Literacy*Links*

Portland Literacy Council

The Newsletter for Volunteer Tutors

Peggy L. Murphy, Editor
November 2014

Board of Directors
Kris Magaurn, President
Emilia Gilroy-Sander, Secretary
Kay Talbot, Treasurer
Cari Martz
Penny Russman
Peggy L. Murphy
Cheryl Thoen

Ex-Officio Members
Lisa Davidson
Troy Hickman

Portland Literacy Council
PO Box 2872
Portland, OR 97208-2872
www.portlandliteracy.org

Online Literacy Links Subscription

Newsletter Editor:
peggy.portlandliteracy@gmail.com

There's a New "Dyslexic" Font in Town
A Food-for-Thought Article

Can a font "cure " dyslexia? The short answer would be "No." A font, might, however, be a useful tool.

A recent article in **Slate online magazine** describes Dyslexie, a "dyslexic-friendly" font designed as part of a thesis at the Utrecht Art Academy (Netherlands). The designer, Dutch student Christian Boer, has dyslexia. According to the article, research studies on the efficacy of the font were conducted at University of Twente (Enschede, Netherlands), and the University of Amsterdam (Netherlands). The same font is discussed in a Scientific American article, "**Bold Stroke: New Font Helps Dyslexics Read**" (October 2011). The comments appended to the Scientific American article are noteworthy.

Literacy*Links* earlier this year interviewed, Julie Hiefield and Susan Farra, contractors at Language Skills Therapy. Julie and Susan are also volunteer tutors at PCC Southeast Campus, and use the Orton-Gillingham method with dyslexic learners. "O-G" is a phonics-based approach that is very structured. It includes training the ear to connect to what is seen on paper. The tutors work with readers to "explode the code." Readers use skills to build on basic alphabet sounds. It is a long process and requires motivated students willing to show up for learning sessions.

DyslexieFont.com features several examples of text in Dyslexie Font. The font is also available for download — free for home use, but for sale for educational use. Both the Slate and the Scientific American articles include examples of the font.

Editor's Note: I had hoped to provide comparison samples for Dyslexie Font and Helvetica font, which is often used on websites. Copyright restrictions prohibited such use. The websites noted above have several good examples. In addition to the features noted on the website, I'd like to call attention to the spacing between letters (kerning), which is usually controlled within a software program.

Shop @ AmazonSmile.com & Donate to PLC

Buy a product at AmazonSmile and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. (We are honored to tell you that Portland Literacy Council is now an eligible charitable organization on **AmazonSmile.com**.)

 "AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service." (source: AmazonSmile.com)

ESL Cell Phone Apps *Redux*

Cell phone and smart phone ownership continue to increase. The Pew Research Internet Project reports that Cell/smart phone ownership by those with high school education or less grew from 64 percent in 2012 to 87 percent in 2013. In 2014 phone ownership by age ranged from 98 percent for 18-29 years, 97 percent for 30-49 years, 88 percent for 50-64 years, and 74 percent for those 65 years plus. Fifty percent of phone owners downloaded Apps in 2014.

In January 2013, Literacy*Links* included an article about cell phone apps. We offer this information as a reminder of the wealth of resources available to tutors and learners.

- **Vocabulary Spelling City.com —** Access to 42,000 words, spoken and used in sentences by a human being. Customizable spelling lists, tests, and learning games. Free and premium activities.

- **Quizlet —** "We make simple tools that let you study anything, for free." Students can use to make their own vocabulary notebooks, learning games, and tests. Instructors can see the words students choose and create vocabulary quizzes

- **Sounds, The Pronunciation App** — "The ultimate mobile English pronunciation aid, for students and teachers." Based on the best-selling 'Sound Foundations' by Adrian Underhill, it Includes an interactive phonemic spelling feature, chart and phonemic typewriter to practice phonemic spelling. By Macmillan Education.

Google Play apps for android phones/tablets include:

- **ESL Daily English** — a "helper application for beginner to intermediate to advanced English learners. This independent application has been made by ImApp Soft . . ."

- **Language Nomad ESL**. 300 of the most commonly used English vocabulary words, illustrations, audio recordings from native speakers and written words. By Clarion Creative.

Phones have come a long way since the days of telephone party lines and dials! Try it out!!!

