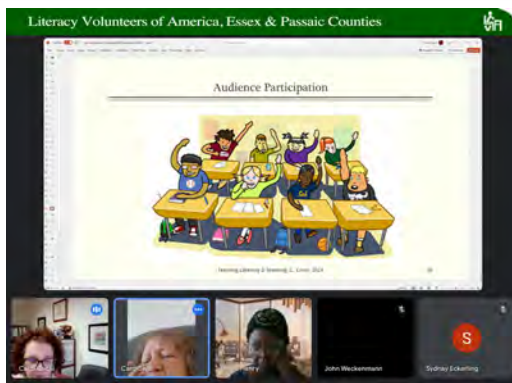




The Insider, the monthly newsletter of LVA Essex & Passaic Counties, will keep you in the loop on all of the organization's upcoming events.



Our deepest gratitude to Carol Cochi, multidisciplinary educator and past-president of the New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning, who joined us in March to support our tutors in planning classroom activities to encourage students to better develop listening and speaking skills.

Literacy Volunteers of America, Essex & Passaic Counties

90 Broad Street, 2nd Floor, Bloomfield, NJ 07003
(973) 566-6200, ext. 217 or 225

195 Gregory Avenue, 2nd Floor, Passaic, NJ 07055
(973) 470-0039

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Cristhian Barcelos | -Executive Director
cbarcelos@lvaep.org |
| Jorge Chavez | -Data Processing Coordinator
jchavez@lvaep.org |
| Sydney Eckerling | -Education Coordinator
seckerling@lvaep.org |
| Valeria Garrido | -Social Media & Newsletter Coordinador
vgarrido@lvaep.org |
| Cheryl Locastro | -Tutor Support Specialist & ESOL Instructor
cloastro@lvaep.org |
| Marisol Ramirez | -Student Coordinator
mramirez@lvaep.org |

The Insider

Greetings LVA family!

Welcome to the April Edition of *The Insider*, your go-to newsletter for all things related to literacy success and language learning. In this issue, we will explore upcoming events, success stories, and insights that bring our learners, volunteers, and community closer together.

We are always delighted to bring you the stories of our students, who work hard every day to progress in their language learning journeys. In this issue we get to learn about Dixie's story. Dixie is originally from Costa Rica, and like many of our students living in predominantly Spanish-speaking communities, she has found it challenging to get enough practice, but supporting her children in their education keeps her motivated and working hard to continue her path towards mastery.

As with many nonprofit organizations, volunteers help us make students' dreams of English literacy a reality and we could not do what we do without them. Meet Cory Sullivan this month, who has been with us for just about a year. Cory reflects on his journey with a combination of humility and enthusiasm. "I was excited for the opportunity to volunteer in a way that I believed would be a good match for my skill set," he shares.

For those who may be interested, the New Jersey Lifelong Learning Association's annual conference is coming up May 22-25 and registration is now open. If you are a volunteer or staff member interested in attending, please reach out.

And don't forget to read this month's Feature Story, "Adult Learners a neglected species in the generative AI era." In adult education, where there are limited resources, GenAI tools can support teachers in creating high-quality, personalized, and engaging materials for any given learning context. The story discusses Generative AI and how tools like ChatGPT can be used to improve the reading, writing, critical thinking skills, and self-directed learning of adult learners

In the News

Copy and paste the highlighted website into an internet search bar to view the following stories.

"Want a stronger workforce? Make reading initiatives multigenerational." eSchool News. <https://bit.ly/3UnGm3n>

" Felician University and President Mildred A. Mihlon Affiliates with Excelencia in Education's Presidents for Latino Student Success Network." Felician University. <https://bit.ly/4b0DDrR>

" How to Use AI Tools to Support English-Language Learners." EdWeek. <https://bit.ly/3JgXCyw>



Getting to Know Us **Dixie, LVA student**

Dixie's path to mastering English in the United States is an inspiring example of the tremendous strength that comes from dedication, commitment, and the will to thrive. As a native of Costa Rica, Dixie arrived in the U.S. in 2000, driven by the hope of better opportunities for herself and her family. Her first steps into the world of English language learning were guided by the recommendations of a friend who introduced her to LVA of Essex and Passaic Counties English as a Second Language program.

Dixie's journey was not without its challenges. Despite her eagerness to learn, the predominance of Spanish speakers in her community posed a significant obstacle to consistent practice. Yet, Dixie persisted, recognizing the necessity of improving her listening and speaking skills to navigate daily life more effectively.

Her journey was marked by moments of frustration and setbacks, but Dixie remained undeterred. She drew strength from her children, who were her driving force and source of pride. Despite the distance from her extended family back in Costa Rica, Dixie's unwavering commitment to her children's education propelled her.

Through her perseverance, Dixie overcame language barriers and found newfound confidence in navigating various aspects of life like healthcare and education, fostering a sense of belonging and community support.

Dixie's love for reading was a crucial component of her language learning journey. She found solace and inspiration in literature, particularly in books like "Challenger," which broadened her vocabulary and provided a sense of accomplishment and progress. Reflecting on her progress, Dixie cherishes the moments of connection with others who offered their assistance and encouragement along the way. From teachers and tutors to friends and family, their support played a crucial role in her success.

Dixie encourages aspiring learners to embrace their desire for self-improvement and remain motivated despite any obstacles they may encounter.

