Volunteers – Tutor Job Description

Volunteer tutors are an essential part of the LV-DAC program. You provide direct service to our adult learners in the form of one-to-one or small group tutoring in basic reading, writing, and English as a Second Language.

Tutor Qualifications and Responsibilities

LV-DAC wants to provide high-quality educational services for our learners and we want to offer our tutors a positive volunteer experience. To help us maintain a quality program, we expect all volunteer tutors to:

➢ Comply with the LV-DAC Advisory Council's Tutor Certification Policy.

➢ Prepare lessons tailored to the individual learner's needs and interests. Consult LV-DAC staff for help or questions on materials or lesson plan as we are knowledgeable about the program's resources and are happy to assist you.

➢ Keep records of learner's attendance, progress, and possible problem areas. **Monthly Attendance and Progress Reports** (casually referred to as time sheets) **are due by the 4th day of the following month.** Your reports are the main source of information we have about the learner's attendance and achievements and our program is required to compile regular reports for funding agencies. If you or your learner will be away, please inform the Education Facilitator. Should you or your learner terminate the match, please inform the Education Facilitator and complete the exit reports.)

➢ Collaborate with program staff in obtaining assessments of learner's progress and learning gains. **Learners are required to complete a reassessment after each 40 hours of instruction.** The assessment of progress is important to us and to our funding agencies. If your learner attends class, s/he will be assessed there. If you are the sole service provider, please let the Education Facilitator know your learner is approaching 40 hours of instruction so that arrangements can be made to assess the learner.

➢ Inform LV-DAC staff of any changes in your tutoring schedule. Please report poor attendance or failure to progress to the Educational Facilitator who can assist with establishing a new match.

Tutor Responsibilities:

- Be at least 18 years of age. The exception to the rule is when a youth-tutor (16-17 years of age) is trained. Youth-tutors are ordinarily matched only with learners of a similar age
- Be able to speak and understand English
- Become fully certified
- Behave appropriately when working one-to-one, or with a small group. Such behavior includes:
    - Sensitivity and respect toward others
    - Use of nonoffensive language
    - Nondisruptive or boisterous behavior
    - Regard for personal hygiene

Tutors must never:
- Participate in behaviors perceived as offensive after being asked to stop (Harassment)
- Possess a weapon or use threatening behavior
- Be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Have a record of conviction for or be on probation or parole for any crime of violence

Tutors must:
- Be willing to commit to tutor at least one learner twice per week for at least six months and attend occasional professional development activities yearly
- Agree to tutor at an authorized tutoring site made known to LV-DAC staff. Such sites include ABE Learning Centers, public libraries, church parish halls, community centers, or other places appropriate for tutoring. Home tutoring is not permitted except under extraordinary circumstances unless approved by the Literary Services Coordinator
- Be able to travel to the designated tutoring site without physical assistance from the program or the learner
- Attend scheduled sessions regularly, arrive at sessions on time, and notify LV-DAC or the learner in advance of planned absence or expectations to be late
- Respond to reasonable needs and requests of the learner regarding materials, learning strategies, the learning environment, etc.
- Agree to return non-consumable instructional materials on a timely basis

Accept the LV-DAC and DACC-ABE policy of non-discrimination. It is the policy of Doña Ana Community College not to discriminate on the basis of sex, handicap, race, religion, national or ethnic origin in employment or other college administered programs. This policy is in compliance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 11246 as amended by 11375 and section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title IX of the Educational Amendments 1972 and subsequent revisions.

Tutor Re-Certification

LV-DAC desires to maintain a fully trained and certified corps of tutors in compliance with ProLiteracy America's prescribed instructional (tutor) methodologies as delivered by trainers certified by the New Mexico Coalition for Literacy. We recognize that, as for all instruction, skills need to be refreshed on a regular basis. To that end, the following policy is adopted:

It shall be the policy of LV-DAC that all Basic and/or ESL Certified tutors renew and maintain certification. It is required that at least once every five years each tutor enroll in and complete the Basic and/or ESL 18-Hour Tutor Training program.

