

ELRC Notes

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"Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all, love of what you are doing or learning to do." Pele. - from Brainy Quote

Best Practices in Tutoring

Tutoring is one of the most effective ways to practice English because students receive instruction that focuses on their individual needs.

In the ELRC, we try to maximize the benefit of tutoring by having our tutors use "Best Practices." New tutors are required to watch and answer questions about a set of videos on *Productive Tutoring Techniques*. The videos model good tutoring sessions, and the concepts presented, such as positive reinforcement, listening, student verbalization, questioning, and helping the student become an independent learner are easy for tutors to apply immediately as they work with stu-

dents. New tutors are also given a book of basic grammar and are encouraged to study and learn it, or they can choose to watch videos of grammar lessons.

In addition to ELRC procedures, new tutors must practice correcting tutee's writing, and I spend an hour with them practicing and reviewing how to do this using papers from previous semesters. For grammar, tutors are instructed to use the student's book to read and then paraphrase explanations so they are right.

Ongoing training reviews these concepts for all tutors. The faculty liaison also conducts

one or two training sessions.

After working a semester or more, experienced tutors are encouraged to add to the "Best Practices" Moodle discussion, so new tutors can learn from their experience. Some of these, both past and present, are highlighted here.



About Tutor Training

By Abdullah Jouejiati
(Former Peer Tutor)

Learning through example is a very effective method. Watching videos of actual tutoring sessions showed me techniques and methods used in real time. This was beneficial in the sense that I was able to anticipate the student's reactions and understand how to deal with their queries. I learned that many times students are able to correct their own mistakes because they already know the answer. Facilitating and helping verbalize students' ideas is key to developing confidence in their English skills.

Pronunciation

Springboard Comment:

Many languages such as Korean, Japanese, and Spanish don't have groups of consonants together the way English does. I tell students that they must move their mouths more and speak English more slowly than they would their native language.

Tutor's Addition:

by Samia Habashee
(Professional Tutor)

It is true that ESL students must speak slowly. They must also practice certain letters that they do not have in their own languages.

For instance, we do not have the letter "P" in the Arabic language,

and we pronounce it as we pronounce the letter "B" Therefore, Arabic speakers must pay attention to this letter, especially when they pronounce the word "police". They should never pronounce it like this, "bolice." They also should never pronounce the word "Pepsi" as "Bepsi." This pronunciation is very common in Egypt where I come from.



From Simple to Complex

By Tabeer Gil
(Peer Tutor)



Grammar is quite complicated for many ALP students, as it is comprised of so many tenses, articles, modals along with rules, and a lot of exceptions. If a student comes for grammar help, I start with the basics. I ask them to explain simple sentence structure first, then simple tenses, and then go to what they need help with.

For instance, if a student comes to learn about present perfect progressive, I'll ask them to explain simple present and present progressive first or will explain it if they are confused, and then move on. In addition, I ask them to give me the examples of what they have learned in that session.

Grammar Concepts

By Harika Tuzun -
(Peer Tutor)



Some fundamental concepts in grammar include the parts of a sentence (subject, verb, object), parts of speech, and articles. Once students have the basics of sentence-writing down, they can focus on the exceptions and idiomatic rules that require a more advanced understanding of the language.

Verbs that Go with Infinitives and Gerunds

By Charles Zelhof - (Former Peer Tutor)

This is the way I help students with verbs that go with gerunds and infinitives. I tell them that there are many verbs that can be followed by a secondary verb in a sentence, but not every verb like this works the same way. Sometimes the secondary verb must be an infinitive and sometimes it must be a gerund. Sometimes it can be either.

I think it can be a bit daunting for students to learn which verbs go with the infinitive, which ones go with the gerund, and which ones can go with either.

The lists that show how to use each verb are valuable as a study and reference tool, but they are very long and not easy to memorize. Also, students will not be able to have that list in front of them at all times.

