

Clatsop Community College Volunteer Literacy Tutor News

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SPRING TERM TUTOR TRAINING

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Fall Term Tutor Training Summary

We discussed strategies to build listening and speaking skills in our students, but first we focused on familiarizing ourselves with strategies we already employ to communicate with others. The ultimate goal is to teach these strategies to our students, but first we need to realize what we do unconsciously to listen and speak with understanding.

Listening Strategies we took a look at:

- ***ESL students need to know WHY they are listening.*** Set the student up for what is coming. Introduce the topic with an examination of key words, a look at what the student already knows about the subject and their own experience.

Family Literacy:

How it's working for one family in our program

Javier has been working with a volunteer tutor for at least a year and a half. He first requested a tutor because he had been assigned work on a computer program in his basic skills class that did little more than confuse him. He received little direct attention from his instructor. The program review we underwent recently advised us to improve our delivery of instruction to students transitioning out of ESL. Reliance on computer software is not the way to go.

Javier speaks and listens at a functional level, but upon further questioning, he expressed reservations with his ability to communicate with customers at his job, particularly when he was asked to give directions. At a certain point in our students' learning trajectories, the ability to read becomes more and more important, especially to build vocabularies that go beyond basic communication.

Javier's tutor has been working with him on a variety of texts, including a leveled reading program, bilingual stories and, because Javier's goal is to achieve US citizenship, the civics and history questions for the exam.

Not long after Javier began studying, he brought in his two daughters, neither of whom had finished high school. One of them, Marisol, had undergone treatment for a life-threatening illness and had had to drop out of high school. Her dad was worried about her future. One of the first questions Marisol asked shocked me a bit when she said "do you think someone like me could

- **Teach verb endings and other words** so listeners can discern time frames. (-ed, ing, will)
- **Teach pronouns** so listeners can determine who is being discussed.
- **Teach sequence words:** next, before, after, then, first, second, etc.
- **Check for comprehension:** can the student restate in their own words? If they can't say it, can they draw it?

From a recent report from the 2010 Census data:
<http://www.migrationinformation.org/integration/LEPdatabrief.pdf>

Approximately 503,000 people, or **14%** of Oregon's population over the age of 5, speak a foreign language at home.

- **150,000-300,000** of these folks are considered LEP, or have Limited English Proficiency.

The US LEP population **increased by 80%** between 1990 and 2010.

Spanish-speaking individuals account for **66%** of the total US LEP population. The next most-commonly spoken are **Chinese and Vietnamese, Korean and Tagalog** (the official language of the Philippines). In 1990, the top 5 languages were **Spanish, Chinese, French, Italian and German.**

The state of Washington entered the top ten states (at # 10) with the largest LEP populations.

Sorry about the hiatus in the newsletter delivery. I hope to be back on track from now on.

find something to do?" Her illness has left her with a bit of a balance problem that could possibly improve the more she walks because her brain is in process of getting "retrained."

Marisol needed to get her GED first, which she accomplished very quickly. Her next steps included a career exploration process, COMPASS testing (a college entrance exam) and applying for financial aid and scholarships, all of which the literacy program helped her to get done. She is now enrolled in a degree-seeking program at CCC with a clear idea of what work she will be doing in the future.

Recently, Javier and Marisol came in to talk about two other family members who want to get GEDs so they can apply for better jobs. Their successes have awakened the possibility for changes through study and education that didn't exist before, an often overlooked result of improved literacy- the whole family benefits in unexpected ways.

Javier is almost ready to send in his citizenship application. He hopes to become a citizen in time for the November 2012 elections when he will be able to vote for the first time.

We also are inspired by the efforts of this father and daughter.

