

CLATSOP COMMUNITY COLLEGE VOLUNTEER LITERACY TUTOR NEWS

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Criteria for Evaluating Tutors: *what's important?*

In a recent newsletter, I wrote about evaluating tutor/student sessions. This is an important piece in any smoothly functioning volunteer program that we haven't addressed yet in any systematic manner. Volunteers deserve feedback on their work, especially in a literacy program where they are working independently with students who have varied needs.

There will be two ways to assess your work. Included in this newsletter is a rubric for you to self-evaluate. Some of you have seen it because we discussed it at the October 9th tutor training. Additionally, my goal is to attend a tutoring session to observe each tutor's work, to offer encouragement and suggestions for improvement. I've looked on the Internet with little success for a ready-made assessment. But going back to our basic knowledge of adult learners, and from observing my first tutor/student pair today, I think the following criteria will guide future observations.

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TUTOR TIP OF THE MONTH

Contributed by Tutor Debbie Golden

"Noticias:" A warm up for one-on-one tutoring, small or large classes, all levels.

The tutor begins with a piece of personal news - birthday, anniversary - any personal milestone, fire in the neighborhood, going to the doctor, etc. The news must be the truth and it should be short and recent. The student or each member of the group contributes their own personal news in a sentence or two. The tutor asks a few questions according to the English language level of the student. The pace should be direct and fast. This short activity gets everyone "thinking" in English, builds community, and provides the pair/class an authentic opportunity to practice question and answer frames. Debbie says that after a few weeks of teacher initiation of the *noticias*, her intermediate students took the lead.

Noticias #2: Tutor and/or students present (once again in 1 or 2 statements) a local, national, or international news story. It can be a natural disaster, an election, a crime, a human interest story - but it should be "big" so that most students have heard of it. Visuals - maps for location, newspaper or magazine photos are helpful.

Extension Activity: Encourage students to watch a TV news story on the Spanish station in preparation for "*noticias*." After they understand the story and have background information, encourage them to re-watch the story in English. Debbie says this was VERY successful and almost all students took up the practice. A large world map is a necessity and it also takes the students out of their own small world and connects them to a larger picture.

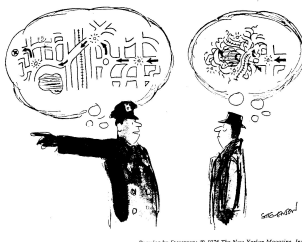
These activities might work well at the Elk Creek group, but would be an excellent warm up with individual students. Thanks, Debbie!

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- REVIEW: does the tutor start with a review of previous material? This implies that some record of the last session is at hand.
- Has the tutor developed a PEER RELATIONSHIP with his/her student? Adult learners do best when they are equal partners with the tutors.
- Is there an INTEGRATION of SKILLS throughout the lesson? Is the student practicing all of these- listening/speaking and reading/writing? This is how we retain more information.
- Is the tutor GENERATING LANGUAGE or just giving the student the words? We already have vast vocabularies; the student needs the practice.
- Is the student's BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE being utilized during the session? This ensures relevancy, equal participation and a memory node on to which new information can be attached.
- How does the tutor provide FEEDBACK to the student? Ideally, the tutor is providing a continuous message of encouragement and gentle correction.
- What is the PACE of the lesson? Does the student have time to digest or is just too much, too fast? Is the lesson ON TRACK, and not veering off on tangents that disrupt the learning process?
- Finally, and most importantly, is there a HEALTHY BALANCE between tutor explanation and student participation? Some explanation is necessary, but tutors must take care to avoid a lecture-style lesson at the expense of student input. Tutoring is most about drawing out the student.



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December Tutor Meetings

There will be no tutor meetings in December due to the busy holiday season. But in January, keep these dates in mind:

- **1/14/11: Tutor Appreciation Lunch**, Columbia Hall, rm. 219, from 11:30-1:00 PM. Expect a more formal invitation later.
- **1/24/11: Volunteer Literacy Tutor Orientation** for new and newly practicing tutors.
- **1/27/11: Informal Tutor Gathering**-meet your fellows and discuss what's important to you.
- **02/11**: sometime in February, we will have a tutor training addressing a specific skill.

Departmental News:

11/12/10 Training Recap

6 people attended the Volunteer Literacy Tutor Orientation training held on November 12. We presented a profile of the VLT program, discussed the differences between adult and child learners, and mulled the barriers our students face as they seek to improve their skills. Thanks to all who attended. We hope the training gave all participants a basic idea of what the program and our students are all about. We would appreciate any feedback to help us improve the trainings.