



LITERACY MATTERS

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Literacy Matters is a recurring publication of Literacy Nassau, Inc.

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EXCITING NEW RESOURCE FOR ADULT EDUCATION PRACTITIONERS

(reprinted from Literacy New York's website)

The Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE) announced a new partnership with Google--the Applied Digital Skills Curriculum.

Applied Digital Skills is Google's free, online digital literacy curriculum which has lessons for a wide range of students, from late elementary-school students to independent adult learners. Instead of teaching digital skills with an instructional manual, the curriculum uses a series of videos to guide students through creating a project from scratch. This means that students who complete a lesson leave with a useful project such as a resume, a monthly budget, a project plan, and more.

Digital literacy, problem-solving, and creativity are often cited as essential skills for jobs of the future, but a report from The Economist's Intelligence Unit reveals that among 18- to 25-year-olds, less than half (44%) believe that their education system is providing them with the skills they need to enter the country's workforce. As technology becomes more integrated into our modern lives, it's important to understand how digital skills fit into a wide range of workforce positions and how they will help students succeed in their current jobs and future careers.

Applied Digital Skills has over 40 lessons—some that take only 45 minutes to complete. Office workers aren't the only ones who need digital skills; employees in restaurants, hotels, and warehouses, among others, are increasingly in need of developing digital literacy. The lessons available are based on the extensive research and focused testing of the in-demand digital skills needed for today's evolving workforce.

Literacy New York encourages practitioners to explore the array of services offered. These are particularly effective lessons for students who you may not be seeing as often during the summer because many of the lessons are self-directed and can be done from anywhere, even on vacation or on the go! All you need is access to the Internet.

To use this great resource, visit:

<https://educateandelevate.org/google/>
Then, click on "Google's Applied Digital Literacy Skills" and a choice will come up for teachers or for students. If you are unable to guide your student through the lessons (say, due to your own long vacation!), there are video hosts who can do the work for you. This is an excellent way to keep students engaged in meaningful skills during the busy summer months!

THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

There is strong evidence that once the final bell rings and summer officially begins, so does a phenomenon called "brain drain" that affects millions of kids every year. But, what we hear much less about is the fact that adults suffer from it too. The break in our usual rhythm, the addition of vacations, and of course, the nice weather all contribute to our inability to concentrate or remember things.

As you can imagine, this trend exists not only for ourselves but for our students - of all ages! - as well. This is why experts say that summer reading is so important.

For adult students, a good goal is the completion of at least one book per month. Younger ones can get away with one book over the entire summer. Choose topics or authors you enjoy so that it doesn't feel like a chore. If we associate enjoyment with summer reading, we can teach our students to become lifelong readers. Happy summer!



The change in schedule can cause a "summer slide" in adults as well as kids (but it sure is fun)!

Karen 😊



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: FLOR ABBAS

(submitted by Cindy Cabrera)

Flor has been part of our program since October of 2018. She has taken our Advanced ESOL classes in Jericho and has really been a model student for her classmates. She is currently interning with Literacy Nassau with the goal of starting up her career. Here is what she had to say:

When and why did you come to the United States?

I came to the United States in 1999 from Lima, Peru. I was planning to go college here but I only took a few months of ESL classes. I realized that I needed to work and I was alone without any support from my family or friends.

How did you adjust to a new country?

Adjusting to a new country wasn't easy without family and my English was very limited. I tried my best to live and adjust myself to this beautiful culture. As a kid, I remember watching movies from the United States; and I've learned from that. Since then my dream did come true to come and live here.

Is learning English easy or difficult?

It's been many years that I've been living here and I still feel that I need to learn more English. It hasn't been easy for me. I have a husband and two kids, and that was a main reason why I didn't go back to school or work. I feel that I wasn't able to practice my English skills very much; especially my grammar and writing skills.

Why did you choose to take classes with Literacy Nassau?

I was taking ESL classes with BOCES, an adult education program; one of my friends there recommended me to go to Literacy Nassau. She informed me that they offered more of a flexible schedule and that they had great teachers.

How has our program impacted you?

This program is fantastic! I like my teachers, and the way they teach. I really like the books that have been chosen. It is very understandable to improve my grammar. And I'm happy with the schedules and locations where I'm taking my classes.

What is your current goal?

My goal is to improve as much I can so I can go back to college to take some courses, and eventually find a good job. I'm doing all this for myself and to show to my kids that nothing is impossible to accomplish. If you believe in yourself, it is important to keep going even if you are living in different country.

What is some advice you would give to all our tutors (teachers) and students?

