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Challenges Encountered by Adult ESL Tutors in the Classroom: A Study of ESL Resources at Jubilee House

Brenda Ordonez '22

Community Learning Research Fellows 2019

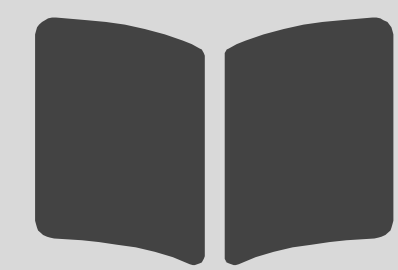
Community Partner: Jubilee House; Faculty Advisor: Stefanie Wong

Jubilee House

- Provides English literacy and social integration services for low come Hartford residence, especially immigrant and refugees.
- Offers English for Speakers of Other Languages program (ESOL) and Citizenship classes.
- Provides assistance finding employment and making resources available to them which help parents support their children.



Life skills and resource to sustain independence



Educational Programs



Community and support system

Research Questions

Given the amount of preparation Jubilee tutors receive and the limited resources offered, I focused on the following questions:

- What kinds of ESL resources currently exist at Jubilee House and what do tutors find helpful and useful about them?
- What kinds of additional resources do new tutors want?

My study used these findings to develop a tutor orientation packet for new tutors with Jubilee House's ESL program.

Prior Research

ESL Tutors and Program Preparation:

- Training programs often are ineffective and cover broad ideas of teaching literacy.
- Volunteers range from qualified educators or someone with no certification and little experience.
- Tutors derive their own learning experiences instead of their training program preparation.

Adult Literacy

- Adult ELs come into language and literacy programs with a wide variety of educational experiences and with different needs.
- ESL are crucial programs for refugees and immigrants to obtain jobs and become self-sufficient.
- The program encounters unique challenges unlike challenges faced by K-12 or higher education settings.

Program Resources:

- Programs are often run on small budgets by community organizations
- There is not a set guide on how to teach ESL programs rather a large range of resources.
- Many ESL tutors develop their own resources and materials that accommodate their students' needs.

Methodology: Qualitative Study

Collected qualitative data through literature reviews on ESL tutor preparation, tutor interviews and analyzing resources from the Jubilee House.

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ESL Resource Analysis

- Side by Side Workbooks
- Laubach Way To Reading
- Ventures Series

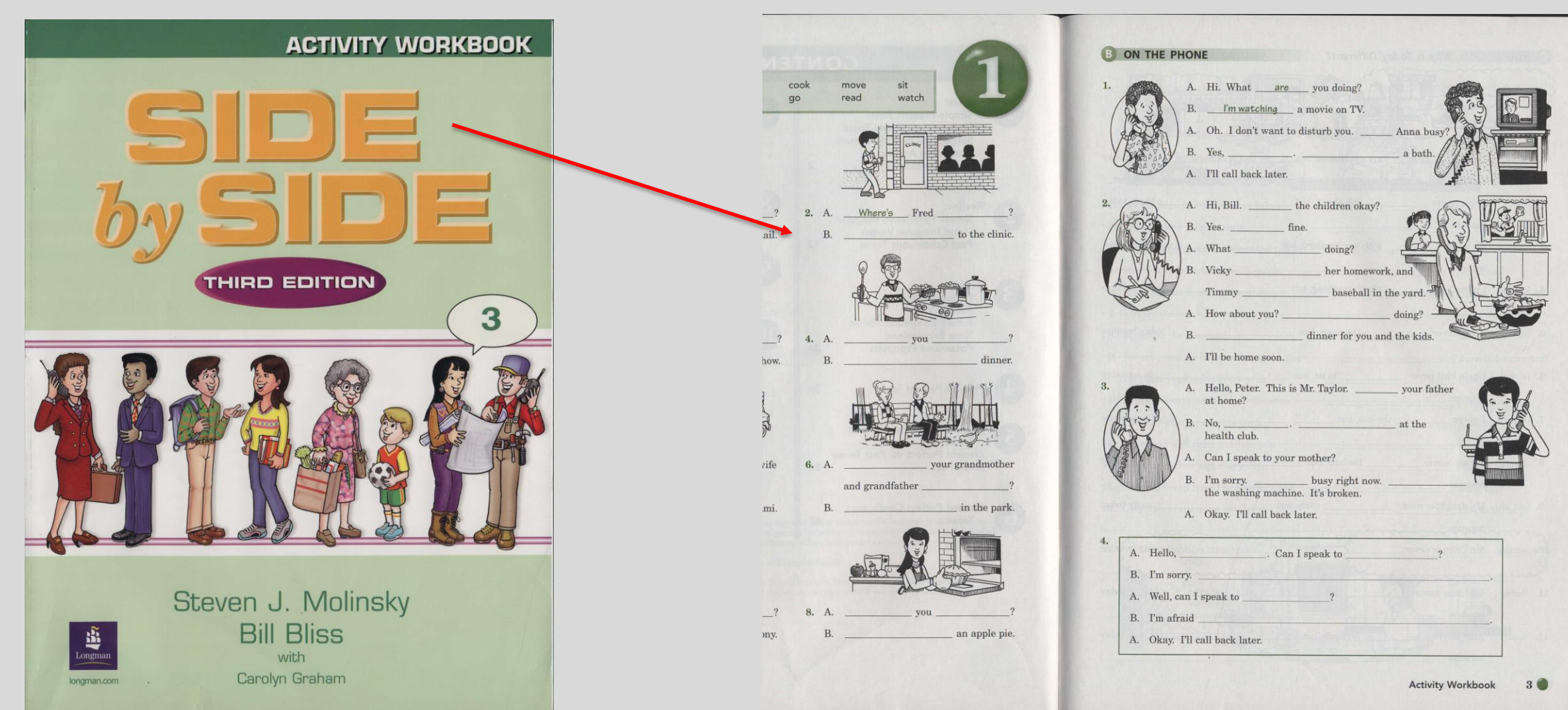
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ESL Tutor Interviews