As an alternative, the tutor may choose to attend LV-DAC-approved professional development workshops (including ABE In-Service programs, the NMCL Annual Meeting or Regional In-Service programs, or other activities designated by LV-DAC during the five-year re-certification period.

Those certified tutors whose date of service pre-dates the original adoption of this policy (8/00) are strongly encouraged to participate and serve as role models for all tutors undertaking re-certification.

The Advisory Council, in consultation with DACC-ABE reserves to itself consideration of any waiver of this policy.

Tutor Persistence

LV-DAC seeks to foster persistent volunteers by providing volunteer opportunities in a relevant, high-quality literacy program. Program staff and the Advisory Council set annual persistence goals for volunteers. Successful tutor persistence will be measured by longevity.

Volunteers – Starting Out As a Tutor

New tutors are *not* expected to find their own learners. LV-DAC maintains a waiting list of learners who need tutors and who have already been pre-assessed for learning level and advised for learning goals.

Learner-Tutor Matching Procedure

LV-DAC staff will use the following procedures for matching learner-tutor pairs.

The LV-DAC Education Facilitator will keep an updated waiting list of all learners who need a tutor. A learner's name will go on the waiting list **after** he or she has been assessed through AED. Learners may be referred to LV-DAC by ABE front desk tutors, GED or ESL instructors, community agencies or by self-referral.

A matching appointment schedule will be passed out at the end of each Tutor Training Workshop. Newly trained tutors will use this schedule to make an appointment with LV-DAC staff members to be matched with a learner. The Education Facilitator will also maintain a list of trained LV-DAC tutors who need to be re-matched.

The priorities for learner-tutor matching

- ➤ **Schedule** – Staff matches learners and tutors who have similar availability.

- ➤ **Special learner needs** – The special needs of the learner may indicate that a match with a tutor meets specific criteria is preferable.

- ➤ **Service requested** – Tutors may choose the tutoring area (Basic Literacy or ESL) they prefer. The program **is not** able to honor tutor requests for learners of a specific gender, ethnicity, or language background.

- ➤ **Learner level** – Learners who enter the program at basic levels will be matched before learners who enter at higher levels, in accordance with the LV-DAC mission.

Whenever possible, learners are matched on a first-come, first-served basis, according to level of need.

At the matching appointment, the tutor will be given the learner's assessment scores, file information, and phone number. **The tutor will call the learner as soon as possible to schedule their first tutoring session.**

The tutor will call LV-DAC staff to let them know the first session has been scheduled. If a tutor is unable to make contact with a learner, the tutor will be offered another learner from the waiting list. LV-DAC staff will follow up with the first learner to see if he or she wishes to continue in the project.

The first session is an opportunity for the tutor and learner to get acquainted and discuss educational and related personal goals.

After the first session, if necessary, the tutor may contact LV-DAC staff for assistance in finding instructional materials that are appropriate for the learner's level, goals, and interests.

If, at any time, the tutor or learner indicates that the match is no longer suitable, LV-DAC staff will contact both people separately to re-match them. If a new tutor is not immediately available, the learner will be placed on the waiting list to be re-matched as soon as possible.

What should we do at our first meeting?

The first meeting is really a "get acquainted" meeting. You may both be a little nervous, so start with simple "get to know you" questions and activities. You can plan a few short instructional activities, but the focus is to learn about each other and to set the plans for your future work together.

At the first meeting, take time to complete the Learner-Tutor Agreement (page 27) and My Learning Goals (pages 28). These two items are important because they set the tone and expectations for your work together. The original completed and signed copies should be returned to the LV-DAC office with your first time sheet. You are encouraged to make copies of these pages for yourself and your learner.

As soon as you start meeting with your learner, inform the Education Facilitator so that we can remove your learner's name from the waiting list.

What else should I know as a tutor?

- Literacy Services staff is **always** available to assist you as you work with your learner. Bring your questions to us. If you feel that you need more assistance than we have provided, you can also work with the ABE Assistant Dean and Dean.

- Your learner has already been pre-assessed using a standardized assessment. However, some tutors also like to use a literacy-specific assessment tool to help them plan instruction. LV-DAC has two of these tools available. For literacy learners, the READ test measures a learner's letter and word recognition skills. For ESL learners, the ESLOA test measures English conversational, reading, and writing skills. If you would like to

complete either of these assessments with your learner, they are available from the LV-DAC office and the staff can advise you on how to give them.

