

# Tutor in Touch

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## Will you be my...?

Valentine's Day is many different things to different people. What is it to your student? A reason to celebrate or renew a strong relationship? A trigger for feelings of loneliness or loss? A day to honor a Catholic saint? A commercial event created by a profiteering greeting card company? Or a complete unknown?

What about this Cupid fellow? Is it significant that he supposedly initiates love by shooting people with arrows? Why red and white, roses, lace, and chocolate? Are candy hearts with sayings on them similar to traditions in another culture? Does Valentine's Day make you want to write to anyone?

However your student reacts to Valentine's Day, the topic can provide an excellent starting point for conversation and language experience stories.

Other February triggers include Groundhog Day (2/2), the Chinese New Year (2/9), President's Day (2/21), and Flag Day for Mexico (2/24). What others can you think of?

## **ESOL Teaching Drills**

Peg Warrick, ESOL Workshop Leader

Do you recall the elementary ESOL teaching drills? Let's review these as they are taught in the ESOL workshops.

**Basic tutors:** This may be useful to you too, especially the writing ideas at the end of each drill. If the idea will help your student, steal shamelessly!

### SUBSTITUTION

The substitution drill can be used to teach a sentence pattern or to teach new vocabulary.

If you are working with a beginning student, start with a sentence like "This is a clock" while holding up a clock. Repeat it once or twice, then have them repeat it. Do this a few times to help them get comfortable. Substitute one word and say, "This is a pencil" while holding a pencil. Again, say it a few times so they can listen. Then ask them to repeat it.

Do this with two or three more nouns so they are both really understanding the sentence pattern and learning new vocabulary words. If they are doing well (or perhaps in the next lesson after reviewing this material a second time), just pick up the item, say the word, and have them say the sentence without your modeling it first.

By the third or fourth session you may be able to hold up an item and have them say the sentence. If not, give them the sentence and run through the drill again. It may seem like you're repeating it a lot, but if they aren't sure of the answer then you aren't overdoing the repetition.

In another lesson, change what you are substituting. Perhaps teach "This is a clock" while holding a clock and "That is a clock" while pointing to one across the room. Then repeat the five nouns from last lesson with "this" and "that" and the appropriate action. You are reinforcing last lesson's nouns and teaching a new word at the same time.

Avoid switching from "This is a clock" to "That is a pencil." If you change two words at once they might not understand which means which.

You could use this idea to introduce your student to writing. Once they understand the spoken words, teach them how to write it. Then provide a model sentence and list of words and have them write the sentence with each word.

## COMPLEX SUBSTITUTION

As your student becomes more advanced, varying the substitution drill allows you to cover a lot of material. Use known vocabulary and sentence patterns but now alternate whether you are substituting the object or subject.

For example teach "Mary is going to the bank" by repeating it while looking at a picture. Then substitute "Joe": "Joe is going to the bank". Then say "store" and "Joe is going to the store." Have your student repeat each sentence. This may take more practice than simple substitution. When they get it you can give them just the word to substitute and have them give you the new sentence. Wow, now you know they really understand what each word in the sentence means and how English sentences are structured!

If your student has trouble, go back to simple substitution for a few lessons until they have that down.

With yet higher level students you can get into more difficult substitutions:

"Joe is going to the bank."

"went", "Joe went to the bank."

"will go", "Joe will go to the bank."

These are not simple. If you have a level 1 student be careful before you get into verb tense substitution.

Again, introductory writing exercises using this technique can be good for those students who are reluctant to start writing a story. Build writing confidence with these drills.

## TRANSFORMATION DRILLS

As your student advances, demonstrate how to turn statements into questions and positive statements into negative statements. Create simple examples at first by using the third person and present tense. Introduce more complex examples later. If you need a review, refer to the *I Speak English* text, available in the LVR library.

## SENTENCE COMBINING

Some new speakers and writers use short simple sentences. Help them work up to longer sentences so their speech or writing isn't choppy. For example "The car is red. The car is shiny." can be combined into "The car is red and shiny." Start with simple sentences your student already understands. This drill is to help your student make their descriptions flow better, not to teach new vocabulary.

*I Speak English* provides information on Completion, Continuing Story and Unscrambling drills. As always, you can call an ESOL Super Tutor for. Basic tutors are welcome to call ESOL Mentor Tutors for help with these techniques.

Drills can be tedious! Avoid spending too much time on them at once. Include other approaches like dialogue and conversation techniques. More on those in another newsletter.

