

BUILDING MINDS.
BUILDING FUTURES.

SPRING 2010

Academic Support Center LEARNING ADVOCATE



Westchester
Community College
State University of New York

75 Grasslands Road, Valhalla, NY 10595 • phone 914-606-6470. www.sunywcc.edu/asc

THE ESL TUTORIAL: A PATHWAY TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

By: Joanna Peters

More than a dozen colorful banners, each announcing “welcome,” “read,” or “good luck” in various languages, rustle when the vent fans are blowing and greet students into the busy ESL/Reading lab. Staffed by credentialed professional tutors, the lab houses many different types of supplemental learning, such as computer-assisted activities, print materials, exercises and videos. This array of materials is provided for students in addition to the one-on-one, or group tutorial sessions, which are offered on a drop-in basis. The signs reflect the diversity of our students, and they provide an opening dialogue on the pathway for supplemental English language learning.

Years ago, this was not the case. The Academic Support Center was housed on the third floor of the Library and had only Math and Reading tutorial support. We began to see many students who needed additional assistance with learning English as a second language. In 1996, the ASC was officially charged with providing tutorial services for credit bearing ESL students. That first year, one tutor offered ten hours of tutorial support a week with the four components of language acquisition: reading, writing, listening and speaking. As the word spread and the language skills learned in class were reinforced, both faculty and students began to take advantage of the tutorial services. There are currently 347 students in Introduction to Academic Writing 1 and 2, the majority of the population we serve. Remarkably, we see 70.9 % of this group coming for tutorial support. During fall semester of 2009, we logged 3,580.8 hours of ESL tutoring.

Tutorial sessions assist students not only with supplemental class work, but also with the four skills involved in language learning. Many English Language Learners speak only their native language when they are off campus, and so the ability to use the language with peers and tutors helps students increase their facility with English. The ESL Tutorial provides that place and the connection to the college that is so important for all students. Additionally, the ASC provides orientations and support for the upper level (6 and above) students in the English Language Institute, in the hope that those students will become Westchester Community College credit students.

ASC
HOURS

Academic Support Center, LIB G-31:

Math, ESL, Reading : M-F: 7:30a-5p.
Extended Hours! Saturdays & evenings begin
week of Feb 15.
(914) 606-6470

ASC Science Tutorial, SCI 219:

General Biology, Biological Science,
Chemistry, Anatomy & Physiology, and
Microbiology : M-T 9a-6p, W-Th, 9a-4p
F 9a-3p, Sat & Sun 10a-2p.
(914) 606-6906

ASC Writing Tutorial , LIB G-13:

Writing across the curriculum: M-Th 9a-4p,
F 9a-2p. Extended Hours! Saturdays & evenings
begin week of Feb 15.
(914) 606-7853

Mount Vernon Center :

Reading, Writing, and Math: M, T, W, Th 11a-8p,
F 12p-4p, & Sat 10a-4p. Spanish: T 4:30p-6:30p
& Sat 11a-2p. Computers: T 5:15p-7:15p & Sat
10a-2p. Accounting: Sat 10a-1p.
(914) 606-7220

ASC
HOURS

A Home Away From Home at Westchester Community College

By: Barbara DiStasio

A Westchester Community College student recently confided, "At first, I was afraid to enter this room, but now I feel so comfortable here ... it is like home to me." She was referring to the ESL/Reading and Study Skills Lab at the Academic Support Center. Students come to this lab on a daily basis to advance their reading and study skills and the four elements involved in English language acquisition: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The Academic Writing Courses are especially designed for ESL students so they can acquire the necessary writing skills before moving onto Composition and Literature as well as other courses.

One of our success stories concerns Amelia, an ESL student. "When I initially attended WCC, I took reading courses at the English Language Institute since English is my second language. Many times I did not understand words, and I especially did not understand synonyms!" Yet here she was, with an armful of books from the ASC library cart and excitedly discussing the writing styles of various authors. To think, a few years ago she was hesitant about stepping foot into the lab. Since that first day, she has succeeded in developing her writing and critical thinking skills. Today, she is on schedule to graduate in May 2010, with plans to transfer to a major university. Amelia attributes her success to the efforts of the dedicated tutors who not only stimulated her intellectual growth, but also encouraged her career goal to become a writer and director of films. See you at the movies, Amelia!

