

LEARN Meeting Minutes for June 7, 2005, at Woodridge Library

Members Present: Roseann Vonesh (Oak Park), Lisa Thackeray (Literacy Volunteers of Dupage), Ameet Doshi and Debra Kakuk (College of Dupage), Karen Neal (Downers Grove), Susan Woodbury (Bridgeview), Joe Popowitch (Indian Prairie), Susan McNeil-Marshall (Woodridge).

Introduction of New Members

1. Lisa Thackeray represented the Literacy Volunteers of DuPage.
 - She told the group that LVD currently has about 400 students and 370 tutors.
 - **Referrals** - I asked if there was any particular way that we should handle student and tutor referrals to LVD, mentioning that we now give patrons a handout listing LVD with all the other literacy tutoring agencies in the area. I asked if LVD might have business cards to distribute. Lisa said that they do not have cards because anyone answering the telephone at LVD could make arrangements for new students. Also, they do want the students to take the initiative by calling LVD, as this indicates a willingness to learn.
 - **Publicity** – I also asked if there was any other way that we could try to promote LVD, especially to recruit tutors, like more signs or mentioning LVD before programs. She said to use any method that we could think of to recruit tutors.
 - LVD would like to be an official member of the group and is interested in joint funding opportunities.
 - While examining the Web site pages, she pointed out that Literacy Volunteers of DuPage's parent organization is now Proliteracy. Also, we had LVD listed at 24W500 Maple Ave in Naperville, which is correct. But they are now in suite 220.
2. Susan Woodbury will be the new contact person at Bridgeview Public Library and has only been there about three weeks.
3. Debra Kakuk is in charge of the ABE/GED materials at COD, as well as the consumer health section. A one time English teacher, she was previously working at the Mayo Clinic. She discussed at length many of the resources at COD, and I may ask her to send around a more detailed description.
 - COD does not send audiovisual items through interlibrary loan. However, all of their media can be viewed at COD. This includes computer software, DVDs and videos.
 - COD offers a series of SOS (**S**mart **O**nline **S**earcher) classes on weekends and evenings (usually 6-8 p.m.). They prefer that students have some understanding of computers for the computer classes, but they are willing to work with complete novices. To view the SOS classes, go to www.cod.edu, the library is the third link from the right, under "Research Help" click "Workshops and Tutorials."
 - Although COD does partner with other community colleges for grants (like Morton College), she is not aware of any coordinated effort to meet the needs of ESL students. We may want to approach some of the other community colleges in the area to also become members.

- COD obviously does have ESL classes. Debra mentioned one called ELI, I think, which is geared toward professionals who merely need to polish up their pronunciation and vocabulary skills.
 - COD has only three full-time ESL instructors and hundreds of part-time instructors. The ESL department is across the street at the West Campus and is almost like its own school.
 - Eleven percent of COD's student body is Latino/Hispanic and perhaps an even higher percentage of the community. They have placed an emphasis on having Spanish language materials, and they have a Spanish language gateway to the Web site.
4. Ameet Doshi is the resident librarian at COD, which means he is there for two years. Like Debra, he is new to the area. He is a recent graduate, has strong technological skills and some understanding of the needs of ESL students because his parents are immigrants.

Web Site – (Forgive me if I get more detailed than necessary in this section).

Discussion of the Web site was again the main focus of the meeting. However, this did include talking about the mission statement and goals for the group. Someone requested that I make the Web site available for our members to view before it is open to the public. I will do this as soon as I make the corrections from this, the June 7, meeting. We currently have eight links that appear on every page 1) Homepage 2) About Us 3) Join 4) Groups That Help Teach English 5) Member Information 6) Links 7) FAQ 8) Site Index

1. Homepage

- First, we definitely need to modify or change the logo. It just does not print well.
- Under the logo it reads, "Connecting people with needs to the appropriate services." At the March meeting someone had suggested this as part of a mission statement, but I like it more as a slogan or motto.
- I had asked the group if we wanted to welcome tutors to become members, too, but everyone seemed to agree that we should only include staff members of libraries and other established ESL groups.
- Below the logo and motto is the description of our group. Per instructions from the March meeting, it states that members should be from "non-profit" organizations.
- Next, there is a brief description of the five main pages: 1) About Us 2) Join 3) Groups That Help Teach English 4) Member Information 5) Links. I feel that FAQ and Site Index are self explanatory and thus do not need a description.
- At the bottom of every page is a message that reads, "For questions, please contact the Webmaster at popowitchj@indianprairielibrary.org."

