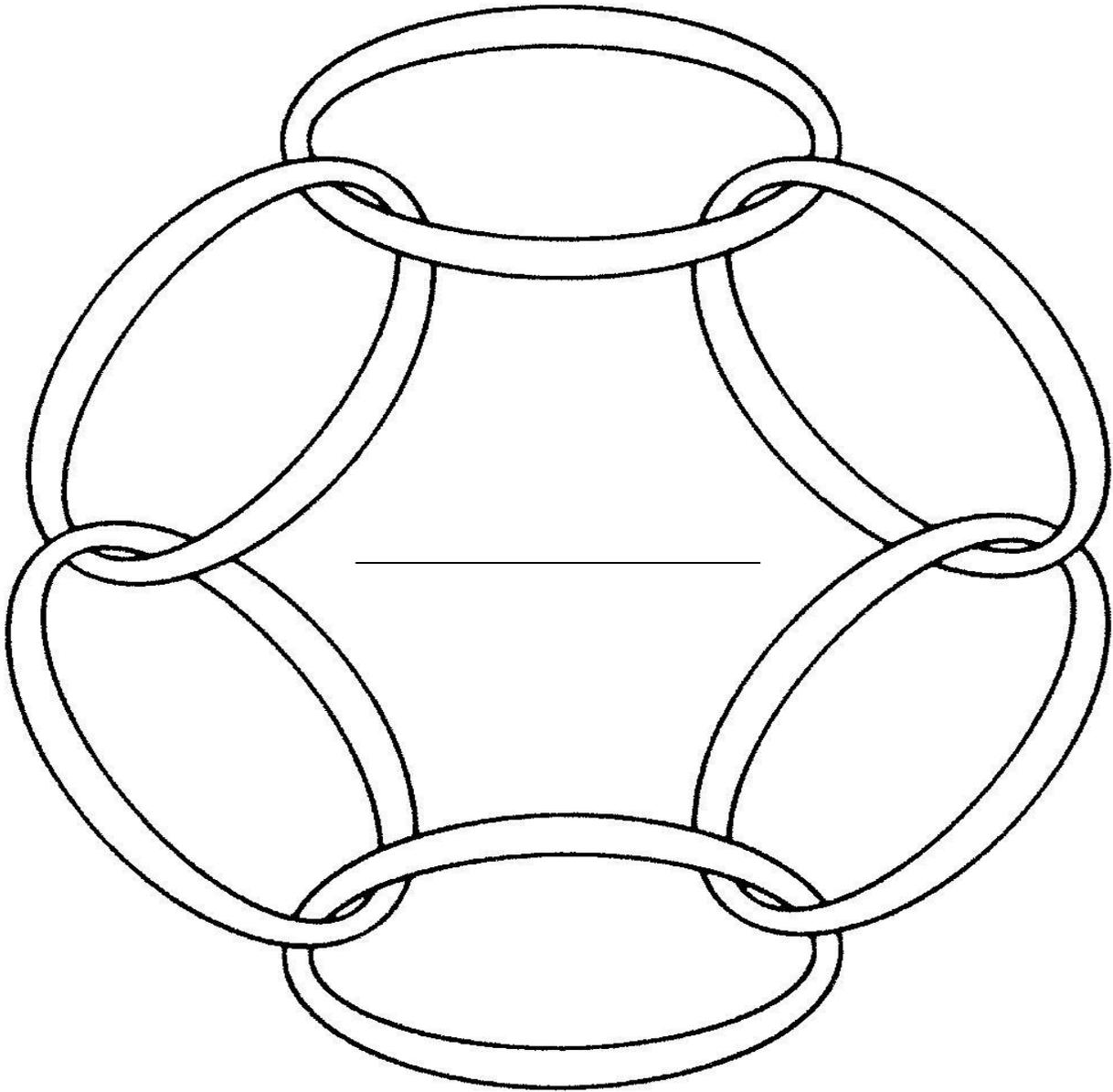
How do you show you can have a conversation with one person about ideas and experiences?

