

Literacy Links

Spring
2008

a newsletter for volunteer tutors

Editor, Kris Magaurn, *Chair, Portland Literacy Council*

Another Successful Tutor Conference Held at Reed College

by Lynda Campbell, Volunteer Tutoring Program Coordinator, Clackamas Community College

The ides of March brought clouds and some rain, but otherwise it was a banner day for volunteer tutors. The annual Tutor Conference at Reed College was attended by about 120 volunteers from the Portland area as well as other Oregon counties and Southwest Washington. Participants attended two workshops in the morning and another in the afternoon.

The workshops addressed a variety of issues and techniques for working with adult learners, whether ESL, ABE or GED. Multiple Intelligences, Vocabulary Development, Grammar, Brain Gym, Pronunciation, Achieving Learning Goals and a Nine-Step Method for Teaching Beginning ESL were a few of the titles offered. Also, Oregon Literacy had a room full of resources and there was a movie about the deportation of three Cambodian men. All of these workshops were taught or hosted by experts in the field and it was difficult to choose. One had to keep in mind that there is always next year!



Carol Zhu, YaYoo Sado, Miladi Olivera and Filiberto Santos gave presentations about their countries in the Culture Exchange workshop

English pronunciation and gave them tips to work with their intermediate level ESL students. She said she was glad to have the opportunity to give something to people who volunteer their time to help students learn English.

The Cultural Exchange was another popular selection. This year four students gave presentations about their

countries. Miladi Olivera talked about Peru while beautiful slides of the countryside were projected behind her. Filiberto Santos used a hand-drawn map and chart to explain Guatemalan Culture. He wore a traditional woven shirt and hat and passed around pictures



Eric Erickson (second from right) was one of the luncheon speakers. Also attending were his classmates Mina and Jalal Forozan and tutor Pat Knox (right)

that depicted the society and events. Participants learned about China from Carol Zhu who did a PowerPoint presentation about various aspects of the culture, including food, dress, economy and education. YaYoo Sado also gave a PowerPoint presentation about her native Ethiopia and its history, complete with song and dance. Those watching the presentations were impressed, not only with the language skills these learners exhibited but by their technical expertise as well.

As always, the luncheon speakers were the highlight of the conference. Three students bravely stood and told the audience their stories. Eric Erickson came to the US from Iran to learn English. He planned to accomplish this in two months but stayed another six months. Then 8 years later, he immigrated and has lived in the United States for 15 years. Although he claimed that his age made it difficult to learn, his command of English was excellent. Miladi Olivera has lived in the U. S. for just five years. She was a lawyer in Peru and is working hard to learn English well enough to take the Bar Exam here. Miladi had trouble holding back tears as she thanked her tutor for taking her to stores and restaurants so she could practice speaking. Marcelle Ziade is married to a U.S.

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Tutor/Student Spotlight

by Edit McDonald, VLT Coordinator, PCC Rock Creek

Dream Team



Dora Disch (left) and her tutor Susan Ellerbrook continue to work toward Dora's goal of earning her GED

A devoted tutor and a hardworking student is a great formula for success. Indeed, Dora Disch's journey to earn her GED is truly a remarkable, though unfinished, success story. Dora is a dedicated student in her early 70's, who is determined to get a GED diploma. Her tutor is Susan Ellerbrook, a retired middle school teacher, who is committed to see it through, "no matter how long it takes." Since the summer of 2004, they have been meeting at the Beaverton Library twice a week for 2 hours. Dora's learning has been interrupted by her battle with cancer, but she was not about to give up studying. She remains resolute to reach her educational goal. "Susan is a great teacher. She's patient and very supportive. Sometimes, she is strict, but in a nice way," says Dora. "I love coming to our sessions, and enjoy working with Dora. She's a big part of my life now," says Susan, who wanted to volunteer in adult education after retiring from the Beaverton School District. She was matched with Dora through the PCC

Volunteer Literacy Program at Rock Creek.

Dora had worked as an assistant in a missile lab at Ford Aerospace in California. From 2002 to 2003 she volunteered as a reading/math tutor at William Walker Elementary School. She decided to study for her GED when a cash award was to be given to volunteers at the elementary school, but only for those who had their high school diploma. She received the award anyway, and now she wants to continue studying for herself. First, she passed her Science test in 2006. "Dora really enjoyed science, but she had to learn a lot of terminology." Susan says. Next, she passed Social Studies in 2007. They're working on Math right now, which is one of the toughest exams for Dora.

