



ELRC NOTES

The Newsletter of the English Language Resource Center



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The ELRC: Helping Students One-to-One



Tutoring, or one-to-one assistance, is often considered an optimal forum for learning as tutors can meet individual student's specific needs. Students direct the sessions by asking for help with topics or skills of their choice. As sympathetic listeners, tutors can make students feel comfortable expressing their difficulties. Tutoring supplements classroom instruction with review and reinforcement to match the students' comprehension.

Working one-to-one is both rewarding and frustrating. Students may grasp a concept in one visit, or may not comprehend a topic in repeated sessions. Patience is necessary to assist those who are struggling. The resources in the ELRC provide diverse means to support tutors' efforts, from supplemental reading, grammar, and writing books with answer keys, stories with audio CDs, paper handouts, computer software, and the website. Progress and success for students are the rewards for tutors.

Longman Advanced American Dictionary

The computer networked version of the Longman Advanced American Dictionary has all of the features of the paper dictionary and more. Like the paper dictionary, the software has an extensive list of defined words and a basic 2,000 word defining vocabulary as well as definitions of all of the nuances of each word along with sample sentences for each.

The additional features of the computer version include the options to listen to and to record a word or a sentence containing the word. The software contains the etymology of many of the words. For every verb, one click will produce all of the forms of that verb. Common words have thesaurus entries with a definition for each synonym. Pictures accompany many of the entries, and students will also find sayings such as "beauty is in the eye of the beholder" and idiomatic expressions such as "put up with."

There are ten TOEFL format tests for vocabulary and grammar for each of three levels. In addition, the dictionary software contains a "Study Center" which includes reading, listening, speaking and writing practice on various academic topics such as history or geography for the TOEFL, TOEIC, or SAT test. Students may also use the notepad to record personal objectives and achievements or use the chart to check off progress in grammar.

The dictionary is currently on all of the computers in E-156 and will soon be installed in the Tutoring Center, L-125. (See the sample on the last page.)

DICTIONARY A - Z

assist¹ verb

assist² noun

assistance noun

assistant¹ adjective

assistant² noun

Ideal Instruction

By Heloise Ruskin

When I was an English professor, I tried to teach as many individual students as possible in each composition class, with the handicap of using the same explanations and assignments for all. But as we all know, classroom learning is not ideal. Office hours do give students the opportunity to get individual attention, but how many who might be inclined to come can fit our hours into their schedules?

Now, in my "retirement," as a tutor in the ELRC I am teaching writing, reading and grammar on a one-to-one basis. In my Composition classes, I had used one-to-one teaching as often as possible by using the conference method with at least two papers. Luckily, I had attended a workshop on this early in my career (a plug for Bergen's Faculty Development). The leader's belief was that to hand any draft back without a conference was a disservice to the student. I agreed, but obviously with all that had to be covered in the syllabus, I could only give ten minutes to each student twice a semester!

As a tutor, I now have one hour conferences, often once or twice a week with the same student! I'm sure you can imagine the benefits of this for the students: their individual needs are addressed; there is carryover from one hour of teaching/learning to the next; students, with my encouragement and confidence building, ask many questions to clarify their understanding; I often give a little homework to reinforce their work and all of them keep vocabulary lists.

In the best of all possible worlds, my classes would have afforded me these opportunities, but they didn't. Yet like all of us, there were many things I was able to do to enhance learning in the classroom. In fact, one-to-one tutoring cannot substitute for the classroom where students can learn from each other.

Meet Our New Tutors

We'd like to introduce you to the tutors who have started working here in the past year so that you can know a little about the people who are assisting your students. Many of their experiences are similar to those of the students they help. Their stories give insight into who they are and what students experience.

Matthew Goldstein

I was born in the United States and have lived here all my life. I'm trying out different classes and areas of study to see where my passion lies. This is my first semester tutoring and I have found it very enjoyable. It has been a new and interesting opportunity for me to gain experience in lending a helping hand.

Daniella Negron

Hey! I'm Daniella Negron. I'm Peruvian and I've been living in the United States for a little less than two years. I'm majoring in business administration at BCC. Hopefully I will transfer to New York University for fall 2010. I speak Spanish, English and French. I'm glad to help anyone who comes to the tutoring center to practice English. I promise I will make this hard and sometimes frustrating experience at least a little bit fun.

Sujung Park

My name is Sujung Park. I have been in the United States for almost three years. I finished all the ALP courses, so I know what causes the most difficulties in learning English. I am majoring in Early Childhood Education at BCC, and I'm especially interested in child psychology. My goal for as long as I can remember is to be an elementary school teacher. I am actually working at it after school. Whenever I teach children, I feel a lot of energy from them. I love children and being around them. I like to work at the ELRC, too. Anything that helps me to reach my goals is worth it to me.

Amy Kim

Hi! I am from Korea. I graduated from law school in Korea, and then I came to the United States to go to law



school. Time flew quickly. I have been here for six years. Now, I'm studying in the paralegal program at BCC. I am an honor student. I am going to graduate next spring. I have been working as a peer tutor in the ELRC since this past spring semester. Personally, I really like to tutor English and math. I like to help international students with anything they need in school life. I understand their difficulty and hardships and know how to solve the problem because I am an international student. I am bilingual; thus, this is helpful for Korean students. I know how they can improve their English and can give them tips. If your students need any help, they can come to me. I am ready to help! Welcome to the ELRC.

Reema Aljamal

Hey! First thing that you should know about me is that I am addicted to Shakespeare. I love English and my major is literature. I moved to the states about six years ago and learned fluent English in one year by taking ESL classes in middle school. I am also fluent in Arabic and speak some French. I am originally from Palestine, but I love the diversity of New Jersey. Now I enjoy tutoring international students because I know what it feels like not to speak a word of English. I excelled quickly, graduated from high school in three years at the top of my class, and I even received the NJSTARS scholarship. Now I am working on finishing and eventually publishing a book that includes poems that I have written. Anyway, don't forget to read my book in a few years!

