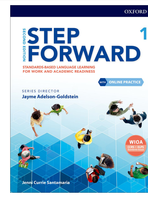
English Language Learning Program Newsletter

March/April 2023



Upcoming Tutor Workshop

Many of you probably remember the engaging workshop last year by Jayme Adelson-Goldstein, author of the *Oxford Picture Dictionary* and director of the *Step Forward* textbook series, about teaching with visuals. I thought Jayme would be the perfect person to lead another online workshop – or "webshop," as she calls it – about using ELL textbooks more effectively. Here is the description:

An ELL textbook is an excellent resource for English language tutors and learners alike. The textbook's illustrations, activities, and digital tools are meant to support the learner's exploration of a lesson topic, increase the learner's ability to engage with the language tasks, and provide level-appropriate explanations of lesson content. Sometimes, however, the textbook becomes a blueprint for instruction rather than a template the tutor and learner can use to meet the learner's needs.

In this lighthearted 'webshop,' Jayme Adelson-Goldstein will demonstrate ways to customize any textbook lesson to match your learner's needs and guide you in practicing routines for the images, vocabulary lists, conversations, readings, and grammar charts found in ELL print materials.

This event will take place on Zoom on Thursday, April 13, at 7:00 PM. You can register here. Space is limited. I hope to see you then!

English Unlocked

I am pleased to share that ELL volunteers now have access to a new curriculum for adult English learners called English Unlocked. The curriculum has four levels – beginning literacy, beginning, intermediate, and advanced – which are divided into thematic units relevant to adult learners' lives, such as "Health Problems," "Shopping for Clothes," "Applying for Jobs," and "Voting in Elections." There are also five phonics workbooks for learners who need to improve their basic literacy skills.

The curriculum focuses on reading, writing, and vocabulary development. However, there are also opportunities for students to practice speaking skills through role-plays and discussion questions. You can see a sample beginner unit on "Home Problems" here.

All of the lessons are available as PDF files, which can be printed or shared online, and every page that students see has a corresponding page with clear directions for teachers/tutors. For access, please email me at newtonell@minlib.net. Enjoy!

Learner Profile

This is the second in a series of profiles of ELL tutors and learners.

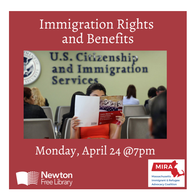
Linda came to the United States from China in 2017, and she moved to Newton in 2018. She was motivated by the idea of participating in the library's ELL program. "My friend tell me there is a wonderful ELL program in the Newton library, so I moved to Newton," she says.

Linda is married and has a daughter in college. She is not currently employed, but she would like to get a job, ideally in health care. (In China she was a nurse.) "My English is not very well, so looking for a job is difficult, so I work hard to learn English," she explains.

She started meeting with her tutor, Jackie, in November 2019. (They are pictured above.) When they first met, she could only speak in short sentences, but after working with Jackie on vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and everyday tasks like ordering at a coffee shop, she feels more confident. "Sometimes I can expression my ideas to other people and I can communicate with people," she says. She likes that she doesn't feel embarrassed about making mistakes with Jackie, whom she describes as 'a very patient and diligent teacher."

Linda feels that it's important to practice conversation as much as possible ("When I practice conversation more…I think my English improves quickly'). To that end, she has attended a variety of ELL classes and conversation groups at the library, which have helped her feel more comfortable speaking English. 'I really grateful that I meet a spectacular teacher…and the excellent ELL program in Newton. I am so lucky live in here.'

Immigration Events



If you are interested in learning more about immigration statuses, immigrant rights, and benefits for health and safety net programs, check out two upcoming events sponsored by the Newton Free Library and the Reading Public Library, which will feature representatives from the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy (MIRA) Coalition. The first event, "The ABCs of Immigration," will take place on Zoom on Monday, April 10, at 7:00 PM. The second event, "Rights and Benefits for Immigrants," will take place on Zoom on Monday, April 24, at 7:00 PM. Click on the links for more information.

Some Interesting Data

- Since we put a pause on learner applications to our tutoring program at the end of September, over 250 learners have filled out a form to be notified when we are accepting applications again. They come from 36 countries – over half from the top five: China, South Korea, Ukraine, Russia, and Brazil.
- The median year of birth for our learners is 1977, while the median year of birth for our tutors is 1951.
- About 82% of our learners and about 80% of our tutors are female.
- Total attendance for ELL classes and conversation groups in 2022 was 5,178. (Learners are counted each time they attend a class, but still an impressive number!)

Until next time,
Andrew

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