- We recommend that you keep a journal to record what you and your learner are doing together. This will help you to track progress and to develop lessons that build on previous work.

- **Very important!** Bring your Monthly Attendance and Progress Report (Time Sheet) to the LV-DAC office, or send it to the **Literacy Volunteers of Doña Ana County at Box 30001; Dept. 3DA, Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001,** by the **4th day of the following month.**

- Let the LV-DAC office know or send a final report on your learner if you discontinue teaching for any reason. Notify the Literacy staff at once of any change in the tutoring status.

- Please visit the LV-DAC website—www.readwritenow.org. This site contains important information about educational materials and activities, program events, policy changes, and training opportunities as well as a place to download forms or to send them electronically. Other than face-to-face, this is LV-DAC's main form of communication with our volunteers.

- **Have fun!** Helping someone learn to read, write or speak English is a challenging task, but it is also incredibly rewarding. We are pleased that you have chosen to volunteer with our program, and we hope that this will be a very positive experience for you.

Strategies for Successful Tutoring:

Concepts of Adult Learners and Adult Learning

Research has shown that adults learn differently from children. As you plan your tutoring activities, keep the following ideas in mind.

- ***Adult learners need to understand why they should learn something.*** Adult learners actively commit to the learning process when they can see how the skills they are learning can help them now. Make your instruction relevant to the learner's needs by choosing real-life materials, breaking long-term goals into attainable smaller steps, and responding positively to the learner's suggestions and preferences about the tutoring processes.

- ***Many adult learners want to take an active role in planning their studies.*** Adults are used to having a certain amount of control and responsibility in their lives, and many respond positively when they feel that they are responsible for their own learning. Help your learner set long-term educational and life goals, and use those goals as a constant reminder of where you are going together.

- ***Adult learners bring a lifetime of experience to the learning process.*** Our culture values formal education, but many adult learners have acquired an "informal education." Learn to respect this informal education by building on what your learner already knows from experience. Dialogue is an important part of the tutoring process because both the learner and the tutor have an opportunity to learn from each other. Relating your lessons to what the learner already knows about life will also keep her/him engaged.

- ***Adult learners bring pre-conceived ideas about learning and about themselves to their tutoring sessions.*** Adults may bring negative past experiences as well as positive ones to the learning process. Many adult basic education students did not experience success in the K-12 school system and may not have positive ideas about themselves as learners. An uncomfortable learning situation will prevent an adult from making progress. From the very beginning, it is important to clearly communicate that ABE is not like school for children. We do this by utilizing adult materials and teaching methods designed to make the learner feel successful. Emphasize your learner's successes. If he or she becomes discouraged, help the learner see that this is an external challenge, not a fundamental personal flaw. If the learner begins to put him/herself down, try as best you can to convey your

positive regard for him/her and don't get caught up in contradicting his/her assumptions or trying to explain the problems with the person's logic.

- **_Adult learners have outside responsibilities and obligations that will influence their learning._** Work, family, and health issues can have positive or negative impacts on learning. It is crucial to respect these priorities in the adult learner's life, but you can also help the learner see how a commitment to education can positively impact these other areas. Additionally, some learners are studying because of the requirements of employers or public assistance agencies. Be sensitive to the fact that these learners may feel pressured to make rapid progress in order to avoid negative consequences for themselves and their families.

- **_Many adult learners take a task-centered approach to learning._** Schoolchildren study subjects, but adults usually want to learn how to complete a job that is important in their lives. Using real-life materials and situations makes the learning experience relevant for an adult.

- **_Adult learners need feedback to make progress._** Clear lesson objectives that are related to the learner's goals will help both of you. Adults want to know regularly how they are progressing on their goals and objectives.

Adapted from *Characteristics of Adults and Implications for Effective Workshop and Class Planning* (B. Bova) and
Concepts of Adult Learning (Knowles, 1987).

Listening Skills

Attentive listening is an important part of your job as a tutor. You will want to plan some time at the beginning of each lesson just to check in with your learner and see how he or she is doing. These listening skills can really help you to hear and respond to what your learner is saying.