Tell the *tutor/instructor* about the conversation.

B. Other Activities

ASSIGNMENT 1 - LINKS

- Write Angella's name in the middle.
- Think about the story. Look at these words.
Class time → Kim → Support → Attendance → Problems → Success
- How do the words connect with each other?
- Write one word inside the chain link.
- Decide which word to add next and so on.
- Write more about each word or draw a picture of it in the center space.
- Discuss with the class how each word links with the next word.

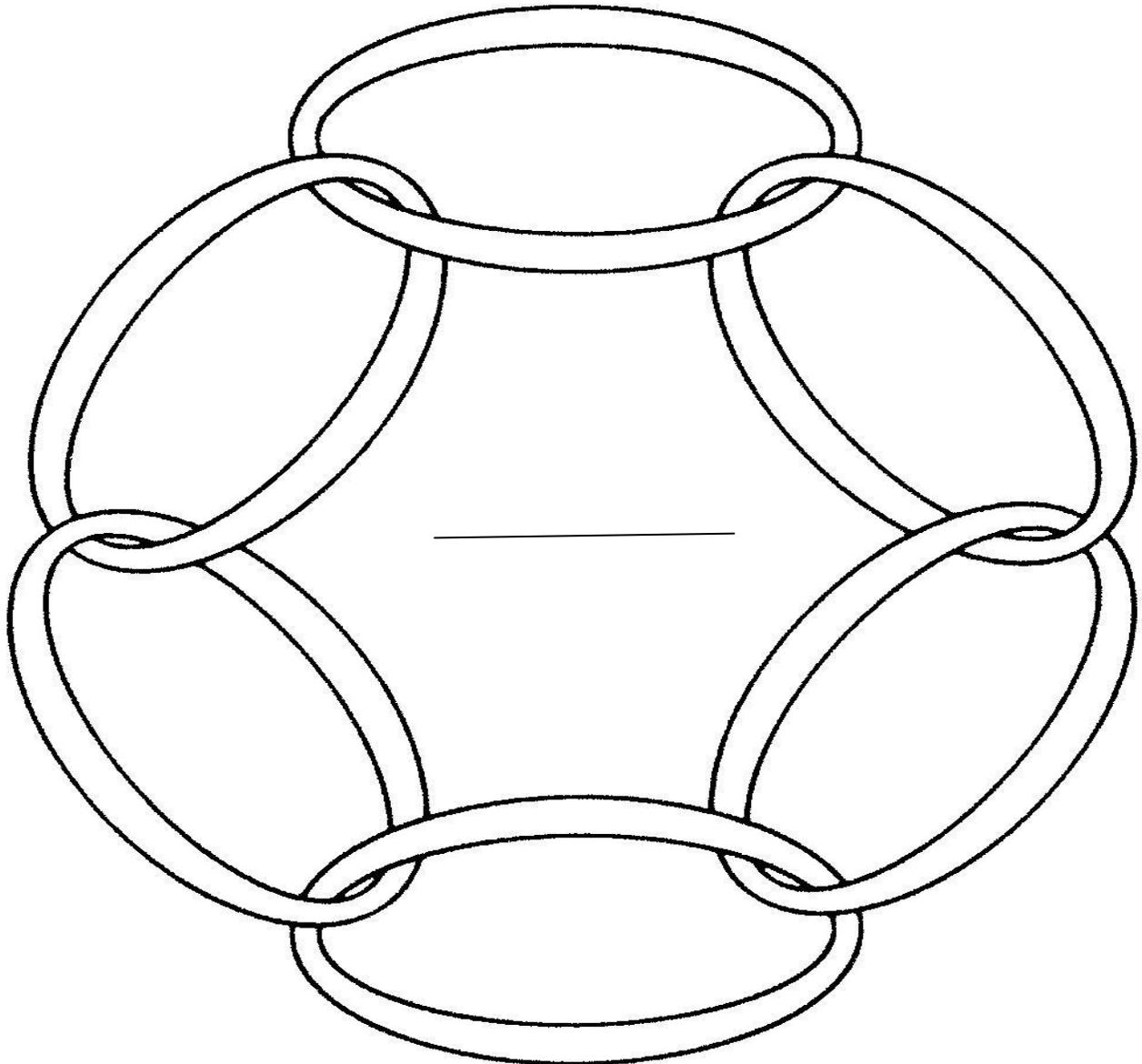


ASSIGNMENT 2 - MY LINKS

Put your name in the middle.

