

Clatsop Community College Volunteer Literacy Tutor News

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VOLUNTEER LITERACY AND LOCAL BUSINESS

We have several excellent examples of students who have taken the skills and assistance received in the literacy program and put them to use running local businesses. This month we take a look at:

Dongmei Wu (May) ***Asian Touch Massage***

113 Oregon Ave. South
Long Beach, WA 98631
360-642-3287
may@asian-touch.com

May moved to the United States from China when she married her American husband in 2005. She came to the literacy program to improve her English and impressed all of us when she said she had taught herself English grammar with a textbook and dictionary! May is one of the most meticulous, hardworking students to ever pass through our program. She considered entering the CCC nursing program, but instead decided to pursue her original career- massage therapy. (Actually May's first career in China was as a high school teacher.) She had a Chinese massage degree, but WA State didn't recognize it, so she entered a program in Bellevue to earn US certification. Not surprisingly, she graduated at the top of her class. When May returned to the Long Beach Peninsula, she found an office behind the pharmacy in Long Beach and commenced to renovate the space to suit the needs of a massage office. May not only practices Chinese massage, but also Swedish and American styles. May's caring and conscientious approach to her clients is focused on relieving their pain. Her patients include locals and tourists, some with standing appointments when they come to the area. May's skill as a masseuse, her charming personality and dedication to her clients all come together in this remarkable addition to American society.

We are fortunate to welcome a few new tutors to the group.

James C.

Dennis N.



WELCOME BACK: FALL TERM 2015

September 28 through December 11

Do you need new sign in sheets? Can you send me your summer hours, please?

ESL Classes

Seaside: Mondays and Wednesdays, 6-9 PM
1455 S. Roosevelt
Begins 9/28

Astoria: Tuesdays and Thursdays: 6:30-9:30 PM
Begins 9/29
Columbia Hall, room 114

Mondays and Wednesdays: 9:30-10:30 AM
Begins 9/28
Literacy Office

"There's nothing like a shovel full of dirt to encourage literacy."

Margaret Atwood

The Blind Assassin

Guest Column: Tess Chedsey

Tess has been tutoring for 5 years. She is in it for the long haul and has committed to seeing her student become fluent. Tess has also served as a community resource for her student, helping her navigate other services and institutions in our area.

Tutoring in Astoria

I met my student, Monica, December 2010. She is from Mexico and knew nothing of the English language. Her goal was to learn enough to fill out everyday forms, converse with her children's teachers, doctors and other essential members of the community.

I knew this would be a challenge but Monica was so bright and eager to learn, she was sure to be a good student. She was and is. I am still her tutor. We meet at her home three hours a week and have kept to this schedule for five years.

So where do you begin with a beginner? It starts with some of Percy's choice resource workbooks with some additional touches of my own. I use everything in Monica's home to demonstrate lessons. For example, I started with the kitchen which is so common to everything we do. I opened and closed the refrigerator door, labeled cabinets, counters, stove, etc. and then continued the process to the other rooms in the house. I did not give a Spanish translation.

I got physical. I got up on the table to demo "on top of" or "above" and under it to demo "below" or "under" or beneath." I crawled on the floor to illustrate a baby crawling when we were studying family. Monica got it and her two kids thought it was hilarious.

So often it seems that progress is slow and we are getting nowhere. And then, I think back to five years ago and realize that there has been immense progress. While Monica will not soon write the great American novel or deliver the commencement speech at Stanford, she can definitely get around in the community with very little difficulty. Her kids proudly identify her as English speaking. Now that's progress.

Activities for More Advanced ESL Students

You can help your more advanced student to understand and function using different communication patterns that fit the social context. Fluent speakers tailor their language to particular social settings, their motives for communicating, and the expectations of others. Our communication functions change as we change social contexts. For instance, we can ask for a cup of coffee in several ways:

Gimme a coffee.

Give me a coffee, please.

Can I have a coffee, please?

May I have a coffee, please?

Do you mind if I have a coffee?

Would it be at all possible for you to give me a cup of coffee, please?

There are many such functions in English.

Common Communication Functions

- requesting
- agreeing and disagreeing
- interrupting
- offering and declining offers
- giving advice
- persuading
- stating opinions and arguing
- apologizing
- expressing likes and dislikes

The ability to understand or not understand functions often indicates a student's level of English fluency. When teaching functions, you need to explain not only the different ways to express feelings and ideas, but also how they relate to various situations. This can be tricky (it's often something you know intuitively) but also a lot of fun.

Think about scenarios where a student may need to adjust tone language and tone- with bosses, teachers, friends, children, etc . . .

From the ESL Tutor's Handbook at

<http://literacy.sa.utoronto.ca/resources/esltutorhandbook.html>