

SCALE Connections is Growing!

Word of mouth from participants has brought a number of new English language learners to our conversation groups. We are now running five concurrent groups on Wednesday evenings in SCALE classrooms with no more than five participants per group. Participants enjoy the small group format because everyone gets a chance to practice their English and build confidence in their conversation skills. It also provides a better opportunity for the participants to get to know each other.

At the same time, we are building community with our monthly social events. The March event was a games night with potluck dishes. A few advisors to the program also came, so there were many native English speakers for participants to talk with.

The photo below shows one of the participants giving clues about the word on the slip of paper he pulled out of the Bowl of Nouns. There was lots of laughing as his teammates tried to guess the word.



A number of participants volunteered to serve as an advisory committee to help shape the plan for next year. They all said they wanted to keep the small group format with monthly social events.

We also discussed possibly adding a monthly outing, and talked about having participants take a lead role in planning those outings. Advisory committee members expressed enthusiasm to learn more about what Boston has to offer, and said that they would feel a lot more confident trying new things if they could do so alongside other group members.

Many English language learners don't participate in activities outside of their native language community, which limits their opportunities to practice speaking English and to connect with the larger community.

Group outings can provide participants with the kind of peer support that make it easier to try new things. Group outings will also help participants build their confidence and have fun in the process, so that they feel better able and motivated to explore community activities on their own.

We hope to try to schedule some informal summer outings in Boston with participants and facilitators. Please let me know if you are interested in receiving announcements about any of those outings.

We are grateful to First Literacy for providing the seed funding that enabled us to launch SCALE Connections.

Be well,
Lori