Susan enjoys reading and hiking. Dora likes to study at home and go to church. They both love to spend time with their grandchildren. Dora's latest CAT scan shows no signs of cancer. Hooray and good luck!

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Citizen. She arrived 11 years ago from Lebanon via Greece and French-speaking Quebec. She realized she was finally succeeding in her attempt to learn the language when she found herself praying in English. These students were proof that the time and effort of volunteers pays off!

Whether they had been working with students for 15 years or had yet to be matched with their first learner, tutors came away from the conference with lots of ideas and useful information. Evaluations completed by the participants expressed great satisfaction with the workshops and presenters at this year's Tutor Conference. It truly did succeed in "Putting the Pieces Together". Hats off to Kris Magaurn, the Portland Literacy Council, and the many volunteers who worked diligently to provide tutors with so much food for thought and a delicious lunch, too.

2008 Tutor Conference Donors

Our sincere thanks to the following community members for their generous support of the Tutor Conference:

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Tutor Tips

edited by Kathleen Holloway, VLT Coordinator PCC SE Center

Pronunciation Practice: Strategies to Teach Word Stress Patterns

Word stress in English is an important aspect of pronunciation. If your ESOL student(s) can learn correct word stress patterns, others will be able to understand them much better. Consider *DES ert* vs. *des SERT*. Here the stress distinguishes the meaning of the two words. Incorrect word stress results in language that can be incomprehensible even though pronunciation of individual sounds, grammar, and vocabulary may be correct. Here are some suggested strategies to teach your student(s) English stress patterns in words with more than one syllable.

- First, practice dividing words into syllables with your student(s). Make sure they can hear how many syllables are in a word before moving on to stress patterns. Tap on the table or board to indicate the syllables in a word.
- Demonstrate for your student(s) some examples of word stress. Stressed syllables are louder and longer than unstressed ones. Sometimes, but not always, the stress pattern determines the meaning of the word, e.g. *MES sage* vs. *mes SAGE*, *CON flict* vs. *con FLICT*. Give more examples of words where stress does not determine meaning but others will not understand the word if the stress is incorrect. *STU dent* (2 syllables), *ex AM ple* (3 syllables), *i DEN tify* (4 syllables). Words with five or more syllables have primary and secondary stress. For example, *pro NUN ci Á tion*.
- Create charts for words with different syllable patterns. Prepare and read a list of words with two, three and four syllables. Have the learner identify the patterns by writing the words in the appropriate column.

Two syllable words:

FOL low

ar RIVE

Three syllable words:

OC cu py

ex AM ple

af ter NOON

Four syllable words:

en JOY a ble

re cre A tion

TEL e vi sion

- If your student(s) are at a higher level, go on to show them five syllable words with two stressed syllables, primary and secondary stress.

pro NUN ci Á tion

com MUN i CÁ tion

UN der STÁND a ble

- Once your student(s) understand the concept, do this exercise with new vocabulary as it comes up. Remember to have the student practice saying the word, not just writing it.
- Compound nouns carry stress on the first word of the compound. To practice, make a chart -
Furniture Store, Hardware Store, Drugstore, Grocery Store, Stationery Store.

Talk with the learner about these compound noun vocabulary words:

beach towel, notebook, ice cream, paper clips, screwdriver, foot stool, floor lamp, toothbrush, hairbrush, book bag, thumbtacks, sunglasses, etc.

Have learners list these vocabulary words under the store where you can buy each one.

Practice pronouncing the words and using them in sentences.

- Phrasal verbs stress the particle following the verb. Practice describing routine activities that involve phrasal verbs.

-drop OFF clothes at the cleaners

-pick UP some groceries

-turn IN books at the library

-turn OFF the lights

-find OUT about activities at school, church, etc.

Remember these are PRONOUNCING activities, so make sure your students are talking!

*Promoting literacy
in our community.*

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Mark Your Calendar! The Chalk It Up Celebration is August 4

Oregon Literacy, along with other local literacy groups, is organizing the Chalk It Up For Literacy Celebration to be held **Saturday, August 4** in downtown Portland at Pioneer Square.

There will be artists creating chalk drawings on the sidewalk, music, storytelling, face painting, lots of information about services available and opportunities for everyone to be involved.

If you would like to participate in the event, or want more information, contact Elizabeth@oregonliteracy.com.

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