- 2 Experienced tutors
- 4 New tutors



Key Findings: ESL Resources Analysis



Side by Side

The Side by Side series allows student and tutor to work one on one on various grammar activities. It focuses on reviewing grammar rules and builds on strengthening vocabulary.

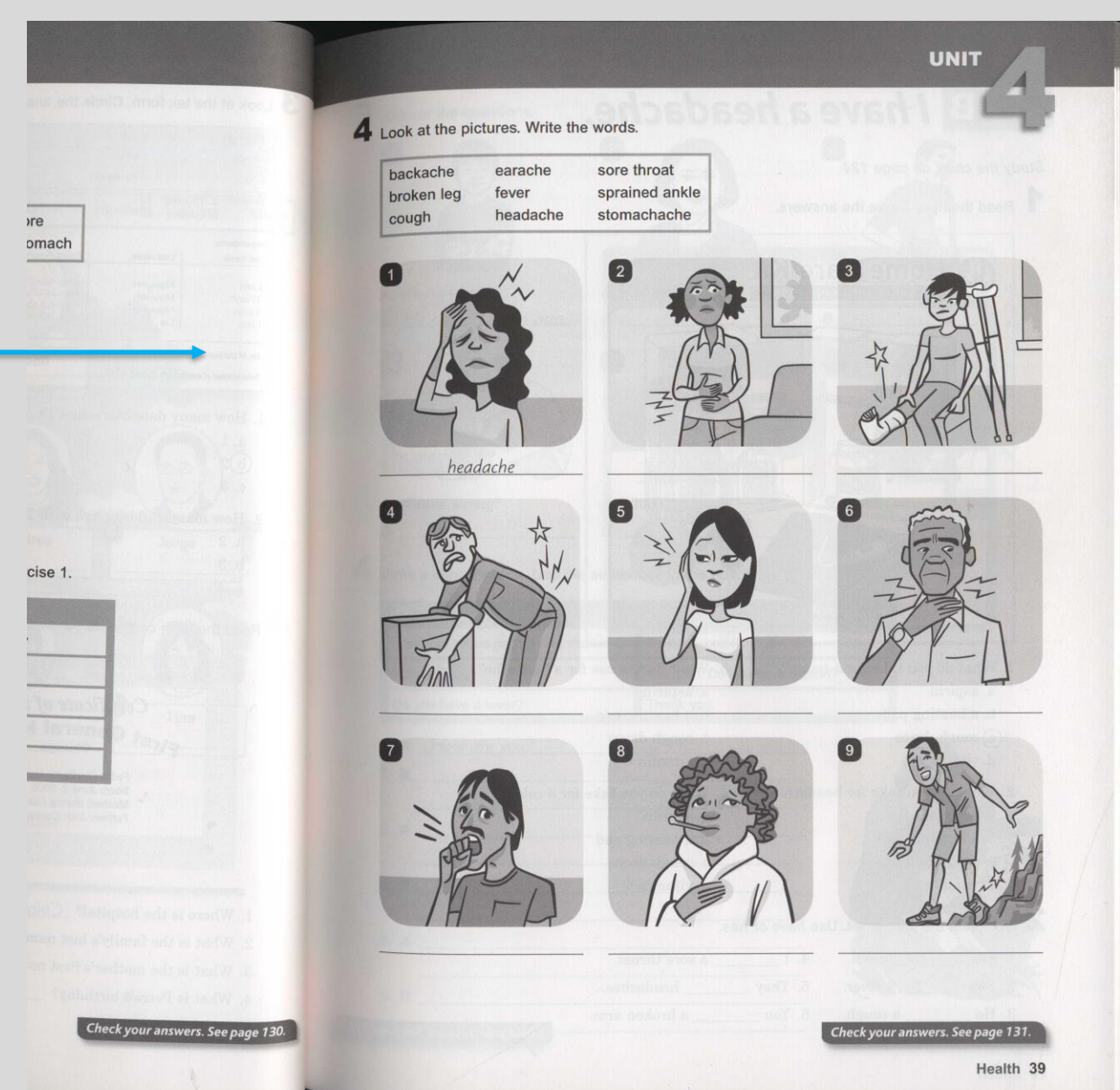