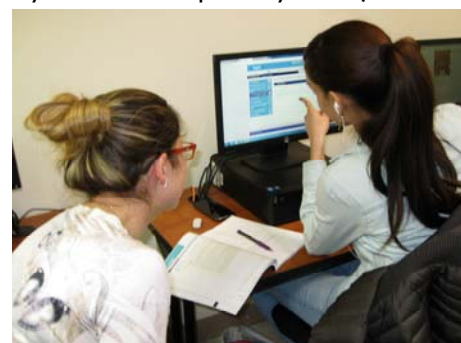
To make things simple, I use the same secondary verb with each primary verb. A good secondary word to use I've found is the verb "work" because it will make sense in a sentence with pretty much all the primary verbs, for example..

With the infinitive:

I agree to work/ I happen to work/
I tend to work/ I plan to work/ I
hope to work

With the gerund:

I avoid working/ I dislike working/ I
enjoy working/ I recall working/ I
tolerate working



Verbs that Go with Infinitives and Gerunds Part 2

by Miriam Mazzei - (Former Peer Tutor)

I find that explaining the way gerunds and infinitives work helps students understand why we use them in the English language. When a verb is followed by an infinitive, such as "I agree," it needs an action. "I agree to do." That's why the verb takes an infinitive.

For using a gerund, the primary verb requires a thing. For example, the verb "tolerate" refers to tolerating something, not an action, so the secondary verb must be changed into its gerund form.

7 Easy Steps for Essays

By Jessica Delarosa (Professional Tutor)

When students need help starting an essay, I like to simplify the process for them by helping them complete these steps:

1. Understand the writing assignment and essay type (comparison, argument, etc.)
2. Create a good thesis statement, which shows the main idea and the essay style.
3. Write 3 topic sentences that support the thesis statement.

4. Develop an outline.

5. Create a "hook" and background information and put it into the outline at the beginning of the Introduction paragraph.

6. Add supporting sentence ideas for each body paragraph in the outline.

7. Rephrase the thesis statement for the concluding paragraph in the outline.

Ask the Tutee to Be the Teacher

By Sibora Peca (Peer Tutor)

One day, during the last fifteen minutes of a one-on-one appointment, a student asked me to explain present perfect. I tried to do my best even though I was short on time. At the end of the session, the student seemed to be clearer about the usage of verb tense.



The next week, the student had another appointment with me and brought his homework on the present perfect. He had done poorly, so I concluded that he was still confused. I explained it again and had him work on extra exercises using a book from the ELRC library, but he was still making mistakes. Then I thought that it would be more effective to ask the student to tell me how to use the verb tense to understand what he was missing. I kindly asked him to be the teacher and explain the present perfect. While he was talking, I realized that he had not understood that present perfect consists of an action that is still related to the present. After I clarified that, he started to complete the next exercises correctly.

Hence, from that day, every time I am asked to work on a specific concept related not only to grammar but also writing and speech, I always ask the student to repeat what I just said to make sure that they understand it. This is a good strategy for tutoring because it helps students to better remember a concept.

Word Games

By Miriam Mazzei - (Former Peer Tutor)

As a student myself, I like learning through humor and games because I feel I retain more information when I'm having fun. I tried this game in one of my conversation groups, and it went over very well. There were lots of laughs, and because it's an individual game, each person had a chance to speak.

Word Forms

This game helps students notice the similarities between words and figure out their definitions. For example, "fortune" and "unfortunate" are related. This way, they can understand the context and meaning without having to look up a word every time.

Setup:

Cut up pieces of paper into quarters. Write the prefix or suffix you want to focus on.

Example: For nouns, some suffixes could be -ship or -hood or -er

For adjectives, some suffixes could be -ive or -ial or -ate

The Game:

Write words on a white board and have the students match the prefix or suffix to the word to create another word. The students should repeat the word many times. You can keep score and then reward the winner/s at the end of the game. You can make it more challenging by asking students to use the new word in a sentence or give a definition. The students came up with some really funny sentences and scenarios that turned into stories or personal experiences which made the game more interesting.

