

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



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A NOTE FROM OCARIA: THOUGHTS ABOUT SMALL GROUP INSTRUCTION

Dear Tutors,

I am so excited to talk to you about Small Group Instruction! Thanks to the generous support of the John and Janet Kornreich Charitable Foundation, we launched this exciting new program this past fall with seven classes. The goal was to eliminate the wait time for English language instruction for our high intermediate students when they register for our program. Students who are assessed at the "High-Intermediate" level have enough vocabulary to get their point across but they need to build their language complexity skills. That means they need vocabulary, idioms, current events, basic writing skills and of course conversational practice. By meeting twice a week (for four hours total), these students receive 48 hours of instruction in a span of 12 weeks. The idea is to provide a safe setting for them to gain the confidence to continue practicing their English outside of class. It's a small group, which isn't intimidating like a large ESL class can be at first. Therefore, after we post test them at the end of the 12 weeks, depending on their commitment and attendance, they can move up to one of our larger ESL classes or we can refer them to one of our many adult education partner agencies in the community.

A small group consists of 5 to 7 students, depending on the space in the library. With this number, tutors have the opportunity to assign role playing activities and group work. Tutors are also provided with weekly theme based lesson plans, which I create, and are encouraged to prepare specific pronunciation and grammar activities for their students. Each tutor receives a box of materials to help guide instruction and make each week fun! Boxes include games and handouts, a small whiteboard, Rory's Story Cubes, and much more.

If you are a certified teacher, I encourage you to contact me and we'll set up a training so you can get started right away! We ask for a certified background because I trust that you are comfortable with lesson planning and working with a group, when you've already had a class of 20 or more students in the past. SGI is also a great option for our retired teachers who spend their winters away, because you can engage with groups in the spring, summer, and fall, and then take 12 weeks off without feeling like you're leaving your student in the lurch.

I look forward to hearing from you and taking this new program to the next level!

Sincerely,
 Ocaria Silva
 Literacy Specialist

THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Hi Everyone,

It's hard to believe spring is on the horizon. Most of you know I have two little girls, and for those of you with toddlers, I'm sure you'll agree that winter is the worst. My husband and I have learned to harness our creative energy playing indoor games like dress up, freeze tag, and transforming our dining room table into a fort. My children have an amazing tenacity for reinventing themselves: one day they're Mike and Sulley from Monsters, Inc.; the next day they're Doc McStuffins and Lambie. My husband and I struggle to keep up! It's the same thing with the students at Literacy Nassau: they're so committed to learning English, becoming citizens, getting better jobs, and reinventing themselves in pursuit of the American dream - we struggle to keep up with them too! We've been hosting more student registrations and have placed new SGI groups all over the county, but we need more tutors to meet the ever-growing demand for services. This spring, convince a friend to join our tutoring efforts - or consider taking on a small group if you have a teaching background. We need all the help we can get!

Karen



In celebration of winter, my daughters spent countless hours proudly dressed up like Elsa and Anna from Frozen!

WHAT'S NEW

Thanks to the newest member of our team Kim Nau (see [Welcome Kim!](#) on right), the Literacy Nassau website has been updated! The address is still the same – www.LiteracyNassau.org – but it now has an updated Tutor Resources page with engaging new resources you can use to prepare your lessons, updates on Literacy Nassau in the news and upcoming events like (un)Scrabble. While you're there, please be sure to share how you and your student are progressing on the brand new Tutor Exchange page. It's like an on-line, ongoing Tutor Roundtable, offering a great way to share successes, useful resources and encouragement for one another in your tutoring efforts. We've

also added a Student Showcase to highlight some of our students' writing samples and a Student Testimonial page. For your next lesson, why don't you and your student spend some time developing a testimonial about their experience at Literacy Nassau and submit it online? We love to hear feedback on how we're doing!

Also new for 2015 is the addition of [Literacy Matters](#) as a monthly publication! Look for us every month in your mailbox and online, as we will have information about recruitment efforts, a calendar of events, puzzles, relevant resource articles, and much more. Literacy Nassau is growing so quickly, a quarterly newsletter is no longer enough! See you next month!

WELCOME KIM!

Kim Nau recently joined the team at Literacy Nassau as Office Administrator and ESL Teacher for our ONA program. Kim has a Bachelor's in Elementary Education and Spanish and a Master's in TESOL from Hofstra University. Kim has a passion for language learning and for helping immigrants pursue their dreams: "I think it's so courageous for someone to come to another country and learn a new language and start a new life." Kim is also responsible for our social media (please "like" us on Facebook) and the Literacy Nassau website. Welcome Kim!



