



LITERACY FOR LIFE

“Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.” – Frederick Douglass

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TAG TEAM TUTORING

Pedro Hernandez Lara and wife Carmen Davila Gomez came to the US from Mexico five years ago. During their first three years with the Literacy Council they had several tutors using several different techniques. Now however they are well settled into a program that is unique at BRLC – that is, Tag Team Tutoring. How, you may ask, does one create Tag Team Tutoring?

First, take Howard Perley, a retired businessman, who was encouraged to “just try it” by Blue Ridge Literacy Council tutor Marian Gowan. Stir in Karen Ashby, an empty nester, who was web-surfing local volunteer sites. Then apply the expert guidance of Amanda Yendall and Diane Bowers, dedicated and hardworking BRLC staff members. Finally conjure up a little serendipity, and you have it, Tag Team Tutoring – every Monday and Wednesday night.

Howard says, “Keep it relevant and make it fun.” So following that philosophy, the two tutors have, through trial and error, come up with a technique that works for them, and for Pedro and Carmen. Having only 3 hours together each week, they make every minute count. Each class starts with a 15 or 20 minute group activity. It may be a “reading circle”, with a current events article and multiple choice opportunities that Howard compiled. Or perhaps it’s a “show and tell” exercise. Sometimes it’s a “treasure hunt” – with help from Cindy’s, Amanda’s, and DJ’s desks. (Diane is careful to lock her door on Monday and Wednesday.) “We try to incorporate

Carmen’s and Pedro’s Individual Learning Plan goals into the time we share with them”, says Karen. And Howard adds, “Dialogue is important, and it’s great to have the group interaction.”



Karen, Pedro, Carmen, Howard in conversation

The next 45 minutes or so are spent working one-on-one. One of Pedro’s interests is improving his on-the-job understanding and communication, so Howard tries to use job-related vocabulary and grammar. Carmen wants to read and speak English better, and Karen has discovered Carmen’s love of housekeeping. So they use the “Amelia Bedelia” (clueless housekeeper) books which they both enjoy.

The last 15 minutes (which tend to stretch to 30 minutes – or more) is a group snack and game time. It’s challenging to find English learning games with relevant, fun, adult level interest, but Karen keeps coming up with ideas. The latest is a “Health Go Fish” game she found on an ESL Internet site. This game teaches how to better communicate with medical personnel and is now available in the office.

All in all tag team tutoring produces, laughter, chatting, and learning. But best of all, students and tutors are having fun!

BRLC Spelling Bee Promises Fun For All

Everyone is invited to “*Get Spellbound*”, our Spelling Bee, on Friday, April 22 at The Chariot restaurant in Hendersonville. It starts at 5:30 pm with heavy hors d’oeuvres, a cash bar and raffle. Then the real excitement begins! Eight teams made up of four individuals vie to win the coveted “Spelby Award.” The “Spelby” is a traveling trophy which goes to the last team standing at the end of the Spelling Bee. Ruth Birge, publisher of the *Hendersonville Times-News*, will be the official pronouncer. The emcee for the evening is Beau Lovelace, Hendersonville Fire Chief. Both of these folks are known for their senses of humor so it promises to be lots of fun.

The teams consist of civic group members, local business employees, teachers and neighborhood groups. Cost to attend the festivities and watch the fun is \$20.00 per guest. Don’t miss it!

Literacy For Life

the newsletter of:

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From The Director's Desk

In the last couple of months, Amanda has been busy collecting our learners' achievement statistics of the past six months. This year she did it a little differently and (possibly because of her threats) most of you responded and saved her sanity. Thank you to all who made ILP time easier for her this year.

Now its time to share what we learned. In 2004 we had 279 students matched with a tutor; 212 of them had 12 or more hours of instruction reported (12 hours is the minimum amount of time to count them). Of these 212, tutors reported 202 (96.5%) achieved one or more of their goals! As a whole our students achieved 2,449 economic, family, societal and/or education goals – an average of 12.12 goals per student. That's pretty extraordinary and I offer a huge pat on the back and congratulations to all our students who worked so hard and to their tutors who helped them. And, tutors, thank you for what you have done to make this happen (and for letting us know about it)!

With daily-life changing education like this occurring here and all over the country, it was quite a shock to learn that the White House Budget proposes to cut Adult Basic Education funding by 64% in 2006 (74.8% in North Carolina). This would effectively remove funding from most literacy councils and GED programs across the United States. I hope you will join us in supporting Senate amendment 177 to the budget (passed on March 17 by a bipartisan majority of the Senate) which restores the Adult Education funds to their current level. As the weeks go on, we will be sending you some data and sample letters so you will be able to voice your support for teaching adults to use reading, writing and the English language to pull themselves and their families out of poverty.

As always, thank you for all you do,
Diane

Editor's Note: I have essentially exhausted my backlog of "Student Compositions." Tutors – encourage your students to write something for publication in the newsletter.

Also, I have no backlog of "Tutor Tips". Please share your ideas with your colleagues.

I Would Like To:

- Learn more about volunteering.
- Make a tax-deductible contribution of _____ (amount).
[If not using a credit card omit the first two items below.]
Credit card type and number _____
Signature _____
- Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: (Home) _____ (Work) _____

Please clip and return to: Blue Ridge Literacy Council, Inc.
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STUDENT COMPOSITION

THE BEST BOSS

by Margarita Morales

My first days at work, my boss taught me everything about the housekeeping. I learned to make my job like he likes. When he comes back to inspect my work everyday, he tells me, "Your work is very good."

