

Literacy Volunteers of Coconino County

LVCC Reader

SPRING 2006

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2005 - 2006

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*Example isn't another
way to teach, it is the
only way to teach.*

– Albert Einstein

Sharing the Stage At the Book Festival

The ninth annual Northern Arizona Book Festival weekend is coming up, and it will be full of wonderful readings, workshops and panels that shouldn't be missed. Some of the proceeds benefit LVCC, and we have a learner and tutor participating.

Faustino Valenzuela has been working with tutor Katie Burdette for two years, who takes a literary approach to her tutoring because of Faustino's interests in literature and poetry. Each of their sessions ends with a reinforcing poem, story or article. Katie encourages other tutors to look for good mono and bilingual story selections at the libraries in town (including ours!), and to give learners "thinking time."

While Faustino has written poetry in his native language for years, he has only recently started to write poetry in English with Katie's help and support. In fact, she is supporting his poetry by giving him meaningful homework assignments to write poems about certain topics. Since learning with Katie, Faustino's reading abilities have improved dramatically, and his goal is to continue to improve his writing capabilities.

He would someday like to publish his poetry.

Don't miss hearing Mr. Valenzuela speak at the Northern Arizona Book Festival on Saturday, April 22nd promptly at 7:00 pm before poetry readings that include U.S. Poet Laureate Ted Kooser at the Orpheum Theatre. He is excited about reading one of his poems and talking about learning English. Check out his poem about Spring in this issue of Learner News.

One of our tutors, Ana Flores, will also be a participant in the festival. She is one of the members of "6 Voices and a Gong," a group that utilizes Reader's Theatre to perform Phillis Thompson's authentic *Dear Alice: Letters Home From American Teachers Learning to Live in China*. The show will be performed free during the festival on Sunday, April 23rd at 5:00 pm at Heritage Square, as well as at the Coconino Center for the Arts on April 15th and 29th as part of the Recycled Art Show. Attend festival events in the name of literacy!

Welcome New Staff

LVCC would like to introduce our new AmeriCorps volunteer for 2006, Jordan Ripley. She recently graduated from NAU and is spending this year working at both the central AmeriCorps office at NAU and LVCC.

Jordan is excited to be a part of the LVCC team as well as to be involved in the important area of literacy in our community. She is looking forward to meeting everyone. She is also just starting out as a tutor, and would love to hear any tips you have to share.

Call Jordan anytime you need support at the LVCC office: 556-0313.

Computer Give-Away

We are working on updating our computers, so we may have a few older ones to give away in upcoming months. Please let us know if you or your learner is in need of one, and we will be happy to put that name on a list.

Some learners might be interested in learning about and working on computers. Please let us know if your learner is interested in a computer class. See our new website for many online sites to help with English under Learner and Tutor Resources.

<www.LVCCreads.org>



Book Review: *English- No Problem!*

By Jordan Ripley


English-No Problem! Language for Home, School, Work, and Community is an attractive and easy to use graded series for English Language Learners (ELL). The series includes a teacher's guide, lesson book, workbook, audiotape and a book of reproducible masters for additional lesson materials. You will find materials for four beginning levels at the LVCC library.

Each level in the series is divided into thematic units based around real-life topics. Each unit corresponds with goals that learners may have. The series addresses vocabulary and survival life skills pertaining to health and shopping, socializing, the workplace, education, community connections and interpersonal communication.

Each unit includes activities that utilize speaking, listening, reading and writing. Additional activities are suggested in each lesson that could be of particular importance to a learner. The series is designed as an overall curriculum, with links from each unit to the next. However, if a tutor and learner are looking for materials to focus on a certain goal, they could look through the different themes of *English-No Problem!* and choose one unit that addresses the goals of the learner.

English-No Problem! features vibrant color, real-life pictures, stories and scenarios. With a variety of activity ideas designed for adults and a clear, well-explained teacher's manual, the series is an excellent resource.

Save the Date!