TUTOR SPOTLIGHT: IRIS GROVER

(Submitted by Iris Grover)

I have been a volunteer with Literacy Nassau for nine years, and have done many things: I've run conversation groups, done testing, volunteered in the office, and taught Tutor Training Workshops and a Writing IST. As a teacher in the new Small Group Instruction program, however, I am the most involved, rewarded, and happy than I've ever been before.

I was no longer involved with a conversation group, and had been thinking about perhaps taking on a small group of higher-level ESL students to work on writing skills. When I read about the new SGI program in this publication it sounded like something I would enjoy. I spoke to Ocaria Silva, the Literacy Specialist who is doing a great job running the program, and she gently persuaded me to commit to it.

SGI is both similar to and different from 1-to-1 tutoring. Of course the main goal of helping students become better at English is the same. Individual tutoring, though, is focused on your student's goals and needs, and as a tutor that is what you base your lessons on, and the commitment is open-ended, with tutoring often continuing for many years. With SGI, the tutor is really a teacher, with lessons based on provided curriculum, in addition to grammar and pronunciation work that the teacher has noted as necessary for the class. It is also presented to the students as a class, not

not tutoring or a more informal conversation group, with attendance and the likelihood of homework stressed to them before they start, and all classes meet for 2 two-hour sessions twice a week for 12 weeks only. Also, SGI students all test at the High Intermediate level of English proficiency. These two factors seem to insure a high level, committed group of students.

The high level and commitment of the students make being an SGI teacher very rewarding. We have recently begun the second session of classes, and my new group is as dedicated and appreciative as the first one was. I hadn't anticipated how difficult it would be to part with my first group, and the feeling was mutual. There were lots of hugging and some tears, and we do plan to reunite at Recognition Night. Also very rewarding was seeing the students become more confident English speakers. They all shared the goal of being able to speak English better, and giving them a place where they could feel safe speaking English, as well as lots of practice and instruction where needed in vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation helped them meet that goal. Every student in the first series of SGI made educational gain, which was rewarding for everyone concerned. If you are a licensed teacher of any subject or level, I highly recommend this opportunity.

There were, of course, some challenges involved in being an SGI teacher. The chief one for me was giving two mornings a week to the program, as well as (for some

reason unanticipated!) necessary preparation time for each lesson. I have so much fun teaching the class, however, that the first challenge has pretty much disappeared. Although Ocaria provided lessons and is always available for support in her patient and eager way, I did need to spend a great deal of time during my first series of classes in finding sources for work on grammar and pronunciation. The second session and those to come are much easier though, because I've already done the research.



Above: Iris (center) poses with SGI students. Below: The group celebrates with a pot luck on the last day of class!



CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to our newly trained tutors:

Joseph Amaral	Celeste Atlas-Pomerantz
Aaron Becker	Judy Beckman
Ira Berkowitz	Susan Braun
Geraldine Carbone	Carol Castle
Marla Cohan	Kathryn Crescimanni
Claire Deroche	Christine Dorn-Moldovan
Avigail Feinstein	Sandra Fox
Charlotte Gabriele	Lawrence Galvin
Billy Goldner	Dr. Robert Greenberg
Charles Jencius	Marilyn Jurgensen
Susan Kimmel	Jeff Konzet
Betty Kurzman	Sandy Lakotta
Susan Levy	Alyssa Lopez
Jill Lupski	Carol Markman
Robert Markman	Angela Milora
Paulette Murphy	Louise Nachshen
Antonia Obara	Janet O'Keefe
Ronnie Packer	Samantha Pardal
Saamil Patel	Madelyn Perlmutter
Gloria Petitto	Patricia Regan
Jeanne Reilly	Teresa Rienzie
Evelyn Rosa	Claudia Salazar
Stephen Salyk	Janine Sanchez
Elizabeth Saurel-	Kathy Scheiner
Schumacher	Robin Schiffman
Neil Seid	Sophia Shapiro
Ruth Stern	Jim Tenney
Matilda Tobin	Debbie Uckele
Lisa Valencia	Janine Washinger
Rita Wienclaw	Joseph Wint
Gina Wood Hart	

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: BOBBY ABBAS

Umama recently sat down with student Bobby Abbas, who shared his reflections on becoming a U.S. Citizen along with his wife, student Farzana Malik.

1. How long have you lived in the United States?

Bobby: Almost 24 years and my family came 12 years ago from Pakistan.

2. Why did you come to the U.S.?

Bobby: I won a lottery for a green card to the U.S. And I received my green card in 1991.

3. Why did you & Farzana want to become U.S. citizens?

Bobby: Because for a good life. There are many opportunities, work, education and different opportunities.

