



Portland Literacy Council

# LiteracyLinks

The Newsletter for Volunteer Tutors

Peggy L. Murphy, Editor

November 2013

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## Online Literacy Links Subscription

**March 15**

**Annual Tutor Conference  
Reed College**

**Save the Date!**

## A Potpourri of Resources for Your Tutor Toolbox

Periodically we dedicate an issue of *LiteracyLinks* to tutor resources. If you have time on your hands at winter break, check out these resources.

## **[www.ManyThings.org](http://www.ManyThings.org) Interesting Things for ESL Students**

A website with quizzes, word games, word puzzles, proverbs, slang expressions, anagrams, and dozens of other *et ceteras*.

[www.ManyThings.org](http://www.ManyThings.org) is a gold mine for students and tutors. This large website includes vocabulary, reading with audio, grammar, listening and speaking, anagrams, proverbs, slang, and songs. There are also resources to use with iPads, iPhones, and cell phones.

There is appeal for all learning styles at ManyThings. For example, Hang Man words include body parts, colors (with American and British spellings), numbers, days of the week, numbers, and months.

In the section "Listening to Naturally Spoken English", a variety of English speaking styles are presented. One can listen to British, Australian, and American voices converse on everyday topics. An ESL video uses audio and visual aids to discuss the pronunciation of "often," and compares it to listen, hasten, soften, and fasten.

Using ManyThings will require some computer proficiency. Because it is a large website, it may take some trial and error to proficiently navigate. Our tester rated it as an "A plus" website, even though experiencing some technical difficulties with external links. This is a non-commercial website without advertising, so less time may be spent escaping annoying pop-ads, etc.

## Changing Lives Through Literacy

For tutors and students interested in improving health literacy, a variety of lesson plans are available at Project Read, [Health Literacy Lesson Plans](#). More than a dozen lesson plans are available, including “regular checkups,” “health history forms,” and “maternity health.” Lesson plans include objectives, materials needed, activities for three levels of literacy, and vocabulary.

The lesson plan “Regular checkups” features images related to arriving and checking in at the health care office, completing medical forms, what to expect in the exam room, describing and discussing common symptoms and their meaning with the health provider. The lesson includes questions to ask, how to let the provider know the patient doesn’t understand, and examples of doctor’s recommendations.

Additionally, the lesson plans include options such as listening to short narratives about a health topic, and various mini-tests to help evaluate comprehension.

The combination of written information, video, and audio along with the mini-tests is effective. The lesson plans use plain language. They avoid long and complex sentences, which make the presentations effective.

Another resource available through the Project Read website is the [Plain Language Thesaurus](#) For Health Communications, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Center for Health Marketing. Compact at 44 pages, this tool presents “plain language equivalents to medical terms, phrases, and references . . .” Imagine defining “immunosuppression” using six words, inapparent infection with nine words, or hyposensitivity with two words.

In addition to the health literacy offerings, Project Read has a large menu of resource and volunteer tips. The Project Read website is provided by the Provo, Utah City Library.

## Oregon & SW Washington Health Literacy Conference

Legacy Health and its community partners recently announced the third annual Oregon and SW Washington Health Literacy Conference on Friday, March 7, 2014 in Portland. The conference is being held at the Governor Hotel, 614 SW 11th Avenue, Portland.

Improved communication with all patients is a critical component in health care delivery. Nearly nine out of ten adults have trouble applying everyday health information. It is a leading contributor to health disparities. Those over age 65 and communities of color are most at risk for low health literacy and its negative impacts to health.

### Conference objectives include:

- Raise awareness of the scope and health consequences of low health literacy, including health disparities
- Using “Teach-Back” and “Plain Language” as strategies to improve patient education and instruction
- Identify common barriers to low literacy patients in actively obtaining health care

National and local experts will share research and evidence-based practices to help increase health literacy and improve quality, safety and outcomes for all.

**Online [conference registration](#)** opens Monday, November 18.

View a [video](#) demonstrating the “teach-back” method for clear communication on the Legacy Health website.

### *Editor’s Note:*

*Information courtesy of Kari Stanley, Community Benefit, Legacy Health.*

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

## What's in Your Tutor Toolbox?

### It All Starts with Listening

by [Patrik McDade, People-Places-Things](#)

You know how you're listening to the radio, and there's a song that comes on over and over. . . and within a week or two, you've heard it about 20 times? And then, in spite of yourself - you start to sing it? Even if you don't like it?

There is an important mechanism of language learning here: with enough contextualized repetition, you will acquire it even if you don't know what it means. A couple of other examples: "Vaya Con Dios," "Volare," "Gangnam Style."

With focused listening, we can acquire linguistic elements without knowing what they mean. But we will have a great deal of trouble saying what we haven't heard. In other words: you can't learn to speak without learning to listen. This is especially true for colloquial language, the language of everyday interpersonal connection.

Here are some ways to focus your technique on listening:

- **Say the names of objects in the room**, and have learners point at them, repeating them and going faster and faster to develop automaticity.
- **Model short, useful real world sentences**: "This butter dish doesn't have any butter in it." Have the learners repeat them as you continue to model several times, developing the articulatory coordination and muscle memory to perform the incredible linguistic feats you are coaching them to perform.
- **Dictate short authentic communicative sentences**, and repeat them several times. Let the learners try to guess at the spelling and work together to figure it out instead of giving them the answer (but don't make them struggle to frustration). Using dictation in a group is extremely versatile and easily scaled for varying levels.

(Continued in next column.)

## For Your Calendar Tutor Training

Saturday, January 18 & 25  
PCC Southeast Center  
2305 SE 82nd Ave, Portland

March 1 & 8  
PCC Willow Creek  
241 SW Edgeway Drive, Beaverton

- [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

The next and last tutor training for the academic year 2013-2014 is in May.

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### Listening (continued)

One of the nice things about focusing on contextualized, task-based listening activities (instead of the meaning): you always know when they've "got it!"

#### *Editor's Note:*

*Patrik is a regular presenter at the Annual Tutor Conference. He has generously consented to sharing his expertise with our readers. We thank him for his generosity and contributions to our newsletter.*