

News & Announcements

Spring Workshops

Smart Tutor Referrals is presenting three great workshops for students this spring:

- ▶ **Study Skills for Academic Success**
2.5 hours
Learn the skills and how to apply them.
- ▶ **Essay Writing**
2.5 hours
Learn to structure writing.
- ▶ **Provincial Exam Prep**
2.5 hours
If you know how to prepare for and write exams, your confidence and results will improve!

For dates, times, rates or more information on workshops, visit us online, contact us via telephone, or register directly through Pearkes or Juan de Fuca Recreation Centres.

April Family Activities in Victoria, BC

Tuesday, April 18, 2006

Meet award-winning author Rachna Gilmore at the Greater Victoria Public Library. (Suitable for ages 6-8.) Rachna Gilmore has written many books, and will be discussing her latest, *Grandpa's Clock*.

- ▶ Esquimalt Branch
Tuesday, April 18, 1:30-2:30 pm
- ▶ Juan de Fuca Branch
Tuesday, April 18, 10:30-11:30 am

April 29th, 2006 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm

Family Kayaking (5 years & up)
Experience kayaking with your family. Free with your swim admission at Saanich Commonwealth Place (\$2.25 per person). Each registered participant will get 30 minutes of kayaking or more.

- ▶ Register at 475-7600.

Secrets to 2nd Language Fluency - Speaking

by Maureen Bouey

Maureen Bouey has been an ESL teacher for a number of years. She is also co-author of an ESL textbook with Dahlia Miller of Smart Tutor Referrals.

“You learn to speak by speaking, to study by studying, to run by running, to work by working; in just the same way, you learn to love by loving.”

St. Francis de Sales (1567 - 1622)

My dear student, you simply must speak!

And I mean speak often. You should be speaking your second language at every opportunity, and you should be taking every advantage that comes your way to practice speaking your second language.

You should speak even when you are uncomfortable, and you should speak when you aren't quite sure you will be understood by other people. And,

You must speak EVEN if you feel shy - and I know many of you do. Do you sometimes avoid speaking because you feel shy? Well, listen carefully and I'll tell you what I always tell my students: “Shyness is expensive.” What do I mean by that? Just this: the cost of shyness = the loss of an opportunity to speak.

And, when it comes to language fluency, opportunities for speaking practice are pure gold. When it comes to learning a language, practice is what builds fluency.

Did you get that? I'll repeat it because it's so important.

PRACTICE is what builds fluency.

It is absolutely extraordinary how seldom many students actually DO speak. And

not speaking is a vicious cycle. They don't speak because they can't, and they can't speak because they don't. It doesn't make sense, does it?

Well, it's a simple fact, you CANNOT become fluent any other way. Think about it. Speaking practice is how you became fluent in your first language. Practice is how EVERYONE becomes fluent - whether it is their first, second, third, or tenth language. It is the ONLY way.

To return to shyness again for a moment, if you ARE shy, I know that this aspect of language learning is harder for you (perhaps much harder). And I'll be honest with you: those of you who are naturally outgoing and sociable definitely DO have an easier time of it in this area.

But don't worry, it's not time to throw in the towel. If you are shy, you'll just have to work a little harder. You'll have to push past your feelings of discomfort and force yourself to participate verbally in situations. You CAN do it.

“You don't understand me,” you might think.

But I do. Believe me: I can sympathize with shy students. I know how difficult it is because for many, many years, I was shy too. I do understand; I am speaking from personal experience. I know very well what the reluctance to speak feels like - AND, I know the price you can pay - because I paid it.

I won't bore you with my story, but I lost many social and learning opportunities due to my shyness, and it

About Us

Our Mission Is:

- ▶ To provide top quality, flexible learning support and service to students and parents of students through:

Superior private tutoring matched specifically to each student's needs.

Stimulating workshops building skills in a practical and creative way.

- ▶ To enhance students' skills and increase learning confidence through individualized support, recognizing each student's unique abilities.
- ▶ To improve the quality of life, in individuals and communities through education.

Our tutors are certified teachers and professionals. Each is carefully screened and selected to match individual students' needs.

We help students to achieve.

For more information, and free study tips, visit us on-line at:

www.SmartTutorReferrals.com

Contact Us

Managing Director Registration

Dahlia Miller
250-995-2632
dahlia@SmartTutorReferrals.com

Mailing Address:

584 Niagara Street
Victoria, BC
V8V 1H7

www.SmartTutorReferrals.com

wasted a lot of time. That's all I'll say on this at the moment. This is a whole topic of its own, but let me just say this, you CAN overcome it. I did. And it doesn't mean completely changing your personality.

I think this secret to speaking a second language fluently is, in some ways, the most obvious. Maybe it doesn't really seem like a 'secret'. Yet, so many students do not speak. Instead, even in a conversation class, they look down and focus their attention on their notebooks. Instead of asking a teacher for information, for example, they will look in their (bilingual) dictionary. Sometimes they'll ask a friend or a classmate – but often, the question is not even asked in the second language.

"A different language is a different vision of life."

Federico Fellini

This quote from the famous Italian director is so true. Language is a part of culture, and so to make a real connection with a language, it is important to participate in the culture as much as possible. HOW you can do this depends on whether you are currently in your own country, or in a country where the language you are trying to learn is spoken predominantly.

If you are in your own country, or are only surrounded by your first language, you clearly won't have as many opportunities to practice speaking your second language as you will if you are in a country where your second language is spoken as an official language. But you will have *some* speaking opportunities. One obvious opportunity is to join a language school or conversation class. If you do join a language school, it is much better for you if you can be taught by native speakers of your second language.

Also, try to make sure the school has a good conversation program, and that they don't just teach grammar and how to study for tests. You could even ask the staff if they use the "Communicative" style of teaching there. But remember, once you're in the language school, it's up to you. Nobody can FORCE you to speak; you have to do that for yourself.

What else can you do? Well, that largely depends on where you are. Aside from language schools, try to participate in as many activities as possible that give you speaking opportunities. You could buddy up with a friend who is also studying the same language and set aside regular time when you communicate only in your second language. Also, try to think about where there are native speakers, and look for opportunities to speak there. Where do they eat? Where do they drink their coffee or tea? Where do they relax? Be creative. You might look for volunteer opportunities where you can use your second language.

If, however, you are in an area where people speak your second language, you have a much larger number of options. (And I highly recommend you take advantage of them while you are there!) Again, you may want to join a language school. Or, you may want to attend a regular school if you are at a high enough level. There are so many possibilities and ideas. You could join a club or a gym, attend a church or other social function, take a class (in painting, music or whatever interests you).

Basically, go where the speakers of your second language go.

Please believe me, there is no shortcut. So, remember, watch for opportunities, actually look for opportunities. Make your own opportunities. Ask questions. Don't worry, just speak.

"Language is a steed which carries you into a far country."

Arab proverb