Next, Candelario, came to WCC by way of Mexico. He has been one of our most diligent students at the lab. His first goals were to improve both his grammar and writing. He credits the tutors' feedback with helping him to master these skills. As a result, he is now a relaxed and confident student/author of numerous presentations and papers. Candelario's success inspired him to push his personal envelope and research a Criminal Justice career. He is looking forward to pursuing this major at a four-year college after his graduation in May 2010. As he said, "I never could have reached my academic goal without the help of the supportive tutors in the ESL/Reading and Study Skills Lab."

We started at A and end with Z for Zerine. When she first came to the lab, she was highly motivated to improve her writing. She needed direction with her organization. "I was all over the place in my writing." Zerine believes that without the guidance of the tutors, she would not be where she is. Looking back to the time she mastered Foundations of College Reading and Introduction to Academic Writing 1 and 2, she is proud that today she is successfully participating in the Composition and Literature I honors program. After graduation in 2010, Zerine plans to continue her education as an International Business major with a unique background, she speaks and writes in five languages!

It was inspiring listening to the varied experiences of these three ESL students and their genuine appreciation for the tutors that staff the ESL/Reading and Study Skills Lab.

Judy! Judy! Judy!

By: Beth Holden

Professor Judy Marano has been teaching Academic Writing 1&2 at Westchester Community College for ten years. When she's not in the classroom, she can be found in the ESL/Reading Tutorial working as a Senior Tutor, but no matter where you find her, her natural effervescence is contagious. When she talks about her work, she's as bubbly as a glass of champagne. Why? She loves teaching ESL. "ESL students are motivated. I love language. I love the fact that you're in a classroom. Aha moments happen on a daily basis with ESL students."

It's obvious that she cares about her students, and it was this caring aspect of her personality that led her to tutoring in the ESL lab. "There was no way for students to get in touch with me because I'm an adjunct. Students would come to the tutorial to do their work. I'd come in and check on them. I ended up being there almost every day. Joanna and I struck up a conversation about tutoring. She felt that it would be beneficial to the students if I could add that perspective to the tutorial as a teacher and as a tutor. We both wanted to do something for our students, so we found a way to make that happen."

According to Marano, wearing both hats as teacher and tutor in the tutorial has its advantages. She can look at what students are doing and see where they need to go while always keeping in mind the final product that she wants to achieve. "I can steer them exactly where they need to go with it. I understand the assignments because I am giving them." Students also benefit from being able to see her both in and out of the classroom. "There's a real comfort level. Students can ask questions without threat or embarrassment from the other students. It's more one-on-one. They can sit and talk to me about what they need help with."

It's also a win-win situation for the tutors who work in the lab with Professor Marano. "Knowing that I teach ESL, other tutors ask me how I might interpret an assignment. They feel like they've received another perspective." Marano also gains knowledge from the tutors she works with. "I learn from them how to look at things differently. I'm so focused on the end product being a teacher. Sometimes I don't look at different ways to reach the end. Everyone has so many different skills. Becky brings her organizational research skills. Phyllis brings her organizational skills. It is really enlightening. I can bring all of these things I learn in the tutorial to the classroom." Her eyes glow, and she smiles. "Can you tell I like it?" She asks. She likes it so much that she always finds a way to make it fit into her busy schedule every semester. And she is busy. In addition to being a Professor and a tutor, she is the mother of twin boys, and she is the President of Friends for the Putnam County Performing Arts, a non-profit theatre organization that provides local theatre groups with props, costumes, and electronic equipment. She holds a bachelor's degree in English from Marist College and a master's degree in teaching from Pace University.

