



TUTOR IN TOUCH

April/May 2011

LVR Scrabble Night



Share your love of Scrabble with learners, tutors, and the entire LVR community at our annual spring Scrabble event!

Where: LVR Office (1600 South Ave.)

When: Wednesday, April 27th from 6:30-8:30PM

Who: LVR Community (Volunteers, Learners, Staff)

This is an opportunity to get your learners into the new office in an educational and fun-filled way! Tutors can come without learners as well; and you do not have to come in teams. Call 473-3030 to sign up to attend.

Save the Date



**LVR Awards Ceremony
Wednesday June 15th
6-8 pm**

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Year-End Testing

Reminder to All Tutors: LVR assesses students each year using standardized tools mandated by the State of New York. Annual testing has begun and will take place from **April-June**.

The Office has sent postcards to learners asking them to call us to schedule their test. Please encourage your learner to come in before June. Note: All students are **REQUIRED** to come in for annual post-testing between April and June, in order to remain eligible for our programs

The results will help: measure the effectiveness and efficiency of LVR's programs; gauge our learners' progress; and identify areas that have improved as well as those with room for further advancement. .

We have information on pages 4 through 9 that explains what each test evaluates. We have also included information you can use to help your learner prepare for the TABE or the BEST Plus Test.

If you have any questions about testing please contact Mellissa or Jennifer at 585-473-3030.

Mary Sue Schaefer Fund

The purpose of the Mary Sue Schaefer fund is to underwrite the cost of tickets for students and tutors to local cultural and recreational events.

Process: Interested tutors contact Program Coordinator Jennifer Eaton at least 24 hours before tickets are needed to express interest in attending a specific event with a student.

Preference is given to those who have not previously received sponsorship from this fund.

Requirements/Regulations:

Students who attend events are expected to write a short article for LitBits; this write-up may be passed along to the Schaefer family.

Each outing will receive a maximum combined reimbursement of \$35.

Receipts should be submitted to the Office.

LVR Policy Tutoring in Public Places

Dear Tutor:

Throughout the year, as staff and outreach callers speak with tutors, the issue of in-home tutoring arises. Tutors sometimes will question the policy of tutoring in public places as they have developed a strong personal relationship with their learner and feel that tutoring in their home or the learner's home may be more convenient. While I understand the reason for the question, we must remind all tutors and learners of the following:

It is the policy of Literacy Volunteers of Rochester that **ALL** tutoring take place in a **PUBLIC** place that it mutually agreed to by the learner and the tutor. **(If tutoring is taking place in a home, the tutoring pair will be asked to move to a public place. If they do not move to a public place then the pair will ultimately be dropped from the program.)**

While we certainly understand that there are many reasons to change the location of tutoring and that either party may suggest a change in tutoring location, please be advised that we do not support, condone, or encourage our services to be provided anywhere but in a public place. The reason for this is simply for everyone's safety and security – LVR learner, LVR volunteer, and LVR. In addition to the safety and security of your match - we are responsible for all matches - more than 200 each week. There are many issues that can arise in any relationship. Adding the issue of home tutoring creates legal and logistical issues which have the potential to impact hundreds of people who are served by LVR each year.

Our volunteers are informed of our policy during training and our learners are informed during intake and testing, as well as periodically in messages like this. We thank all of you for all that you do to support the mission of Literacy Volunteers in your role as volunteer. Our staff and administrative volunteers are working hard each day to provide you with the resources to make yours a successful match. If you are experiencing difficulty related to your tutoring location or time, please contact the office so we can assist.

Thank you,

Robert Mahar
Executive Director
Literacy Volunteers of Rochester

Volunteers Needed



LVR is *always* in need of new tutors for our native and non-native English language learners. Please tell your friends and co-workers about our volunteer opportunities! Teaching experience is *not* required. Tutors have to be at least 18 years old and have a high school diploma or equivalent. They will receive comprehensive training including practical and theoretical information.

Volunteers for administrative support in the LVR office are also welcome. If you know someone who is interested, please call (585) 473-3030 for more information.

