

Literacy of Northern New York February 2016 Newsletter



Dyslexia and Famous People

Hans Christian Andersen - (April 2 1805 - August 4 1875) An author of children's fantasy stories, he had dyslexia and showed the world that when you want something, nothing can stop you from obtaining it. The books that he wrote have been translated into hundreds of different languages and continue to be distributed even today in millions of copies. Hans wrote books such as "The Emperor's New Clothes," "The Princess and the Pea," "Thumbelina," "The Snow Queen," "The Ugly Duckling," and "The Little Mermaid."

Cited from: http://www.disabled-world.com/artman/publish/article_2130.shtml

Some of the many other famous people with dyslexia include Albert Einstein, Pablo Picasso, Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison, Leonardo da Vinci, Muhammad Ali, John Lennon and Cher.

St. Lawrence County Success Stories

Congratulations to Wilma!

Wilma works with tutor, Brenda Wainwright of Gouverneur. Wilma is employed at Northland Veterinary Clinic in Gouverneur and she takes care of the daily needs of the animals. Brenda has helped Wilma with reading skills for over three years. The following was printed in *North County Now*:

"Each year, for the past 70 years, the month of October has been designated National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) during which we celebrate the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities.

For the past eight years, OPWDD has marked the occasion with its annual Works for Me event which honors select employers throughout New York State who have demonstrated a great commitment to workforce diversity through the hiring of talented employees with developmental disabilities.

This year's winners were honored at the Works for Me Awards Ceremony at the NYS Museum in Albany. The winner of the Small Business was Northland Veterinary Hospital, Gouverneur, NY."

Wilma attended the ceremony and received an award for service exceeding 20 years at Northland Veterinary Hospital.

Shafa Al'omari, an ESL student from Jordan and her tutor, **Tamera Rizk**, have been working together diligently for the past few months. Shafa has gained enough confidence with her progress in English to pursue her Ph.D in Chemistry.

She will enter the program at Clarkson University in the fall of 2016. Her husband is currently working in research at Clarkson University.



Shafa Al'omari, her husband and son.

Dust off your Scrabble® boards!

We are planning a Scrabble® fund-raiser for this spring in Watertown and are looking for volunteers to help us! We also need people who are interested in playing at the event. If you are interested, contact Cecilia at 782-4270.

Tutor Tip for ESL Learners

Helping your student master those difficult sounds

Many English sounds are challenging for all English language learners. The first language determines which sounds will cause problems. Remember, your adult student's language may not have the sound or the context of the sound may be different in English from their language. To make these new sounds, your student needs to think about how the sound is made and combine that with the appropriate muscles and other parts inside the mouth. Think of this process as using muscles in a new way. Imagine trying to master yoga when you have never done it.

Just focus on one sound per session. Do not expect mastery but awareness. You can use several words that contain the focus sound(s). For example, to distinguish the unvoiced /th/ from the voiced /th/, choose words that contain both sounds (thin, think, moth, mouth, bath, bathe, lathe, wrath). Point out that English is the only language that has the /th/sounds. Explain that the tongue sticks out slightly between top and bottom teeth when they use /th/. Have your students close their eyes and place their fingers lengthwise across their throats. You say the words and have them repeat. Ask them to think about everything going on in their mouths. Did the tongue stay inside and make a /d/ sound instead of /th/? Did they notice the vibration in the throat with the voiced /th/?

After they achieve some mastery, have the students read words and sentences with the two /th/ sounds. It is helpful to record using the recorder app built into Windows or the recording feature on a cell phone. When you play back the recording, they can critique their pronunciation.

This is a stepping-stone awareness activity so do not expect perfection at first. Remind your students to be aware of using the /th/ sounds correctly in conversations outside of class or tutoring sessions.

Here's an item from *The ESL Teacher's Book of Lists*.

List 3.5. Problem English Sounds for ESL/ELL Students

In addition to having a different set of phonemes, each language has patterns of sound use that make different sounds more or less frequently heard and used. The following sounds can be a challenge to ESL/ELL students. Auditory and articulation training and lots of practice will help students recognize these challenging sounds and correctly pronounce English words that include them.

Native Language	Problem English Sounds										
Chinese	b	ch	d	dg	f	g	j	l	m	n	ng
	ō	sh	ŋ	th	th	v	z	l-clusters	r-clusters		
French	ā	ch	ē	h	j	ng	oo	oy	s	th	th
	s	ə									
Greek	aw	b	d	ē	g	i	j	m	n	ng	oo
	r	s	w	y	z	ə	end clusters				
Italian	a	ar	dg	h	i	ng	th	th	v	ə	
	l-clusters		end clusters								
Japanese	dg	f	h	i	l	th	th	oo	r	sh	s
	v	w	ə	l-clusters	r-clusters						
Korean	b	l	ō	ow	p	r	sh	t	th	l-clusters	r-clusters
Spanish	b	d	dg	h	j	m	n	ng	r	sh	
	t	th	v	w	y	z	s-clusters	end clusters			
Urdu	ā	a	d	ē	e	f	n	ng	s	sh	t
	th	th									
Vietnamese	ā	ē	k	l	ng	p	r	sh	s	y	
	l-clusters		r-clusters								

Here's an item from *The ESL Teacher's Book of Lists*.

List 3.4. English Sounds Not Used in Other Languages

Not all languages use the same set of speech sounds. The number of distinct speech sounds—phonemes—also varies across languages. English has about forty-one, depending on the dialect, and this number is greater than the average for modern spoken languages.

Children are physically capable of learning any of the phonemes. However, from birth they sort out and recognize those that are part of the language they hear. As a result, ESL/ELL students have difficulty recognizing, or “hearing,” the unfamiliar English sounds and therefore have difficulty pronouncing words that use them. Notice in the following chart that the sound /*th*/ (voiced *th*), a common English sound, is not part of all languages. This makes pronouncing *the*, the most common English word, a challenge for many ESL/ELL students.

To master the pronunciation of sounds not used in their native languages, students need to practice recognizing the sounds, then producing them. Practice with *minimal pairs*—words that differ by one sound—to isolate the sound of interest. Example: *pit/bit* and *pit/spit*.

Language	English Sounds Not Used in the Language								
Spanish	dg	j	sh	th	z				
Chinese	b	ch	d	dg	g	oa	sh		
	s	th	<i>th</i>	v	z				
French	ch	ee	j	ng	oo	th	<i>th</i>		
Greek	aw	ee	<i>i</i>	oo	ə				
Italian	a	ar	dg	h	<i>i</i>	ng	th		
	<i>th</i>	ə							
Japanese	dg	f	<i>i</i>	th	<i>th</i>	oo	v		
	ə								