- Apr. 15** **Workshop: Accent Modification.** Saturday, 10 am to 1 pm. Learn more efficient ways to teach your student American pronunciation from NAU's Communication Science and Disorder graduate students. The instructors will discuss various activities and strategies to maximize learners' comprehensibility.
- Apr. 21-23** Mark your calendars for the **Northern Arizona Book Festival**, which is always full of wonderful readings, workshops and panel discussions with various authors at a variety of places around town. Keep an eye out for the schedule that is usually in *Flagstaff Live!* as well as on the website, <www.nazbookfestival.org>, which has much more information. Remember, some of the proceeds benefit LVCC!
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- Apr. 27** April is National Volunteer Appreciation Month. Join us for a potluck at the LVCC office on Thursday, April 27th from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm. Bring your favorite dish— we will provide plates, utensils and drinks. Thanks to all volunteers for your hard work!
- May 25** **Workshop: The Teaching and Learning Process for Adults With Learning Disabilities.** On Thursday, May 25th, LVCC's Laura Bohland will present a summary on a recent research-based training given by the National Institute for Literacy.
- May 4** The annual **Mountain Spelling Bee** fundraiser is coming up on Thursday, May 4th. The Spelling Bee is for adults, and is sponsored by Flagstaff's business community. Local celebrities, dinner, a cash bar and outrageous words make for great fun. Please let LVCC know if you are interested in being a sponsor or just helping out. Or, simply attend the event as an audience member to support the organization. The cost for dinner and a fun-filled evening is \$35. Call 556-0313 for more information.
- May 13** Author and NAU professor **Monica Brown** will be at LVCC on Saturday, May 13th from 1 pm to 4 pm. Join us for music, interactive storytelling with salsa dancing, refreshments and fun! Bring your learners and their families to this special event. Dr. Brown will be reading her award-winning children's book ***My name is/ Me Ilamo Celia*** along with ***My name is/ Me Ilamo Gabriela***. Please share the invitation flyer enclosed in the Learner News insert with your learner.

2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy Results

The recent US National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) results were released last December after a long wait. Unfortunately, there was generally little change compared to the last adult literacy rates from 1992, when the general population was warned about the higher than expected rates of illiteracy in the country. According to Robert Wedgeworth, President of ProLiteracy Worldwide, "we should not be complacent about the fact that adults' ability to read and do math in English is no worse than the last time they were tested. In ten years literacy rates in this country may have stayed the same, but the world around us has not stood still. Managing the increased complexities of economic, social, and political life in the U.S. requires greater literacy skills, not less nor the same as ten years ago." Global expectations of literacy have grown considerably in the last ten years. Literacy, as defined by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, is "an individual's ability to read, write, and speak English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual and in society." Thus the literacy capabilities needed in our lives go beyond reading as the information explosion continues.

This survey included a random sample of over 19,000 Americans sixteen or older, and was conducted by the US Department of Education's National Center for Educational Statistics. Three types of literacy were surveyed: prose (search/ understand/ use information, e.g., books, magazines or newspapers), document (search/ understand/ use information from other formats, e.g., forms, tables or lists), and quantitative (identify and perform computations using numbers in printed materials). The highest levels of literacy in prose declined slightly since 1992, while document and quantitative literacy rose slightly. African Americans were the only group whose levels of literacy increased significantly across the board, while Whites and Asian Americans rose by a slight degree. However, Hispanic Americans scored much lower in prose and document literacy, with many more people falling in the "Below Basic" category (40% of the category were Hispanic), which certainly may be attributed to recent immigration rates.

There were five major levels of literacy represented:

Nonliterate, Below Basic, Basic, Intermediate and Proficient. Representatively, 5% or 11 million adults are considered completely nonliterate in English, 14% or 30 million are in the Below Basic category, 29% or 63 million are in the Basic category, 44% or 95 million are in the Intermediate level, and 13% or 28 million are in the highest level, Proficient. Those with Below Basic skills may not be capable of reading a newspaper, having a simple conversation or reading a prescription bottle. Furthermore, according to the survey, even "average" adults have low skills, and may not be capable of interpreting tables or comparing articles. The average score was about 280/500 points. Moreover, only 41% of the highest educational levels (post Bachelor) were proficient in prose; 31% in document; and 36% in quantitative literacy.

