

# Region 4 Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 5

7:00 – 9:00 PM

Acton Public Library, Acton

**Facilitator:** Lynne Osborn

## **Attendees:**

Mary Ann Angle

Mary Bishop

Phyllis Curcuru

Ina Donohoe

Barbara Donahue

Sue Fagan

Carol Henrichs

Lynne Osborn

Alice Schafer

Martha Thurk

## **Tutor Sharing**

Each tutor talked about her learner. In several cases we shared a common problem - identifying ways to have our learner find and take advantage of opportunities to converse with fluent English speakers and to listen to conversations among English speakers.

## **Conversation Groups**

Mary Ann and Lynne suggested that having learners join a conversation group might be a useful complement to one-on-one tutoring (but not a substitute for it.) In response to questions, Mary Ann described several creative and effective ideas she and Win Wilbur have used in their long-running conversation group in Acton. Everyone present wanted to be certain we will be notified about the next cycle of conversation groups to begin in September.

## **REEP Tests**

Lynne reminded tutors that many learners will be receiving letters asking them to schedule the test. She gave a brief explanation of the purpose and procedures for the test and we spoke of the need to assure our learners and to try to reduce their anxiety. We talked about ways to introduce more writing into tutoring sessions. Phyllis and Mary Ann described their use of journals as an effective way to get learners writing more.

## **Format of Future Meetings**

Lynne summarized the outcome of a meeting of CLC coordinators with Marlana Patton held in February. It was decided that each CLC region will plan to have four meetings during the year (though this doesn't preclude meeting more often depending on the desire and energy of tutors in a particular region.) The program plan for the four meetings is outlined below.

One in-service training on a particular topic hosted by one CLC region and open to tutors from all regions on a first-come-first-served basis. This will feature an outside presenter on a topic in which a wide range of tutors have expressed interest. A member of the EMLC staff will probably attend these meetings.

e.g. Pronunciation workshop presented by Marnie Reed in Acton in Feb.

Goals and Tracking progress workshop scheduled for 4/26 in Bedford



One in-service workshop presented by a member of the EMLC staff on a topic requested by tutors. The same presentation will be repeated at each CLC location and an attempt will be made to coordinate these meetings within a fairly short time frame.

e.g. Marlana's presentation on Web sites last fall

Two meetings drawing on the expertise/experiences of our own group of tutors. At the meeting we decided to ask those members able to attend EMLC-sponsored workshops to share what they learned and, if feasible, bring copies of materials handed out. In the upcoming meetings we hope to hear about the following:

Wilson Method - Darlene Dowdy and Jacquie Manley  
Setting goals and tracking progress - workshop attendees  
Health Literacy - Mary Ann Angle (Alice Schafer also found a good Web site for this topic and will share)

Other ideas included: Ways to model life skills for learners (telephone use, conferences with teachers, shopping, etc.); uses and techniques of role-playing; use of journals to encourage writing.

In planning these meetings we want to be sure to leave sufficient time for the informal exchange of ideas, questions, problems arising, techniques that work well. We also need to find a vehicle to determine which topics are of concern to many tutors as a guide for planning future workshops.

### **Discussion Time**

Most of us agreed that our learners are more skilled in reading/writing than in speaking/listening, so we talked about ways to use reading resources to develop conversation skills. Many excellent suggestions were made:

Children's section of the library - use fairy tales from learners own culture, Dr. Seuss books for fun with words, books with accompanying CDs

News For You - Carol and her learner review each issue and select an article of interest; learner reads and prepares to talk about it at next meeting

Ina has her learner bring books from home that learner's children are using; Berenstain Bears series has been working well for reading, building vocabulary, introducing concepts, etc.

Mary Ann uses the small news clips from the World Today section of the Boston Globe when one has a focus on learner's country (useful in conversation groups.)  
Mary Ann reads the article and then the student explains it.

### **Library Resources**

Mary Ann was able to attend the open house showcasing the Winchester Library's ESL resources and was very impressed. It was suggested we ask CLC coordinator of that region to consider hosting a meeting there. We also discussed the need to evaluate and upgrade the ESL section of the Acton Memorial Library.



Many thanks to Barbara Donohue, Carol Henrichs, and Alice Schafer for providing food and beverages and helping with set-up and clean-up

**Next Meeting:**           **Monday, June 5, 2006**  
Acton Memorial Library  
Meeting: 7:00 - 9:00 pm   Refreshments 6:30  
(room will be open at 6:00 for informal visiting)

**Agenda (tentative)**

1. 7:00 - 7:15 Introducing ourselves
2. 7:15 - 8:00 The Wilson Method (Darlene Dowdy and Jacquie Manley)
3. 8:00 - 8:15 Questions on the Wilson Method
4. 8:15 - 8:55 General discussion, Report on goals workshop (if time)

**Help is needed!**

Have you found, or developed, any simple, easy-to-remember rules (or ways of teaching/reinforcing the rules) for the following problems that seem to plague many of our learners?

1. Using articles - when must an article be used? when must one not be used?  
when does user have a choice
2. Using the subjunctive mood/mode
3. Using personal pronouns correctly
4. Using 'to' and 'for' correctly

Hope to see you all on June 5<sup>th</sup>

Lynne Osborn