I never have a problem with him. He is a good man because he always respects me.

TIPS FOR TUTORS

(From Tutors)

BRLC tutor **Dave Bass** has shared the following:

I have been working with my student for about 3 months. We began in Foundation level in the Voyager series. My student is an Hispanic gentleman, in his early 40's, who has been in the US for 17 years. He knows quite a few words and caught on to most of the lessons quickly with a little coaching. His pronunciation needs improving and I correct him at times, but I did not want to discourage him by constant correction and slow down the progress he needs.

For our last lesson, I used the tape recorder at the library and had him read a couple of paragraphs in the lesson and played them back. Upon hearing his own voice, he laughed and asked if I could understand him. I said I could but he could improve. We taped him again and this time he read more slowly and distinctly. We reviewed the tape and I made notes of words that could be pronounced more distinctly. We reviewed these and we recorded another session which showed further

improvement. At the conclusion, I emphasized the importance of taking time to pronounce all the syllables correctly so that English speakers can understand him. Obviously I will continue to make frequent use of the tape recorder.

(Editor's Note: BRLC tape recorders are available for use in class in our tutoring rooms and from the reference desk at the main library - you will need to bring your own tapes)

BRLC tutor **Diane Emon** writes:

Homework now consists of having P. make a list of the places she spoke English during the week. This leads to very good conversation during class.

STUDENT BOOK ACHIEVEMENTS

On Bradburn, Marilyn McNichol, *Voyager 5*; **Maria Carrillo Perez**, Suzy Camp-Goodman, *LifePrints Literacy*; **Martha Lopez**, Roxanna White, *LifePrints Literacy*; **Michael Morris**, Ilah Porterfield, *Voyager 5*; **Veronica Nava**, Anne Laubengeiger, *Voyager 2*; **David Nava**, Polly Heaton, *Voyager 7, Patterns in Spelling 1*; **Esperanza Orihuela Urbina**, Katherine Price, *Voyager 1*; **Rosa Martha Paniagua**, Pat Keyse, *Voyager 2*; **Hernesto Paniagua**, Pat Keyse, *Voyager 2*; **Sandra Perez**, Joyce Roth, *LifePrints Literacy*; **Mark Riley**, Barbara Nicholls, *Voyager 1*; **Donald Strickland**, Norm Makowski, *Wilson 3*; **José Tamayo**, David Bass, *Voyager Foundation*; **Rosalina Tomas**, Wendy Kotowski, *Voyager 6*; **Mariana Velazquez Salis**, Kay Nelson, *LifePrints Literacy*

BRLC receives nod from 2005 BMW Charity Pro-AM Golf Tournament

Blue Ridge Literacy Council is pleased to announce that we have been selected for the third year in a row as a beneficiary of the BMW Charity Pro-Am golf tournament.

The BMW Charity Pro-Am at The Cliffs will be played April 28-May 1, 2005. This year the tournament adds a third course, the all new Cliffs at Walnut Cove near Hendersonville; the tournament will mark the grand opening of the Jack Nicklaus-designed course. Jack himself will play at the opening round. As in the past, the tournament will also be at Cliffs Valley and at The Cliffs at Keowee Vineyards in South Carolina.

Amateurs and other celebrities will be grouped with Nationwide PGA Tour professionals. All four rounds will be televised live by The Golf Channel. Last year's players included Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player, Kevin Costner, Kurt Russell, Branford Marsalis, Alice Cooper, Cheech Marin, Jennifer Mills, Ben Wright, and many others. This year's celebrities will be announced soon.

Patron tickets are \$25 and admit you to all four days of the tournament at all three courses. BRLC receives \$17.50 back from every \$25 ticket we sell. In order for BRLC to receive proceeds, tickets must be purchased directly from us. To purchase tickets from BRLC or to volunteer at the tournament and have insider's access, stop in or call us at 696-3811.

How to Pronounce "the" in English

We've had lots of requests lately from tutors wanting to know if there are rules for when we pronounce the word "the" as /thuh/, and when we say /thee/. Well it turns out that there actually is a rule - and here it is. Normally, we pronounce "the" with a short sound (like "thuh"). But when "the" comes before a vowel sound, we pronounce it as a long "thee".

VOWEL SOUND

A
E
I
O
U

WE WRITE

the **a**pple
the **e**gg
the **i**ce-cream
the **o**range
the **u**gli fruit

WE SAY

thee apple
thee egg
thee ice-cream
thee orange
thee ugli fruit

It is important to understand that it is what we **say** that matters, not what we write. It is the sound that matters, not the letter used in writing a word. We use a long "thee" before a vowel **sound**, not necessarily before a vowel. Look at these cases:

WE WRITE

the house
the hour
the university
the umbrella

WITH

consonant (h)
consonant (h)
vowel (u)
vowel (u)

WE SAY

thuh **h**ouse
thee **o**ur
thuh **y**ouniversity
thee **u**mbrella

WITH

consonant sound
vowel sound
consonant sound
vowel sound

(Editor's note: If you have any other situations, and you wonder if there is a rule, let us know and we'll try to dig up an answer for you.)

WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WAY to support the long term health and vitality of the *Blue Ridge Literacy Council*. To learn about the benefits of including the *Blue Ridge Literacy Council* in your will call the Council office at 828-696-3811 or consult your attorney.