Editor's Note: Troy Hickman and Sharon Hennessy contributed to the original article. Troy, a former PLC board member and ABS specialist at PCC Sylvania has relocated to Vermont. *Sharon Hennessy is an ESOL instructor at PCC Southeast Campus.*

Goodwill Community Foundation

Are you tired of proudly claiming yourself to be a Luddite or semi-Luddite when it comes to using your electronic device? Welcome to the second decade of the 21st Century with nearly limitless opportunities for intellectual stimulation.

Dust off that tablet, smart phone, or other device and check out **GCF LearnFree.org®**. This is a free, no download website that gives and gives. It includes over 100 tutorials featuring reading, math, mobile apps, technology, Microsoft Office, and work and career.

An abbreviated menu of finds on the GCFLearnFree. org site includes:

- Computer know-how for the 21st Century. Do you need an update of skills? How about Photoshop basics, iPhone6, Instagram? Have you been out of the workforce for a while and wonder if there is new business etiquette?

- Office etiquette: How does one behave at the office? Is it okay to make personal calls at the office? What behaviors might interfere with job success? (Hint: procrastination, perfectionism, distraction, boredom, hostility are all deal-breakers.) You will find these topics covered in Work and Career.

- Topics for learners, such as reading, math, and grammar. In the Grammar section, the topic "I, me, and other pronouns" begins by describing a pronoun. It includes simple correct and incorrect examples of pronoun use. A list of subject and object pronouns flows into "Picking your pronouns" with accompanying graphics to support the text.

- Technology topics include computers, email basics, internet basics, MAC OS, Online safety, and Windows. Mouse Basics shows how to hold a mouse, and describes and demonstrates rollovers, clickables, and drag and drop.

- Free online classes: Word, Excel, Powerpoint, and Access are available in three release versions for each program.

It's time, dear readers, to use those electronic devices for something besides an alarm clock and Words with Friends!

What's in Your Tutor Toolbox?

Real-World Experiences Build Language
by Patrik McDade (patrik@pptpdxcom) Founder & Program Director, People*Places*Things

For many newcomers, Thanksgiving is the quintessential American holiday. Even more than Christmas, Thanksgiving is the holiday that can represent "We now belong here. This is our new home."

And in the American narrative, it's a day where the indigenous people of the New World welcomed and fed the settlers. A day of abundance and togetherness. It's our harvest festival – almost every culture has a harvest festival. It's also a day when we try to make sure that nobody goes hungry.

What does this have to do with literacy? Many of us are tutoring or teaching immigrants and refugees who desire to develop communication skills. And the best way to develop those skills is by sustained meaningful interactions with people over time. Lots of them. If we really care about language learning, we need to work to create new spaces of welcoming in the larger culture. Extend Thanksgiving far past the fourth Thursday in November, and support your learners as they engage with the wider community.

We often think that the solution for newcomer families is that they "learn the language", and then they'll be able to navigate mainstream systems. We think of our role as explaining the structure of English, with maybe a unit on Thanksgiving or a classroom potluck.

What this does is encourage a focus on the teacher or tutor as the gateway. Instead of being gateways, we can be bridge builders by facilitating relationship development and system navigation first, and facilitating language skill development from those real-world experiences.

Try these:
- Create an Intercultural Thanksgiving Potluck in your church, school, or community center
- Invite a learner to your home
- Bring your family and a learner's family to a community event, and build language practice into the experiences

Let's bring the outside inside!

Editor's Note: Patrik regularly presents at the Annual Tutor Conference, and has facilitated our Awesome Tutor Workshops. We thank him for sharing his expertise.

For Your Calendar

Tutor Training

Do you know someone who is considering becoming a volunteer literacy tutor? Interested volunteers can learn more about tutoring on the **Tutors** page of the Portland Literacy Council website. Access online registration via the Tutors Page.

Upcoming workshops
- January 17 & 24
  PCC Southeast Campus
  2305 SE 82nd Ave.
  Portland
  Registration opens December 22
- February 28 & March 7, 2015
  PCC Cascade
  705 N Killingsworth
  Registration opens February 2, 2015

Opportunities

Citizenship Classes
Registration is now open at Multnomah County Library for Citizenship classes. Pre-registration is required; access registration via the Multnomah County Library website. This class meets on six Sundays.

- Sunday, February 8, 2014, 1 pm
  Midland Library
  805 SE 122nd

GED Success: Plan of Action
Registration is also open for MC Library's revamped workshops on how to study for the GED; access registration via MC Library website.
- January 17, 2015, 3 pm
  Kenton Library
  8226 N Denver Ave