

Skills Lab can help improve your writing, reading and math

The Skills Enhancement Lab is offering its popular “brush up” grammar classes this month, plus some new services to help workers improve their basic reading, writing, math and spelling skills.

The Skills Enhancement Lab is a partnership of the Department of Energy, Columbia Basin College and the Volpentest HAMMER Training and Education Center operated by Fluor Hanford. The lab is open from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. No tuition is charged for the lab's classes and services, which are entirely confidential and open to Hanford Site workers.

The Painless Punctuation class will be offered on Thursday, Feb. 20, from 7:30 to 11:30 a.m. in room 31 of the HAMMER administration building. Participants will learn to cure comma-itis; use colons and semi-colons properly; handle exhausted apostrophes; tackle the lowly hyphen; review fragments, comma splices, and run-ons; and review must-know key rules.

The Goof-Proofing your Grammar class will be offered on Thursday, Feb. 27, from 7:30 to 11:30 a.m. in room 31 of the HAMMER administration building. Participants will learn to recognize and deal with the most frequent grammatical goofs: pronoun problems; mangled modifiers; easily confused, misused and abused words; proper use of who/whom, lie/lay, bring/take, who/which/that; pronoun-antecedent agreement; subject-verb agreement; parallel phrasing; and must-know key rules.

Space is limited and classes fill quickly, so reserve a seat now by calling the Skills Lab at 376-3250.

The Skills Lab also provides adult basic skill assessment services to help if your basic math or verbal skills are rusty, or if your co-workers — or perhaps the boss — complain that your written work could stand some improvement. If you'd like to see how your basic skills measure up, the Skills Lab is offering a brief standardized survey of adult basic reading, writing, math and grammar skills, also known as the Test of Adult Basic Skills, or TABE.

You can choose to take both math and verbal portions, or just one. The total time for both portions is two hours. After the assessment is scored, you can schedule a private conference with a Columbia Basin College faculty member at the lab to discuss your results and learn simple ways to brush up your skills — either by using the Skills Enhancement Lab or on your own.

You have probably noticed that different people prefer different learning styles. Some people prefer to read about a subject to master it; others need to see the concept demonstrated; still others prefer to listen to someone explain the concept. Studies show that we learn and remember most efficiently when we take advantage of our preferred learning style.

Often a few minor changes to our thinking/writing/studying processes can make a startling difference in how well we process and retain information. The Skills Lab can administer a “learning styles inventory” that can help you maximize your study potential more fully. After you take the assessment, CBC faculty will discuss ways to apply the information to your work techniques. This assessment takes two hours.

Both the TABE and learning styles assessments are offered by private appointment only on Tuesday or Thursday afternoons at the Skills Lab, located in the Learning Resource Center, room 4, in the HAMMER Training Building. There is no charge or obligation, and all information remains confidential. To schedule an appointment for an assessment, call the lab at 376-3250. ■