

## In This Issue

Pronunciation Tutor  
Portland ESL Network  
Tutors in Washington County  
Training & Volunteer Opportunities  
ESL Network Intern

## Upcoming Events

Pronunciation Techniques for ESL Teachers  
Change in date: May 21, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.,  
PCC Cascade Campus. Tutors are welcome.

People-Places-Things  
Troutdale Library, May 28th, Noon to 2 p.m.

Tutor Training  
June 18 & 25, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.,  
PCC Sylvania Campus

## If You Don't Hear It, Can You Say It?

by Peggy L. Murphy

Curiosity about how English learners can improve their pronunciation brought me to Cece Dispenza's class at St. Anthony's in Tigard. I met this group at the tutor conference in March, where they participated in the cultural sharing workshop, and I was impressed at how comfortable and close everyone seemed with each other.

As a professional speech therapist, Ms. Dispenza brings a wealth of techniques and knowledge to tutoring sessions. In the pronunciation class, students strive to improve their spoken English so they can improve their own comprehension as well as help others better understand them. Ms. Dispenza explained that excellent sentence structure and grammatical correctness are not the only components of comprehension. Languages use sounds differently, and if a particular sound is missing from a language then it won't

be heard in a new language. English uses "s" to make plurals, and it takes a lot of cognitive power to remember to say the "s" sound if you are not used to it. Another example is the "v" sound, which Spanish speakers will hear as "b". In some languages, tones change the meaning of words.

While Ms. Dispenza uses professional speech therapy techniques, student success is still based on hard work and repetition. Group discussions include topics students choose, and each contributes to the discussion. Ms. Dispenza will stress syllables in words, comparing the words cemetery and symmetry, for example.



Cultural Exchange workshop speakers Thuong Hoang Cao, Hongcuc (Cookie) Ritter, Cece Dispenza, Rosa Elana Ayala (front row), and Guadalupe Sales, Ricardo Villalta, Eliuth Ayala, and Bao Dang (back row).

Continued on page 2

## If You Don't Hear It, Can You Say It? - Continued from page 1

Writing new words on a small white board helps students compare spellings and syllable accents. One technique she uses is to record the students' speech so they can hear themselves speak.

A key element in improving spoken English is motivation. Each student in the St. Anthony's class has strong motivators relating to family and personal achievement. Some want to understand church services, help their children with their homework, or be better able to provide their children with an education. Communicating with others is a strong incentive at work, in classes, or with friends. The St. Anthony's students report their desires to speak English are sometimes at odds with the need to speak with family in their first language. Perhaps a spouse doesn't wish to speak English, or the family wants children to remain fluent in the first language, while the children need to have better English to succeed in school. (Interestingly, one student who speaks to his children in Spanish noted that his children talk to each other in English.)

As a tutor, I think it's important to keep reminding myself what it's like to walk in my students' shoes. My visit to St. Anthony's pronunciation class gave me new perspective on the difficulties immigrants face, ranging from evacuation from a war zone and living for months (if not years) in a refugee camp, to being unable to accomplish common everyday activities such as ordering food in a restaurant, to starting their lives over from the ground up. And as a tutor, I think it's wonderful that there are caring volunteers like Cece and programs that support immigrants when they are ready to face the task of learning English.

*Thanks to Cece Dispenza and her students - Eliuth Ayala, Thuong Hoang Cao, Bao Dang, and Ricardo Villalta for sharing their time with me.*

## Sharing ESL Information

by Peggy L. Murphy

At the May PLC board meeting, Heidi Dryden, Ariana Chandler, and Patrik McDade spoke to Portland Literacy Council board members about Portland ESL Network, a wiki website. The network's primary purpose is to gather information about ESL programs in the Portland metropolitan area. The PLC website lists many of the same programs, and the PLC Board and the ESL Network have agreed to share information. Website: [portlandesl.pbworks.com](http://portlandesl.pbworks.com)

In less time than it took me to view the royal wedding photos, I was able to peruse Portland ESL Network. I found a "Practitioner's Toolkit for Teachers," reports about various refugee groups, and links to online information for teachers (and tutors), ESL students, and other resources. My online tour changed my original view of the site from one that is designed for social service providers to seeing its usefulness for tutors and students.