Fill in these blanks:

- Friend / Family Member - _____
- Things to do - _____
- Time of Class - _____
- Attendance - _____
- Support - _____
- Problem - _____
- Decide how the words link together. Add them to the picture.
- Discuss with a partner how the words link to each other.



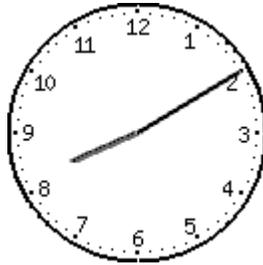
ASSIGNMENT 3 – Clock Worksheet

1. Angella had to get to class for: _____.
2. What time was it at the beginning of the story? _____.
3. Write the time

If you know analogue time, write the time using the 24 hour clock.



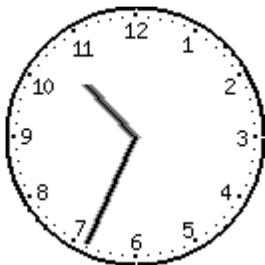
1a ___ : ___ a.m.



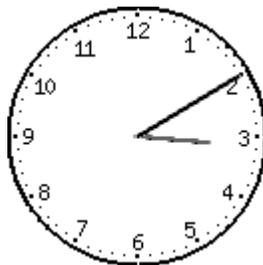
1b ___ : ___ a.m.



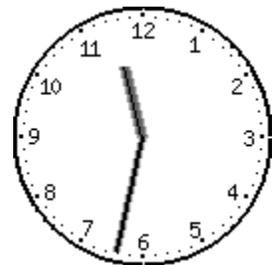
1c ___ : ___ a.m.



2a ___ : ___ p.m.



2b ___ : ___ p.m.



2c ___ : ___ p.m.



3a ___ : ___ p.m.



3b ___ : ___ p.m.



3c ___ : ___ p.m.



Waking Up to a New Day

“It feels good,” smiles Lorraine. “When I wake up, it’s always to a new day with something exciting going to happen.”

“But it was not always that way,” she adds. “It took me a long time with a lot of help from special people - the teachers at the ALC were always there for me and the courses that I took helped me discover who I am, and what I can be.”



It all began in Saskatchewan. I stayed in school until I was 20, and decided that I was too old to be in a classroom, so I left without my grade 12. I told my Dad that I would go back, that I needed time to refocus, to regroup. But that never happened. He was given custody of one of his grandchildren, and he needed me to help, which I did until my nephew went back to his mother. Then I moved out.

It wasn’t long before I met and married my husband, and I started working at the local bakery. I enjoyed that, but six months after I started, my sister’s children needed me, so at the age of about 24, I suddenly had 3 kids to look after—they came from Saskatchewan, and I had an immediate family. My son was born in 1993, and in 2002, my daughter. The thoughts of going back to work or to school never entered my mind.

My brother Bob was really important in my life because we were so close. He was only one year older than me, but that made him my big brother. We would share hopes and dreams, and he stressed time and time again that I needed my grade 12 for everything. He’d sit at my kitchen table and say, “Everything, Lorraine, everything revolves around education.” My response to that was always the same: “Yeah, well, maybe next year.”

Then he died. It was a sudden massive heart attack. One minute he was alive and full of advice. Then he wasn’t here anymore. It was devastating. All I had was his voice in my head: “Everything, Lorraine, everything revolves around education. “ All through the summer—I kept hearing his words.