Buy a Great Read, Do a Good Deed

When: Friday and Saturday, April 15 & 16, 2011

Where: Greenwood Books, 123 East Avenue, Rochester, NY

Hours: 11 AM to 6 PM, April 15 and 16

What: Support Literacy Volunteers of Rochester (LVR) through your purchases.

10% of the purchase price of all purchases made at Greenwood Books on April 15 and 16 will be donated to LVR.



Rochester Medical Orchestra Presents

Concert for Literacy Volunteers of Rochester

Featuring

Peter Kurau

Principal Horn
Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra

Julia Figueras

Music Director and Host
WXXI 91.5FM



**Wednesday, May 11 at 5 p.m.
Flaum Atrium, UR Medical Center**

PROGRAM:

Overture to Semiramide by Rossini
Concerto #1 for Horn and Orchestra by Mozart
Concerto for Three Horns by Telemann
Symphony #7 by Beethoven

ADMISSION IS FREE but donations to LVR are encouraged.

Preparing your student to take the BEST Plus

BEST Plus is a standardized, formal assessment tool developed by the [Center for Applied Linguistics \(CAL\)](#), Washington, D.C. The New York State Department of Education mandates that Literacy Volunteers of Rochester (LVR) use it to assess our non-native English Speakers who are improving their English speaking and listening skills.

Trained test administrators give the BEST Plus test in the LVR office. The test measures the student's oral communication skills in these areas:

- Understanding of a question
- Complexity of the answer
- Tester's understanding of the answer

The score is expressed as a Student Performance Level (SPL). The document, "Student Performance Level Descriptors," was given to each tutor in workshop training. If you need a new copy please contact the office and we can e-mail or send you one.

We assess students each year, this year we are testing current students between April and June. Reassessment helps gauge progress, drive instruction, and helps LVR demonstrate the effectiveness of our program. Please notify the office immediately if your learner is discontinuing for any reason.

CAL has an assessment section for the BEST Plus on their website <http://www.cal.org/adultspeak/index.html>. The links below, will take you to a description of the components of listening comprehension, language complexity, and communication. There are two video clips for each which give examples of students demonstrating and not demonstrating listening comprehension, language complexity, and communication. These clips are live administrations of students being given the BEST Plus. Looking at each of these will give you a good idea of what your learner is being tested for when given the BEST Plus.

Listening Comprehension: <http://www.cal.org/adultspeak/assessment/listening.html>

Language Complexity: <http://www.cal.org/adultspeak/assessment/complexity.html>

Communication: <http://www.cal.org/adultspeak/assessment/communication.html>

Teaching techniques that might help your student improve his/her score include:

- Use pictures and flash cards
- Ask student to follow simple directions
- Build sentences from written words
- Create a timeline
- Ask "Wh..." questions: who, what, where, when, why
- Conjugate verbs
- Use model dialogues
- Substitute in sentences

Preparing your student to take the TABE

TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) is a series of commercially-produced, multiple-choice tests from [McGraw-Hill/Contemporary](#). LVR uses the following levels:

- E = Easy
- M = Medium
- D = Difficult

[McGraw-Hill/Contemporary](#) also has an "A" or Advanced level, however LVR does not use it because our program aims to help people read at up to an 9th grade level.

After your student takes the TABE, you'll receive a sheet corresponding to the test questions s/he got right and wrong; we circle the latter. I suggest that you and your student focus on the area(s) in which the student missed the most items.

Levels E, M, and D assess the following reading areas:

• Interpret graphic information

- o Signs
- o Maps
- o Index
- o Reference sources
- o Graphs
- o Forms
- o Consumer materials

• Words in context

- o Same meaning
- o Opposite meaning
- o Appropriate word

• Recall information

- o Details
- o Sequence
- o Stated concepts

• Construct meaning

- o Character aspects
- o Main idea
- o Summary/paraphrase
- o Cause/effect
- o Compare/contrast
- o Conclusion
- o Supporting evidence

• Evaluate/extend meaning

- o Fact/opinion
- o Predict outcomes
- o Apply passage elements
- o Generalizations
- o Effect/intention
- o Author purpose
- o Style techniques
- o Genre
- o Generalization
- o Effect/intention
- o Author purpose
- o Style techniques

TABE, especially levels E and M, do not evaluate a person's decoding or word analysis skills. It is important for tutors to evaluate or assess these skills using some of the informal assessments we have in the office.