Ellen Habashee

Hi, my name is Ellen. I was born in the United States, but I know how difficult it can be for international students because I have many family members that speak English as a second language. I really enjoy tutoring students here in

the ELRC. I went to Long Island University last year and hopefully am going to transfer to William Paterson University for nursing.

Giselle Pujols

Hello, everyone! I am a new tutor here in the ELRC. I am in the Nursing Program and will hopefully graduate in May, 2011. I came from the Dominican Republic when I was a year old and learned how to speak English and Spanish simultaneously. My passion for helping others and for reading and writing makes my job here very enjoyable. It is a pleasure for me to help the students here improve their English and to learn about their cultures.

Juan David Pulgarin

I was born in Colombia twenty-three years ago, where I spent the first eighteen years of my life. I attended a Catholic school where I was taught the importance of values and morals. Now I am in my first year of Engineering Science at BCC, and at the same time, working in the ELRC, which has been a very rewarding experience. Helping others has always been one of my priorities, and today I feel very satisfied tutoring other students.

Carlos Filipe Salvador Da Silva

I came from Portugal about two years ago as an International Student. Because I also had to adjust to a new culture, I think I have a good understanding of what other students are going through. English has been a passion since I can remember, so it is very rewarding to be now helping others learn the language.



Beverly DeCotiis

I was a professor in the ALP program here at Bergen for many years and recently retired. I missed working with the international students so much that I decided to return to campus and offer my services as a tutor in the ELRC. I am really enjoying my rewarding experiences at the Center.

Julia Ruskin

This is my second semester at the ELRC. I just returned from four years in Barcelona. For work, I taught English and it made me realize that that was what I wanted to pursue as a career. I am now in the middle of an ESL Masters Degree and Certification program at NJCU and I hope to teach college level one day. I think that my experience struggling with a new language has helped me to better attend to my students and tutees. I feel fortunate to have had the experience of having to learn a new language in another country. I know how it feels to not be able to communicate or participate in any conversations. When I arrived to Barcelona, I could not speak Spanish at all. During my first year or two, I felt so frustrated, lonely, and left out.

Because I have been through this, I am especially empathetic with my students. I can relate to their struggle and they seem to feel that and appreciate it. I also know how important



confidence is when speaking another language. When I was learning Spanish, I could feel my

level drop 3 notches when speaking to someone who seemed critical of or impatient with me. All of a sudden I would completely forget even basic vocabulary! For this reason, I am always encouraging of and patient with my students and make them feel comfortable.

Mimoza Nurce

I moved to the United States five years ago from Albania where I taught middle school science for thirteen years. I loved teaching, but not science; my dream was to teach ESL. Thus, I studied English on my own and earned a certificate that allowed me to teach and run a private school for three years in my home town. In 2004, I won a green card lottery and moved to this country with my family. I was thrilled for this opportunity to continue my education in an

American university. I started at BCC where I took a few ALP and general education courses. Then I continued to study at NJCU where I got my Master's Degree in teaching ESL and the NJ ESL certificate.

Currently, I am teaching part-time at NJCU and at Bergen County Technical Schools and tutoring in the ELRC. I am having a great experience teaching adults and tutoring international students at BCC. I enjoy tutoring because I get to meet people from different countries. I understand and like to help students who struggle to learn English because I was in their shoes years ago. That is why I always encourage, help, and make my tutees feel comfortable in my tutoring sessions.

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Practice Makes Perfect

Study Center | Longman Advanced American Dictionary | Personal Assessment | My Notepad | Teacher's Corner

Listen & Repeat | Etymologies | Verb Forms

as-sist ^{AS} ^{W3} *verb formal*

1 [intransitive, transitive] to help someone to do something especially when they are doing the main part of the work and you are providing extra help ^{BYN} help:

- She has three researchers who assist her.
- assist (somebody) within
- U.S. helicopters assisted in the rescue effort.
- Ms. Allen assists immigrants with gaining citizenship.

THE SAURUS

help, give somebody a hand (with something), need a hand, lend a hand (with something)

▶ see THE SAURUS box at HELP¹

2 [transitive] formal to make it easier for someone to do something ^{BYN} help:

- Citizens have a duty to assist the police.

ELRC Schedule Fall 2009

Monday	9:30 - 6:00
Tuesday	9:30 - 7:30
Wednesday	9:30 - 7:30
Thursday	9:30 - 7:30
Friday	9:30 - 3:00
Saturday	10:00 - 2:00

Bergen Community College
English Language Resource Center E-156
Telephone: 612-5292
Supervisor: Marilyn Pongracz
Assistant Supervisor: Dale Egan
Faculty Liaison: Prof. Ed Murtha
Learning Assistance Center Manager:
Khairia Fazal

Conversation Groups:



Mondays at 11:30 AM
Leader: Samia E-156 C

Mondays at 12:30 AM
Leader: Julia E-156 C

Tuesdays at 11:00 AM
Leader: Dawn E-156 C

Wednesdays at 12:30 & 1:30 PM
Leader: Jack E-156 B

Fridays at 1:00 PM
Leader: Mimoza E-156 C

*Saturdays at 11:00 AM
Leader: Monika L-125

Workshops:

Conversation
Tuesdays at 1:00
Professor Beverly Decotiis

Grammar Q & A
Wednesdays at 11:00
Professor Ed Murtha



Conversation through Newspapers
Thursdays at 10:00
Professor Ed Murtha



Vocabulary Development
Thursdays at 2:00
Professor Heloise Ruskin