



## Literacy Volunteers of Middlesex

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### OpenBook Software Reviewed

After a month of experience with the new phonics software, we are pleased to report that both tutors and learners are very pleased with the product. What follows is an interview with our ESL tutor who is using the software with her Vietnamese learners who are at level 1 - 2.



**Q**  **How do your students like the software?**

**A**  They find it very motivating because they get immediate correction and feedback.

**Q**  **Why is it different than if you were quizzing them?**

**A**  It is neutral, and there are no issues of personalities or approvals. Also, the directions are quite clear and minimal. Sometimes I would use too many words they would not understand. Also, they are free to work at their own pace. They actually have made a lot of progress.

**Q**  **What are some of the features of the program that you like in particular?**

**A**  I like the pronunciation features. They can use a microphone, hear the computer speak, then hear themselves speak. They can correct themselves. It is standard American English, so I don't worry about teaching them a wrong pronunciation.

**Q**  **Are there other features you like?**

**A**  I like that once the learner acquires a certain number of sounds, he's taught to make words. There is also a picture with each new word, so the software helps build vocabulary.

**Q**  **Is this the only writing exercise?**

**A**  No. The student has a chance to do his own writing, which is saved on the computer and automatically corrected. There is also a section on Punctuation and Capitals.

**Q**  **Are there additional features you have not used yet that might be of interest later on as your students advance?**

**A**  Yes. There are reading stories of general interest about African Animals, the story of an American Indian boy. I particularly like the stories in a USA Tour of the country. The adult student learns geography and American History as well. The stories are on different levels, and progress from simple sentences to more complex sentences.

**Q**  **Are there any drawbacks to the Literacy System?**

**A**  Well, the software is designed to keep track of many students. So the students have to sign in, and then the teachers assign them lesson pages. The computer keeps track of their progress and can generate reports. Since I work one-on-one with my students, I don't need all of these design features. But it may come in handy when you need to measure achievement and improvement.