Reflective Listening:

Respond to the person by giving back both the message and the feelings in a tentative manner.

Paraphrase:

Give back the speaker's idea in your own words, rather than by repeating their words.

Focus Questions:

Help the speaker keep to the point he or she is making, asking questions like: *Just what is it that you don't understand? How do you feel about today's lesson?*

Encouraging Skills:

Let the speaker know that he or she is being heard by encouraging the person to continue: *Tell me more. How did you feel about that?*

Interested Silence:

This is especially useful in helping the speaker talk about a difficult problem because it gives them space to think before reacting.

Door Openers:

These are cues – silence or words that indicate that you are willing and have the time to listen – that issue an invitation to the other to speak. Use phrases like: *You seem troubled. You look excited. How did that go?*

Open-Ended Questions:

Encourage the speaker to elaborate; they might bring ideas to mind that the person isn't aware of. For example: *What do you want to do now?* instead of just suggesting the next course of action.

Summarizing:

Reflect the main points of the other's conversation in two or three sentences.

Learning Styles

Everyone has different learning strengths. Our strengths usually fall into one of three groups: visual, auditory, or tactile. These groups are known as learning styles. If you know which learning style your learner prefers, you can tailor your instruction to best meet her or his needs. Literacy Services has a tool called the *Learning Styles Inventory* that you can use with your learner to determine preferred methods of learning.

LEARNING STYLES		
CLUES		**LEARNING TIPS**
VISUAL	Needs to see it to know it. Strong sense of color. Difficulty with spoken directions. Overreaction to sounds. Trouble following lessons. Misinterpretation of words.	***General*** • Use graphics to reinforce learning – films, slides, illustrations, diagrams, doodles. • Color code to organize notes or possessions. • Written directions. • Use of flow charts and diagrams for notetaking. • Visualize spelling of words or facts to be memorized. ***Reading and Language*** • Stress sight words, configuration clues, context clues, and structural clues. • Don't stress phonics. ***Math*** • Show examples of math functions.
AUDITORY	Needs to hear it to know it. Difficulty following written directions. Difficulty with reading and writing. Inability to read body language and facial expressions.	***General*** • Use tapes for reading or lectures. • Learn by interviewing or participating in discussions. • Have test questions read aloud or put on tape. ***Reading and Language*** • Stress phonetic analysis and sound clues. • Use bookmarkers or your finger to follow along while reading. • Don't emphasize sight words or fast reading. ***Math*** • Provide tapes of word problems. • Explain math process out loud while demonstrating them.
TACTILE	Prefers hands-on learning. Can assemble parts without reading instructions. Difficulty sitting still. Learns better when physical activity is involved. May be very well coordinated and have athletic ability.	***General*** • Experimental learning – making models, lab work, role-playing. • Frequent breaks in study periods. • Use the computer to reinforce learning through touch. • Memorizing or drilling while walking or exercising. • Expressing abilities through dance, drama, or gymnastics. ***Reading and Language*** • Stress the shape and structure of the word. • Trace letters or words with finger. • Use manipulative letters to spell words. ***Math*** • Use objects (buttons, pennies) to practice math functions.

Tips on Teaching Adults with Learning Disabilities

Some, though certainly not all, of our learners may have diagnosed or undiagnosed learning disabilities. The following strategies are helpful for all students, but they may make the difference between success and failure for a student with a learning disability.

General Principles of Instruction
- Teach new concepts concretely; use specific examples when explaining a lesson.
- Explain the purpose of every lesson or activity.
- Explain information in a precise way; never make assumptions about what the learner knows.
- Break down the learning into small, sequential tasks.
- Present directions one step at a time, using both oral and written demonstrations.
- Provide intensive instruction until the material is mastered.
- Allow ample time for learning a task; a student with a learning disability will usually take longer to master new material.
- Use physical demonstration of abstract concepts, such as left and right.
- Keep the learning environment free of visual and auditory distraction.
- Preview and review major points, both orally and visually.
- Provide auditory, visual, and concrete clues.
- Make eye contact frequently; this helps in maintaining attention and encouraging participation.
- Teach to the learner's strengths and prior knowledge; build on the experience and language of the learner.
- Be flexible and willing to try different methods of teaching to meet the student's needs.
- Suggest reinforcement activities to be used at home.
- Provide instruction to help the transfer of learning from one task and setting to another.
- Relate new materials to daily life.
- Ask the student to restate a new concept in his/her own words.
- Simplify language but not content by using pictures, charts, maps, and diagrams.
- Enhance the student's self-concept by providing success-oriented activities.
- Praise the learner's accomplishments at the end of every session.

