Human Resources

October 2023

English for Speakers of Other Languages

for MIT Service Employees

Our DEI Home

This year, the English as a Second Language for MIT Facilities Department Employees program changed its name to English for Speakers of Other Languages for MIT Service Employees (ESOL). This new name reflects our commitment to serving the larger MIT community and allows us to leverage the program's 14 years of expertise for more service staff members.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) are at the core of our program. In support of this we are excited to have expanded our services to reach Housing and Residential Services employees.

Gabe Campos, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Department of Human Resources, described our program mission's alignment with MIT's DEI goals:

"DEI is about creating an inclusive environment among diverse individuals within existing structures. To that end, the ESOL program focuses on helping people who often navigate through a system that is new to them. It is so important to find ways to help them reach their full potential and to let them know that they are welcome here."

In addition to supporting its many students, the ESOL program provides opportunities for our volunteer tutors to



connect with people they may not normally encounter at the Institute. In this way, the community is enhanced by fostering these rich opportunities for sharing.

"The great achievements of the ESOL program students with the help of their volunteer tutors is one of the strongest examples of the spirit of community at MIT," said Ramona Allen, Vice President for Human Resources.

We look forward to continuing to enhance and expand the program!

The ESOL Program for MIT Service Employees helps employees who are not native English speakers improve their English communication skills and advance their careers.

To sign up to become a tutor, scan the QR code below.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
77 Massachusetts Avenue
NE49-5000
Cambridge, MA 02139

esl-admins@mit.edu
hr.mit.edu/learn/esol

Volunteer tutors needed one hour per week:

- No tutoring experience required
- Pick your own schedule
- Visit **bit.ly/esol-signup** or scan the QR code to sign up

We Are Growing

by Monia Doandes

New features and resources, increased outreach, and more

The ESOL Program for MIT Service Employees has grown tremendously this year, and we expect to expand even more. In order to help more service staff members improve their English communication skills, we have moved many of our resources online to make it easier for everyone to access materials, share expertise, and collaborate. We are leveraging Microsoft Teams and Slack online collaboration tools to facilitate the growth of this wonderful ESOL community.

We encourage **volunteer tutors** to join our ESOL Volunteers Microsoft Teams space, an area designed by volunteers for volunteers, with resources for tutors, an interactive space to ask questions or request additional resources, and the Wins and Kudos channel where we celebrate together. This Teams space also contains a large and uplifting collection of our newsletters. See our Online Community Wiki (bit.ly/mit-esol-community) for more information on how to join.
(Professional growth: Microsoft Teams; Microsoft Planner; SharePoint)

We have also created a public MIT ESOL Slack workspace for coordinators, ambassadors, tutors, ESOL students, and friends of the program. The Digital Literacy Track for Service Employees will bring many of them to this workspace, where they can learn about online tools in a supportive and encouraging community.
(Professional growth: Slack; Digital Literacy)

As part of our digitalization enhancements, we have also developed online forms for both volunteer tutors and service employees (in 132 languages). Additionally, we have implemented many computer-assisted processes to make it faster and easier to manage the tremendous amount of work that goes on behind the scenes.

We have also expanded our outreach efforts to multiple communication channels to increase volunteer awareness and engagement. Email us at esl-admins@mit.edu to learn more about our outreach efforts, or if you would like to become one of our ambassadors.

Volunteer Tutors Celebrate Student Achievements

by Nancy Kelly

Facilities Technician Graduate: Ngawang Shakya



Recently, Ngawang Shakya graduated from the Peterson School with an excellent overall average of 95%, earning his Facilities Technician diploma. His tutors shared that:

"Ngawang loves to learn and is passionate about everything that he approaches. Despite having two jobs, he made time for his Facilities course and that is reflected in his grade. Now that he has graduated, he likes to learn math in his spare time, especially geometry."
—Lesly Franco

"Ngawang is an excellent student who has great enthusiasm for learning. He often ties things we learn about to his incredibly interesting experiences in Tibet, China, and India, especially as a Tibetan Buddhist monk. I have enjoyed and learned a lot from our discussions."
—Willow Huang

Did you know?
Our ESOL Wiki is updated regularly with new resources requested or shared by our volunteer tutors. Check it out at **bit.ly/mit-esol-wiki-main**.