Some interesting findings: educational attainment has increased in the last ten years, but prose and document literacy scores of adults at the highest level of education has decreased by about 10%. However, those without high school degrees or the equivalent accounted for 55% of the Below Basic category, while being only 15% of the population represented. 46% of those in the Below Basic category had some sort of disability, and half were not in the workforce. The oldest groups improved in all areas, and women scored higher in general than men on prose and document literacy, while men scored higher on quantitative literacy. But most interesting is the lack of significant change since 1992.

Literacy is one of the largest contributing factors to the achievement of goals and potential relating to such aspects of life as health, employment and earnings, children's education and competition in the global economy. On a national level, we are focused on childhood literacy through No Child Left Behind, but there also needs to be more attention given to adult literacy in this country. Wedgeworth continues to say that "it cannot be emphasized enough that there is a huge impact on this country when many people cannot read or write well . . . if the U.S. is to remain competitive in the increasingly globalized economy, if we are to ensure stable and responsive government, and if we expect to leave no child behind in education, we cannot afford to leave behind a substantial number of adults either."

Tutor Tip: "Share Your Thoughts"

Many poor readers don't know that good reading is an active process. They think that if the words have been decoded or pronounced that reading has happened. You can show your learner some of what is going on in your mind if you share your thoughts with him or her.

Try reading a story to your learner and simultaneously voicing your thought process.



When you pause from the reading, comment on what you've just read AND what you expect to read next. You might point to the text while you read, and to your head while you're "thinking out loud." It is important for us to bring this kind of thinking to our learners' awareness. See more tutoring tips from Contra Costa County Library at <http://ccclib.org/psc/tutor_tips.html>.



715 N. Humphreys Phone: 928-556-0313
Flagstaff, AZ 86001 Fax: 928-556-9360

“One adult unable to
read is one too many in
America.”

-U.S. Secretary of Education
Margaret Spellings.

*Changing lives
through literacy*

LVCC's New Website

LVCC would like to announce its new website at <www.LVCCreads.org>. We are excited about this new resource for tutors, friends and learners, and we appreciate any comments, suggestions or concerns that you may have about it.

On the website, you will find such elements as tutor tips, web resources, literacy news, upcoming events, tutoring stories and a reporting form. Please take the time to visit the pages, surf around and let us know what you think as your thoughts are important to us. The site will be updated quarterly with more tips and stories that tutors may have to share with each other. Feel free to use the online reporting form to report your hours if you wish. Look for the site later this month.

A Great Online Resource

The website <<http://www.englishpage.com/>> is a great resource for those tutors with learners who would like to practice their English grammar skills. It has a wide variety of online materials to aid in the process of learning English. The site includes lessons on grammar, vocabulary and reading and writing, as well as a reading room, games, flashcards, mini-tutorials and a student forum.

This is a site that you might direct a more advanced learner to or work with a lower-level student on together. We have four computers available here at the office, and of course the libraries also have computers available for use. Keep in mind that the definition of “literacy” now includes technological abilities!

Newsletter Survey

Hello tutors and friends of LVCC! Please complete this survey and drop it off at our office. We would appreciate input from you in order to improve the usefulness of this newsletter. Thank you!

1. Do you want to continue receiving the newsletter via regular mail, or would you rather receive it via email? _____

2. Do you find the newsletter useful? What would make it more practical and helpful to you? _____

3. What do you like best about the newsletter? _____

4. Do you use the LVCC Learner News inserts in your lessons with your learner? What would make them more beneficial? What topics would you like to see addressed? _____

5. What kinds of articles would you like to see in the newsletter? Please circle.

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|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Tutor tips* | 9. Learner/ Tutor written articles* |
| 2. Events | 10. Fundraising |
| 3. Board information | 11. Book reviews* |
| 4. Staff information | 12. Program activities |
| 5. National literacy news | 13. Tutors sharing lessons* |
| 6. Tutor features | 14. Other literacy programs |
| 7. Helpful resources | 15. Other volunteer opportunities |
| 8. What's new in the library | *We could use your help with these |

16. Other: _____

6. Other comments: _____

