

# LiteracyLinks

The Portland Literacy Council Newsletter for Volunteer Tutors

Peggy L. Murphy, Editor

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Reminder

## Annual Tutor Conference Literacy for a Brighter Future

Saturday, March 16, 2013

Vollum Center — Reed College

Space is still available.

**Preregistration is required.**

Registration closes March 9, 2013.

### 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  
1:45 - 3:00 Session 3

### Streamline Your Registration and Check-in

Simplify your conference experience by preregistering and sending your check early. Prepaid registration allows you to check-in with registrars and proceed immediately to the lounge for your preprinted badge, including workshop listings, and conference packet. Enjoy a cup of morning joe, refreshments, and networking before heading off to your first workshop.

**We look forward to seeing you at the conference.**

## Happy Birthday to Portland Literacy Council

Established February 26, 1992.

Celebrating 20 years of volunteer service to literacy programs throughout the Portland area.

### Real World Health Literacy

Attendees at the Annual Tutor Conference have the opportunity to explore health literacy with Patrik McDade, founder and program director of People-Places-Things. His presentation will rely on experience in public health care programs and teaching ESL instructors, locally and internationally. Look for Workshop J, "Language Skills for Health Literacy" in the [program guide](#). McDade is a proponent of bringing real world situations to students learning languages.

A health literacy workshop is a good addition to the annual conference offerings. As tutors we are cultural navigators who help our students learn to navigate work, school, and social interactions. Navigating the health care system may be the new cultural frontier for ourselves and our students.

In the real world, using the health care system means completing endless forms. In many cases, the only person who may understand the form is the legal department. (The Oregon Health Care Plan 16 pages long and comes with a "Green Book" of instructions.)

In the real world, proficient health literacy will enable patients to have meaningful question and answer exchanges with health care providers. Patients will be able to apply this knowledge to modify behaviors and get optimum results from treatment plans.

In the real world, health care programs are seeking alternative formats to dense text. What other ways can we help students communicate? How might we use pictures, gestures, or body language to help students learn to communicate?

In the real world, low literacy means a higher risk of death and more emergency room visits and hospitalizations (1). Low literacy may mean that diabetic, asthmatic, or hypertensive patients have little or no control over their disease. With improved health literacy, these patients will be better able to manage their disease.

In a real world study, only 33 percent of those with graduate degrees or study have proficient health literacy. Overall, 12 percent of Americans have proficient health literacy, 53 percent have intermediate health literacy, 22 percent had basic health literacy, and 14 percent had below basic health literacy (1).

In the real world, the literacy behaviors and skills that will maximize health care results are the same behaviors and skills used for reading, writing, and arithmetic (2). We have to be able to read and comprehend to use the information we gain. Proficient health literacy means we can use this information to determine credibility and quality, analyze risk and benefits, calculate dosages, interpret test results and locate health information (1).

Workshop J, The Language of Health Literacy, may open some real world doors for tutors and students.

#### *Editor's Note: Sources used*

- (1) [Agency for Health Care Research and Quality Report](#), National network of Libraries of Medicine
- (2) [The Health Literacy of America's Adults](#), National Center for Education Statistics [NCES]

## What's in Your Tutor Toolbox?

### ESL Basics

Would you like to add idioms or tongue twisters to your tutor toolbox? [ESL Basics](#) offers over 200 videos with text, and includes beginning and advanced vocabulary and U.S. citizenship sections.

ESL Basics is the creation of Andrea Giordano, assistant director of ESL programs at Campbellsville University, in central Kentucky.

The idiom videos use humor to explain the mysterious vagaries of our language. Apples make a good prop to demonstrate the literal meaning of "You are what you eat," for instance. How would you explain "start from scratch" or "out of the blue"?

Tongue twisters can be a great icebreaker and loosen tongues. In addition to the old standbys of "how much wood would a woodchuck chuck", ESL Basics has shorter tongue twisters: unique New York, crisp crusts crackle crunchily, and Arnold Palmer (who knew?).

The U.S. citizenship section includes the 100 questions and answers that immigrants study for the history and civics portion of the U.S. citizenship interview. Short videos cover each question, giving the viewer the opportunity to see and hear a native speaker ask and answer the question.

Video offerings are a mix from short and sweet to several minutes, with spot-on visuals to reinforce meaning. Basic vocabulary includes the nouns bat (26 seconds) and dock (40 seconds), with simple images. A baseball terminology video (under 2 minutes) filmed at Busch Stadium in St. Louis, MO, narrates and shows the field, infield, outfield, and bases.

ESL Basics is available in numerous forums including Facebook. The site is generally well-organized, although the A-Z and Z-A searches don't seem to alphabetize the entries. Another level of organization might make it easier to get a quick view of what is on the site. On the other hand, it might make the page too crowded. The design is clean and uses white space well. User comments on the site are favorable. Overall, this is a good addition to the Tutor Toolbox.

***Editor's Note: I discovered the [ESL Basics link on the Portland ESL Network website](#). Find out more about the Portland ESL Network at the Annual Tutor Conference in Workshop H: Online ESL Resources and the Portland ESL Network.***

## For Your Calendar

### Volunteer Literacy Tutor Training

[Registration Information](#) (register by Email or telephone 971-722-6111 X3700)

- March 2 & 9, 9 am to 4 pm  
PCC Willow Creek  
241 SW Edgeway Dr, Beaverton
- May 11 & 18, 9 am to 4 pm  
CCC Harmony Campus Bldg  
7738 SE Harmony Rd, Milwaukie

#### To register:

Call: 971-722-4620 x3700

E-mail: [pdxliteracy@hotmail.com](mailto:pdxliteracy@hotmail.com)

### Tutor Discussion Group

**Spring Term Tentative Date:** Saturday, May 4 or 11, PCC Climb Center. Look for firm date and location in upcoming issues of [LiteracyLinks](#).

## Opportunities

### ORTESOL Spring Workshop

[Oregon Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages](#)

Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR  
Saturday, April 2, 10:00 am to 3:00 pm

Plenary Session — "The Creation of a New ESL Spelling and Vocabulary List"

Speaker — Keith Folse

(Sponsored by National Geographic Learning)

Includes luncheon and two afternoon workshops  
ORTESOL membership is open to ESL tutors.

### Multnomah County Library

#### Multnomah Co Library GED Learning Labs

Learn general information about GED testing requirements. Take a practice test and learn how to study online and from library study guides. Learn about many resources to help prepare you for your GED test. Attendance at the lab qualifies participants for a partial GED testing scholarship.

#### [Registration is required](#)

- Troutdale, Saturday, March 16, 10:30 am
- Kenton, Saturday, April 20, 3:00 pm