4. How did you prepare for the citizenship test?

Bobby: We have a private tutor who helps us with our English. We practiced in English classes with Digna. We applied for citizenship with Umama.

5. What are some of your future goals for you family?

Bobby: I want to vote and get a better job for my family.



Bobby and Farzana (pictured right) with their 4 sons after receiving their naturalization certificates.

BRAIN TEST

JUST FOR FUN: Solve the combination of words, letters, figures or symbols below to create 4 common sayings or phrases. This type of puzzle is called a *rebus* -- a word and symbol puzzle that dates back more than 2,000 years. It regained popularity as a form of correspondence in the 18th century and into the 19th century among writers such as Voltaire and Lewis Carroll.

Answers: Back in 5 minutes; Too little, too late; A little rough around the edges; A shot in the dark.

JUST FOR TUTORS

As a tutor with Literacy Nassau, you've seen the joy a student experiences when they master a difficult skill, sound or vocabulary word. It is a feeling that is contagious and creates memorable moments for you and your student. Once you've seen and experienced it, you'll never forget it.

In October 2014, we introduced our Refer a Friend program for the month of November. Based on the feedback we received, we decided to extend it year round in 2015! When your friend signs up for and completes a Tutor Training Workshop with Literacy Nassau, you'll receive a \$10 Amazon gift card as a thank you from us. It's a great way to treat yourself to that great book that you've wanted to read!

Here's how it works:

1. Share your tutoring story with your friends to help them understand what it's like to make a difference in the life of someone who can't read, write or speak English. Ask them if they'd be interested in learning more about our program.
2. If their answer is yes, call Literacy Nassau at 516.867.3580 to provide us with their names and contact information. We'll follow up with a phone call to them to learn a little more about them, talk about volunteer opportunities with Literacy Nassau and ask if they're interested in signing up for a Tutor Training Workshop.
3. If they sign up and complete a workshop, we'll e-mail you a \$10 Amazon gift card. It's that easy!

NEW CITIZENS

Hats off to the following new U.S. Citizens: Bobby Abbas, Imtiaz Begum, Carla Caldeira, Blanca Cruz, Maria Teresa Goncalves, Joy Lawrence, Won Joon Lee, Farzana Malik, Shushila Patel, Jose Salvador, and Paul Segura!



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LITERACY SPECIALISTS' CORNER: /B/ vs. /V/ SOUND

(Submitted by Cindy Treminio)

There are many languages that do not distinguish the /v/ vs. /b/ sound. For example, native Spanish speakers fail to distinguish the two sounds when speaking English. However, the sounds are clearly different to a native English speaker and students should be able to practice so they won't confuse their listeners.

/B/ To create the /b/ sound:

- The student should press their lips together and release one strong puff of air. The vocal chords should vibrate.

Here are some words to practice:

Berry Best Bolt Baby
Bath Back Book

/V/ To create the /v/ sound:

- The student should put the top teeth against the bottom lip (or just behind the bottom lip) and should vibrate.

Here are some words to practice:

Vest Vine Vote Very
Vast Verb Vowel

Notice that the /v/ sound is held for a longer time than the /b/ sound; which is produced with one strong puff of air.

To see a demonstration between the /b/ and /v/ sound visit this website:

<http://www.engvid.com/english-pronunciation-b-v/> Also check out more pronunciation lessons so you can practice with your student.

UPCOMING EVENTS

It's Finally Here:

Our Annual
(Un)Scrabble
Challenge!

Join us at
Chateau Briand
for an amazing
event! An
(un)SCRABBLE



event, in a nutshell, is when teams compete in short, timed rounds, and the team that forms the highest-scoring words from their Scrabble tiles in each round is the winner. It is called (un)SCRABBLE because the format is slightly different from the regular game – all of the tiles are exposed and the teams scramble to fill their boards.

Date: March 30th, 2015, 6:00 – 10:00pm.

Advance ticket purchase required.

Tickets can be purchased online at www.literacynassau.org.

All proceeds to benefit Literacy Nassau.

Annual Recognition Night is coming up in May. See the April Newsletter for details and to learn how to nominate your student for a variety of special awards!

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT: CERTILMAN BALIN

This year's (un)Scrabble Challenge honoree is Certilman Balin – a firm that provides proven attorneys and powerful advocates for a broad range of clients. Certilman Balin is a major supporter of many worthy philanthropic causes throughout the surrounding community on Long Island including Long Island Cares, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and Literacy Nassau (just to name a few). In addition to financial support, the firm's partners, associates, and staff give a great deal of their time serving as board members, advisors and committee members. This not only allows them to contribute their talent to the community, but also keeps them in touch with issues and events that are important to clients. Our thanks go out to this team of highly motivated and compassionate members of the Long Island community.