



Portland Literacy Council

LiteracyLinks

The Newsletter for Volunteer Tutors

Peggy L. Murphy, Editor

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Volunteer Literacy Conference **Carrying the Torch for Literacy**

Saturday, March 15, 2014
Vollum Center, Reed College

Preregistration and prepayment required.

Registration closes March 8, 2014.

Agenda

8:30 am Check-in & Welcome
9:00 - 10:15 Session 1
10:30 - 11:45 am Session 2
11:45 am - 1:15 pm Luncheon & Guest Speakers
 Gluten-free lunch option available on request.
1:45 - 3:00 Session 3

Streamline Your Registration and Check-in

Simplify your conference experience by preregistering and paying by PayPal/credit card or sending your check early. Prepaid registration allows easy check-in. You may then go immediately to the lounge for your preprinted badge and conference packet. Enjoy a cuppa morning joe or tea, refreshments, and networking before heading off to your first workshop.

We look forward to seeing you at the conference.

Learning English in the Real World

by Ariana Chandler, MA TESOL
Portland ESL Network

At the [Portland ESL Network](#), we have begun to offer a solution to two challenges:

- First, as ESL teachers and tutors, how do we help our students have experiences learning English and connecting to English-speaking people beyond the classroom?
- Second, how do we as a society move more quickly towards the inclusion of the resources of our growing immigrant population? On our Portland ESL Network website, which gives up-to-date listings of ESL classes and other language and culture resources, we have started a page of organizations that are ready to welcome English-learning volunteers. We call it, "[Learn English in the Real World.](#)"

Several of us at the Portland ESL Network have students who have already begun to learn English in the real world.

- One highly skilled Thai ESL student is enjoying his volunteer work doing data entry at Our United Villages because he gets to interact with English-speakers in a real-world setting.
- An Afghani student wanted to start a fashion business in Portland, so in order to help him better understand U.S. culture, his teacher started inviting him to sit in his own business meetings.
- My low-literacy beginning students are also starting to volunteer at the school their children attend. They are very motivated to learn English as well as to help the school that is helping their children.

What makes learning English in the real world successful? It requires students to try new and challenging situations. It requires teachers and tutors to match the students to organizations, support the students, and even help organizations to be culturally ready for these student volunteers. At the Portland ESL Network, we look forward to helping the process by growing our list of organizations that want to help students "Learn English in the Real World."

Editor's Note: Ariana Chandler volunteers at Portland ESL Network, is a board member of Portland Literacy Council and an instructor at Portland State University.

GED Success at Londer Center

by Carole Scholl, Manager
Londer Learning Center

The GED Close Out Campaign received overwhelmingly positive feedback and interest from community groups involved in the City's Gang Task Force and from DCJ's Dept of Community Justice.

Londer staff trained dozens of volunteers who assisted at Rosewood Community Center, Africa House, POIC, Straightway Services, and Londer Learning Center. The volunteer tutors were essential to community testers.

Almost 100 adults called a GED Hotline about the program; about half of these engaged in tutoring. Londer Learning Center assisted more than 35 students at Saturday community tutoring sessions. Twenty-five students received scholarships to pay for GED test fees and took GED tests.

In 2013, Londer Learning Center had 172 GED graduates — twice its usual. Students tended to persist more at Londer. We believe our infrastructure of dedicated staff, coordination, and other factors that accommodate students and tutors will be key to continuing any future community GED effort.

Editor's Note: Over 40 Volunteer Literacy Tutors stepped up and answered the Londer Center's request for help with the GED Community Closeout.

Portland ESL Network Is Walking the Walk

by Ariana Chandler, MA TESOL
Portland ESL Network

The goal of the Portland ESL Network is to share resources for English language learners in the Portland metro area at portlandesl.pbworks.com.

We are volunteer-run, and our website includes a list and map of ESL classes as well as other cultural and language resources. We want to expand students' opportunities for civic engagement. If you want to host an English language learner volunteer with your group/organization or job, please contact [Patrik McDade](#) and he will add your name to the website.

What's in Your Tutor Toolbox?

Useful Metaphors for Learning a Language

by [Patrik McDade](#), Founder and Program Director, [People*Places*Things](#)

It's like riding a bike. It's like having a baby. It's like roasting a chicken.

In any complex human endeavor, we will search for a good metaphor to help us express and understand the journey, and also to guide us. As someone engaged in this work, and perhaps searching for a way to be better at it, you'll often be asking yourself: Is this how it's supposed to go? I've found certain metaphors have very practical usefulness in helping tutors know that they're on the right track. The metaphors above are not those, however!

There are two metaphors I return to over and over when giving guidance to tutors, teachers, and language learners – and myself!

Learning a language is like a meadow path: The first time you walk through a meadow, you trample the grass that's there; but if you don't retrace the path, it will spring back up within a day. However, if you keep at it, gradually, the grass will stop growing there, and the path will stay visible. This takes several weeks or months. Language learning is a lifelong process, and the "practice" never stops. "Use it or lose it" is another phrase that supports this same perspective.

Learning a language is like learning to dance: If you've ever taken a group dance class, the instructor will usually require that the learners switch dance partners throughout the lesson. Language is a social skill and must be practiced with other people. For this reason, tutors can improve the rate of acquisition by a) focusing on language as it's used in specific situations and b) creating opportunities for learners to interact with many people.

Do you have other good metaphors that help you? Send them to me at patrik@pptpdx.com.

Editor's Note: Patrik regularly presents at the Annual Tutor Conference. We thank him for sharing his expertise.

For Your Calendar

[Volunteer Literacy Conference](#)

March 15, Reed College, Portland
See page 1 for details.

Registration closes March 8.

Tutor Training

March 1 & 8, 2014
9:00 am to 4:00 pm
PCC Willow Creek
241 SW Edgeway Drive, Beaverton
[More info & registration details.](#)

May 10 & 17, 2014
9:00am-4:00pm
CCC Harmony Campus, Harmony Campus bldg
7738 S.E. Harmony Road, Milwaukie
This is the last tutor training until Fall term.
[Registration](#) opens March 31.

Opportunities

Oregon & SW Washington Health Literacy Conference

Sponsored by Legacy Health and community partners, Friday, March 7, 2014
Governor Hotel, 614 SW 11th Avenue, Portland
[Online conference registration](#)

Citizenship Teacher Seminar

USCIS Portland Field Office
1455 NW Overton Street
Naturalization Ceremony Room
March 25, 9 am-4:30pm; March 26, 9 am-Noon
Registration deadline: March 17

[For more information](#)

TESOL 2014 International Convention & English Language Expo

[ELT for the Next Generation](#)

March 26-29
Oregon Convention Center & other venues
Register by March 3.