

Reading. For Life.



LITERACY
N A S S A U

Literacy Matters is a recurring publication of Literacy Nassau, Inc.

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THE AI DEBATE

(by Karen Micciche, Executive Director)

The advent of AI has sparked a huge debate in the education and publishing realms, and as someone who has her feet planted firmly in both, I find it a worthy conversation to bring to you, our tutors.

Artificial Intelligence as a construct comes with inherent risks, challenges, and certainly raises the question of ethics, but also offers the potential for a vast amount of resources that could be of benefit to our students. The introduction of ChatGPT in November 2022 has created a ripple effect where more and more developers are bringing new and exciting technological innovations to the market, and its impact on students of all ages - not to mention teachers - is being widely felt.

From the student side, AI offers opportunities for adaptive tutoring (think Duolingo), writing critiques (ex. Grammarly), and can even help parents do things like generate letters requesting IEP services or student evaluations. For our students - adults who are learning the English language - AI can easily be utilized to create written communication to deal with a variety of typical ELL concerns, such as responding to a supervisor via e-mail, writing a letter to address a concern about a child in school, even writing a letter to a landlord. Nothing is off-limits with AI, which is part of what makes it so fascinating to consumers and developers alike.

As a teacher, AI offers a wealth of assistance with lesson planning. AI can develop worksheets, create quizzes, and make differentiated materials for lessons that can save teachers lots of time. Many generators can even develop lesson plans. Thankfully, in our adult program, our tutors are given a vast amount of curriculum from which lessons are developed. Our children's programs are diagnostic and prescriptive, so AI would not be of benefit because our students require personalized instruction.

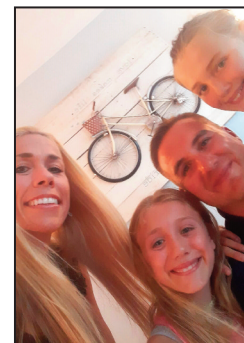
While on the surface, AI appears to have many uses, with innovation comes moral responsibility. Challenges of AI include student cheating, an over-reliance on technology, equity concerns regarding access, and privacy issues. Also, as a creative,

I can attest that there are tremendous concerns about how AI models are trained. According to The New York Times, "The Authors Guild recently organized a petition signed by thousands of writers demanding that companies seek their approval before using their work to train AI programs. Agencies representing illustrators have also revised their contracts to keep their work from being used to feed AI programs. Penguin Random House, the country's largest book publisher, said it considers the 'unauthorized ingestion' of content to train AI models to be a copyright infringement." (*The New York Times, AI's Inroads in Publishing Touch Off Fear, and Creativity*, August 2, 2023.) I can certainly say that as a creator of genre fiction, there is justifiable fear about AI potentially utilizing books as models to generate artificial literature in the future, which could put authors out of business.

Many sing the praises of AI: the advents of the rapidly-evolving tech world have made information readily available with the click of a button or the exhale of a voice command. AI is the newest easy way for people to have access to whatever they need - no thinking or creativity required. However, technology like this comes at a huge cost, ranging from decreased social connection to an inherent disrespect for the creative process and the value of humanity.

All that is to say, be a thoughtful consumer. If there are ways that AI services can help your students learn, you might consider them. Just tread lightly, because there are two sides to every story.

FROM THE CORNER OFFICE



There is always so much to be grateful for, but this year, I'm extra grateful for my family. I wish you and yours a blessed and bountiful Thanksgiving.

Karen 😊

MY VISIT TO THE UNIONDALE LIBRARY

(submitted by Kate Quijano, Senior Program Director)

As part of our responsibilities as case managers, we visit different classes, observe the tutors and students in action, and get to know the participants in our programs better. Based on our visits, we offer suggestions and resources if needed.

I recently visited our level 4 class that meets at the Uniondale Library. Tutor Bob Silver had a message written on the board for students along with a Do Now so that no time was wasted upon arrival. Students got to work right away and had something to engage them while they waited for everyone to arrive.

Students also got a chance to share what they had done over the weekend. One went apple picking and one went pumpkin picking. This led to a discussion about various farms, prices, and locations, and students shared info with others who were interested. It was nice to see the rapport that students had already built with one another and how interested they were in each others comments. Bob encouraged discussion amongst students, prompted quieter students to share and discussed his weekend as well. He also supported any vocabulary questions that came up utilizing a quick Google Image search and the overhead screen provided at the library.

Since it happened to be Friday the 13th on the day of my visit, Bob also asked the students, "Do you know what triskaidekaphobia is?" They ended up discussing different phobias and superstitions and comparing cultures. Literacy Nassau students come to us to learn English, but a big part of what keeps them coming back is the relationship that they build with their tutors and classmates. The ability to discuss their weekend, get to know one another better, and share about different cultures all helps students feel safe in their learning environment and want to continue learning.

When case managers meet individually with students and ask them their goals, the number one goal for most of our students is to improve their speaking/conversational skills so this is also a great way for them to get practice speaking and listening to one another in a supportive environment when they can ask their tutor for help on certain words/vocabulary/grammar.



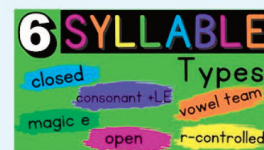
Thank you Bob, for a great visit and for everything you do for your students. They are very thankful for your time and dedication to their learning.



