

Domestic Workers Adult ESL Program

Partnerships and program flexibility key to success



Domestic workers – typically women from South East Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe working as caregivers to become Canadian citizens – have busy schedules, do not make much money and often feel isolated. For these reasons it is difficult for them to access conventional English as a Second Language classes.

In order to better serve domestic workers, Frontier College in Vancouver formed a partnership with the West Coast Domestic Workers Association to create the Domestic Workers Adult ESL Program that provides free and flexible ESL learning opportunities.

Caregivers work with tutors on a one-to-one basis, for one hour a week in a public space convenient to both the caregiver and the tutor. This approach is central to Frontier College's mandate – to go where the learners are, rather than having them come to us.

Tutors work independently with caregivers on ESL lessons and learning activities that are guided by the interests and requests of the caregivers. Activities may include helping learners with conversational English, grammar, pronunciation and comprehension, or developing skills related to writing resumes and cover letters (workplace literacy).

“Am working on writing letters, paragraphs, conversation, grammar, speaking [with my tutor]. It is great to speak to somebody; to speak about the life as a caregiver. We are having a great time.” – DWA learner