



# LITERACY MATTERS

JUNE 2020



**LITERACY**  
**N A S S A U**

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

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## BEST PRACTICES FOR ONLINE TUTORING SUCCESS

(submitted by Kim Nau)

I have been teaching online for almost four hours every day since the start of New York on PAUSE. I even redecorated my home-office into a sanctuary space since I am now spending so much time in here.



I have now gained some valuable experience with virtual tutoring that I would like to

share. First and foremost, always start on time. If you teach for one hour, and your student is late, you should still end at the originally scheduled time. This will encourage students to be on time for their lessons in the future. Everyone's time is valuable (even if you would be just sitting on the couch watching Netflix).

If you are easily distracted, try using a headset with a microphone. The noise-cancelling headset will enable you to hear your students more clearly and will block out any distractions for you. The microphone will also help your students to hear you speak more clearly which is essential for English language learners (ELLs) and also our students who are dyslexic. If you are working with a group of students, you

might want to encourage them to mute their microphones until it is their turn to speak. This will eliminate any background noise from their homes from small children or barking dogs.

When I started, the one thing I felt was lacking was the ability to write things down to show my students as I would on a classroom whiteboard. Of course, you can write something on a sheet of paper and awkwardly hold it up to your laptop camera to show them or you can use an online whiteboard which will enable you to draw things with your computer mouse or touch screen. If you use Zoom to conduct your lessons, there is a whiteboard on the platform already. If not, you can search for "free online whiteboards" and you will find a selection of options.

Don't forget the human side of online learning. It is still important to get to know your student(s) and/or deepen the existing relationship while teaching online. One way I have been doing this is with a question of the day. I start off each lesson with a question like: "If you can go anywhere in the world right now, where would you go?" My answer: I have been craving frozen yogurt so I would love to be at frozen yogurt shop right now, piling on the toppings.

(continued on page 2)

## THOUGHTS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

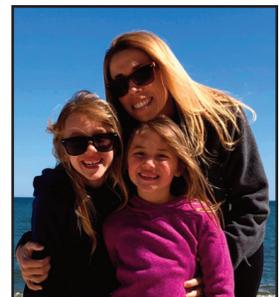
Hi Everyone,

They say there are five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. As we have lost so many things (people, milestones, etc.) during this pandemic, I feel like I've been riding this emotional wave and have finally settled into the acceptance phase. I knew it last night, when I bought my girls an inflatable, above ground swimming pool.

We summer in Cape Cod every year. We drive up at the end of June and settle into our little condo, ready for days at the beach or the pool and nights filled with Brewster Whitecaps baseball and picnic dinners. Once the Cape Cod League cancelled its baseball season, I knew our summer would not be the same.

This weekend, the weather was nice, and we tried to take the kids to Jones Beach. From the car, I could see the bike path was so crowded, few people wore masks, and the beach was worse, so we turned around and went home. Julie (my 6-year old) cried. I told her the same thing I keep telling myself: "It's okay. We just have to make the best of it."

*Karen* 😊



Price gouging is a real thing! I spent a whole lot more than typical "list price" for a blow-up pool for my girls. Our backyard is the only weekend oasis they have right now.





## BEST PRACTICES FOR ONLINE TUTORING SUCCESS

*(continued from cover)*

This simple ice breaker gets them thinking and sharing more openly. When students have a lower affective filter, they feel more comfortable. This allows them to make mistakes without feeling judgement from their teacher or their peers. Mistakes are often what holds our students back from an essential part of the learning process.

Student engagement is key! Something fun to incorporate is "Show and Tell." Since our students now have the benefit of learning from home, encourage them to share something at each lesson. For ELLs, this is a simple way to get them speaking more in a virtual classroom. For our students with dyslexia, you can have them do a scavenger hunt around their home for an object that begins with a sound or contains a syllable type that you are working on.

Just remember that you might be the only friendly face that they see that day. You do not just want to be a talking head on a computer screen. Spend time instructing but also allow for time to provide support for their educational and emotional needs. Feel free to share any of your ideas with us as well.

