

# CLATSOP COMMUNITY COLLEGE VOLUNTEER LITERACY TUTOR NEWS

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## Update: July 16<sup>th</sup> Tutor Training: Highlights from Andreina Velasco's training: *Working with ESL Students*

- The importance of *wait-time* in ESL tutoring *cannot be underestimated!* Wait for the ELL (English language learner) to respond just past the point of the delay becoming uncomfortable before stepping in to assist. And preferably you first will provide a cue, then the answer, if the student cannot respond.
- Closely tied to waiting and cueing for student responses is what Andy called the "art of teaching:" knowing when to push and when to pull back. This skill is developed through experience with intense listening/ and observation.
- Remember that learning a new language is an exercise in risk-taking! The "*I do/We do/You do*" technique, used in the proper sequence, ratchets down the risk level and promotes a gradual release of responsibility to the student from the tutor.

*I do- tutor demonstrates*  
*We do- student and tutor practice it together*  
*You do: the student does it*

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## TUTOR TIPS OF THE MONTH

### Study Materials

We have a questionnaire called "**Workplace Speaking Prompts**" that many of our tutors working with English language learners will find useful. It is a series of questions encompassing everyday "chit-chat" to skills a worker possesses. It serves as a good lead-in to building a resume because the student is asked to articulate past work experience and abilities. This exercise also asks for responses to questions often heard in job interviews. There are 29 questions and it will provide a basic lesson template for several lessons, maybe more. I've used it in class to good effect, and it is particularly useful and easy to use as a review exercise. This is appropriate for high beginner or intermediate/ advanced students. Please write or ask for it and I'll get it to you.

Another resource in the literacy office is Picture Stories: Language and Literacy Activities for Beginners. It offers a series of picture prompts and simple text for beginning ELLs and emergent readers. It's set up to create both speaking and short writing opportunities. There is a detailed introduction for instructors that offers many suggestions for using the picture prompts. Review opportunities are easy to create through variations on usage.

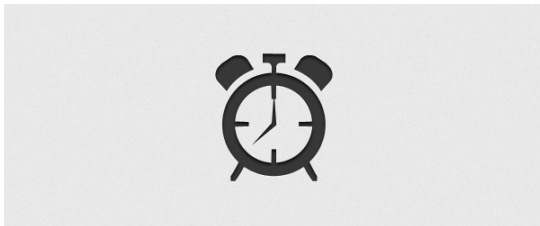
We have many new materials. Please call or write and let us know what you might need to enrich your lessons.

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- Always let ELLs know what the lesson is going to be about before starting- prime the student for what to expect.
- It is important to keep your body language neutral or engaged; the ELL picks up lots of information from how you sit, your facial expressions and how relaxed and alert you appear.
- Try teaching your students through Word Sorts: a way to categorize types of words (verbs, nouns, adjectives, etc.). This can be a warm-up activity, a way to review and a way to start making sentences with the "Sentencing Pattern Chart" that is included with this newsletter.
- The *Continuing Homework Debate*: we must negotiate with our students on the appropriate level and make it easy to do. Homework must *be doable and meaningful*.
- Think of tutoring as performing as a scaffold: first sheltering the student, providing "a hand and leg up" that will gradually allow the student to produce new language, and which will be progressively "discarded," as the student becomes progressively proficient with the skills to perform independently.

**More on . . . The 40 hour per year mark . . . .**

Have you developed a "doable" homework plan with your student? Is the student recording the time they spend on it? (A simple sign-in sheet will suffice.) The state rule is that the tutor assigns the homework and that a "reasonable" amount of time is spent on it weekly- probably no more than 3-4 hours a week. Let's get as many students as possible to reach this 40-hour threshold this program year! Call me for suggestions or materials to make it easy (or easier!).



***Is literacy tutoring Important?***

A recent report from the Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS) charts education and its relationship to higher earnings and lower unemployment rates. We all know that education gets us decent jobs and when layoffs occur, hired again faster than folks with out adequate education. The BLS tracked unemployment rates by level of educational attainment.

Level of Educational Attainment	Unemployment Rate in 2010
Doctoral Degree	1.9%
Professional Degree	2.4%
Master's Degree	4.0%
Bachelor's Degree	5.4%
Associate Degree	7.0%
Some college, no degree	9.2%
High School Diploma	10.3%
Less than a high school diploma	14.9%

The primary barrier our students face is lack of access to educational opportunities. We understand that family obligations, grueling and unpredictable work schedules in minimum wage jobs, compounded by the lack of transportation, child care and home-based Internet connectivity create roadblocks to self-improvement through literacy. Volunteer literacy tutors comprise approximately 50% of staff in adult education programs in the United States. You work with the most difficult to serve students. Your importance in creating opportunities for our students cannot be underestimated. Your work as a tutor is truly a grassroots effort that empowers vulnerable individuals, strengthens families and creates paths to personal success. Consider yourselves "sodbusters," breaking ground for both our students and for educational institutions that often lack the will and the resources to address their needs.