Five Newly Minted U.S. Citizens



Congratulations to our new U.S. citizens! We are very proud of them. A few words from their tutors:

Sherilann Clunis-Williams
"Sherilann is an extremely driven and receptive student, and her improvement has been amazing to watch. We recently read a book over 100 pages long! Working with her has allowed me to learn tremendously as well. I can't wait to continue working with Sherilann and see her accomplish even more!" *—Abby Dulski*

Estela Fernandes
"It was awesome working with Estela! She always came with a smile and was ready to learn and prepare for the citizenship exam. She worked really hard for it, and also always made my day by sharing stories about birthdays, family, or travel. I'm extremely proud of her and I'm happy she was able to pass the exam." *—Julian Zulueta*

"Estela is truly remarkable in her dedication to learning. She is the definition of a self-starter. On top of being an incredibly driven and busy worker, she manages to find boundless energy for taking classes and reading books. She always has such sharp insights and profound reflections on the material she encounters. I have learned so much from working with her." *—Erin Grela*

Luis "Carlos" Hincapie
"Carlos is very thoughtful and hardworking. He put extra effort into learning and understanding the materials for the citizenship test preparation, which helped him make speedy and excellent progress. I was very happy to see him achieve the U.S. citizenship milestone. Working with Carlos has been one of the fun experiences during my time at MIT." *—Deepsing Syangtan*

"Carlos is a great student to work with. Three years ago, I introduced him to a bilingual Spanish-English book about a family's journey through La Frontera which inspired our work together and was the catalyst to an enduring friendship beyond our ESL sessions. Now during our time together we talk about our families, our gardens, health, politics, immigration, education, and so much more." *—Anne Kern*

Sally Romero
"I had the delight of tutoring Sally for several years, and one thing I hadn't anticipated when I started is the lifelong friendship we would make! Our weekly sessions have been such a highlight of my time at MIT, and getting the chance to know Sally has been an absolute treat. She is such an asset to the MIT community, and deserves kudos for all of her hard work, which ultimately has seen her graduate on the Dean's Honor List from the Facilities Technician Program at the Peterson School and become a newly minted American citizen. Congratulations Sally!" *—Pru Robinson*

Egidia "Victoria" Santos
"Victoria is an extremely motivated student in the ESOL program. She always engages fully and comes to sessions with many questions. It's clear that Victoria practices a lot both in and out of the classroom, and it shows in her wonderful achievements and steadily improving English ability over the past year!" *—Brooke McGoldrick*

Volunteer Tutor Achievements

Two of our tutors, **Michael Sutton '23** and **Victor Damptey '23**, won 2023 Fulbright fellowships. Michael will be an English teaching assistant in Taiwan. Victor will join the Chemical Institute of Sarrià in Barcelona, Spain, where he will test alternative conduits for cardiovascular grafting surgery. They have both been great assets to the ESOL program, helping their students achieve their English language goals, and are excited to continue to help build a better world.

Read more about their achievements: news.mit.edu/2023/mit-fulbright-fellowships-0515.