## OG TUTORING UNDER QUARANTINE

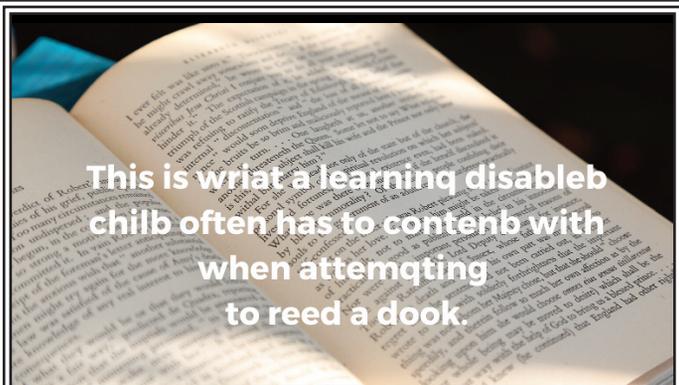
*(submitted by Kate Quijano)*

When I think back over the past month, in some ways I feel like nothing has changed. I am still working from home, virtually teaching my OG students, and keeping busy in my house baking, crocheting, and reading. But as I reflect further, I realize that there have been changes and learning along the way. My virtual sessions now are different than they were at first. So are my daily activities outside of work. At first, I thought I should get everything on my "One Day When I Have Time" list done as quickly as possible. Now, I am taking it more one day at a time and using the time for long-term planning. I am also taking more walks and enjoying the sunshine when I can.

At first, I thought virtual teaching was a brief emergency and I tried to keep it as much the same as in person tutoring as possible. For any lesson that I thought wouldn't work virtually, I planned to just wait until we were meeting again. But as the amount of time stretched on, I had to get used to a new normal and find a way to teach those lessons. Now, for many of my students, the number of hours we have spent together virtually has exceeded the number of hours we have met in person. The instruction can't be an emergency reaction, it has to be intentional and worthwhile.

I started working with two new OG students this month, so their introduction to OG and tutoring has been completely virtual. It seems so odd that we will have been working together for so long before we actually get to meet in person once the office reopens.

Now, I am embracing virtual instruction a bit more and trying out a little more tech. I have finally learned how to screen share and it is actually working really well. I've figured out how to re-work several games that I had hard copies of. You can take a



**This is what a learning disabled child often has to contend with when attempting to read a book.**

**If you've ever wanted to help a child with dyslexia learn to read, now is the time.**

In August, Literacy Nassau will be offering a 30-hour Orton-Gillingham training and then you will be matched with a student who needs your help.

Contact us to learn more about this amazing opportunity to tutor in our donation-based tutoring center in Wantagh.

[knau@literacynassau.org](mailto:knau@literacynassau.org)  
[www.literacynassau.org](http://www.literacynassau.org)

photo or screenshot of a game, upload it to a Google Slide, then draw circles as game pieces which you can move when you screen share (keep Google Slides in edit mode rather than presenting). There are also various sites that have dice that you can modify to your needs (amount of faces or only vowels on the dice, etc). If you open two windows, you can screen share your game and the dice together. Here are some options for virtual dice; go to <https://rollthedice.online> and search for vowels or you could try a Google search for one.

I also love this cube template which has the opportunity to become so many different games. Print it, build it, and give students the opportunity to actually roll it!

<https://www.firstpalette.com/printable/cube.html>  
 I found a triangular one: <https://www.mathsmentality.com.au> (click on "Nets for Building 3D solids").

I've realized in the past month that there are new activities and strategies I will still incorporate into my teaching once we return to in-person tutoring and I never would have found them if I wasn't forced to figure out virtual tutoring. I am now looking at this as an opportunity for learning and for helping my students regardless of circumstances.



## COMMUNITY RESOURCE PRESENTATIONS FOR ADULT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

(submitted by Kelly Siry)

Imagine being new to the country. You do not fully grasp the native language. Now imagine you have recently arrived in a new country; you are not fluent in the language AND a world-wide pandemic has broken out. For our adult English language learners, this is reality. *How do I find out more information about what is going on when I don't understand the news? How can I keep myself and my family safe? I've lost my job, now what?* These are just a few of the questions they have running through their minds.

I think now, more than ever, it is so important for us to be there for our adult students, to answer their questions and give them guidance on navigating the unfamiliar world we are experiencing. As part of our Adult Literacy Education (ALE) grant, case managers should provide community resource seminars to the students enrolled in their program. These are uncertain times for everyone, so it is crucial that we provide a trusted source of information. The students can then share that information with their friends and family members.