And as always, use some of the above writing suggestions to assign homework. More repetition leads to more retention and confidence.

### **Mentor (Super) Tutor Contact Information**

Mentor Tutors are very experienced tutors who enjoy helping other tutors come up with new approaches to solve tutoring problems. (We used to call them Super Tutors. Maybe the visual image of blue tights, red cape, and a yellow “S” on the chest was too much.) They would love to help you—just call!

#### ***Basic, daytime***

Susan Brandt (advanced Basic only), 248-5786

#### ***Basic, evening***

Paul Crough, 271-3787

Mary June Dowd, 392-3811

Pamela Langdon, 546-7254

#### ***ESOL, daytime***

Cynthia Goldstein, 334-4557 (late afternoon)

#### ***ESOL, evening***

Malla Barker, 473-5327

Charlotte Klose, 377-5481

Pamela Langdon, 546-7254

Peg Warrick, 461-0939

### **Help Wanted**

LVR needs people to administer and coordinate student assessment.

To learn more about these opportunities contact Judy Emerson, Program Coordinator, at 473-3030 or [Jemerson@literacyrochester.org](mailto:Jemerson@literacyrochester.org).

LVR also needs people to speak with state legislators about their own LVR experience. This personal contact will help LVR obtain vital grant funding. Contacts will be scheduled on Fridays in February during business hours. Please contact Board member Sue Windsor at [wind0222@aol.com](mailto:wind0222@aol.com) for more information.

## **C.A.S.H. Program sponsored by United Way**

Creating Assets, Savings and Hope. In this program volunteers help low-income households take advantage of tax credits and build stronger financial futures—including savings, credit repair, financial literacy, and home ownership.

The Earned Income Tax Credit is available for people who worked in 2004 but did not earn a high income. If you qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit, you could reduce or eliminate your income taxes, or even get money back. You could still be eligible for these benefits if you never paid taxes or had taxes withheld. Or even if you haven't earned enough to file an income tax return.

LVR office has brochures that we can send out. There are a number of CASH sites that individuals can visit (appointments and walk-ins). LVR has a list of the items to bring with you. Call the office at 473-3030 and request the CASH brochure.

## **Pronunciation Workshops for Students**

ESOL Tutor Pamela Langdon will give two eight-week courses for ESOL students beginning in February. The Tuesday afternoon series, beginning February 1, still has a few spaces. The Thursday evening series is already full. Pamela plans to cover the following topics:

- Syllables and how they affect the way we speak
- Suffixes and prefixes
- Clear and unclear vowels
- Stress, pitch, length, and clarity
- Intonation
- Rhythm
- Basic emphasis patterns
- Focus and new focus
- Phonics and specific problems

Interested students can contact Judy Emerson, Program Coordinator, at 473-3030 or [Jemerson@literacyrochester.org](mailto:Jemerson@literacyrochester.org) to sign up or for more information.

## **LVR Raffle**

Prizes for the annual raffle will be set on February 1. The drawing will be held March 30.

Can you help sell tickets for this important fund-raiser? Please contact Bob Mahar, at 473-3030 or [rmahar@literacyrochester.org](mailto:rmahar@literacyrochester.org).

### **Great Website for Tutors**

From *The Partners Press*, Tompkins Learning Partners, Inc.

The *Literacy Practitioner*, a Literacy New York publication, recently ran an article discussing a website for ABE tutors. This website provides ideas for student assessment by diagnosing his or her reading difficulties. It gives extensive information about reading and assessment techniques, as well as reference and downloadable resources. You can access this website at <http://www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles>.

### **Curves for Women Discount**

Fredda Gilmartin, fgilmar1@rochester.rr.com

I just bought a new business, Curves for Women, at 277 N. Winton Road. Please spread the word about my new endeavor! I will offer a special discount to any LVA students, tutors or administrators. Thanks!

### **Send us your Tutor Tips!**

Want to help other tutors? Share your experiences with them! Send your great tutoring ideas to us for inclusion in the next *Tutor In Touch* newsletter. Be sure to include your full name, so we can give you credit for your suggestion. Write to Barb Wainright, editor, at email address [TutorNews@LiteracyRochester.org](mailto:TutorNews@LiteracyRochester.org)

### **Calendar of Events**

Tutor Chat:	Spot Café, East Avenue, February 26, Saturday 10 AM
LVR office closed:	March 25 (Good Friday), May 30 (Memorial Day), July 4