Tutor Spotlights



Volunteer tutors Julian Zulueta and Victor Damptey featured on MIT's website

by Nancy Kelly and Monia Doandes

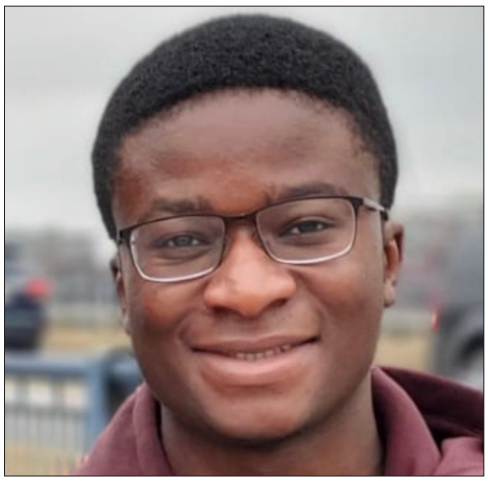


Julian Zulueta

Julian Zulueta is one of the friendliest, most dedicated, and helpful people you'll ever meet. He has been tirelessly helping his student prepare for the citizenship exam, and in the process, finding creative resources that we have also shared on the program's Wiki page.

Julian will be graduating this semester and going on to Columbia Medical School. He enjoyed working with his student so much that he will continue to tutor with us remotely as an MIT alum and friend of the program. "The ESOL program was definitely a part of my enjoyment at MIT," said Julian, "I'm happy I found this community."

Read more about Julian:
news.mit.edu/2023/julian-zulueta-bioengineering-many-paths-0209



Victor Damptey

Victor Damptey joined the program in 2021 and has been helping his student make tremendous progress. The student's supervisor, as well as staff working in the student's building, have all contacted us about the impressive improvement they've observed in the student's English communication skills.

"One thing that we as native speakers of English take for granted is that we can easily navigate this world without wondering if what we're saying is not being communicated well, and we're easily able to convey our thoughts, feelings, and questions," Damptey stated in the MIT News article. "In a health care setting where a patient's health is on the line, it becomes clear how important it is to properly communicate."

Read more about Victor:
news.mit.edu/2023/using-language-skills-bridge-gaps-health-care-0406

2024 is our 15th anniversary! Email **esl-admins@mit.edu** to let us know if you'd like to write a story for our next newsletter.

The Many and Surprising Benefits of Volunteering

by Monia Doandes

When I set out to write an article on the benefits of volunteering,while I knew in my heart how amazing it feels to help others, I did not expect to find such a huge trove of research on how volunteering gives right back. My research generated such a substantial list of benefits that the article kept growing, becoming too long for this newsletter. The full list of benefits is available on our Wiki (bit.ly/vol-ben). Here are a few examples:

- Volunteers were found to be healthier overall than non-volunteers, with one study showing that the health of those who volunteer was comparable to that of peers who were five years younger.
- In a group of adolescents, those who volunteered an hour per week had lower levels of inflammation, cholesterol, and lower BMIs than non-volunteering peers. The volunteers who reported the greatest increases in empathy, altruistic behavior, and mental health also saw the greatest improvements in their cardiovascular health.
- Those who volunteered an average of 200 hours a year, three to four hours a week, were 40% less likely to develop high blood pressure, even four years later.
- 87% of active volunteers believe volunteering has helped them develop professional skills.



- People who engaged in regular volunteering saw an 8.54% increase in mental well-being and a 4.3% decrease in depression.
- Older volunteers in the U.S. experienced a 44% lower mortality rate than those who did not volunteer.

To all of our amazing volunteers, a heartfelt thank you for your dedication in helping our service employees. We thank our readers for sharing this article with friends and spreading the joy of volunteering. The Volunteer Tutor Sign-Up section on our Wiki has information on how to apply to be a volunteer, as well as additional details about the MIT ESOL Program, including an up-to-date list of times and locations where tutors are needed (wikis.mit.edu/confluence/x/gQmWDQ).

Can you find all of the words?