2. About Us

- I need to include "About Us" as the header on this page.
- First on this page is the **mission statement** which reads, "To identify and promote collections, organizations and resources to people learning to read or learning English in the Chicago area." If this is not exactly as people remember it, please let me know.

- Next is a brief history of the group followed by the four main goals of the group. I had phrased them originally as questions, but I think I will make them into statements. Goals: 1) To select the most useful items for our patrons 2) To inform the public that we have these special collections 3) To effectively direct patrons to non-profit organizations when there is a need beyond the resources we have available 4) To share information and promote cooperation between organizations that offer ESL related services and/or collections. Because these goals do not read exactly as they did when they were phrased as questions, I welcome suggestions to modifying the wording of the goals.
 - Finally, there is a list of benefits of membership to libraries and other organizations. Lisa suggested I include a mention of the training/tutoring space available.
3. Join- People can link from this page to two possible questionnaires: one for librarians and one for people at tutoring organizations.
- Library Questionnaire
 - Debra has suggested, and everyone seems to agree, that having libraries list the number of items in each individual format (DVDs, CDs, etc.) is time consuming for librarians and of little value to patrons. Instead, we will ask for a total number of items (or perhaps records as many items are placed together in kits). Then we will ask respondents to check all the formats that apply to their collection (the same question will be asked for foreign language collections). From this information, we can classify libraries into one of three or four categories (e.g. Beginner, Core, Advanced). This information would appear on the Member Information page next to the library's contact information. There would also be a key telling patrons how many items a library with a Core collection has.
 - We also added a few questions: 1) Are your ESL-related materials housed in a separate collection or interfiled? 2) Do you have any on-line databases available? 3) Do you have equipment for patrons to view or listen to audio-visual or computer software in the library?
 - One question was reworded so that it asks, "Do you provide space in your library where one-on-one or group ESL/ELL **tutoring** can be held?"
 - The box asking for a "Link to your Web site" will be rephrased to "Please send us a direct link to your ESL page, or your homepage if you do not have a specific ESL page."
 - Tutoring Organizations Questionnaire - I unveiled a new, separate questionnaire for tutoring organizations.
 - Question 10 was rephrased from, "How long does a tutor session last?" to "What is the time commitment per week for tutors?"
 - Question 13 was omitted.
 - Question 15 was simplified to, "Do you have a collection of materials?"

- Several questions were added: 1) Would you be interested in grant funding? 2) How many tutors do you have? 3) How many students? 4) Do you have anyone who can be sent to speak about your group?
4. Groups That Help Teach English
 - We had previously been unable to come up with a name for this link, but the members present seemed to think that “Groups That Help Teach English” will work.
 - Susan McNeil-Marshall passed around a list of ESL groups that included World Relief Refugee Services and The Neighborhood Resource Center in Woodridge. I will incorporate them into our list.
 - At the March meeting it was suggested that we need more of a description of each group. Once we get the Web site up, we can send each group the on-line questionnaire to fill out and have them include a short description.
 - I accidentally listed School on Wheels as Literacy Volunteers of Dupage. This will be changed.
 5. Member Information
 - Lisa asked that LVD also be listed on the member page.
 - We will try to market ourselves a little on this page. I believe Debra said we could ask, “Do you see your library listed here?” If not, call your local library to see what ESL materials they have and ask if they are interested in joining LEARN.
 6. Links
 - The disclaimer about LEARN not being responsible for the content of external links will appear at the top of the page.
 - I had “borrowed” web site selection guidelines from a health web site as a sample. However, Debra already has a set of guidelines for their health web links. I will review her guidelines and see if they are suitable for being our guidelines as well. In addition, she is putting together a list of ESL links for the COD Web site. I will compare notes with her to see if there are any sites she thinks we could add or delete. Then we can make sure all the links on our Web site meet our criteria.
 7. FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)
 - Someone wanted a link to the history of the group.
 - Joe Popowitch will be listed as the main contact person.
 - Individual tutors cannot become members of LEARN but are encouraged to suggest that their organizations become members.
 8. Other Web site Suggestions
 - Susan Woodbury suggested that the site include a counter to record hits to the site. Other members echoed this suggestion saying that it would be good to get some statistics.
 - It looks like we will probably put the Web site on NorthStarNet. We can do this for free, or for a small fee of about \$50 a year, we could register our own domain name. Ameet feels that it might be worth it to get our own domain name to have a recognizable web presence.