Techniques Specifically for Teaching Reading and Language
- ✓ The primary goal of reading is to understand and construct meaning from written words. Make sure that at least part of your lesson is about understanding the "big picture" of the text.
- ✓ At the same time, realize that many readers with learning disabilities do better when they see language as an organized pattern of sounds (phonics). Learn new vocabulary by its structure before trying to read a passage.
- ✓ Model good reading strategies for your learner. "Chunk" words together into phrases, read at a normal pace, don't correct every single error while the learner is reading, and ask the learner to predict the action in the story.
- ✓ Use note-taking strategies such as SQ3R or repeated reading (read the passage three times; once for vocabulary and mechanics, the second time to read sentences fluently, and the third to understand the meaning).
- ✓ Give the learner the opportunity to self-correct, and provide hints to help her/him.
- ✓ Combine life skills such as reading medicine labels and filling out forms with phonics, word recognition, and reading comprehension.

Techniques for Tactile Learning
Some students are more successful when they can touch what they are learning.
- • Use various types of writing tools – pencils, pens, "felt tip" markers, large markers to see what your learner prefers.
- • Draw or cut out words or letters that are learned.
- • Use clay to make letter shapes.
- • Trace letters.
- • Play charades for comprehension.
- • Act out action verbs written or pictured on cards.
- • Act out stories.
- • Go on field trips related to your lessons.

Techniques for Learners Who Have Visual Learning Problems
Visual learning problems will make it difficult for the learner to detect differences in forms, letters, and words, and to retain a full mental image of what he or she has seen.
- ✓ Help the learner see her/his progress using checklists, graphs, or other visuals.
- ✓ Use simple drawings to clarify terms.
- ✓ Use color for visual impact.
- ✓ Use visual cues such as highlighting, underlining, drawing arrows, or pictures.
- ✓ Use color-coding, calculators, computers, graph paper, etc.

✓ Teach visual patterns in words, numbers, or pictures.
✓ Be sure print is large enough.
✓ Select materials with simple visual layouts and white space.

Techniques for Learners Who Have Auditory Learning Problems
Auditory learning problems make it difficult for the learner to recognize differences between sounds and to store and recall what he or she has heard.

- Reinforce main ideas and concepts through rephrasing rather than exact repetition.
- Ensure clear pronunciation of complex or difficult words.
- Encourage the student to repeat verbal information.
- Have the student use a tape recorder as a self-checking device for pronunciation.
- Use games, songs, and rhymes to help the student listen and repeat sounds.
- Repeat words that may be ambiguous or have unaccented syllables in them.
- Repeat blended sounds over and over again to help the student differentiate among these.
- Encourage the student to repeat verbal information.

TIPS FOR TUTORS

Remember: the ABE front desk is there to serve you

Students need to sign in at the AED front desk. You can contact the AED front desk for translation. You can turn in your time sheet at the AED front desk.

Maintain a focus on "prevention"

Always be cognizant of changes in learner moods, body language and tone of voice. Attempt to diffuse a bad situation instead of adding fuel to the fires. Encourage "Talking it out" and never crowd or touch any angry person. Remain calm, be direct and do your best to diffuse a bad situation.

Safety

When meeting learners in off campus locations, remember to be aware of your surroundings. If you feel uncomfortable in any way, reschedule your session selecting a more appropriate location and/or time for the session.

Do not tolerate intoxicated or abusive learners

Call for help. Refuse to be a participant and remember that it takes two to tangle. You have the right to refuse contact with the person. Go to the ABE Front Desk and request assistance if necessary. Contact the Assistant ABE Dean and submit a written incident report.