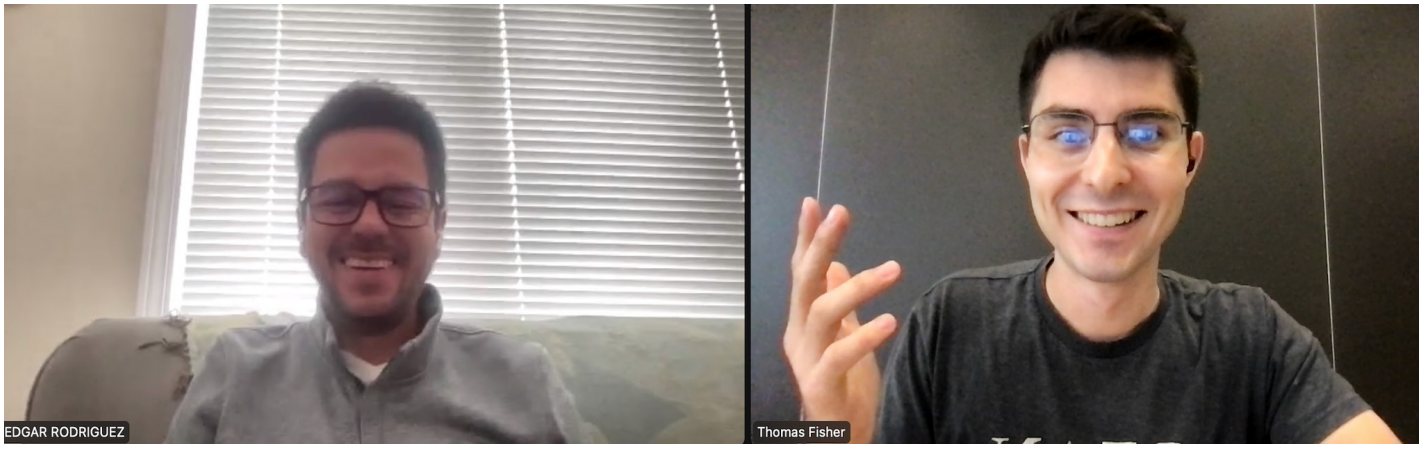
Word Search - TheTeachersCorner.net

Y	F	Y	T	I	U	Q	E	O	Y
N	O	I	S	U	L	C	N	I	T
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C	Y	T	I	S	R	E	V	I	D
L	L	K	G	J	I	E	S	O	L
P	V	O	L	U	N	T	E	E	R
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- COMMUNITY
- DIVERSITY
- ENGLISH
- EQUITY
- ESOL
- FUN
- INCLUSION
- MIT
- VOLUNTEER

My Experience as an ESOL Volunteer Tutor

by Thomas Fisher



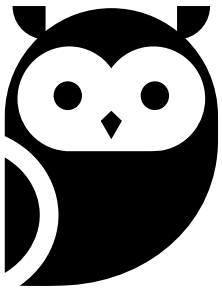
I came across an ESOL email requesting help while searching for an MIT volunteer opportunity at the start of the school year. I had previously volunteered virtually with the Cambridge School Volunteers program, so the remote opening felt like a good fit.

From our first meeting, my student Edgar and I developed a great rapport. We made a habit of starting each session by sharing something, big or small, that had happened in our lives since we had last talked. Over the course of our nine months together, we discussed our jobs, dream vacations, what we liked and disliked about Boston, our families, and many other topics.

Edgar and I even ran into each other once in Building 4, which was an unexpected but welcome chance to meet in person.

I'd like to congratulate Edgar on the progress he's made in advancing his mastery of English while we've worked together, and I wish him continued success in the program. Many thanks to Nancy Kelly and Gabe Campos for all their support during my time here!

I'm heading to the University of New Mexico to start my master's degree in computer science. My graduate studies are being sponsored by Sandia National Laboratories and I'm excited to be placed into a staff position after I finish my second degree.



Night Owl?

On-campus volunteers needed
11pm – midnight

Volunteer tutors needed one hour per week:

- No tutoring experience required
- Pick your own schedule
- Visit **bit.ly/esol-signup** or scan the QR code to sign up

Fall Semester 2023
September 18 to December 13

Spring Semester 2024
February 20 to May 14