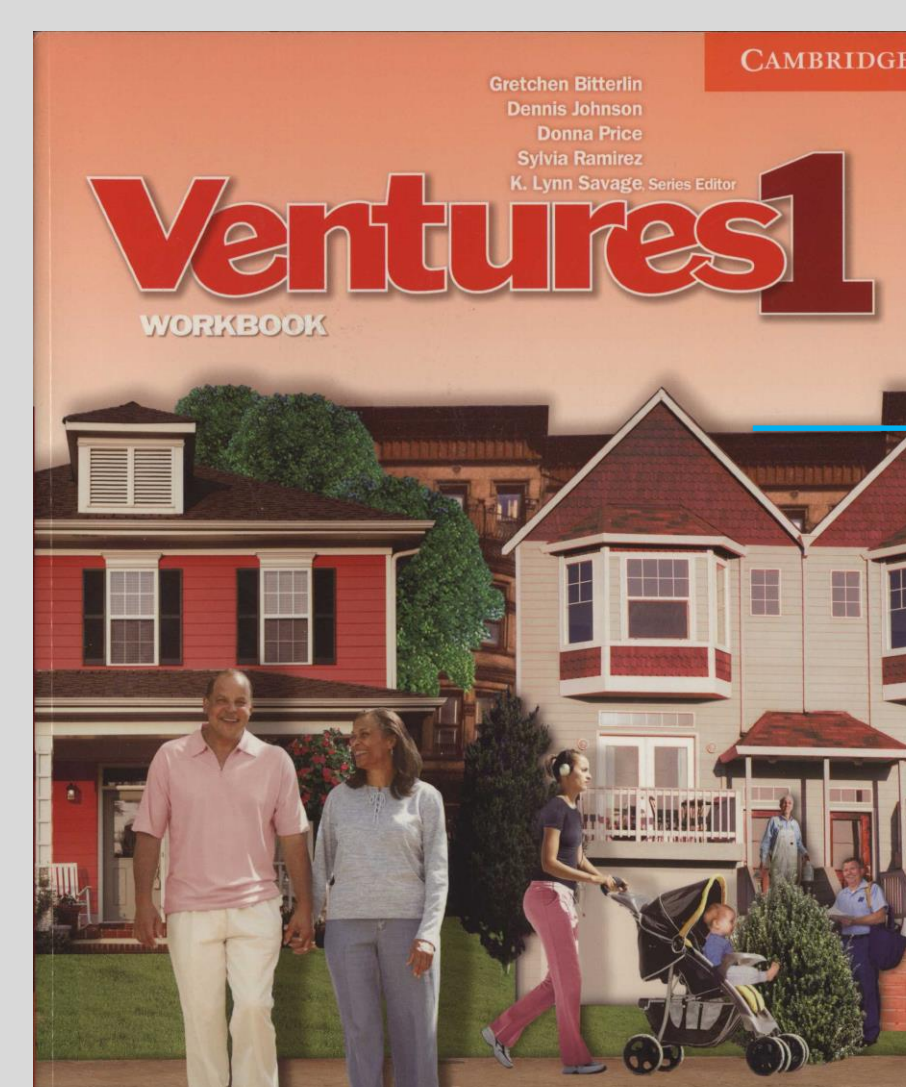
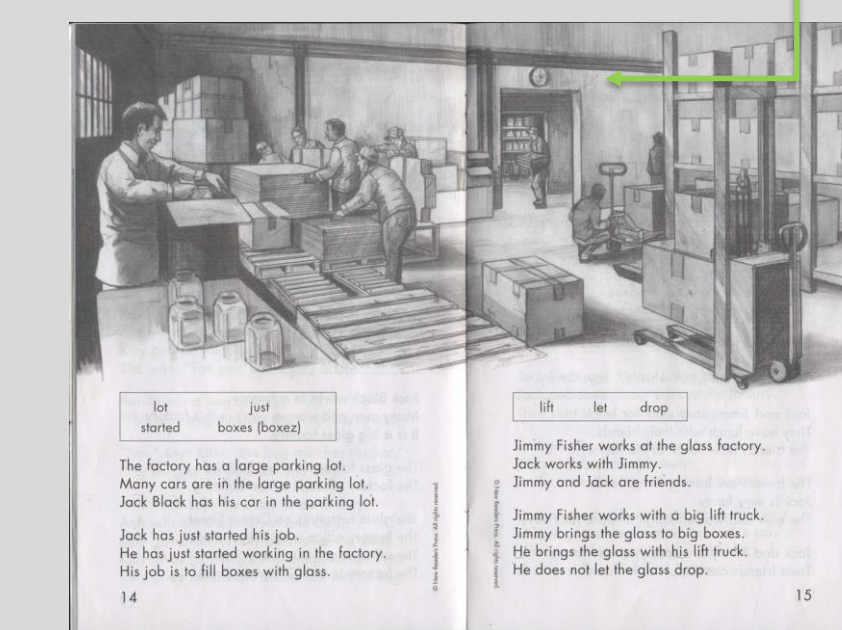
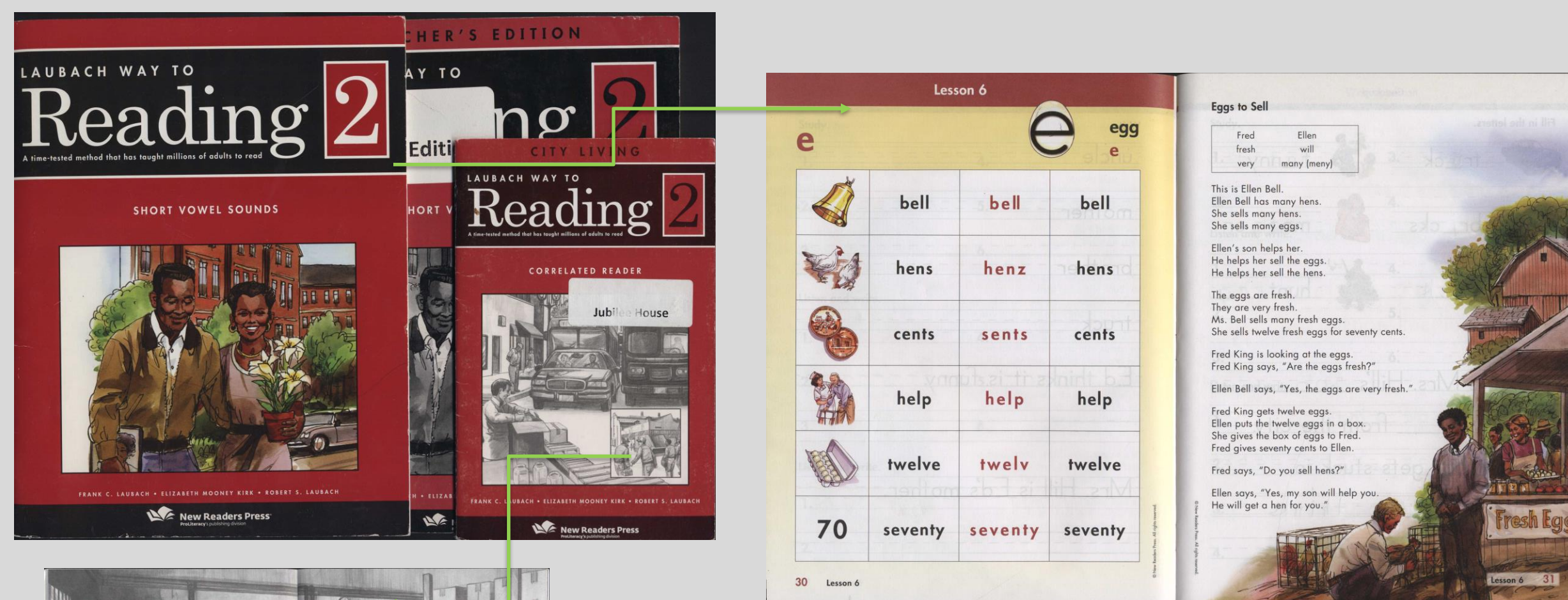
- Workbook
- Teacher guide
- Levels 1 to 3