ASC Workshops

Math Workshops:

Pre-Algebra:

- 2/24: Signed Numbers
- 3/3: Solving Linear Equations
- 4/13: Using Percents

Beginning Algebra:

- 3/9: Graphing
- 3/24, 4/6, & 4/16: Factoring
- 4/21: Solving Word Problems
- 4/14: Square Roots & Quadratic Formula

College Algebra w/ Trig:

- 3/10: Functions
- 4/7: Logs
- 4/21: Trigonometry

Review Your Grammar & Reading

Skills Workshops:

- 2/17: Build Sentences: Simple, Compound, Complex/Compound Sentences
- 2/24: Increase Your Vocabulary
- 3/3: Comma Tips
- 3/10: Avoid Run-Ons and Fragments
- 3/24: When to Use the Colon & Semi-Colon
- 3/31: Homonyms
- 4/7: Context Cues

Exploring the Process of Writing:

- 2/3: Brainstorming/ Organizing
- 2/10: Writing the Introduction & Thesis
- 2/17: Focusing the Paper
- 2/24: Developing Paragraphs
- 3/3: Writing Conclusions
- 3/10: Revising the Paper

Science Workshops:

- 2/10: Tissues, Metric/ Titration 1, Chemical Conversions
- 2/17: Tissue Types, Blood, Ascorbic Acid pt 2, Metric System, Chemical Conversions
- 2/24: Muscle Phys, Blood, Asorbic Acid, Metric System, Nomenclature
- 3/3: Muscle Anatomy, Blood, Probability/Chi Square, Naming Ionic Compounds
- 3/10: Axial Skeleton, Cardiovas, Mendel Genetics, Naming Ionic Compounds
- 3/24: Appendicular Skeleton, Cardiovas, Codon/AntiCodons, Genetic Nomenclature, Balancing Chemical Equations

For more workshop information call:
Writing Tutorial @ 914-606-7853

Math, Reading & ESL @ 914-606-6470
Science Tutorial @ 914-606-6906

Academic Accolades

Westchester Community College ASC Receives CRLA Tutor Certification!

In the spirit of encouraging all of our tutors to aspire to excellence both for our students and for themselves, last semester, the Academic Support Center applied to the nationally recognized College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) to certify our Tutor Training and Development Program.

We are pleased to announce that we have been accepted for all three levels of certification that CRLA offers. All tutors in our Math, Reading, ESL, Writing and Science tutorials who have earned their level one certification were presented with a CRLA certificate in a ceremony in December of 2009. All incoming tutors are expected to attain Level One certification within one year of their hiring date.

This is one step in our commitment to provide our tutors with ongoing training opportunities and to provide ongoing quality tutoring for our students .



Prof. Kent Trickel

Focus on Excellence: Kent Trickel

By: JoAnn Gala

What would an issue on the ESL tutorial be without a feature on our very own Kent Trickel, Associate Professor of Modern Languages and Coordinator of the Academic ESL Program here at Westchester Community College. This interview was done totally by email—the wonders of technology.

Question: How long have you been at WCC? What is your background, former jobs, FAVORITE jobs or experiences?

I started teaching at WCC in the Fall, 2001 semester. Previously, I was an administrator at the University of Florida English Language Institute where I had also taught ESL for several years. My favorite job has always been teaching. In fact, the prospect of a full-time, tenure-track faculty position coming from my administrative, non-teaching position at UF was the primary reason that I applied to WCC, a school that would require a 1200 mile relocation.

Question: How did you get interested in ESL as opposed to regular writing courses for native born students?

That decision was actually one I made in college. I started off my undergraduate career as a Math major. I switched to an English Literature major after two years and finished my BA in English. During my last few semesters of undergraduate study, I took a few TESOL, Linguistics, English structure, and Second Language Acquisition courses as electives within my degree program, and I found that I enjoyed the analytical approach to language. I ended up completing my Master's Degree in Linguistics with a focus on Applied Linguistics and TESOL. Once I started teaching ESL, I knew I had made the right choice because, as any ESL teacher will tell you, ESL students are amongst the most interesting and motivated students. I love learning about their cultures and languages, as well as their experiences in coming to live in a new culture.

Question: I am awed by the courage of these people who come from different parts of the world and don't speak the language---do you find that they are eager to assimilate into our culture or do they like to hold on to their own? I imagine you have been invited to share memorable moments with these students----any stick out in your mind as particularly profound or heart-warming?

I, too, am awed at the courage displayed by many of the students I've taught. It's not easy to assimilate to a new culture and language, but in most cases I find that is what immigrants try to do, although they often try to preserve their native cultures as well. The memorable moments for me are always of talking to students or reading their writing and finding that many have overcome such enormous obstacles in life and still maintained motivation to go on and get an education.

