

Clatsop Community College Volunteer Literacy Tutor News

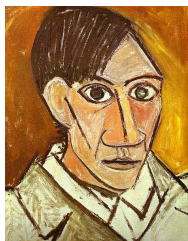
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Importance of Cultural Knowledge when Building Adult Reading Skills

You can't assume your student has built a complete picture from reading text. Be on the alert for socio-cultural assumptions that we take for granted that help us understand what we read. Our foreign-born (and some native-born) students often lack this background knowledge. We need to help them build meaning through context and history. I have been teaching a woman who is working hard to improve her reading comprehension skills in preparation for the GED tests. Quick forays into **Google Images and Maps** combined with **discussion** places the information she is reading into context. Today we looked at a map of Sweden and its geographic position in relation to the US, photos of Egyptian and Mexican pyramids and of frogs and toads (what's the difference?). We got through less text, but this student is making connections with other things she's learned and accumulating background knowledge. We also talked about Huck Finn and Ichabod Crane. Does your imagination conjure images of bare-foot boys adventuring along the banks of the Mississippi and ghostly rides through Sleepy Hollow? Never having heard of these characters, she has no images to connect with the text. Recommending **movies or documentaries** that tell these stories is another way to enrich text, build cultural connections and create do-able and countable homework hours.

I learned this lesson once when I had a student read a short story/bio of Picasso. He seemed to understand the words and answered the comprehension questions, but when we finished he said, "**Who's Picasso?**" A few images of the paintings and the man himself most likely would have prevented this.



Mexican Independence Day Celebration



Sunday

September 15, 2013

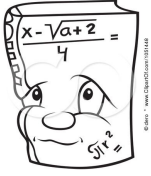
1465 Grand Ave Astoria

Please consider attending a celebration of Mexican Independence Day on **September 15** from **1:00- 4:30 pm** at St. Mary's Star of the Sea (in the gymnasium). **The music starts at 2 PM-** enjoy a **mariachi band**, Mexican foods, **Fort George beers**, and great raffle prizes- all proceeds will be used to support both **KMUN** and the **Lower Columbia Hispanic Council**, an important partner of the volunteer literacy program. Need info? **Contact Jorge at 325-4547.**

Percy will be out of the office from September 4 through September 16.

FREE CCC LIBRARY CARDS FOR ALL VOLUNTEER TUTORS

Remember that you all have free access to the CCC library collection to the Astoria Public Library and any library that appears on the passport list below:
<http://librariesoforegon.org/node/30> Seaside Library isn't participating in this program, but if you are 18 or less, there is grant money that gives free access to both the Astoria and Seaside collections, if you don't reside in the city limits.



Literacy Math

39 million Americans do not have a high school diploma, and current GED testing programs reach just **2-3%** of this population.

There are **3 million unfilled jobs** reported every month because our workforce lacks the skills and credentials to fill them.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-07-25/companies-say-3-million-unfilled-positions-in-skill-crisis-jobs.html>

ESL TIPS

Organize lessons by topic

Adult programs can be especially chaotic. One very effective way to organize what the students are learning is by topics, which the students themselves can determine. Within one topic (whether it's grocery shopping or world peace) there is plenty of room for adjusting to different students' levels and for offering help in all the skill areas the students might need (such as reading, pronunciation, spelling, fluency, etc.)

This will be more cohesive from the students' point of view than a series of unrelated language activities.

Reduce teacher talk

Pay attention to the percentage of class time devoted to your speech. Only at the very lowest language levels (and I can argue against this!) should you be talking more than your students.

Oral History Questionnaires

To generate discussion, consider an oral history approach using the following questions:

- describe the house you grew up in
- describe a meal at your childhood home--who is at the table, what do you eat, who serves, who eats first, who shops, who cooks and who cleans up
- who supported the family
- what kinds of jobs did family members have?



ESL Materials:

Some of you are familiar with the *The Pizza Tastes Great*, *The Salsa is Hot* and *The Chicken Smells Good* series. These leveled texts are popular with both students and tutors because of the dialogs, discussion questions, idioms, phrasal verbs and comprehension checks. Each text comes with a workbook for easy-to-assign homework.



Tutor Tip

Teach How to Say a Question

Practice saying questions with students until they learn correct inflection. Say a question and have them repeat it after you. Write the question so the student can read it as they say it.

Interested in a Healthy Living Lesson Plan for Lower/Intermediate Level ESL Students?

This real-life lesson plan requires some prep time by the tutor- finding pictures in magazines and gathering a few props. It provides **specific steps and strategies** for the tutor and hands-on activities for the students- cutting out their own pictures and making index cards.

Recently heard from a tutor: one of her students now attends doctor's appointments for her toddler and a new pregnancy without translation assistance!