Warm Birthday Wishes to our November Birthday Tutors!

Susan Anton – Lorraine Bak – Patricia Ballard
Nupur Banerjee – Gail Bauer – Gail Carlin – Erica Davis
Kathleen Dendy – Diane Dubno – Diane Dwyer
Stefanie Edwards – Gwynne Feiner – Sandra Heiman
Dennis Horan – Charles Jencius – Joni Jones
Joanne Kassnove Susan Kimmel – Madia Lamontagne
Jean Lavelle – Sue Levy Angela Luo – Kathy Mahony
Celeste Maloney – Karen McDonough – Deirdre McElhatton
Mary Ann Neber – Matthew Nill – Kevin O’Keefe
Teresa Rienzie – Martha Salzberg – Adarsh Singla
Diane Ugelow – Maryanne Williams-Pitman
Cathy Zwilling

SYLLABLE TYPES/SYLLABLE DIVISION IN-SERVICE TRAINING (IST) FOR TUTORS



**Thursday, November 30
6:00-8:00pm
(virtual)**

Do your students struggle with vowel sounds in reading? Do they get stuck on “big words” if they don’t know how to break them into syllables?

Join us for a study of syllable types and syllable division. This training is specifically geared towards Basic Literacy tutors to provide next steps as your students progress. However, it is also helpful for ELL tutors whose students need reading/spelling support, especially with vowel sounds.

If you are interested in attending, please email kquijano@literacynassau.org.

TUTOR SPOTLIGHT: JOSEPHINE

(submitted by Kate Quijano, Senior Program Director)

Jo has been with Literacy Nassau since 2017. Most recently, she has taught a mixed level 3 and 4 ELL class in East Meadow and is currently teaching a level 3 ELL class in Levittown. We are so appreciative of her flexibility in location/schedule based on our needs each session and her ability to differentiate for different levels of learners.



We asked Jo some questions so you can get to know her better:

1. How did you get involved with Literacy Nassau?

I have been involved with Literacy Nassau on and off since 2017. I grew up with a parent who emigrated from Poland. My father always had a heavy accent even when his English improved. In many aspects, I helped him navigate through his world in the U.S. At times, I lived in two different worlds one being an American teenager and the other an immigrant finding his way from an utterly different world. It taught me the importance of learning English in an attempt to adapt to life in America.

2. Describe some of your most rewarding experiences as a tutor.

One of the most rewarding experiences is feeling how appreciative the students are.

3. What are some challenges you have faced while tutoring and how did you overcome them?

A challenge is having students at different levels in my class. One way I handle this is by pairing up the students. The more advanced students are more than happy to help each other out.

4. What keeps you motivated to continue working with adult learners?

What really motivates me to continue working with adult learners is when I see how I am helping bring change to their lives by improving their educational attainment, social and family life.

5. What would you advise a new tutor just starting out?

I would advise a new tutor to repeat and review in every class. Also, to research the many ESL activities on the internet that you can add to your lessons.

6. What are some of your interests outside of Literacy Nassau?

Some of my outside interests are reading, hiking and ice skating.

Richard S: I'm grateful for groups like Literacy Nassau, who provide English lessons for free. My students have told me that in other countries, if you don't speak the native language, you're at a big loss. You've got to pay a lot of money for lessons. Here we're making it as easy as possible.

Jerry F: I'm thankful that I was born in the United States to two parents who raised and educated me, enabling me to pursue whatever paths I choose in life.

Brian G: I am grateful for each new day, because 14 months ago I was diagnosed with stage 4 metastatic prostate cancer, where I had a PSA level of 250, where anything over 5 is concerning. At the time, things were a little bleak, but I have responded very well to the hormone based treatment my oncologist put me on. My PSA is now zero and the progress of the disease, while it was too advanced to ever be able to go into remission, has stopped. My prognosis is good for now and I will likely get to stick around for a while, so I am very grateful. It certainly beats the hell out of the alternative!

Bob G: I am thankful for the opportunity to be a part of the Literacy education of my current, three students: William, Alvin and Damian. I am also particularly thankful of the progress that William has made as the current Literacy Nassau student I have tutored the longest. He is starting a new job as a Custodian, which will ensure a steady income, along with benefits such as full reimbursement for post-secondary education. Finally, I am thankful for the excellent Fall weather, which enables me to continue my running, which is something that I love to do.

From Jeffrey: I am thankful that my niece Rachel, her husband, and her two young children, were on vacation in Vienna, instead of Tel Aviv, where they live, when Tel Aviv was bombed.

Staci S: I am grateful for the opportunity to connect with eager adult learners in a non-traditional classroom setting.



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Wondering how you can donate to Literacy Nassau?

We make literacy services accessible to disadvantaged populations of all ages by providing donation-based language-building programs.

You may continue to make this possible by donating to us directly on our website at www.literacynassau.org/donate

DONATE



or scan the QR code.



Happy Thanksgiving!

We are all grateful for our volunteers who donate their time and knowledge towards helping others.

**We will be closed beginning Thursday, 11/23
and will be back on Monday, 11/27.**

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