Question: How has the ASC contributed to the success of these students?

More than you know. I often say to Joanna and to my students that I hardly need to bother keeping a grade book. I can basically go through the ASC report of student hours and figure out from there whether a student is likely to do well in their writing class.

Question: What is your vision of the future of ESL and what part does the ASC play in it?

My department is about to move into the Gateway building. This is a new building devoted to immigrant education and service, and I think this presents us with an opportunity to both improve the quality of education for ESL and immigrant students and to show the rest of the community just what this population has to contribute to our community and our country. That contribution is and will continue to be huge. I see the ASC as continuing to play a major role in supporting ESL students' progress in English as well as their integration into the college and community.

TALE OF TWO TUTORIALS

The Writing Tutorial and the Academic Support Center joined forces on October 20, 2009 to celebrate the National Day on Writing. Students were given a prompt to get them started, and then they wrote away. Below is the unedited, uncut version of our collective story.

You've recently purchased a new house. Upon your first full night there you begin to hear noises but think nothing of it until you see something that convinces you the house is haunted.

It was my first night in my new house. It was everything I always thought it would be, an old Victorian built in 1900 with a wraparound porch and two fireplaces. Dusk was starting to creep over the hills, and I was just making my way up the steps to go to bed when I heard it. A creak that seemed to be coming from under the root cellar, or was it just my imagination playing tricks on me? I continued up the steps.

Was this a dream? Was it real? Where was that luminescent glow coming from? I told her not to buy the house. We had to stretch our finances just to make the down payment. A handyman's special. Yeah! My wonderful dreams of weekends on the golf course evaporated quickly. Now they are filled with painting and carpentry . . . and now this stupid root cellar, the creaks and the strange light.

As I walk toward the root cellar, the light gets brighter like the sun is at its peak. The wind is blowing so hard I can hear the tree branches brushing against the windows. The dogs are barking and the cats crying as if they have seen something. My nerves are increasing, my body shaking. As I get closer I hear a loud scream coming from the room sounding like my wife I rush downstairs

When my Husband came downstairs I didn't hear him come. I was daydreaming about how to decorate my room. I wanted my room to have a big screen TV with a living maid to help me with my work I didn't hear my husband calling me I still daydreaming about the big screen TV . Then I heard a big noise the glass in the kitchen broke and later at night my husband yelled at me and everything was ok after that.

After my husband yelled at me, I suddenly woke up. And he asks me what happen, and I told him that I'm daydream about the big screen TV and how can I decorate my room. So my husband hug me and we went back to sleep that time.

When I awoke the next morning my husband had already left for work, and I couldn't believe that he had left without kissing me goodbye. Irritated, I picked up the phone to call him, but to my surprise the phone was dead. It was at that moment that I began to recall the strange and unsettling events from the night before, and as I frantically searched for my cell phone the home phone started ringing. "Hello ?" I answered shaky voice.

After I said hello a couple times, no one answered and I got so scared that I started to panic. Suddenly, I started thinking that the house was really haunted and that there were ghosts in the house. At the moment I didn't know what to do anymore because I was so frightening about the ghost. Then I decided to go to my room and take a nap because I was really tired.

Suddenly I hear someone knocking the door really hard, I was surprised because I wasn't expecting for anyone, so I went to see who it was. When I asked, no one answered, which seem kind of bizarre, so I went back to my room. While I was going back to my room, I heard someone knocking the door again, so I opened the door and there was nobody there.

I felt scare but later my husband coming and he hug me and kiss me. Later we decided to go outside to see who its but nobody is there, we waiting for so long time and we saw that was a little child who try to find a place where sleep. I and my husband thought that is a good idea to protect the little child in the home with us.

The little child was about 10 years old who enjoyed playing games. But I wanted to find out who the parents were, however my husband wanted to adapt him. We named him John, John was remarkably healthy. We were blessed to have a child like John in our family.

John was not really known by the couple. One morning Teddy the husband left for work and Lisa the wife was left on her own with John. As the day went one, John had disappeared and was nowhere to be found. Worried, Lisa went in search of little John. Looking everywhere and finding nothing she attempted one more place the shed.

