"Newsy" the ESOL Tutor Newsletter

May 15, 2020

Welcome to "NEWSY" the Literacy Unlimited Tutor Bi-Weekly Bulletin!

Hi everyone,

We're back and some things have changed!

- "Newsy" is back to being bi-weekly and we've refreshed the format.
- Instead of a Tutor Get-together on Thursday nights, we have introduced the concept of virtual office hours.
- It is becoming more evident that we will not be able to hold regular, in-person tutoring sessions or conversation classes inside for the foreseeable future. Therefore, we need to focus on designing content and tutoring methods for virtual classrooms and tutoring sessions.

English Conversation Classes

The following English conversation classes are being held weekly. Tutors, students, and conversation class leads are encouraged to refer students who want to join a class by emailing us at fplmail4@minlib.net. The conversation class leader will forward meeting information to new students.

Some of these classes use video conferencing, some do not:

Beginner:	Mondays 1:00 – 2:30PM	TPRS Method (Teaching Proficiency through Reading & Storytelling)
Low Int to Adv:	Fridays 1:00 – 2:30 PM	FUN with Pronunciation!
High Beg/Int:	Thursdays 1:00 – 2:30PM	
Intermediate:	Tuesdays 1:00– 2:30PM	
	Wednesdays 10:00 – 11:30AM	
Advanced:	Wednesdays 7:00 – 8:30PM	

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

Tutor Meetings

Tutor Technology Meeting – Tuesday May 19th at 2:00 PM (No meeting on May 26th)

These ZOOM meetings are about technology and digital teaching options for use in conversation classes or for one-to-one tutoring.

For this meeting there is no planned presentation. Instead, we would like you to come and share with other tutors what is working for you. If it makes sense, we can use ZOOM screen share.

Virtual Office Hours for Tutors – Every Thursday night at 7:00 PM

Remember how you used to be able to drop into our office and talk with us about what was going on, or get some new ideas for tutoring, or just laugh? Well, now we are holding "virtual" office hours every Thursday night at 7:00 PM for tutors to do what they used to do in person. And if you couldn't connect with us in person before (e.g., you tutored at night or outside the Library) now you can on Thursday nights.

Please join us!

Joining a ZOOM meeting: Click here Literacy Unlimited/Covid-19 Ideas *for ZOOM download instructions for Android and IOS devices. If you don't have video capability, you can just call into the meeting. Liehua has helped several tutors, who have called into a meeting, to set up the video at a later date.*

Working with Your Students While Practicing Physical Distancing

Tutoring "virtually" is different than face-to-face.

I know, that's a big "duh", but how is it different, and how can we be successful at it? Listening to tutors and conversation class leaders, here are some of their suggestions to typical questions:

Q. How do I keep my sessions/classes from being boring – virtual meetings don't easily allow you to take the kinds of physical and mental breaks that you take in person?

A. For online sessions, "less is more"! Vary the activities if you can and, if possible, limit each activity to no longer that 15 minutes. Watch a video and discuss, take a break and walk away from the computer screen, collaboratively write on line using a screen share, assign activities outside your session with the student and then discuss when you are together.

Q. There are so many resources online, it is overwhelming – how do I pick and choose what to use and what to do?

A. Experiment! Everyone's technology access is different and can include: different operating systems and application releases, cameras and video or not, audio and microphone or not, individual familiarity with technology and predisposition to experiment with technology. Because of this variability, no one size fits all - you really have to experiment on your own with

your student(s) and determine what works. Take it in baby steps, try something, fine tune it or drop it and try something else.

Here are some resources for working with your students:

Mango Languages

Mango Languages may be something to have your student work on solo and then when you are together, discuss what they have learned. In addition to learning vocabulary, the application allows students, with a microphone enabled device, to speak in English and then compare their speech to a native English speaker.

Mango Languages is free for Framingham Public Library cardholders, and is free to everyone until at least June 30th due to COVID-19. You and your student can access it by going here Framingham Library Find Online Mango Languages Set up a profile with your email and password if you want to track progress or try it as a guest. Since your student will be learning English, they should pick English as the language to learn.

ESL Library

More new lessons:

Beginner level: ***"The World Health Organization"*** *(Click on Materials (top of page tab)/Lessons/Reading and Discovery/Famous Things)*

Low Intermediate level: ***"Scams"*** Digital only (Click on *Materials (top of page tab)/Lessons/Discussions and Debate/Discussion Starters)*

Good to Know

Everything COVID-19 - Erin S. Bromage, Ph.D. and Associate Professor of Biology at UMass Dartmouth has posted some really interesting "science" on COVID-19 especially how it is spread. Hint: I am much more comfortable going to a grocery store after reading the article. Check it out here: COVID-19 Erin Bromage, Ph.D.

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.

Fun and Final Thoughts

Both Anne and I were inspired by Dawn Soma's presentation at "Immigrants Day (Virtually) at the State House 2020". In her presentation, Dawn uses the term "language-based marginalization" and comments on the importance of the multi-lingual work that we do. Here is a link to all the presentations, Dawn's starts about 29 minutes into the video.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L2TfEye0sxI

After watching Dawn's presentation as well as reading Dr. Bromage's COVID-19 posting (above), it struck me that "language-based marginalization" and "technology-based marginalization" plus COVID-19 have come together to create a "perfect storm" for many of our students. The multi-lingual work that we do is so important helping our students navigate this storm and meeting the many other challenges they face. In the short-term many of us will share, in an English level our students can understand, the information that is in Dr. Bromage's COVID-19 posting. Long-term, by helping our students to read and speak better English, we are giving them the tools to find, read, and understand this level of information on their own.

Please know that all your hard work and dedication is so important to our Community! Thank-you for all that you do!