ESOL Class Writes About Visit to 911 Center

Recently, Carolyn Flynn's ESOL class visited a 911 Communication Center. After the field trip, Carolyn used the Language Experience Approach (LEA) with the students to create an article about their experience. Here is what they wrote:

Our class visited 911 Communication Center recently and we learned a lot of information, especially how 911 works. The information Portia gave us was very important and we should share it with our family and friends.

First of all, knowing your locations is the most important thing when you call 911. If you use a home phone, the dispatcher can detect your address right away. If you use a cellphone, you need to figure out your location by yourself. If you don't know, you can use a map app on your phone to find out. We also learned the 911 dispatchers map every first responder's movement and situation on their computer screen. Also, 911 can transfer your call intrastate, but not interstate.

Secondly, we learned the 911 Communication Center has a few departments work together, such as fire, police, ambulance, or animal control. What impressed us most is that the dispatcher is typing and sharing your information with other agents while they are talking to you. High Point 911 can handle eight phone lines at the same time.

If you are worried about your English, the good news is 911 Communication Center offers translators for different languages. Portia, the dispatcher, demonstrated to us how this worked. Two classmates tried Japanese and Spanish and they enjoyed their experiences.

Advanced technology is used to communicate with the Police Department, Fire Department, or EMT (ambulance) to solve different kinds of situations.

Some of our favorites during the visit included:

* Use of translators for non-English speaking callers
* Use of texting
* Use of map apps
* Knowing the dispatcher will stay on the line with the caller, if needed

According to highpointnc.gov, each month, our Telecommunicators (Dispatchers) answer an average of 25,000 telephone calls and dispatch over 700 calls for assistance every 24 hours.

Our thanks to Portia and her colleagues for allowing us to visit. Valuable information was learned and shared.