Since the house was bought the couple has never been in the shed. Lisa opens the shed doors and starts to call his name but with no answer. Frighten, she walks in the shed and sees a shadow quickly move across the dirt grown. She turns

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on the shed light, John is crawled up in a ball scared and crying as if he had been hurt by someone or something.

As he was crying, I hugged him and try to calm him down. After he began to calm down, I try to ask him what had happened and what have hurted him. He kept his silence with teary eyes, looking frittered behind my back. There was something scrolling to us silently.

I looked behind my back but I didn't see anything. Goose bumps were running up my spine and the shred suddenly became cold. I try to find out where that sounds come from. It was really alarming to me more than before. I felt like I was hearing sound out of my imagination.

I took john by the hand and decided to run, but after running for 30meters I stop and ask myself. Where am I going? Am I paranoid? Or is it real ghost exist? Since I read the book about the ghost I had not being at peace which is very weird. My husband never experienced it.

Then I decided that I must do something. Perhaps, I should leave the house, the room, or even the town we lived. Something was wrong and I had to take action. It felt like I was living someone elses life, living their story. I packed up our belongings and started towards the car.

When I hit the road, I saw a black cat. The book about ghost said that cat could have a spirit, so I felt more frighten. "Dose a ghost really exist in this house?" I kept asking myself. Anyway I kept driving. However, when I was going forward, a lot of black cats around my car, and they were crying very violently. I didn't know what I needed to do, and I was just in panic. I thought they were a bad sign for exist a ghost. At that time, I didn't know what happen next.

We kept driving and I noticed the gas tank was running low. The cats were allover I was praying that we get out of way were all the cats are. Before I could tell the gas take went to empty. I honked the horn to scare the cats but that just made them mad. They jumped on the car and scratched the hood. When they scratched the car it was very annoying. John and I were in the car wondering what are we will do.

My sister was in a state of panic the house is said the house is haunted: the house is haunted save me please. But, no one answered as the cats kept scratching the car making my sister more scared. Finally, the police showed up at the car wondering what was happening on the road but my sister was unable to speak for hours.

Well ... between ghosts and strange children and cats and fears, etc., I decided to run away from my present location so I can once again be happy and free. Let someone else decide what to do with "this old house!"

I found another nice-looking Victorian that the agent told me was snug and quiet. "Nothing to be worried about any more!" Or so I wanted to believe. But, uh oh! As I tried to fall asleep about a week after I moved in, I heard sounds like scraping and squeaking coming from the porch, like how an old rocking chair would sound, moving back and forth, back and forth. Did I even own a rocking chair? No! I didn't get out of bed to look at the porch. No more of this for me!!!! I raced over to another real estate person who found me a nice quiet apartment in a shiny new modern building in another part of town where I live now, with no squeaks except the sound of my own old shoes as I walk around, scared no more.

By: JoAnn Gala

UV-C WAND APPEARS TO REDUCE GERMS ON SURFACES!

With all the talk of H1N1, those of us who work in student labs are spending hours wiping, disinfecting, etc. in an effort to stop the spread of this virus. The department of Media & Instructional Technology had purchased UV-C light wands to use on keyboards in the student computer labs. We heard about these and wanted to get in on a good thing!

But how do we know it works? Enter the Science Tutorial! We designed an experiment in which we swabbed the sign-in computer's keyboard and transferred the contents to an agar plate (a Petri dish containing nutrients in which to grow cultures). We then exposed the keyboard to 1 minute of UV-C rays and re-swabbed the surface. We performed the same transfer onto another agar plate.

After a week of incubation, we were ASTOUNDED at the results. Germs grow in cultures (colonies)—and only become visible to the naked eye after the colony has been formed. A clean agar plate is, well, CLEAR for all intents and purposes. This photo was taken after the one-week incubation period.

Upon further investigation of this technology, we learned that there are more industrial versions of these devices (in hospitals, for example) that could potentially sanitize larger areas. We are not sure of the cost of these devices, but maybe it would offset the amount of money we spend on those disposable sanitizing wipes...which will be the subject of our NEXT experiment ...Stay Tuned!