The ESL Network gathers a great deal of information about ESL programs and resources. It is a great reminder of the support that is available in the community for programs and individuals. The site also is also a reminder that the potential for collaboration is great. Developed as part of Ms. Dryden's recent ESL master's degree program at PSU, this network is a treasure trove of information. The database of classes and locations, supported by a Google map, is just one of its treasures. There are links to a cost-comparison chart for ESL classes, teaching resources, cultural orientation, community news, and student resources.

Continued on page 3

## Sharing ESL Information - Continued from page 2

The Portland ESL Network is fairly new, and as with any informational website, it will always be a work in progress. As anyone who's ever been responsible for a group address, telephone or email list realizes, lists are always slightly out-of-date. As a wiki application, anyone with information has the capability for updating the list. Users can register with the site and get permissions to update information; the site includes easy-to-follow directions. Take a few minutes to review this site and you'll set up a new bookmark of your own. Register as a user and you will receive notices whenever the site is updated. This is a website fit for anyone's toolbox.

*Editor's Note: I used the ESL Network Saturday to find a beginning English class for a citizenship student. We were able to locate a free class within 15 minutes walk from her home.*

## VLT News from Washington County

by Edit McDonald, Volunteer Literacy Tutor Coordinator

*"No one is more cherished in this world than someone who lightens the burden of another."*

~Author Unknown

Winter Term 2011 at Rock Creek campus and Willow Creek Center were very busy and successful. We had five integrated skills groups, three small conversation groups, an advanced pronunciation group, and several one-to-one tutoring sessions.

In the Willow Creek GED program, three very dedicated volunteers have been helping with math in Donna Trudeau's evening GED class. One of these math tutors, Amanda Duncan, also tutored one-to-one math. Her student, Stephanie Griffith, only needed to pass her state math exam to receive her GED diploma. She took the math exam April 20th and passed it! Congratulations to Stephie on a great accomplishment in receiving a GED diploma.



Gerrit Kockx

Student attendance has been steady and high due to the quality teaching of our tutors. Many waiting list students from the Rock Creek Campus ESOL program are happy that PCC VLT offers ESL classes. They appreciate the chance to be able to learn integrated language skills and become familiar with American culture as members of the greater community. Our volunteers are learning, too, about different countries and customs from around the world. More than 20 languages are spoken in our ESL classes.

One of our many dedicated volunteer teachers is Gerrit Kockx. Gerrit has been teaching a Level D (Level 4) intermediate ESL class on Saturday mornings for the last two years.

Continued on Page 4

## VLT News from Washington County - Continued from page 3

He is a physical therapist at St. Vincent Hospital. Gerrit is delighted to be able to use a lot of teaching aids from the Internet thanks to high-tech equipment in the classrooms at PCC Willow Creek Center.

Another Saturday morning tutor is Chely Castillo. She's been teaching a low-intermediate reading/writing class for the last four years. Chely is about to graduate from PSU. She's also the coordinator of Jesuit High School's ESL outreach program. Somehow, Chely finds time to volunteer every Saturday because she wants to help students in the community, and she also loves to teach!

Thank you, volunteers in West Washington County, for your continuing hard work and dedication!

*Editor's Note: Tutors rocked at Rock Creek Winter Term! Thirty-one tutors volunteered 810 hours of their time to 97 students who spent 2,191 hours with their tutors. A peek at Edit's website reveals that she is at home in Hungary in the European Union as well as Oregon. She will teach ESOL 150 and 154 Summer Term at Rock Creek.*

## Training and Volunteer Opportunities

### Talk Time Volunteer at Multnomah County Library

Midland Branch of Multnomah County Library (805 SE 122nd Ave) needs a Talk Time facilitator. Talk Time is an informal conversation practice group for people learning English. If you are a "quiet extrovert" who is comfortable with silent moments, can make people feel welcome and safe in a group setting, Talk Time might be right for you. The library provides training, and is looking for people to bring flexibility and humor to weekly sessions. Talk Time is comprised of English speakers from many countries who have varying levels of English speaking and listening skills. Having fun while learning is encouraged, and all topics of conversation are open for discussion. Groups meet weekly and the Library hopes for at least a six-month commitment from volunteers.

