



Portland Literacy Council

LiteracyLinks

The Newsletter for Volunteer Tutors

Peggy L. Murphy, Editor
October 2013

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Apply for a PLC Community Grant Now!

The Portland Literacy Council is seeking applications for community grants from local community nonprofit organizations which operate literacy programs that advance Adult Basic Education, including GED preparation, or assist English Language Learners through English-as-a-Second Language instruction.

PLC's 2013 Community Grants are limited to \$500. Grant funds are available to support existing projects only and may be used to meet the program or operational expenses of the sponsoring agency.

To apply: Authorized representatives of interested agencies may submit a letter describing, in 500 words or less, the literacy project for which funding is requested, the students served, the project's goals, and how a community grant will advance the project mission. Submissions must also include a copy of the requesting agency's IRS 501 (c) (3) tax exemption letter or other acceptable evidence of nonprofit status.

Application Deadline: November 15, 2013

For more details: see [LiteracyLinks September 2013](#) or visit the [Portland Literacy Council website](#).

Contact: [Bryan McGowan](#), Board of Directors

March 15

**Annual Tutor Conference
Reed College**

Save the Date!

ESOL Apprenticeships at People*Places*Things

Are you an ESL tutor who would like to get more training at a reasonable cost? Do you know about the teacher apprenticeship possibilities with People*Places*Things?

"Your Work Is Our Work" is a P*P*T program that includes an option that allows teachers in training to earn tuition by volunteering with a P*P*T-allied organization. This apprenticeship program makes it possible to earn a P*P*T teacher's certificate for free.

Among the benefits of the apprenticeship program:

- A minimum of 50 guided classroom experiences
- Flexible, reality-based curriculum
- All the messiness of real-world English classes with ongoing support
- One page lesson plans that work

People*Places*Things (an LLC) focuses on training English speakers to use dynamic activities and real world materials to build cross cultural bridges in communities. P*P*T was established by Patrik McDade in 2011.

More details can be found on the [P*P*T website](#) (select the Ampersand link), by [Email](#), or by phone: 503-522-1589.

Editor's Note:

Patrik is a regular presenter at the Annual Tutor Conferences. He will regularly contribute to Tutor Toolbox (beginning with this issue!).

Portland Literacy Council recommends that prospective ESOL teachers who are interested in this or any ESOL certificate program research available options and make informed choices.

Correction

Our September article regarding SEWorks mistakenly described a workplace ESOL program as a vocational ESOL program. Our apologies for the error.

Learning American English with the Voice of America

The [VOA Learning English](#) website makes great use of current technology to provide a variety of learning platforms that tutors and students alike will find useful.

One of the VOA's strong points is the use of daily news using video, audio, and written formats. This is especially effective as it models pronunciation for learners. With video, learners can connect facial expressions with speech, and see how speaker uses the vocal tract in language. The site has materials for Level 1 and 2 English learners.

Our tester found current events articles ranging from the return of the Somali diaspora, a history and use of aspirin including benefits and side effects, and the U.S. government shutdown. The site has a wide range of topics including science, history, and American life. English learners interested in becoming naturalized U.S. citizens will find articles on U.S. history including the American Revolution, American presidents such as Andrew Jackson and Thomas Jefferson, and slavery.

Our tester found this website to be an excellent resource with features such as one-minute Learning English videos, words and their stories, everyday English, and idioms. There are numerous stories on international and U.S. news. Because of the depth and breadth of the site's contents, understanding how the site is organized will take some work by users. One very attractive feature is not having to deal with annoying pop-ads. Overall, this site is a great resource, and because of its nature, users can look forward to new content regularly.

Looking for free resources for tutors and students? Try the [Portland Literacy Council website](#). Available 24/7.

What's in Your Tutor Toolbox?

Working with Multilevel Groups by Patrik McDade, People-Places-Things

Working with multilevel groups is one of the most confounding challenges any teacher or tutor confronts. But the “problem” of multiple levels can often be turned into a profound strength.

There are three things that can really help you work with a multilevel group, even when some learners have very low literacy skills:

- a) **Group-based Activities** — instead of separating people into different levels, group your high and low learners together and employ activities, like modified dictation that require them to work together. Say the words or the sentences out loud, but do ***not*** write them on the board — let the group work together to figure it out. This will increase engagement and connection, both of which enhance learning.
- b) **Problem Solving/Content-Based Learning** — When we give learners something interesting, relevant and meaningful to work on, their engagement is increased regardless of level. We just need to use excellent technique to ensure Total Participant Engagement.
- c) **Focus on Listening skills** — Production activities are critical for language acquisition. But production, especially free production, also brings out the differences between lower and higher skill learners, making your multilevel class a lot more complex. A quick example: if I say “What’s your address?” Advanced beginners and above will probably be able to answer this, but below that, there may be considerable difficulty, since this involves conscious recall and ability to pronounce numbers, street names, etc. However, if we ask the group to say the question “What’s your address” out loud as a group — it’s something that everyone can participate in.

Once we embrace the multilevel character of any group and work with it, everyone is more engaged, there’s more joy and connection, and you can visibly see the learning after two or three classes.

For Your Calendar Tutor Training

Saturday, November 9 & 16

PCC CLIMB Center

1626 SE Water Avenue, Next to OMSI

Preregistration and prepayment by check or credit card are required.

- [Register online](#) at Portland Literacy Council website.
- Register by mail, print [tutor training brochure](#), complete registration form, and submit to
Portland Community College
Attention: Kay Talbot, VLT
P.O. Box 19000, SY SS 3
Portland, OR 97280

Questions: Kris Magaurn, Portland Literacy Council, [Email](#) or phone, 971-722-3700

Welcoming the 2014 GED

As you may know, the 2002 GED test series will be replaced in 2014 with computerized testing. GED test takers have limited time to complete the testing for the 2002 series before new standards take effect. While this is a big change, the 2014 GED test comes with these benefits:

- All scheduling information is available via [MyGED™](#) (GED testing service website).
- A practice test offers personalized, actionable feedback and comes with targeted study recommendations to improve scores.
- Students can take the exam they want, when they want.
- Scores are available the same day.
- Transcript requests made through MyGED™ and transcripts are available the same day
- College and career transition resources are embedded in the program.

Source: [MyGED™](#)