



April 20, 2020

GO ONLINE TO IMPROVE YOUR LITERACY SKILLS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Laubach Literacy NB is excited to announce the introduction of Learning Upgrade – an online learning platform – now available to their adult learners in New Brunswick looking to improve their literacy skills.

“We had just begun to launch Learning Upgrade within our regional councils before COVID-19 hit,” said Carol Cottrill, Executive Director, Laubach Literacy NB. “Now, with in-person tutoring impossible, this allows us to continue to support adult learners throughout the province.”

For nearly forty years, Laubach Literacy NB has been helping adults struggling with literacy to improve their basic reading, writing and math skills through a free, confidential, one-to-one tutoring program. The introduction of Learning Upgrade means that even during this time when physical distancing is necessary, they can continue to support adult learners.

The online learning program is available as an app for phones and tablets and is also available on the computer. Support from LLNB is available to walk new learners through how to download and register for the program.

Learning Upgrade includes more than 900 sequenced lessons including topics on phonics, decoding, vocabulary, grammar, writing, and listening, as well as fractions, percentages, statistics, word problems, geometry, and algebra. The curriculum includes engaging songs, videos, games, and rewards that encourage all learners to achieve mastery.

Each lesson provides practice problems accompanied by immediate intervention and remediation with multimedia supports. Students can repeat lessons until they master them, earning a gold certificate when they become proficient in each of the standard’s benchmarks. The lessons are short, and learners are rewarded in a game-style play that encourages them to play and learn.

Anyone can go online and try the program as a free demonstration. But if they want to go beyond the first eight lessons in Math and/or English, they will need to be registered. On your own that would cost money, however Laubach Literacy NB is able to offer their learners free registration, as well as additional tutoring support for our volunteers.

“Our learners are part of a Pilot Project until the end of June, but we plan to keep the program around longer than that”, assured Cottrill. “We intend to keep this resource around and add it to the other free, tutoring services that we offer.”

Cottrill also noted that the program is unique in that it gives tutors real-time data as to their learner's progress, and tutors can provide additional support when they see a learner is struggling. "At this time, we obviously can't meet in person with our learner, but we can give them a call, or schedule a facetime meeting or a video conference. We can explore together where the difficulty may be and provide support and even additional digital resources to help them through."

How do you become an adult learner with Laubach Literacy NB? You can call toll-free from anywhere in New Brunswick at 1-877-633-8899. Carol or Susan will walk you through the registration process.

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For more information:

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Does it cost anything to become a learner with Laubach Literacy NB?

All of our services are FREE and confidential.

What does it take to register with Laubach Literacy NB?

You need to want to improve your literacy skills, whether in reading, writing or math or all three. Everyone comes to the program with a different goal. Maybe you want to get your GED, or your driver's license. Maybe you simply want to be able to read to your grandchild. It doesn't matter why you are here or how you got here, just that you are here now.

Why may someone need your services?

The literacy rate in New Brunswick is low. Nearly half of all our adults fall below what is considered the 'required' level for day to day life and activity. That doesn't mean they can't read at all, but that they may not be comfortable for them or easy for them. They may be able to do basic math but cringe when they need to work out the sales tax on something. At some point in their lives, they make a decision that getting by isn't enough, and they start looking for solutions. That is when we hope they will find us.

Why don't people get the help they need?

Unfortunately, there is still a lot of stigma associated with not being able to read. Which is ridiculous when you think that nearly every other person struggles at some time. They may be embarrassed. They may have been told at some point that they couldn't learn, or that they were stupid. They may have taken that to heart and be scared to try again. We see that a lot. But reading, writing and math are skills and like all skills, you can get better with practice.

I can't bowl but with some practice maybe I could learn, get better. I may even start to enjoy it. We hope our learners will feel the same way, that with a little practice they may find it easier, they may start to look forward to their next tutoring session, or online learning lesson.

Do some adult learners have learning disabilities?

Yes. Some may already know that, or we may discover that during the course of our tutoring. In most cases, we try to assist and find resources that will allow that person to continue to learn. Sometimes we may even call in some expert assistance or try new resources to make sure that learner continues to make progress and achieves success.

Why do you like Learning Upgrade (<https://web.learningupgrade.com/solutions/>)?

I think it is fun. I've done the placement test and the demos myself. I love how it uses simple instructions, music and animation to make learning fun. I've discovered that I could probably brush up on some of my math skills (algebra). The placement test allows you to start where your skillset is. That may be at the very beginning, learning the letters of the alphabet or with simple addition and subtraction, or you may be further advanced than that. Once you take the placement test, you start the

lessons at your particular skill level, so you don't get frustrated thinking "this is too easy" or worse, "this is too hard."

For my part, as a tutor, I like that I can see how the learner is doing. It provides real time data. I love to be able to see when a learner has really gotten into a session and kept going and going for an hour or more. It also shows me where that person may be struggling and has had to try more than two or three times to pass a lesson, and I can provide the necessary intervention.

I don't see Learning Upgrade App replacing our traditional tutoring but during COVID-19 I think this is an amazing resource to have at our disposal. After COVID-19, I see this becoming part of our regular tutoring process. I would like each learner to be using it on their own in addition to and during their one-on-one tutoring sessions.