My advice to teachers is that in every class it is important to review the homework. Also, make sure your students understand what is being taught. Some students may understand more than others. Make sure to write down words or phrases that we may not understand. My advice for the students is to keep working hard on your English. Make sure to take some free time reviewing what has been taught in class. I know everybody is busy working, raising a family, etc. but English is so important for your future. Your family will have a better life in this wonderful country and there are a lot of opportunities. Keep on going.



Student and LN Intern Flor Abbas

RESOURCE CORNER: WE SPEAK NYC

(submitted by Kate Quijano)

I recently attended a Professional Development seminar in Brooklyn. While I was there, other colleagues shared different resources that they like to use with their ESL students. I took a look at several and as soon as I saw this one, I knew I had to share it with all of you! It is called **We Speak NYC** and it is a **FREE** resource available online - no need to even create an account with them. It contains videos created specifically for English Language Learners. They speak slowly, use beginner/intermediate vocabulary, and focus on topics relevant to the immigrant community.



It is particularly interesting for NYC residents because the videos are filmed there and they will recognize many of the locations. For Long Islanders, they may not be as familiar with the locations and some of the community resources they suggest may be different, but they are still very good for building language skills as well as career skills. You could always take a field trip to see some of the places in the video. You could also research local resources related to those that are discussed in the video and compare NYC to Nassau County government and resources.

All of the videos are presented in story format and resemble an interesting TV series rather than a documentary/interview format. They have two seasons available so far with several episodes in each season. There are various topics so you can pick and choose whichever are relevant to your student - no need to watch them in order. The episodes include the following topics: coming to the United States, money, health, weddings, hospitals, domestic violence, storms, food pantries, job search, worker's rights, making friends, legal services, and mental health.

Each episode includes a script that students can use to follow along and match written to spoken language. It also has a study guide, which has worksheets and activities related to the video, and a related short story which has concepts and vocabulary from the video.

They provide an "Images and Words" resource which has photos related to the concept from the video with questions for students to discuss about the photo as well as vocabulary words used in both statements and questions. I thought that the "Images and Words" activity would be particularly helpful in making students more comfortable with the section of the BEST PLUS (the pre- and post- test we use with our ESL students) that asks students to tell about a picture. They can practice describing a picture in this activity and extending their language complexity which will help them progress to the next level in our programs.

I hope you are able to utilize this free, educational, and entertaining resource with your students. You can visit the website at:

<https://wespeaknyc.cityofnewyork.us/episodes/>

TUTOR SPOTLIGHT: DENISE HIBBERT

(submitted by Kim Nau)

I recently had the opportunity to chat with one of our Orton-Gillingham tutors, Denise Hibbert. Denise is the only tutor in our Orton-Gillingham program who is not a teacher by trade. Her success with OG is a testament to the power of hard work and perseverance. Below are some highlights of our conversation.

What made you initially want to become involved with Literacy Nassau?

I have been volunteering with Literacy Nassau for 3 years. What made me initially want to become involved with Literacy Nassau was simply that I enjoy volunteering. I have volunteered for one organization or another over the 15 years that I have lived on Long Island so when I saw the article about LN in the Baldwin Library newsletter I instantly made the decision to go to the next orientation.

Tell me about your previous experience tutoring an adult compared to working with a child?

Prior to tutoring a child, I tutored 3 adults of varying backgrounds. For me it has been equally rewarding whether it's an adult or a child but I find that tutoring a child comes with more challenges. I feel the need to approach my student with a higher level of patience and sensitivity, especially when the child feels as though he is less intelligent than his/her peers as a result of teasing. I also find that it weighs on me a little more because I don't want to do anything that could set him back even further.

Tell me about your current student.

I began tutoring my student in September of 2018 and he was fairly shy with me initially but it did not take long for us to get comfortable with one another. We see each other at least twice a week and rarely does a lesson go by where he doesn't make me laugh. He is quite the character.

He was very excited about learning to write cursive and he took to it quite well. Sometimes when he loses focus, his letters change size or he writes outside the lines. He actually criticizes his writing much more than I do because he wants to get better at it. I can tell that he is very bright and very creative because of the way he always comes up with a story or a witty line about whatever we are working on at the time. His mind never seems to stop going. Sometimes I can literally see the wheels turning when I look into his eyes and he has lost focus of the lesson. I can tell the exact moment when I have lost him to a voice, a noise or a movement. I know when a thought has interrupted my lesson and taken hold of his mind.

Some days are frustrating for both of us and some days we are high-fiving through half of the class because he has so many correct answers. IT'S A JOURNEY and I am enjoying taking it with him! He is a very special young man!



OG tutor Denise Hibbert

What is the most challenging part of being an Orton-Gillingham tutor?

