Dear Driving Curriculum Tutors,

This driving curriculum is the result of a community partnership between Professor Rebecca Lorimer Leonard and her students at University of Massachusetts Amherst and the International Language Institute of Massachusetts (ILI) in Northampton. ILI is a non-profit community language school that provides instruction in world languages, intensive English, and TESOL certification in order to fund free English courses and support for immigrant students. Their mission is to promote intercultural understanding and strong, diverse communities through language instruction and teacher training. It was ILI’s students in the Free English Program (FEP) who asked for a driving course because they recognized the complexity of driving and using English in the United States.

The UMass Amherst team, in conversation with ILI staff and teachers, designed this driving curriculum with the knowledge that driving, mobility, and language are closely connected, especially in the credentialing bureaucracy of the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV). Driving offers access to work, care, and community, especially in more rural locales where public transport is slow or scant. Because, for many immigrants, physical mobility and social mobility are linked—the ability to move oneself here and there sometimes means a step up in job quality, pay, or better schooling—learning to drive in an additional language presents no small set of rewards and risks. Thus, the need to drive, and the barriers to it in the U.S., can highlight the existing economic, social, political, and emotional conditions of those in the process of learning a language and living in a new place.

Driving tests and interactions with government officials—from RMV representatives to law enforcement officers—demand that speakers use one variety of standard American English. However, because language users call on multiple varieties of English and other languages to learn a standard variety, this curriculum acknowledges and asks students to use the richly diverse language resources that students carry with them. This curriculum thus provides access to standard American English and Americanized cultural knowledge around driving while simultaneously recognizing that learners come to this curriculum with their own important cultural and language knowledge. Because of this, each lesson draws from learners’ past experiences. We aim to both help learners understand the vocabulary and processes associated with obtaining a driver’s license in the U.S. (and Massachusetts specifically) while also engaging in critical reflection about the social situations and power dynamics that learners may face in spaces like the RMV or with law enforcement.

As you move through this curriculum, we offer the following guidelines from instructors who designed, piloted, and revised this curriculum. We encourage you to think of this curriculum as:

1. Adaptable
   a. This curriculum is, above all, adaptable. No two lessons will look the same with different students. Some lessons may unfold over several hours, or several independent meetings; other lessons may be of limited use, especially if a
student already knows the material. Therefore, it is helpful to think of each lesson as a jumping off-point. The curriculum should ultimately be guided by the student's questions, prior knowledge, and goals. This might mean, for example, that vocabulary comes up naturally in conversation and that you move away from the stories about May if your student wants to. This might mean that you discuss instances that come about in the student's life as they relate to driving and veer away from the lesson plan. Optimally, these lessons are a frame you can use to put students' prior learning experiences and future goals at the center of each conversation about driving.

2. Social
   - In making room for a multiplicity of student experiences, this curriculum invites frank and open conversations about the power structures and people with power that drivers might encounter in the United States. From the political tension in the RMV's demands for "ID and Documentation" to the emotionally charged experience of taking a road test, drivers in Massachusetts, especially those who may feel particularly vulnerable or at risk on the road, must navigate complicated power dynamics.
   - When UMass Amherst graduate students Kyle Piscioniere and Ashley Canter piloted this curriculum, they both observed how important it was to establish a human connection with students right away. This is why the curriculum begins with a lesson that guides getting-to-know-you activities. For the curriculum to succeed, tutors must generate an open, low-stakes, welcoming space, in which tutor and student can have a sustained relationship. Kyle and Ashley found that moments of laughter, of genuine connection, and of connecting through shared life experiences allowed them and their students to benefit the most from this curriculum.

**With deep thanks to the following participants who contributed to designing this curriculum:**

**International Language Institute of Massachusetts staff**
- Caroline Gear, Executive Director
- Macey Faiella, Director of English Programs
- Laura Robinson, FEP Coordinator
- Geordie Morse, ESOL Instructor
- Michelle Walch, ESOL Instructor
- Amy Ben-Ezra, Volunteer Tutor Program Coordinator, Educational Counselor for FEP, Host Family Coordinator for Intensive English and TESOL Programs

**UMass Amherst team**
- Rebecca Lorimer Leonard, Associate Professor, English Department
- Ashley Canter, English Department graduate student
- Danielle Pappo, English Department graduate student
- Kyle Piscioneire, English Department graduate student
- Undergraduate students from English Department course 391ml “Multilingualism and Literacy in Western Massachusetts”: Stacey Cusson, Pavithra Devarajan, McKayla Lovering, Lauren Murphy, Kate Pfeil, Garrett Sager, Emma Shaw, Sarah Spillane

Notes:
Adaptable
This curriculum is, above all, adaptable. No two lessons will look the same. Some lessons may unfold over several hours, or several independent meetings; other lessons may be of limited use, especially if your tutee already knows the material.

Therefore, it helps to think of this curriculum as a jumping-off point.

Some features that
- offer that the Mae vocab sections are V optional conversations around the terms tend to be more useful
- Bring in tactiles
  - Driving materials to reconstruct a driving car
  - Toy car for demonstrating maneuvers
  - Getting in a car, even if stationary
- Optional resources
  - YouTube driving tutorials

Meant to go at own pace, built on the tutee’s experiences
Designed to show the social dimensions of literacy and driving, how those intersect
- Roleplaying
- Makes room for, but doesn’t require, conversations about (in)justice and driving, documentation, etc.

Establishing a human connection between you and the tutee is incredibly important

Trying to establish that you are not the RMV- there is room to critique the rules, but you are helping guide them in learning the rules and the language of the test for the exam (critiquing the standard while performing within it).