Sharing of Information

1. **Publishers** – Several people have asked me before, and it was brought up at the meeting, if we could create a list of publishers of ESL related materials. It was even proposed that we keep the list on the Web site, but I am leaning away from this. I feel that we should make the list available to our members. If it were on the Web site, it might be mistaken for an endorsement. However, perhaps we could create a publishers list for a future meeting.
2. **Core Resources List** – I had proposed that eventually we create a core list of materials that every library might want to have in its collection. Lisa Thackeray says that they have a list of resources. I propose that we take their list as a starting point and expand from there. As an addendum to the core list, we might have a “Recommended list” for libraries with more developed collections. Someone also suggested that we ask Publishers what they consider to be their core collection.
3. **Show and Tell** – I suggested that at each meeting we each bring, or talk about, a resource in our collection that is new or is used very often. We might even consider asking publishers come to speak before the group to demonstrate a database or product. Perhaps we could get a group discount on certain items.
4. **I Need This** – Someone recommended that we could also have a time when people could list items for which they have a need. Then other members could help look or point out a possible source. We could also do this through the Yahoo group.
5. **Informative vs. Working Meetings** – Debra suggested that some meetings be devoted to LEARN business, and some meetings be informative presentations of products and materials.

Next Meeting

Roseann Vonesh has volunteered Oak Park Library to be the next meeting place in early November. I believe that she was going to check on November 1 at 1:30 or 2:00 p.m. We will wait to see if she can confirm that date. Because we have had School On Wheels and Literacy Volunteers of Dupage come to meetings, I thought that maybe we could have someone from Literacy in Action come to the next meeting. Also, Roseann had mentioned Literacy Volunteers of West Cook County. Maybe we could have them come as well.

Tasks to be Completed

1. **Web site** – I hope to make the corrections, review the web sites on the “Links” page and selection guidelines with Debra, and have the Web site available for members to view by the end of July. By the end of August I would like to have the Web site up and running for the public.
2. **Next Meeting** – Roseann will confirm the next meeting for early November.
3. **Core Resources** – I will get the core resource list from LVD to use as a starting point for our list.
4. **Publishers** – I can post a list of publishers of ESL materials, to which anyone can add publisher names.

5. **Product Suggestions** – Please select one new or very well used item from your collection to share with the group.
6. **ESL Groups** – I will ask someone from Literacy in Action to come to the next meeting. It sounds like LVD will be a regular member and will also attend. Perhaps Roseann could contact Literacy Volunteers of West Cook County to come. I will also see if Sister Marybeth from School On Wheels would also like to be a regular member.
7. **Additional Tasks** – Because November is a long way off, we may complete all of these tasks early. If so, we might want to start thinking about marketing. Also, COD has expressed an interest in hosting the subsequent meeting, probably around February or March. By that meeting we might want to start looking into grants because the Secretary of State often makes grants available in the spring.
8. **Yahoo Group** – Please use the Yahoo group to post messages. Even if you just have a question, this is a convenient way to contact other members of the group.