

“Newsy” the ESOL Tutor Newsletter – April 24, 2020

Hi everyone,

It is **National Volunteer Week** and that makes it a terrific time to recognize your generosity, compassion, perseverance and resourcefulness. Thank-you for working with your students to bring about good things and for helping to lighten burdens, especially during this difficult time. We are also so grateful for all your suggestions – keep ‘em coming! This newsletter is sprinkled with ideas and links that were recommended by tutors.

To serve our students better, we are adding **two new conversation classes** to the weekly line-up: a Beginner class on Monday afternoons and a High Beginner/Low Intermediate Pronunciation conversation class on Friday afternoons. If you have a student, who you think could benefit from attending these classes, let us know either by email fplmail4@minlib.net or phone 508-532-5574.

On Tuesday we had 20 participants in our weekly **Technology meeting** and last night we had 12 participants at the **tutor Get-together** including the Library’s Director, Mark Contois. You can read about these meetings below in the Weekly Tutor Get-togethers section.

I attended a webinar this week and learned that using the term “**physical distancing**” instead of “social distancing” is more descriptive and, although not as widely used, is a more positive term. It has been six weeks since we started to **reimagine** (also suggested wording instead of closed or cancelled) how we would continue to help our students in light of the pandemic. Good things are coming out of this journey of learning, collaboration and change.

Last Week’s “Newsy” Survey

We had 22 respondents to our survey about visiting beautiful places in the world. Seventeen people added new locations to the list, including Garden in the Woods in the springtime! I hope that we get there this spring!

Everyone who responded had visited New York City and no one who responded had visited the Azores, Morocco, or the Maldives. One place (and it’s large and diverse) got many votes for the favorite place to visit. Which one? For complete survey results and the answer, see our website here [Literacy Home page](#)

Weekly Conversation Classes

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: Mondays 1:00 – 2:30PM **NEW**

High Beg/Low Int: Fridays 1:00 – 2:30 PM Pronunciation – but fun! **NEW**

High Beg/Int: Thursdays 1:00 – 2:30PM

Intermediate: Tuesdays 1:00– 2:30PM
 Wednesdays 10:00 – 11:30PM

Advanced: Wednesdays 7:00 – 8:30PM

Natick is also offering conversation classes – contact Laurie Christie at LChristie@minlib.net for more information.

Weekly Tutor Get-togethers

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 teaching options for use in the classroom or for one-to-one tutoring.

We have learned that these meetings should involve a short video (if applicable) or short demo, followed by questions and as much interaction with participants as possible to imitate hands on learning. If you have an idea for a technology topic, let us know fplmail4@minlib.net

The meeting on **April 28** will focus on **WhatsApp** an application widely used by our tutors and students. It is American freeware, owned by Facebook, Inc. It allows users to send text messages and voice messages, make voice and video calls, and share images, documents, user locations, and other media. **If you are a WhatsApp user and can attend the April 28th meeting, we would love to have you share how you use WhatsApp and why you like it. Let us know at fplmail4@minlib.net if you plan to attend and would like to do a short demo using ZOOM screen share.**

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 physical distancing.

Last night we discussed: tutors using snail mail with students (one student loves getting mail – had to learn how to open their mailbox), we heard about a conversation class learning about 3-D printing, Mark Contois (the Library Director) explained the new online, live “Chat” service on the Library website here <https://framinghamlibrary.org/> (on the bottom right-hand side of every page), and many more ideas and activities.

To join a ZOOM meeting with video, download the free ZOOM app to a device with a working camera (e.g., smartphone, tablet, laptop) and follow the prompts after clicking the appropriate “Join Zoom Meeting” link 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.

Ideas for Working with Your Students While Practicing Physical Distancing

NCFL (National Center for Families Learning) has some free resources here <https://www.familieslearning.org/resources/english-learners/14#nav> Click on the link “30 Days of Families Learning Together” for 30 ideas related to learning. Although not specific to ESOL, these are some great ideas for bringing learning to life and making it fun.

[Google Arts and Culture](#) – Great website for ideas and inspiration

[Story Corps](#) - Short, interview-based (video with transcript) uplifting American stories. Great to assign to students to watch and talk or write about.

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.

Resources For Your Students

In response to the pandemic, the City of Framingham will provide relief of rent, mortgage, and/or utility payments for two months to alleviate the burden for households that have lost their employment and primary income as of March 10, 2020. For application information, visit the Resources for Residents [\[https://www.framinghamma.gov/2895/Resources-for-Residents\]](https://www.framinghamma.gov/2895/Resources-for-Residents) page on the City’s COVID-19 website and select the “Temporary Financial Assistance” tab.

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

Anne’s survey this week is about fun. We can always use more fun! The survey asks you to share your fun activities. Check-it out!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GFD7KL9>

Musings

This was one of those up and down weeks again, ugh. But talking to my ESOL student for an hour and laughing about English pronunciation with her as well as deciding to co-lead a Beginner conversation

class with Anne were high points. Spring is coming and so is doing some of the things that we used to take for granted like going to the library, a museum, a coffee shop, a movie, the gym, having people for dinner, going out to lunch or dinner, going to a concert, going shopping and to the garden center, and changing the bulletin board outside the Literacy Center to reflect the time of year. Can't wait to do those things again!

Besides becoming an expert at physical distancing and upping your hygiene game, what have you learned from surviving the pandemic?