Remember, TABE levels E, M, and D are timed tests. If a student does not finish all 50 questions in the allotted time of 50 minutes, you should determine if there are fluency issues or test taking strategy issues. Test taking strategies are important to our learners who are trying to get their GED or enter a training program that has an entrance requirement. (See page 6 for review on Fluency and page 7 for test taking strategies).

The Four Components of Reading

Proficient readers use skills and background knowledge acquired over a lifetime. Adult learners may have gaps in both skills and general knowledge, and need explicit, systematic instruction in each of four reading components if they are to succeed.

The four components of reading are:

- Alphabetics (the process readers use to identify words)
- Vocabulary (the body of words whose meanings a person knows and understands)
- Fluency (the ability to read with efficiency and ease)
- Comprehension (the process and product of understanding text)

Alphabetics

To learn to read, students must know and be able to produce the sounds that letters represent, be able to blend those sounds as they hear them in sequence, and recognize the word.

With strong alphabetic skills, readers can identify words independently and read more rapidly. This facilitates reading with greater ease and better comprehension.

Reading achievement generally increases when beginning readers participate in alphabetics instruction. Students learn strategies to decode new or unfamiliar words and to spell words when writing

Phonemic awareness instruction- the ability to isolate individual sounds in words - to recognize them, blend them, break them apart, identify them, and delete them. For example:

“Tell me the sound that is the same in desk, dog, and date.” (Answer: /d/)

“How many sounds are there in ship?” (three: /sh/ /i/ /p/)

Phonics instruction or decoding for letter-sound associations to recognize words in print, including:

learning consonant and vowel sounds

high frequency words as sight words (the, of, to, etc.)

word analysis instruction by learning to use spelling patterns to recognize words – for example, learning -ack helps students to learn *back*, *sack*, *pack*

prefixes, suffixes, & compound word instruction – for example, re- as in *replay* and un- as in *unplug*

Fluency

Research shows that fluency is critical to comprehension.

Without fluency, readers pay more attention to decoding than to understanding the meaning of what they are reading.

Fluent reading shows that readers are pausing at appropriate points to make sense of what they are reading.

Fluency instruction includes: Guided repeated oral reading in which a student may read aloud to, or in unison with, a teacher or tutor, who models fluent reading and provides assistance. There are several different ways to do guided oral reading. They include:

Reading to the teacher or tutor

Echo reading

Pair and choral reading

Tape-assisted reading

Performance reading

The Four Components of Reading

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Vocabulary

Recognizing words and having a robust vocabulary improves reading comprehension at all reading levels. Without knowledge of the meanings of the key points in a text, a reader will struggle to understand the writer's message.

According to McShane (2005), if students' reading skills "stalled in elementary school, their vocabulary development may have slowed or stopped long before high school." These students often lack basic knowledge and vocabulary in high school curriculum areas such as science and social studies.

Direct vocabulary instruction

Pre-teach unfamiliar words in reading selections. For example, a student needs and wants to read a manual from work which includes words she has never heard before. Include those words in your lesson activities, about five new words each lesson with instruction, practice and review.

Teach words adult students will use in real-life situations. Give priority to words related to student goals.