Reading and Vocabulary

by Thelma Lazo - (Former Professional Tutor)

Many are the students who become frightened or paralyzed when they start reading about a specific topic assigned by their professors and come across unknown words. I have noticed that a great number of these students want to make use of a dictionary almost immediately. When this is the case, I ask them to close the dictionary, and pretend that we do not have a dictionary and continue reading because the next sentence or the text on the whole might reveal the meaning of the new word. On other occasions, they had seen a word whose meaning applied in a different context. Then they tell me "I thought I had already learned the meaning of this word, but now that I am reading about a different subject, I realize this word has a different meaning." I consider the occasion a good opportunity to help the student not

to feel afraid but rather glad for having the opportunity to learn a new meaning of that specific word.

One day I tutored a woman who had learned the literal meaning of the word "key". She knew that a key is a small object with which one can start a car or unlock doors. However, during our tutoring session while reading, she came across the phrase "the key to success." Then, she asked "What does key have to do with success?" I told her "Success is also a door. Reading is a key to success, which means that if you read a lot, your reading skills will develop, and you will succeed because you will be able to understand more texts in English." Then she laughed.



Writing Concepts

By Harika Tuzun - (Peer Tutor)

I often find myself explaining the organization of an essay to my students. I emphasize the importance of a thesis statement, later elaborating on the introduction, body, and conclusion. I tell my students that an introduction is like an upside-down pyramid, beginning with general statements and ending with the specifics (thesis). I explain that the conclusion is the opposite, going from specifics (restating the thesis) to ending with general ideas/statements. Once they have the fundamentals of essay organization down, they have an easier time writing.

Terms for Vowels

When talking about vowel sounds, ESL students find the traditional American terms long and short to be confusing. This is because a vowel followed by a voiced sound such as /d/ in *pad* is held longer than the same vowel followed by a voiceless /t/ in *pat*. In her book, Judy Gilbert suggests using the terms alphabet vowel sounds and relative vowel sounds instead of the terms of long and short (24).

Gilbert, Judy. *Teaching Pronunciation Using the Prosody Pyramid*. Cambridge, 2008. Book.

Resource Website



By Professor Leah Carmona, Faculty Liaison

Flipboard is one of several mobile magazine websites and apps that allow individuals to keep track of their favorite topics and filter their favorite articles from magazines, newspapers, and the internet. From a computer or phone, you can select a topic or topics you are interested in, and it searches for publications which constantly update on the app. I find this app very helpful because it saves time.

I use **Flipboard** to prepare my students to write essays that summarize and compare information from different articles. The three step reading process starts with guiding students as they work in groups to predict the content and key words based on the title of the article, from which they create word mappings. The process helps them find the main ideas while reading and scanning for the previewed key words. It also promotes group discussions as the students try to identify the most important information. This is not an easy task! The second step is to find key words and guess their meanings based on clues the writer provided. Students can then confirm their predictions in addition to editing their word mappings and creating an outline of the article. All this prepares students for the final step, summarizing the article in their own words.

During class time, we use the app together to find an article on a specific topic. Students then have the opportunity to continue reading about related topics at home or do a research assignment using a variety of current articles provided by **Flipboard**.

<https://flipboard.com/>

ELRC Schedule Spring 2017

Monday through Thursday
9:30 - 6:30
Friday 9:30 - 3:00

Workshops

with

Professor Carmona

Editing & Grammar Q & A

Mondays 12:30 pm

***Reading & Discussion
with Vocabulary***

Wednesdays at 12:30 pm



Group Tutoring Sessions

For Conversation
Monday through Friday
Between 11:00 AM & 2:00 PM
Full schedule is in C212

Intercultural Conversation Partners (ICP)

30 minute sessions with native speakers
from the Intercultural Communication
course

Tuesday through Friday
Between 10:00 AM & 3:00 PM
Students can sign-up in C212

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