ESL Phonics Series for English Language Learners Fills the Missing Gap in ESL Lessons

All ESL students face challenges when learning to read English. With the dropout rate among Latinos and other new arrivals at 75% in many parts of the country, it’s urgent that these at-risk students get specialized phonics support in their uphill struggles in school. Ordinary phonics programs designed for native English speakers just don’t do the job. Elizabeth Claire, editor of Easy English NEWS, has just completed a series of five books, ESL Phonics for All Ages, to fill the missing gaps in ESL lessons.

Saddle Brook, NJ (PRWEB) June 2, 2010 -- English language learners and their ESL teachers can breathe more easily,” announces Elizabeth Claire, author and creator of the “ESL Phonics for All Ages” series of student books and audio CDs. Her most recent ESL texts are published by Eardley Publications.

“Students who are learning to read in English face ten challenges that native English speakers don’t face,” says Claire, a former ESL teacher who has authored 26 books for English language learners and their teachers.

“Challenge number one is vocabulary. English language learners need to read words they know. Phonics books for native-English speakers use words like mat, vat, cob, bib, cub, and sub. These words are not in a newly-arrived student’s vocabulary.

“Challenge number two is sounds: The sequence of sounds should go from easier to more difficult. A typical phonics book for English speakers starts out with words like cat, hat, mat, vat, Pat, rat…However, the sound that the letter a represents in those words does not occur in most other languages. Our newcomers then mispronounce these words as cot, hot, mot, etc. So right away they associate the ‘a’ sound in cat as the ‘ah’ sound in cot.

“Three: context. English learners want to learn sentences they can use in their daily life. A typical phonics book for native speakers has sentences that make very little sense to a new speaker of English: ‘The rat sat on the mat. That made Dad mad.’

“Four: word length. It’s easier to distinguish words that are of varying lengths. English language learners are confused when they see a whole row of little three-letter words that all look similar: bat, cat, mat, sat, fat.

“Five: the appearance. The book and illustrations must appeal to older learners. Most phonics books are illustrated to appeal to five- and six-year olds. Newly arrived students who need to learn to read may be any age, including adults.

“Six: English phonics books do not have built-in success. Students need success in order to stay motivated.

“Seven: the phonics-only mode. The pure phonics approach doesn’t capitalize on the other ways that learners learn to read: sight words, environmental print, words from memorized songs, chants, and stories, as well as absorbing patterns from their ESL lessons.
“Eight: grammatical errors. The sample sentences in ESL learners’ phonics books should be written with correct grammar. Often writers of phonics books for native English speakers take liberties with verb tenses and leave out direct objects. An example from one popular phonics series: ‘The boy pulls.’ ‘The hens tug.’ ‘The pup wags.’

“Nine: too many different instructions needed. Learners need simple, repeated instructions so they can work on their own. They can’t work on their own if they need a teacher to explain and demonstrate what to do on each page.

“Ten: lack of audio input. English language learners need to know what the words sound like in order to connect sound and symbol. Without audio input, students are tied to the teacher’s input for the sounds of the words.

ESL Phonics for All Ages by Elizabeth Claire meets all of these challenges:

Words chosen for ESL Phonics for All Ages Book One are those that newcomers will learn in their first year in an ESL class: book, boy, teacher, table, pen, paper, etc. The student can listen to the words on an audio CD which reads the words three times each. This frees up the teacher, and allows students to progress at their own pace. All sentences are useful; sight words are included; songs and chants to memorize help motivate and provide right brain involvement.

Five student books and accompanying audio CDs and teacher guides are ready now.

Available at www.Elizabethclaire.com
Grand opening website special for June 2010: 10 % discount, with free shipping.

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