

“Newsy” the ESOL Tutor Newsletter

April 17, 2020

Hi everyone,

We would love to hear from you either by email fplmail4@minlib.net, phone 508-532-5574, or by joining a virtual tutor Get-together. Last night we had 13 tutors at the Get-together and discussed many ideas for working with students. And don't miss our brief survey at the end of this newsletter. 😊

Reaching Out to Our Community

This week we sent an email, in four languages, to all our students. You may hear from them in response to the email.

Our volunteers continue to check-in with our tutors and conversation leaders by phone. The news is both heartening and disheartening. On one hand, some tutors and students are finding ways to meet and learn using various approaches and I have been able to make a few new student and tutor matches. On the other hand, some students and tutors cannot meet due to technology access issues, limited English skills, homeschooling commitments, work schedules, etc. There is much work to do here but we are working on it. Read on!

Last Week's “Newsy” Survey

It is really interesting how we are trying to make the best of times in arguably some of the worst of times.

Here is a sample of the responses:

- *Other than ordinary household chores, I am making a point of reaching out to friends and students, including some to whom I have not spoken in years. It helps fend off my own sense of isolation and helplessness when I reach out and offer companionship or comfort to others.*
- *I'm amazed at how quickly the time passes. I think I have slowed down to the point where only 1-2 little "projects" take up a whole day. So I'm not sure that I'm doing much of anything different from my usual--maybe getting a little more housecleaning done! My husband and I have watched some movies on TV, something we almost never do. And with the nicer weather, I'm starting to do some yard work I also spend more time on the telephone, connecting with family and friends.*

If you would like to read more of these, the results of last week's “Newsy” survey are on the website here [Literacy Home Page](#). Check-out Anne's “Word Cloud”. The more a word is used in the responses, the bigger it is in the word cloud. It's very cool!

Mindset shift in the midst of COVID-19?

It has been 5 weeks since we began social distancing and stopped meeting face-to-face with students and tutors. Our efforts up to now have been mostly reactionary. We have reached out to our community of tutors and students, we have been finding help for those in need, and identifying and implementing ways to continue our ESOL work using technology. And while these activities will

continue, over the last week, **I have sensed a shift in our discussions and thinking.** First, we are coming to the realization that social distancing, in some form or other, will be with us for a long time (i.e., months, and most probably, years). Second, given the new reality of social-distancing we are starting to think about how this will forever change how we interact with our tutors and students. One thing that seems to be increasingly clear, is that we will probably use technology much more than we have in the past and that our efforts to identify, implement and learn new technology is probably a wise investment of time and effort and to that end we will try to keep introducing new ideas.

Weekly Conversation Classes

Conversation class leaders needed! We are looking for permanent, new conversation class leaders for the Tuesday morning Low Beginner class and the Monday evening Intermediate class. We are also looking for leaders who would like to try to lead a class while practicing social distancing. If you are interested in either, let us know.

The **following English conversation classes are being held** and tutors are referring students who need the practice. If you have a student who might benefit from participation in a conversation class, please let us know by email fplmail4@minlib.net. The conversation leader will forward the meeting information to them.

Some of these classes use video conferencing, some not:

Beginner: Thursdays 1:00PM – 2:30PM

Intermediate: Tuesdays 1:00PM – 2:30PM

 Wednesdays 10:00 – 11:30PM

Advanced: Wednesdays 7:00PM – 8:30PM

Weekly Tutor Get-togethers

We have decided to make the tutor Get-together ZOOM meetings recurring. This means that the link, the meeting ID and password will not change from week to week. You should be able to save the meeting to your digital calendars or you can save the links as “Favorites” in your web browser. Note the Tuesday afternoon and Thursday evening Get-togethers have different links, IDs and passwords.

To join the meeting with video, download the free ZOOM app and follow the prompts after clicking the meeting link just before the meeting starts. If you don’t have video capability, you can just call into the meeting. Liehua has helped several tutors, who have only called into a meeting, to set up the video at a later date.

Weekly Tutor Technology Meeting – Tuesdays at 2:00 PM (*Occurs every Tuesday beginning on April 21 and ending on June 2*).

This is a weekly meeting to discuss technology and digital options for use in the classroom or for one-to-one tutoring. At the last meeting we had an overview of “Google Suite” applications

(e.g. Google docs, sheets, drive, etc.). For those of us familiar with Microsoft Office 365 applications, Google Suite is similar but there are differences.

The meeting on April 21 will continue with a Google Suite video that is specific to using “Google Classroom”. Unlike ZOOM or Skype, Google Classroom is not an interactive meeting application, it is an application that could be used to assign lessons to students and share or collaboratively work on quizzes, flashcards, worksheets, etc. that you can create using Google Suite applications. It could be suitable for one-to-one tutors as well as conversation class leaders.

Contact us at fplmail4@minlib.net if you would like to join the meeting,

Weekly Tutor Get-together – Thursdays at 7:00 PM (*Occurs every Thursday beginning on April 23 and ending on June 4*).

This is a weekly meeting (using video conferencing or call-in, your choice) for tutors to support each other and to share tutoring ideas while maintaining social distancing.

Contact us at fplmail4@minlib.net if you would like to join the meeting,

Ideas for Working with Your Students While Practicing Social Distancing

Based on the tutor meetings and the survey responses, many of you are connecting with your students in a variety of ways based on the tutor’s and the student’s situation. If you are interested in what other tutors are up to, join our weekly tutor Get-together meetings.

[Literacy Website - Tutor Resources](#) – Check our website for ideas.

Resources For Your Students

We know that there are some students who are struggling to home-school their children. If your student could use some help with their children’s home-schooling, the Framingham Library is currently tutoring a number of K-12 students remotely with the Zoom app. If this is something that might help your student, please contact jgatlin@minlib.net.

We continue to receive information from the Library, the Mayor, and from other sources about things related to COVID-19. If your student has a specific question or need, let us know and we will try to get you an answer.

Reminders

Please keep track of the time you spend with your student – these are reportable. This includes: phone calls, texts, emails, and of course virtual conferencing time (e.g., Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp, etc.).

Although we are working from home, we do have access to our database, email, and voicemail and can give you student or tutor contact information if you need it.

The 2020 census is here and it is so important that everyone complete their census form. We continue to post information about it on our website here [FPL Website/Literacy/Census](#)

Just for Fun

We have a fun survey question for you this week about [Beautiful Places](#) that you have visited. Hopefully it might inspire you to think about where you might like to go, near or far, when we are able to travel again. Please take a moment to answer this one question survey - we'll share the results next week.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9NQF33H>

Musings

While being confined to home and the need to escape the reality of the current situation, I find myself musing about the future when COVID-19 is the rear-view mirror. Here are some of the questions I have asked myself or heard others ask over the past week. Will we still have videoconferencing tutor Get-togethers? Will tutors meet with students via videoconferencing when they can't meet in person? How might we modify our tutor training sessions? Could we test students virtually, and if we could, would we want to? Will we need to have technology learning sessions in multiple languages? How will digital ESOL training resources adapt? Could we use Google Classroom to try to connect students who are trying to home school their children with tutors who have experience teaching. None of this will take the place of face-to-face interaction but a move to digital in some areas may help us to be more effective in what we do. What do you think?

Stay healthy, safe and practice social distancing and please join us at one of the tutor Get-togethers. We would love to have you.

Karen

Karen Boudreau

Office Manager