Contact: Melissa Madenski, Adult Literacy Coordinator, Multnomah County Library, 503-988-6318 or [www.multcolib.org](http://www.multcolib.org). for details on volunteering for Multnomah County Library.

### Pronunciation Techniques for ESL Teachers

**New Date: May 21**

ORTESOL (Oregon Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) is presenting a one-day workshop led by Susan Ginley, a speech language pathologist from PSU. Ms. Ginley will share speech-pathologist techniques to target specific pronunciation issues such as consonants, vowels, and prosody. Attendees will learn about evaluation protocols and processes to assess the pronunciation of English-language learners, how to develop a plan to target specific pronunciation issues, and techniques appropriate to specific situations.

The workshop is suitable for tutors, although membership in ORTESOL is required to attend. The membership fee for tutors is \$15; membership is available via their website [www.ortesol.org](http://www.ortesol.org).

Saturday, May 21, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (rescheduled from April 30)  
PCC Cascade Campus, Terrell Hall 122  
Free to ORTESOL members

Continued to Page Five

# **Training and Volunteer Opportunities - Continued from page 4**

## **Tutor Training**

June 18 and 25, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

PCC Sylvania Campus, 12000 SW 49th Avenue, Portland

Registration details: 503-244-6111 X3700 or [pdxliteracy@hotmail.com](mailto:pdxliteracy@hotmail.com)

## **Getting To Know Your Neighbors - One Word At A Time**

Each month People-Places-Things ([www.peopleplacethings.memberlodge.com](http://www.peopleplacethings.memberlodge.com)) holds a free, practical workshop in a community space in the metropolitan area. These dynamic workshops are open to all, and you'll get lots of opportunity to learn from your colleagues. Patrik McDade describes the workshop as two hours of nonstop, power-packed, energy-evoking language and social activities. Experience ten different activities to keep learners simultaneously engaged and learning language skills.

May Roving Workshop

Lively Learning in the ESOL Classroom

Saturday, May 28th, noon to 2 pm

Troutdale Library, 2451 SW Cherry Park Road, Troutdale

## **You Can Teach ESL in the Garden!**

A new program pairs school and community garden folks to work with English Language Learners, and ESL teachers who want to bring their work outside. Come and spend time thinking about adult learning, language acquisition, cultural and agricultural diversity, food security, out-of-the-classroom learning, lesson planning for wildly unpredictable conditions, and more. Participants will walk away with lesson plans, ideas for working with English Language Learners in the garden, and quite possibly new perspectives on making the garden even more beneficial to the community.

For information complete the form at You Can Teach ESL in the Garden!  
Website: [esl-in-the-garden.lxw.com](http://esl-in-the-garden.lxw.com)

## **Additional Tutoring Opportunities**

Portland Literacy Council Tutor page: [www.portlandliteracy.org/tutors](http://www.portlandliteracy.org/tutors)

# ESL Network Seeks Summer Intern or Volunteer

by Heidi Dryden, Portland ESL Network

## Internship Position: Portland ESL Network Wiki Expert

The Portland ESL Network ([portlandesl.pbworks.com](http://portlandesl.pbworks.com)) is looking for an intern or volunteer to help with its website! Experience with Wordpress, wikis, PBworks, and building modular front ends is ideal; database experience is helpful. The ESL network strives to increase the usability of the website for low skill computer users, streamline data collection and presentation, and efficiently collect and update data for all the English language development programs in the wider Portland area.

The ideal candidate will have designed at least one functional, easy-to-use website that collects as well as displays information. Internship credit can be in the areas of social services; computer programming/web design; marketing/outreach; data collection and analysis.

The project includes

- a) 2-hour website assessment with team members
- b) 1-hour meeting/discussion about options
- c) planning meeting (s) as required
- d) implementation (10 - 50 hours)

Responsibilities include

- Create an interactive front end for the current Excel database
- Manage data collection and online presentation
- Create a new website interface
- Assess options for the wiki
- Connect ESL site map to class database

For more information email Patrik McDade at [patrik@pptpds.com](mailto:patrik@pptpds.com); phone 503-522-1589.

Promoting literacy in our community.

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