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Oregon Literacy, Inc.

LitBits

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Tutor Resource of the Month

*LitStart; Strategies
for Adult Literacy
and ESL Tutors*
by Patricia Frey.
Available at the OLI
bookstore and lend-
ing library.

*Easy to Read Voter
Guide* is available
now in English and
Spanish. To order,
call: 800-322-8715

Quote Corner:



“It is one of the most
beautiful compensations
of this life that
no man can sincerely
try to help another
without helping
himself.”

— Ralph Waldo
Emerson

2006 OLI Writing Challenge for adult learners

To encourage writing at all levels, Oregon Literacy, Inc. is sponsoring the 2006 OLI Writing Challenge for adult learners. We challenge tutors to structure activities around writing and we challenge students to share their stories by submitting them to Oregon Literacy. The stories we receive will be selected for publication in future newsletters and on our website.

Over the next few months, LitBits' articles will focus on writing-centric tutoring activities and tools such as those drawing on the Language Experience Approach. We hope these activities and objectives will encourage tutors and their students to explore students' stories, focus on learners' needs, and provide learners

with the opportunity to share their work and be rewarded for their creativity.

The Writing Challenge is one way to motivate learners to develop their writing, reading, pronunciation, and listening skills. Students may participate by submitting a short piece of writing or essay on the following topic: *What I like about living in* [name of your city].

Submissions up to 500 words should be received by December 15th. Send them via email (newsletter@oregonliteracy.org) or via postal mail (1001 SW Fifth Ave., Suite 320; Portland, OR 97211). Please include student's and tutor's name and contact info, tutor center and any other information regarding reading level, country of origin, age, etc. that you would like to include.

Teaching language through experience

The Language Experience Approach (LEA) allows tutors and learners to focus on writing and reading activities through exploring student experiences and is a great way to begin any writing project, including the OLI Writing Challenge.

Through conversation, tutors write a learner's phrases, experiences or stories related to our challenge. Write down exactly what the learner says, using correct spelling and punctuation and not altering the grammar or style. Read the story aloud slowly, then at a more natural pace. Ask the learner if any changes need to be made.

LEA is one of the most efficient ways to initiate reading and writing exercises,

but tutors may also design speaking and listening activities around the transcripts. For example, the learner may identify punctuation marks or capital letters; the tutor may read the transcripts with a learner until the learner associates the written form of the word with the spoken; or the tutor may use the transcripts for dictation exercises. Curriculum standards may provide a framework for setting achievement goals (see LitLinks section).

The next two LitBits issues will focus on techniques and activities that can be used with the LEA. This issue will focus on brainstorming writing topics familiar to the learner—such as the place where the learner lives.

Integrating writing into tutoring

How to Get Started

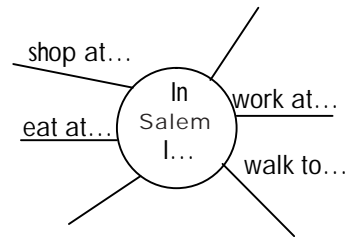
Sometimes getting started is the most challenging part of creating an essay. Below are suggestions to help learners begin their Writing Challenge submission.

This month's LitLinks gives tutors an idea of what can be expected from learners at different reading and writing levels. Focus on the importance of the learner's experiences in the LEA and how that affects the enthusiasm and commitment of the learner.

"Guided Writing for Beginners" is an exercise that builds on the learner's knowledge about where they live. Beginners may focus on single sight words or vocabulary words they use everyday in a chosen city. Advanced students may map out a more abstract brainstorming web. Afterwards the diagram can be used to make complete sentences or an essay. Think of this and the activities in our next issues as a springboard for other writing activities, particularly those that the learner initiates.

Guided Writing for Beginners

Write a topic or the beginning of a sentence in a circle. For example, "In [name of city] I..." The learner completes the sentence in rays around the circle. The topics may focus around communicative topics (eating, shopping, working, family, culture) or grammatical functions (verbs, subjects, objects) like live with, walk to, enjoy, visit, eat at - depending on the level of the learner. This provides a framework for writing a paragraph and structuring activities around spelling, vocabulary development, etc. For writing a paragraph, have the learner write using the map as reference.



LitLinks: Where to get more information on LEA

Language Experience Approach Resources:

These two sites are good resources for more information about the LEA:

- <http://www.sil.org/lingualinks/literacy/ImplementALiteracyProgram/UsingLanguageExperienceStories.htm>
- <http://www.ericdigests.org/1993/approach.htm>

Objectives and Standards:

Viewing these standards may help tutors focus on setting appropriate objectives based on learner abilities.

EFF Standards

- Reading– <http://www.adultedcontentstandards.org/ReferenceFiles/EFFReading.pdf> This website offers an overview of Equipped For the Future as well as standards related to reading comprehension using effective diagrams.

- ELA– <http://www.adultedcontentstandards.org/ReferenceFiles/EFFELA.pdf> This website is similar to the website referring to reading comprehension standards, instead it addresses English language acquisition.

Reading Standards

- Reading– <http://www.adultedcontentstandards.org/ReferenceFiles/casasela.pdf> Use this website for Adult Basic Education standards and benchmarks in the reading strand.

ELA Standards

- <http://www.adultedcontentstandards.org/ReferenceFiles/CASARReading.pdf> Tutors can also refer to this site for more exact objectives for their ESOL learners.