Teach word-learning strategies. For example, common prefixes and suffixes (e.g., un-, post-, -ful, -ly), context clues, and how to use a dictionary

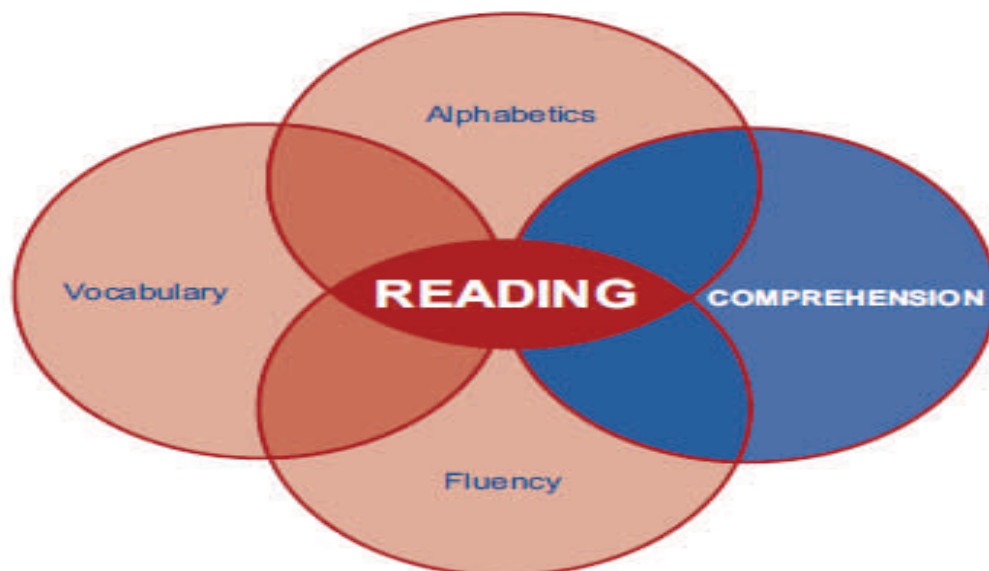
Comprehension

A lack of vocabulary and background knowledge and decoding skills are common problems for adult basic education students. These issues cause comprehension difficulties.

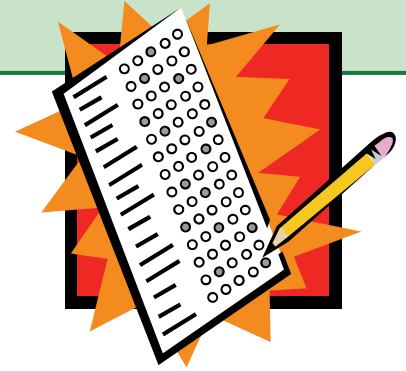
Adult learners are often not aware of the strategies they could use to improve their comprehension. Students are not likely to develop comprehension monitoring and repair strategies without direct instruction.

For specific comprehension strategies refer to Chapter 7 in *Applying Research in Reading Instruction For Adults*. If you did not receive a copy in your workshop training, please contact Jennifer and she will give you a copy. Anyone who has taken the training in the last year received this chapter in session 4.

The Four Components of Reading



Test-taking Strategies for Reading Comprehension



- ◆ When you have a passage to read followed by questions, **read the questions first**. This will give you a good idea of what to look for as you read the passage.
- ◆ When you are asked to choose a definition for a word in the passage, the word will usually be italicized. **Scan the passage** to find the word. Reading the sentence before, the sentence containing the word, and the sentence following the word will usually give you enough information to answer the question correctly.
- ◆ **Provide many opportunities for students to learn how to "scan" written material in a variety of activities and lessons.**
- ◆ Always **look back at the passage** to answer questions rather than relying on memory.
- ◆ Look for key words such as **first, then, next, finally, and after** when sequencing events.
- ◆ Always **read all the choices** before answering a question.
Encourage your students to try all the answer choices to see which one is best and to eliminate answers they know are wrong. If you can eliminate two wrong answers, your chance of choosing the right answer is greater.
- ◆ Look for negative words in questions.
- ◆ Teach your students what to do when they read, "What is the opposite of...", "Which one is not included...", "All of these happened except..."
- ◆ The **main idea** of a passage is most often at the very beginning and it may be stated again at the very end.
- ◆ If you are asked about **cause and effect**, look for key words such as since, because, as a result of, and therefore.
- ◆ Do not be discouraged by **very long passages**.
Teach your students to not spend too much time on any one item. Focus on the questions that come quicker and easier for them.