I have decided to offer community resource presentations every Friday at 5:30pm. I wanted to share topics that would be relevant for our students, so I took some time to explore different resources available throughout Nassau County. During the month of May I will be offering the following community resource seminars: May 8th – Tips for Grocery Shopping During COVID-19, May 15th – How to Receive SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), May 22nd – How to Check on the Status of Your IRS Economic Stimulus Payment, May 29th – The Importance of Filling Out the Census.

My first presentation, on May 8th, was a huge success. The students eagerly listened to advice on safe food shopping and food handling during COVID-19. Many of them had avoided going to the store since the start of quarantine. Being equipped with the proper tips gave them confidence. Should they need to

go grocery shopping, I believe they will do so with less fear.

If you have an idea for a community resource presentation or would like to be a contributor, please let me know. In June, I will be focusing on supporting civic engagement around the upcoming elections.

For information on upcoming events, feel free to e-mail me at [ksiry@literacynassau.org](mailto:ksiry@literacynassau.org).



<b>MAY 8</b> <b>5:30PM</b> GROCERY SHOPPING TIPS DURING COVID-19	<b>MAY 15</b> <b>5:30PM</b> HOW TO RECEIVE SNAP ASSISTANCE (SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM)	Reading For Life <b>LITERACY</b> NASSAU	<b>MAY 29</b> <b>5:30PM</b> THE IMPORTANCE OF FILLING OUT THE CENSUS
<b>MAY 22</b> <b>5:30PM</b> HOW TO CHECK THE STATUS OF YOUR IRS ECONOMIC STIMULUS PAYMENT	<b>MAY 29</b> <b>5:30PM</b> THE IMPORTANCE OF FILLING OUT THE CENSUS		
<b>FRIDAYS ARE FOR</b> <b>ADULT ESL STUDENT SUPPORT</b> Join us for a virtual presentation of important topics E-mail <a href="mailto:KSiry@LiteracyNassau.org">KSiry@LiteracyNassau.org</a>			

*Thank you to all the student-participants!*

*Please stay well and feel free to contact me via email if you have any questions.*



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## ONLINE ENGLISH CLASSES

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E-mail  
[KSiry@LiteracyNassau.org](mailto:KSiry@LiteracyNassau.org)



### Happy Birthday to the Following Tutors!



Adolph Anglade – Janet Bazuro – Judy Beckman – Teresa Benedetto – Mel Breshin – Marilyn Clarke Marla Cohan – Carol Davan – Denise Dressler – Beth Dyckman Betty Engel – Michele Fielding – Dianne Fraiman – Sheila Frank Edward Garfinkel – Daniel Goldschmidt – Vicki Goldstein Coleen Graziose – Robert Greenberg – John Guerin Denise Hibbert – Maureen Hogan – Jennifer Hopper Valerie Ignatowitz – Stanley Karolewicz – Kathleen Kelty Muriel Leonard – Carolyn Meditz – Brianna Meurer – Maureen Calamo – Edward Paley – Alison Picarella – Cindy Podell Celeste Pomerantz – Jennifer Power – Patricia Ryan Susan Santoro – Stefanie Singer – Maxine Schmerzler Kathryn St. Juste – Lauren Thomas – Monique Thomas Matilda Tobin – Sandra Villatoro – Eileen Watts – Angell Xiang



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## REFLECTIONS OF AN AMERICORPS VISTA

*(submitted by Jessica D'Aprile)*

When I first started the process of becoming an AmeriCorps VISTA I had a pre-constructed notion of what my service would be like. When reading up on AmeriCorps service, the first thing I found is that there are challenges faced in every service, and it isn't right for everyone. Looking for an opportunity to help people in need, without traveling overseas like the PeaceCorps, I found AmeriCorps to be the perfect fit for me. The impression that this service would be life-changing is correct, in all the right ways. Literacy Nassau's staff has welcomed me with open arms, showing me warmth, kindness, and support throughout the learning process. I have been able to develop crucial professional skills, and obtain additional useful skills, like grant writing. I have been able to find peers who share my interests and are equally driven to help others, willing to take on challenges and tackle hardships along the way. As some of you may know, AmeriCorps members receive a poverty wage salary, so they can understand the people who they are helping and the hardships that they face. This is something that is tough, but incredibly important for granting us a perspective into disadvantages we may not have understood originally. With the challenges faced in the past few months, I have gained a new appreciation for those who struggle financially, and I have also gained an appreciation for how lucky I am to be serving, and to still be able to do so. Because of Literacy Nassau's welcoming embrace, and being able to help as much as I can, I look forward to the next six months of my service.