Looking ahead, Dixie envisions a future filled with stability and opportunity. She aspires to secure a stable job with better benefits, allowing her to achieve her goals and provide for her family more comfortably. Her story illustrates that the journey of learning English is not merely about mastering a new language; it's about overcoming barriers, seizing opportunities, and, ultimately, building a brighter future.

Arriving from Costa Rica in 2000, driven by the hope for better opportunities for herself and her family, Dixie committed herself to learning English so she could navigate daily life more effectively. She encourages others to remain motivated despite the challenges of learning a new language.

Tutor Training Workshops

Online Training, by TBD

Platform: Zoom (sponsored by LNJ)
Wednesdays, 9:30 - 11:30 am
May 16, 23, 30, June 6, 13, & 20, 2024

Online Training, by TBD

Platform: Zoom (sponsored by LNJ)
Tuesdays, 6 to 8 pm
June 4, 11, 18, 25, July 2, & 9, 2024

Tutor Support Workshop

"LVA's Approach to Adult Education,"
with Cristhian Barcelos

Platform: Google Meet
Tuesday, May 21, 2024, 11 am to 12:30 pm

Coffee Hour with Tutors

with Cheryl Locastro

Thursday, May 9, 2024, at 3 pm (General in-person meeting)

<http://www.lvaep.org/workshops.html>

Literacy opens a wide door to life. Help us keep that door open with your donation!

Thanks in large part to you, we are able to aid hundreds of students each year. Please continue your efforts to improve the lives of others by giving the gift of literacy.

<http://www.lvaep.org/donate.html>



Adult Learners a neglected species in the generative AI era

Written by Michael Agyemang Adarkwah, University World News
February 24, 2024

More than four decades ago, Malcolm Knowles shed light on the plight of adult learners in educational settings with his book *The Adult Learner: A neglected species*. This publication highlighted the underappreciation and lack of attention given to the specific needs and challenges faced by adults in education compared to school learners.

At that time, adult learners lacked resources and policy focus, and faced social stigmas that hindered their educational advancement.

Fast forward to the present intelligent era with advanced AI tools. The needs of adult learners remain underexplored, particularly in how they can leverage generative AI (GenAI) tools for work and education.

GenAI, popularised by ChatGPT, has emerged as a prominent trend and innovation with the potential to revolutionise education. The sweeping changes brought by GenAI in the educational arena have implications for adult learning.

In education, GenAI will usher in a world of adult learning that will be radically different from its predecessor. In adult education, where there are limited teacher capacity and resources, GenAI tools have the potential to expedite the rapid creation of high quality, personalised and engaging materials for the purposes of instruction and assessment in any given learning context.

GenAI has the potential to revolutionise traditional adult education practices by improving andragogy and personalising learning experiences. Tools like ChatGPT, Synthesia, Midjourney, Dall-E 2 and InstructGPT can help tailor education to individual adult learners, enhancing their learning outcomes. Specifically, ChatGPT can be used for improving the reading, writing, critical thinking skills and self-directed learning of adult learners.

Synthesia can be used for generating instructional video content for adult learners. Midjourney can be used for creating realistic images to enhance the immersive learning experience of adult learners. [...]

For the full story please copy and paste the following link on your browser: <https://bit.ly/441Jq8F>

Learning a new culture is more than studying a language. Tutoring is more than learning techniques. Our "Resources" webpage covers everything from legal matters, health care, & scholarships for immigrants, to professional development for tutors. Give us a look: <http://www.lvaep.org/students.html>

Getting to Know Us (cont.)

Cody Sullivan, LVA Tutor

In a fast-paced world where time is a scarce resource, individuals like Cody Sullivan emit a shining light of generosity and dedication. As the Publications Coordinator for the Electrochemical Society by day, Cody assumes a different role in the evenings and on weekends by volunteering as a tutor, aiming to empower others through the gift of language.



As he approaches his one-year anniversary with LVA this month, Cody reflects on his journey with a combination of humility and enthusiasm. "I was excited for the opportunity to volunteer in a way that I believed would be a good match for my skill set," he shares. With a bachelor's degree in journalism and a flair for communication, Cody recognized the potential to make a tangible difference by assisting others in mastering the English language.

Currently, Cody is guiding three students, but his role goes beyond teaching. It's about empathy and encouragement. One of his students, Nelly, is a testament to his dedication. Despite the challenges, her unwavering attendance and thirst for knowledge inspire both Cody and her peers.

Working with LVA has been just as much a learning experience for Cody. Wrestling with self-doubt and the quest for effectiveness Cody finds solace and validation in the words of his students, such as when one expressed, "When you teach, I understand." Such affirmations underscore consistent support and guidance's profound impact on language learning.

Cody says consistency is the most crucial part of learning a language, highlighting the delicate balance required to foster progress amidst life's myriad demands. Beyond the classroom, he finds invaluable support in his wife, Daniela, a Peruvian immigrant and Spanish speaker. Together, they navigate the nuances of language acquisition, drawing insights from their shared experiences and discussions.

Cody's story poignantly reminds us of the transformative power of volunteerism and the enduring bonds forged through the shared pursuit of knowledge. In a world often fragmented by barriers of language and culture, individuals like Cody embody the ethos of unity and compassion, bridging divides and nurturing connections that transcend linguistic boundaries.