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## "Destination Literacy": A Resource Tool for All

by Shelli Ryan

If you are looking for a useful, easy-to-follow resource, Destination Literacy: Identifying and Teaching Adults with Learning Disabilities is for you. This binder, published by the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, is a compilation of material designed to help identify and teach adult learners who may have learning disabilities. The layout is clear and consists of definitions, informal assessments, teaching strategies, lesson ideas and links to other resources. Although the goal of the binder is to aid those who work in adult literacy, it is worthwhile to promote it for teachers in all areas of adult education.



Adult learners in any program (Basic, Academic or Vocational) have various strengths and areas of need. It is useful for teachers in adult education centers to gather resources in the area of Learning Disabilities to better serve those adult students experiencing difficulties in learning. Those of you who have endeavored to do this will recount the time involved in searching for, gathering, and reviewing information. It is a challenge to find the time to develop an understanding of learning disabilities, assess the adult learner who is experiencing difficulties in learning, and find strategies to help them. Destination Literacy's value lies in its approach.

The binder includes information that a teacher needs to address when trying to help an adult learner who is experiencing difficulties. First, it offers ways to identify an adult learner who may be at risk for a Learning Disability. Second, it provides informal assessments to help highlight the student's area(s) of need. And third, it offers teaching and learning strategies, focusing on ways to develop skills in the areas of difficulty.

The introduction includes a comprehensive definition of Learning Disabilities and outlines characteristics of adults who have learning disabilities. It also discusses the emotional sensitivity of an adult who may have a learning disability. This is an important issue to highlight. The adult learner who has a learning disability often describes a history of negative educational experiences. These learners have low self-images, feel incapable and get emotional when discussing their difficulties in learning. It is important for those of us in education to be sensitive to the concerns of learners who have special needs in order to help them experience success in learning.

Perhaps the most meaningful chapter is the one on Self-Advocacy. This chapter discusses strategies to help adult learners understand their learning disability, develop compensatory methods, and gain confidence in dealing with issues surrounding their own learning. Self-Advocacy is part of the Teaching Strategies section of the binder. Offering chapters

relating to attentional and organizational difficulties, study skills, skill building and accommodation strategies, the "Teaching Strategies for Adults with Learning Disabilities" section is a valuable resource on its own.

The Screening and Academic Assessment section offers much sought after information. In particular, the Informal Academic Assessment chapter describes activities to test strengths and areas of need in various skills. Checklists highlighting characteristics that might indicate a learning disability are included, but it is up to the assessor to develop appropriate tests relating to a particular student's needs.

This binder serves as a practical tool for teachers in assessing and teaching adults who may have a learning disability. Highly recommended, Destination Literacy: Identifying and Teaching Adults with Learning Disabilities, is a worthy investment for adult education centers and teachers committed to assisting all adult learners.

Destination Literacy: Identifying and Teaching Adults with Learning Disabilities (1999; 286p; ISBN 0919053629) can be purchased from Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, 323 Chapel, Suite 200, Ottawa Ontario, K1N 7Z2.

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