

Skills Enhancement Lab offers help to improve basic skills

July classes

The Skills Lab will offer half-day sessions on punctuation, grammar, business writing and spelling during July from 7:30 to 11:30 a.m. in room 31 of the Volpentest HAMMER Training and Education Center Administration Building. There is no charge for any of the following sessions, but seats are filling rapidly, so reserve space now by calling Kathy Dechter at 376-3250:

- **Painless Punctuation** — Tuesday, July 15. 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.
- **Successful Business and Technical Writing** — Thursday, July 17. Learn how to structure a document for impact, pinpoint audiences, identify purposes, organize information clearly, eliminate gobbledygook, and edit your own and others' work. Produce clear and readable documents. Suggested prerequisite: Painless Punctuation.
- **Goof-Proofing Your Grammar** — Tuesday, July 22. Learn to fix the most frequent grammatical goofs — pronoun problems; mangled modifiers; easily confused words; proper use of who/whom, lie/lay, bring/take, who/which/that; pronoun-antecedent agreement; subject-verb agreement; and parallel phrasing.

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 Skills Lab helps workers improve their reading, writing, math and spelling skills, and is open from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. At the lab, experienced CBC faculty members work privately with each student. They use workplace materials, texts, software programs, videotapes and audiotapes to match each person's learning style.

Tutoring is available in reading comprehension, speed-reading, spelling, vocabulary development, grammar, writing, communication, test-taking skills and math. No tuition is charged for the lab's services. Services are entirely confidential and open to Hanford Site workers. Employees attend with their supervisors' permission and when their work schedules allow. Though hours are flexible, a minimum commitment of one to two hours per week is recommended. For further information on the Skills Lab or to sign up for any of the sessions, call Kathy Dechter at 376-3250.

Another service available to Hanford workers is skills assessment. The Skills Lab staff members perform assessments by appointment only on Tuesday or Thursday afternoons at the Skills Lab in the Learning Resource Center, room 4 in the HAMMER Training Building. The following assessments are available:

- **Adult Basic Skills Diagnostic** — Are your basic math or verbal skills rusty? Does your written work need improvement? 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. You can choose to take either or both the math and verbal portions. Then, after the assessment is scored, schedule a private conference with a CBC 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.
- **Learning Styles — Left-Brain/Right Brain Inventory** — Do you struggle to retain and master new material on the job? Have you noticed that different people prefer different learning styles? Studies show that we learn and remember more efficiently when we take advantage of our preferred learning style. Often a few minor changes to our thinking, writing and studying processes can make a startling difference in how well we process and retain information. The Skills Lab offers this learning styles Inventory to help you maximize your study potential. After you take the assessment, CBC faculty will discuss ways to apply the information to your workload.

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- **Successful Spelling** — Thursday, July 24. Review common spelling demons and learn to spell them correctly. Master the Terrible Ten — the 10 most often misspelled words — and clarify commonly confused words. Learn crucial key rules for spelling more than 4,000 words correctly. Get memory tricks to help you remember what you learn.

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- **Gregg Reference Manual Diagnostic** — Those who want to master a specific area of punctuation, grammar or capitalization can arrange to take a diagnostic assessment based on the *Gregg Reference Manual*, a well-respected handbook used on the Hanford Site and by major corporations across the United States. This test is an excellent way to polish your skills in commas, quotation marks, hyphens, semicolons, bullets and capitalization.

- **Vocabulary Diagnostic** — There are more than 700,000 words in the English language, and no one ever knows them all. Beyond the 50,000 to 100,000 words needed for average adult communication, you'll have to determine which words you need to actively use (or at least passively recognize) according to your own current interests and priorities. This brief assessment will help you determine a course of action for steady vocabulary improvement.

There is no charge for any of the assessments, and all information remains confidential. To schedule an appointment for any service, call the lab at 376-3250. ■