The most challenging part of being an OG tutor for me is creating lesson plans. In the beginning, I often felt as if the lesson plan were not good enough to be of any help to my student. It has gotten better but I still feel that I have a long way to go.

What is the most interesting thing that you have learned in your Orton-Gillingham (OG) training?

The most interesting thing that I have learned in my OG training is in regards to understanding dyslexia and that it is not only defined by the inability to recognize letters or numbers but may also involve other symptoms such as the inability to put thoughts into words properly, experiencing attention deficit disorders or hyperactivity, or suffering from an inability to retain information.

What advice do you have for someone who is considering becoming an Orton-Gillingham practitioner?

My advice to anyone who is considering becoming an OG practitioner is that if your heart is not in it, it's not for you! It's your heart that's going to keep you going, it's not wanting to give up on this other human being. It's wanting to be your best so that they can get to be their best, or close.

What do you like to do when you are not volunteering?

When I am not volunteering, I help families realize their dream of home ownership. (*Denise is a great realtor if you need one!*) I enjoy spending time with my children (both adults now) and my friends. I am learning sign language and trying to become fluent in Spanish or sometimes you can find me just crashing on the couch watching movies.



Warm wishes to the following tutors born in June!

Adolph Anglade – Janet Bazuro – Judy Beckman
 Stephen Bendernagel – Teresa Benedetto – Mel Breshin
 Marilyn Clarke – Marla Cohan – Nadine Connors – Carol Davan
 Denise Dressler – Beth Dyckman – Betty Engel
 Michele Fielding – Dianne Fraiman – Sheila Frank -
 Edward Garfinkel – Daniel Goldschmidt – Vicki Goldstein
 Coleen Graziose – Robert Greenberg – John Guerin
 Denise Hibbert – Maureen Hogan – Jennifer Hopper
 Valerie Ignatowitz – Kathleen Kelty – Lisa Kornberg
 Muriel Leonard – Carolyn Meditz – Brianna Meurer
 Karen Micciche – Edward Paley – Alison Picarella
 Celeste Pomerantz – Jennifer Power – Maxine Schmerzler
 Susan Santoro – Kathryn St. Juste – Monique Thomas
 Matilda Tobin – Sandra Villatoro – Eileen Watts – Angell Xiang



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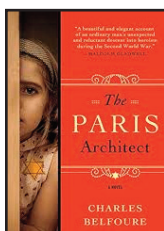
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SUMMER READING

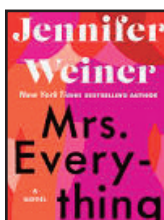
Summer is almost here! We have peeled off those layers of winter clothing and restocked our summer wardrobes. We are happily spending the longer days outside and some of us have vacation plans booked. Part of our summer planning includes making sure we have a good book to read with us at all times. Here are some of our staff suggestions and current reads. We know you all must have some great recommendations for us as well and we'd love to hear about them. Please feel free to submit your own summer reading book recommendation along with a review of your book for us to include in our next newsletter. Be the first person to email us a complete submission and you will receive a \$5.00 Starbucks gift card to enjoy. Send us your submissions by May 31st to mail@literacynassau.org. We look forward to hearing your suggestions and reading your reviews.



Renae's pick: *The Paris Architect* by Charles Belfoure
The book takes place during World War II. An architect is given the opportunity to help others, even if it can get him killed. How much are you willing to help others in need, without knowing them? Would you be the hero or turn away from those who can use your help?



Cindy's pick: *What to Expect When You're Expecting* by Heidi Murkoff
My August 31st due date is approaching quickly and my husband and I are trying to prepare for our first child to come to this world. I'm learning the different stages of development of my child and how to take care of a newborn and myself.



Karen's pick: *Mrs. Everything* by Jennifer Weiner
This is on my summer reading list but it won't be released until June 11th. It chronicles the stories of two sisters born in the 1950's and how each of them navigates their lives in a rapidly changing world. Jennifer Weiner is one of my favorite authors; her new book promises to be witty and timeless.



Kate's picks: *The Brides of Beckham* series by Kirsten Osbourne

This is a historical western series set in the late 1800s, as the West was being settled primarily by men. This series follows the Mail Order Bride Agency of Beckham, Massachusetts. Each book is an individual romance story between two people who are matched through the agency. It is interesting to hear of the simplicity of life and the hard work that was required to complete everyday tasks we take for granted now due to technology. It reminds me of stories my grandmother always told me (even though she was born about 30 years later) of cooking and cleaning taking the entire day and all of the things they never had in her day. I have greatly enjoyed working my way through this series and I imagine you will enjoy it as light summer reading.