On the last day of September, I walked through the doors of the ALC. I was scared, nervous, and to be honest, I did not feel like this was a place for me. With everything I had gone through in my life, I just did not feel like I deserved it.

So when I walked in, I sat with the Director, and I said, I want to register for school, and she said, “Do you want to start today?” That was too much, so I said, “No, not today. I’ll come back another day.”

And I did. I sat and I worked. I never missed a class. October became November, and even though I was there every day, I was still nervous, feeling as if I didn't belong. I worked through math and English. Family Studies was interesting, especially after I had spent so much time with five children! By Christmas, I was feeling better about being back in school after more than 20 years away—and then I took Life/Work Transition. This course has a section where you examine your self-esteem, and with everything that had gone on prior to that moment, everything came to a head. I hit rock bottom—it made me get down to my core, to discover the root of the way I am.

After the self-examination, the self-esteem units, there's a part about your career choices, your volunteer work—it's a process that made me examine my life—what was, and what could be.

There's a part in that course where you need 20 hours of volunteer work. My previous child care would not qualify because it was too old—it had happened too long ago. And to be honest, I was thinking of 101 ways to get out of it, why I couldn't go. There are too many hours and I just can't afford the time. I even convinced myself that I didn't have a way to get there—but our family had 2 vehicles. When it came time to go, I just went, and I am so glad I did.

Somehow, I got through that barrier, and now I am totally the opposite of the person I used to be. I am more outgoing. I still have my moments where a panic will set in, but I don't run like I used to do. Now I hit it head-on. I don't back down anymore.

The first day I volunteered, I walked in, and I was nervous, so nervous. I went in there, and I called the boss by the wrong name. The place is called Terry's Greenhouse, so I said, "Hello, Terry," and he says, "It's Murray. Terry is the former owner; we just kept the old name!"

Down the road—I see opportunities, lots of opportunities. I have taken a course at Academy of Learning with my sister—a business course. I was thinking of getting into health care, and still might go that way. I have a lot of chances ahead.

But you know, what I learned through this process is that I am smart. There were some times when I was growing up, with my grandmother especially, when I was told, "You're stupid, and you'll never amount to anything. You're just like your mother." She always put us kids down. And that just stuck in my head—I'm no good, I'm just here to watch my sister's kids. That's it.

I have so many things that I want to accomplish now. I'm doing this for my son, and to make my brother proud.

I wake up to a new day; "It's a new life. Starting over—it feels good."

Adult Learning Activity – Waking up to a new day

Waking up to a new day

Transition Section Stories	Transition Topic The importance of a promise and achieving a learning goal.
Essential Skill Focus	Reading, Writing
Literacy Level	Stage 2 English Language Arts, Career Development
Materials	Story

Method

Section A: In class introduction and discussion

Section B: Independent Assignments and Assessment

Section C: English Language Arts Outcomes questions

Summary

Lorraine left school at the age of 20, believing she was too old to be in high school. She was always there for her family, caring for her nieces and nephews. Immediate family members responded negatively—her grandmother repeatedly told her she would never amount to anything; and positively—her older brother encouraged her at every moment to return to school. The sudden death of her brother was the catalyst that Lorraine needed. She conquered her shyness and fear of people when she discovered who she really was through assignments in the Career Development - Life/Work Exploration Course.

A: In class introduction

- Ask your class to brainstorm the importance of family members to each other. Ideas may include **support, encouragement, lending of money or other items, being there when needed.**
- Ask your class to brainstorm negative impacts of family members to each other. Ideas may include **lack of financial support to the family, refusal to work, refusal to share home chores.**
- Jot these examples on a board/projector screen, and leave for later.
- Ask for specific examples in each instance.

Hand out the story, explaining that the style of the writing is personal by using quotes from Lorraine. The writer has changed the order of some of the events in order to create a flow to the story.

- Provide 5 to 10 minutes to read the story.
- Have your students discuss the story in pairs or small groups.
 1. Ask them to locate examples of the importance of family, and the negative impacts of family to each other.
 2. Ask for comments and examples, and add to the brainstorm list.