Laubach Way To Reading

A basic reading and writing course for adults. The learner is able review sound-symbol relationships in charts and practice both diction and writing skills.

Sounds and names of letters:

- Reading guide books: include short stories for student to practice reading out loud.
- Focus on Phonics
- Levels 1 to 4



Ventures

Provides extra classroom practice, homework, and independent learning activities. It includes grammar charts and real-life documents to help student practice reading and real-life situations.

- Workbook
- Teacher guide
- Levels 1 and 2

Key Findings: ESL Tutor Interviews

Resources in the Classroom

Some tutors used the workbooks and reading guides provided by Jubilee House like the Side by Side workbooks.

"The books are good but they can be childlike so I often look for books that deal with things that are relevant to their daily life like renting an apartment."

Other tutors made their own resources to meet students' needs.

"I always tell my students besides learning to read or write, what other skills do you need help with because sometimes it's things besides bookwork. My student then told her she needs help with money and explained she got so scared when she went to the grocery store that she would just open her wallet and let them take whatever it is."

New Tutor Challenges

Most tutors are volunteers who are retired and often had some type of teaching experience.

Some new tutors struggle with knowing where to start in their lesson and they cater to their student's level of English. Some ask their students what they would like to learn more about.

"I asked my student where did you need English this week and she said at the Doctor. So we did a unit on the hospital and then another one on shopping and returning an item. What do I say to return this? Something as simple as that makes a difference"

Currently, tutors at Jubilee House are not given any ESL training.

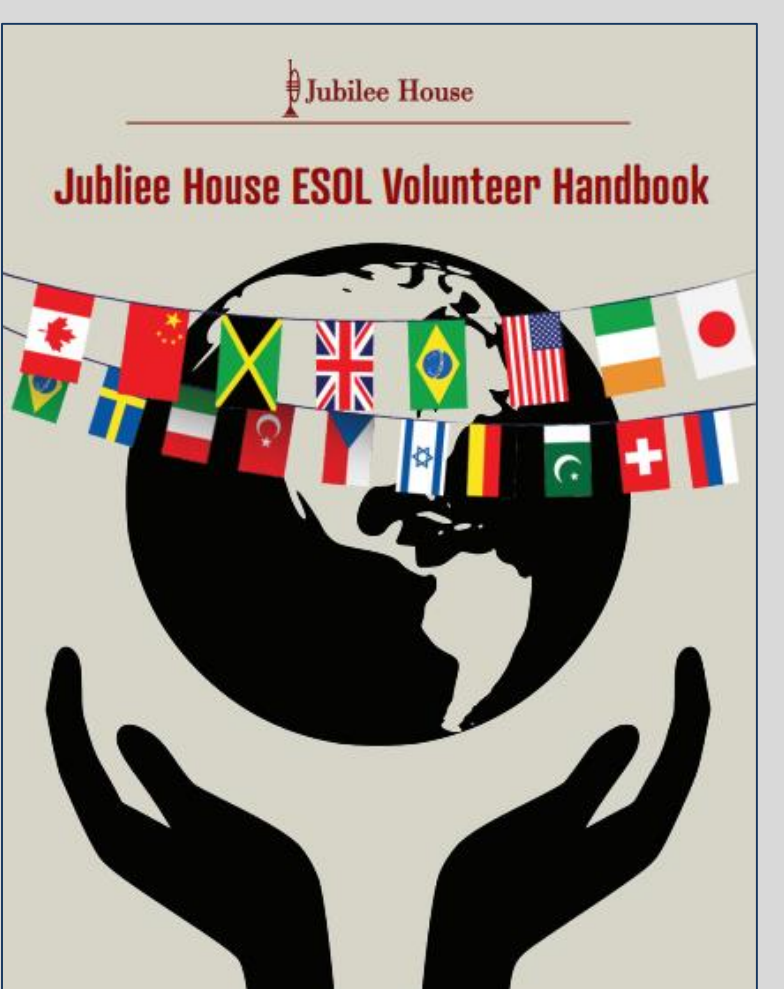
"The first day I came in, I asked the coordinator if I could talk to somebody[another tutor] ... because I did not know where to start."

"I had to think about my parents' experiences and what they needed to know when they came to this country."

Deliverable

Tutor Orientation Packet

- A brief introduction to Jubilee House
- Includes resources that tutors made
- A guide to the types of resources offered at Jubilee House and what they focus on E.g. grammar, reading
- Includes a list of online resources and suggestions for new ESL tutors teaching English as a Second Language for the first time.



Acknowledgments

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