Help your Learner Prepare for the TABE

LVR Library Resources

We suggest the following materials in our [library](#) to help prepare your learner for the TABE test. I have put in blue the case and shelf where these books can be found in the library.

- Contemporary's *Reading Basics: Introductory* Case 3 Shelf 3
- Contemporary's *Reading Basics: Intermediate 1*
Case 3 Shelf 3
- The Steck-Vaughn Comprehension Skills series
Case 2 Shelf 5
 - Conclusion 1
 - Context
 - Context 1
 - Context 2
 - Facts
 - Facts 1
 - Facts 2
 - Main Idea 1
 - Main Idea 2
 - Teacher's Manual



- TABE: Content area skill exercises
Case 3 Shelf 3
This three-ring binder contains McGraw-Hill/Contemporary exercises for levels E through A
- New Reader's Press *Voyager Series : Reading and Writing for Today's Adults*. Volumes 1-8
Case 1 Shelf 4
- New Reader's Press *Challenger* Levels 1-8
Case 1 Shelf 4
- Reading for Today: Workbook 1-6 and Book 1-6
Case 1 Shelf 2
- New Reader's Press *Reading Wise Comprehension Strategies that work* Teacher's Guide and books 1-8
Case 3 Shelf 2

The following items are often out of the Library so there are copies in Jennifer's office (second shelf on her bookshelf) for you to make copies of the pages you would like to use with your learner.

- Contemporary's *Achieving TABE Success in Reading Level E*
- Contemporary's *Achieving TABE Success in Reading Level M*
- Contemporary's *Achieving TABE Success in Reading Level D*
- New Reader's Press *Endeavor* Levels 3-7 student workbook and teacher's guide (this is a new series of books that we received recently)



News from the Library



Library Rules Review

Tutors, please remember that only six library items may be signed out at a time. If you have two LVR Learners, twelve items is the limit. Learners may also borrow from the library, so why not bring your learner to the library and show him or her how to sign out books? You can ask a librarian or any staff member to help you with this.

What's new in the library?

- *Crosswords for Reading Success: workbook for decoding skills and reading comprehension.* 122 student crossword puzzles designed to develop fundamental language arts skills including decoding, encoding, and reading comprehension; [Case 1 Shelf 6](#)
- *1000 Instant Words: The Most Common Words for Teaching Reading, Writing, and Spelling* by Edward Fry, Ph.D., copyright 1997. [Case 1 Shelf 5](#)
- **The following are all part of the Wilson Reading System (a phonics-based instructional series) and located on [Case 1 shelf 5](#):** *Student Reader 1-6, WRS Sound Cards (flash cards), Instructor Manual, Magnetic Journal with 104 magnet pieces, Dictation Book Steps 1-6, Rules Notebook, Student Rules Notebook, Word Cards for Steps 1-12*

Office & Library Hours and Closings

Hours

Monday:

9am - 8 pm (ending May 23rd for the summer)

Tuesday-Friday:

9am - 4pm

*Saturday (4/16, 5/21, and 6/18):

9am - 12pm

*Office will be open on the third Saturday of every month (except July and August). Though we are open, outside of our normal business hours (9am - 4pm), the building door may be locked. Please ring bell (at entrance) in this event.



Closings

Friday April 22: Good Friday

Monday May 30: Memorial Day

Friday July 1 and Monday July 4: Independence Day

Library Book Drop

Outside of normal business hours, library books can be dropped off in the library drop box on the Elmwood side of the building. The mailbox is at the top of the side steps, which are at the end of the handicap ramp. The ramp is to the right of our regular entrance.



EDITORIAL INFORMATION

Literacy Volunteers of Rochester, Inc.
1600 South Ave.
Rochester, NY 14620
Phone: (585) 473-3030 • Fax: (585) 473-7478

MISSION STATEMENT

Literacy Volunteers of Rochester, Inc. is an organization of trained volunteers, dedicated to providing one-to-one or small group tutoring to functionally illiterate adults, and to others lacking English language skills and to fostering literacy in the greater Rochester, New York