B: Assignments and Assessment

1. Ask your students to brainstorm real or imagined issues due to the age difference between adult learners and younger students, particularly in a high school.
2. Ask your learners for their opinion on this statement: *Raising children is a barrier to the mother's continuation of certain activities.* Ask for details that support their point of view.
3. Ask your learners to define *hopes* and *dreams*.
 - a. Ask your class to brainstorm the qualities a person needs to exhibit in order to be considered worthwhile as a confidant.
 - b. Follow up by asking whom they consider worthwhile as a person with whom to share personal hopes and dreams.
 - c. Ask your class whether an older sibling is a trusted person worthy of knowing personal hopes and dreams.
4. Ask your learners to discuss in pairs the impacts of premature and accidental deaths.
 - a. List on the board/projection unit the Five Stages of Grief as presented by poet Linda Pastan: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, Acceptance.
[Note: the five stages of grief are originally from the works of Elisabeth Kubler-Ross who presented them in a 1969 publication titled *On Death and Dying*. It is worth noting that since the publication of that book, much has been studied and written about death as a topic, and its impact on others. Not all researchers agree that there are Five Stages of Grief, or that there is a regular order in which stages appear.]
 - b. List under each stage words and phrases that describe possible impacts.
Dependent on the level of your class, explore
 - The use of metaphor
 - The use of personification
 - The use of irony
5. Ask your learners for a definition of the term “self-esteem” and its importance to a person’s daily life.
 - a. Ask for examples that demonstrate
 - High personal self-esteem
 - Low personal self-esteem
 - b. Ask your learners to provide an explanation with examples as to how a low self-esteem can be a significant barrier to success.
 - c. Ask your learners to form pairs to develop a strategy to help an individual with low self-esteem.
6. Ask your learners to explain the word “volunteer.”
 - a. Ask your class to brainstorm the concept of “volunteers” in their community, in their city, in their province, and in their country.
 - b. Ask your learners to provide personal experiences of volunteering.
 - Where did they volunteer?
 - Why did they volunteer?
 - Was the experience positive?

7. Ask your class to read the paragraph towards the end of the passage which includes Lorraine's comment: "I have a lot of chances ahead."
 - a. Ask your learners how Lorraine's comment demonstrates how she has changed.
 - b. Ask your learners what kind of "chances" could be in her future.
 - c. Lorraine has expressed interest in both business and health care. Ask your class to research employment opportunities for her now that she has her Grade 12 diploma.



Breaking Out

Living in three countries sounds exciting, but there are problems, too.

I have lived in Russia, Germany, and Canada. I left Russia when I was 17, and spent 14 years in Germany before coming to Canada. I obviously speak Russian and I also speak German. My third move to an English-and French speaking country meant that my shyness became my shield. I did not speak either of those languages, and felt quite lost. I did not have the courage to chase my dreams.



Being a stay-at-home mom was perfect. I did not have to interact with many others, and I had no real need to learn another language.

I managed to find a job sweeping the floors of a manufacturing company. Because that company understood my childcare needs, I was able to work and look after my children for 2 years. I also started a Literacy class at that time. I did not understand anything. My teacher allowed me to just sit and absorb. She did not call on me.

When I was finally ready to learn, my progress was quick. I finished Stage 1 in one year and then I finished Stage 2 in seven months. The Stages were great for me. I was able to choose interesting topics that had direct application in my life.

I saw a posting for a job at a daycare centre. I told my teacher about it and she said, “Just go for it.” Her confidence gave me the push that I needed, and I applied. I had an interview, and was working there within one week.

Now I work at a day care, and I am pursuing my Early Childhood Education Certificate. I am moving toward three goals. First, I plan to complete my Stage 3 and apply for the two high school credits that come with completing Stage 3. Second, I plan on completing my grade 12 or writing an entrance test for College. My teacher is working with me and helping me decide which option is better for me. My third goal and dream is to work with children.

In the past, my dreams seemed impossible, but now they are in sight. I have a lot of hard work to do, but I know that it is possible.

If you knew me a few years ago, you might be surprised by what I have accomplished. I met people who believe in me, and this has made all the difference.

Adult Learning Activity – Breaking Out

Breaking Out

Transition Section Stories	Transition Topic To learn from and be inspired by a learner who is breaking down multiple barriers.
Essential Skill Focus	Reading, Writing
Adult Literacy Level	Stage 1
Materials	Record of Achievement Manual or activities in Section B

Method

Section A.

Learners may apply this story to a variety of learning tasks found in the Record of Achievement Manual as represented below.

Section B.

Learners can alternately use the supplemental activities listed below in section B. *Learners have the option of acting out the role play in activity 2.*

The intent of this story is to inspire learners to push past barriers that would normally impede their efforts to move forward and achieve their dreams. Learners can therefore be encouraged to draw out the following points from the story:

- Although challenging, learners can push past their own comfort levels to achieve their goals.
- Sometimes it is ok to be in an environment for a while and just “learn to be comfortable” before really taking steps forward.
- We need to find people who can cheer us on as we are reaching our dreams. If we can find people who believe in us, we can find inspiration where we lack vision.

Stage 1, Reading Text, Assignment 1

What do you need to do?

- Read “Breaking Out” to find the details.
The details should answer as many of the "who, what, where, when, why, and how" questions as possible.
- Write the details down in point form.

How do you show you can find detail in “*Breaking Out*”?

- Tell your instructor the details of what you read.

Stage 1, Reading Text, Assignment 2

Re-tell what you have read.

What do you need to do?

- Read “Breaking Out.”
- Decide on the main points of the text and re-tell them in the right order.
- Write down the main points.

How do you show you can re-tell what you have read?

- Tell your instructor the main parts of the story, “*Breaking Out*,” in the right order.
- Show your instructor the main points you have written down.

Stage 1, Reading Text, Assignment 3

Understanding the Meaning of Text

What do you need to do?

- Read “Breaking Out.”
- Decide what the text is mostly about. What is the main idea?
- Write the main idea.

How do you show you understand the meaning of the text?

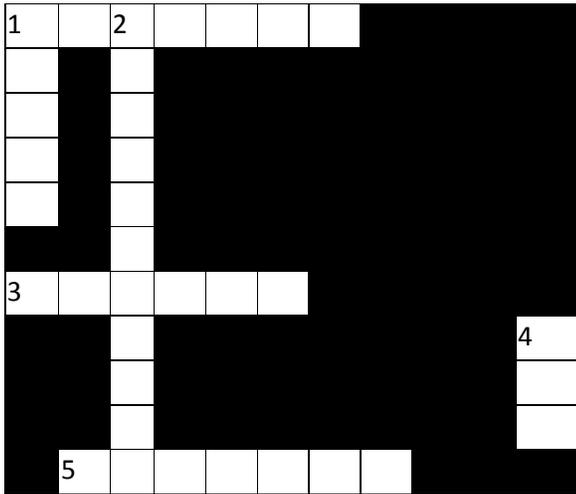
- Tell your instructor the main idea of what you read.
- Tell your instructor what helped you decide on the main idea.

B. Additional Activity Suggestions:

Breaking Out

Helene made some choices that were not easy for her but allowed her to start pursuing her dreams.

Top of Form



Across	Down
<p>1. Hero in Helene's life</p> <p>3. Helene's dream group of people to work with</p> <p>5. Lived in Russia, Canada and this country</p>	<p>1. Number of goals to reach her dream</p> <p>2. Name of college Helene is taking courses with</p> <p>4. Stage already completed</p>

2. Imagine that you are in the room with Helene and her teacher. Helene has just seen the job posting for the daycare. Helene is unsure if she should apply. She does not know if anyone would hire her with her limited job experience and her current reading and writing skills. Helene's teacher knows that "nothing ventured is nothing gained" and is trying to help Helene to find the courage to apply.

Write a short play of the conversation that might have gone on that day.

