



TEXAS Adult & Family Literacy QUARTERLY

Success Stories

In This Issue

About This Issue - <i>Letter from the Interim Director</i>	2	Family Health and Parenting Benefit from Better English Skills <i>by Maria de la Cruz</i>	14
From Home School to College with a GED in Three Months, <i>by Ashton Anderson</i>	3	Musician Finds Success in Music City <i>by Pablo Partida</i>	14
English Language Learning - It Does Matter! <i>by Nora Tinajero</i>	3	From Carpenter's Helper to Business Success <i>by Jose Martinez</i>	15
A New Mother's GED Success, <i>by Jessica Telford</i>	4	You, Me and The Texas Adult Education Administrator Credential, <i>by Chris Palacios</i>	16
Never Stop Learning, <i>by Blanca Garcia</i>	4	Texas Tech Tutor Perspective <i>by Rebecca Neitzel</i>	17
Quality of Life Improved for English Language Learner, <i>by Alejandra</i>	5	Caution Adult Learners: Futures Under Construction, <i>by Dr. Robert G. Tatman</i>	18
Learning Leads to Opportunities in a New Century, <i>by Umberto Sanchez</i>	5	Life-Saving Lessons: AVANCE's Bilingual Parent-Child Education Program Teaches More Than Basic Education <i>by Ricardo Brambila</i>	20
English...Why? <i>by Rodolfo Diaz</i>	6	Learning About Writing from Both Sides of the Desk, <i>by Kenneth Appelt</i>	21
Never Give Up, <i>by Kayeth Kilpatrick</i>	6	Literacy Texas 7th Annual Conference	22
Learning English in Pursuit of a Dream <i>by Sandra Ramirez</i>	7	Asking Everyday Life Questions as a Successful Adult ESL Classroom Activity <i>by Dr. Clarena Larrotta</i>	23
Nick's Story, <i>by Jacqui Mohr</i>	7	Workforce Literacy Summit in San Antonio a Success, <i>by Barbara Tondre-El Zorkani</i>	24
English Language Learner Pursues Higher Goals, <i>by Frances V. Ortiz</i>	8	Three Concepts for My Success Teaching ESL <i>by Tomas Rodriguez</i>	25
Why I Want to Learn English <i>by Gerardo L. Corral</i>	9	Let's Do Lunch! <i>by Sue Barker</i>	26
Never Go Back, <i>by Gloria Fonseca</i>	9	Fashion, Food and Fun - All in a Day's Work <i>by Kathleen Simmons</i>	27
Poverty...Education...Hopes <i>by Sonia G. Apodaca</i>	10	A Volunteer Literacy Program's Successful Collaboration, <i>by Paul L. Murad</i>	28
My Successes Learning English <i>by Alberto Cordoba</i>	11	Advocacy Outreach Awarded One of Ten National Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy Grants	29
Overcoming Obstacles to Learn English <i>by Adela Van Ruiten</i>	11	Welcome to Our Library	30
Better English Leads to Workplace and Family Success <i>by Jose Luis Torres</i>	12	Free Things to Send For	33
Juan's Story: GED-to-College Success <i>by Jacqui Mohr</i>	12	Click on Over	35
English Skills and Job Success Lead to Home Ownership, <i>by Lucio Guerra</i>	13		
Kudos to the Standards Team	13		

About This Issue

Dear Readers:

We hope that our readers and their students alike will enjoy and be inspired by this annual Success Stories issue of TCALL's quarterly publication. We've broken last year's record by publishing 22 stories of adult learner success, all but two written by the learners themselves. Four of those articles feature GED learners and 18 are tales of English language learner success. It seems that Ysleta Community Learning Center in El Paso and Fuente Learning Center of Austin are competing to send TCALL the greatest number of these inspiring adult learners' stories.

Five articles describe successful teaching experiences or strategies. Texas Tech University linguistics major Rebecca Neitzel describes her life-changing experience as a tutor in the Texas Tech ESL Initiative, a joint project in which college students earn course credit while tutoring adults through Literacy Lubbock (p. 17). Dr. Clarena Larotta of Texas State University-San Marcos contributes an article based on her study of inquiry circles and other curricular interventions in adult English as a second language classrooms (p. 23). TCALL Professional Development Specialist and former New Jersey Writing Project Teacher Trainer Ken Appelt shares what he learned about writing from both the teacher and student perspective at the University of Iowa Writing Lab (p. 21).

Local program successes are featured in articles by Ricardo Brambila of AVANCE-Rio Grande Valley's Bilingual Parent-Child Education Program (p. 20) and Paul L. Murad of the Montgomery chapter of Literacy Volunteers of America (p. 28). Sue Barker writes of a successful collaboration between Mt. Pleasant ISD Even Start and Northeast Texas Community College Adult Education, in which lunch hour meetings serve as a forum for program improvement and team building (p. 26).

At the level of statewide success stories, Barbara Tondre-El Zorkani of Texas LEARNS hopes her description of the first annual Workforce Literacy Summit held in San Antonio April 21-23 (p. 24) will inspire readers to attend the next Summit in Spring 2009. Chris Palacios of Del Mar College writes of being the first to complete the new Texas Adult Education Administrator Credential. Don't miss Chris's smiling face along with others in the first cohort to complete the Administrator Credential (p. 16). Finally, as we pass the first anniversary of the June 2007 official rollout of the *Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks*, all the teachers, administrators, state leadership, and adult learners who contributed to the development of that cutting-edge resource for our state should take pride in the words of our colleague Melody Clegg from the state of Idaho, whose imitation/adaptation of Texas' Standards and Benchmarks for their own state's use is indeed the sincerest form of praise (p. 13).

We at TCALL would also like to congratulate Advocacy Outreach in Elgin for being the only Texas program to be awarded a national Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy grant for 2008-2009 (p. 29). Ten more programs have been awarded grants from The First Lady's Family Literacy Initiative for Texas. Those are: Austin Community College; Austin Learning Academy; AVANCE-Waco; Bryan ISD; Carrizo Springs ISD; Community Action, Inc., San Marcos; Corpus Christi ISD; Mi Escuelita Preschool, Dallas; Mount Pleasant ISD; Plano Education Foundation.

Harriet Vardiman Smith
Interim TCALL Director
and Clearinghouse Project Director

Please note: In the case of adult learner-written articles, while the editorial decision was made to fix typos and spelling errors, in keeping with the article's integrity, the authors' words, for the most part, remained unchanged.

From Home School to College with a GED in Three Months *by Ashton Anderson*

My mom home schooled me for most of my life. When I turned seventeen, I decided to try something different and get my GED. I found out about a GED class through a friend at church and began my preparation. I started in September and by December I had my GED and was ready to enroll in the local community college for the spring semester.

My older brother was also home schooled when he was younger, but he eventually got his GED. He was my inspiration for pursuing my GED. I decided to try out a GED class. The first thing I liked about GED

class was the interaction between me and the other students. Home school was sort of lonely since it was just my mom and me.

To enroll in the GED class I had to take a placement test which showed my weakest areas. My weakest area was math and I immediately began working on it. In a very short time I showed a great deal of improvement. After a little work in the other subjects, my practice tests indicated that I was ready to take all of my GED tests.

continued on page 19

English Language Learning – It Does Matter! *by Nora Tinajero* *English Now, Austin; Round Rock ISD*

My name is Nora Tinajero. I'm from Mexico. I'm the third of ten children. When I was living in Mexico I never thought to come to the U.S., although I used to listen to music in English and also sometimes I looked at English books that my father had. I remember that my brothers asked me, "Why do you listen to that music? You don't even know what they're saying!" And I said, "It doesn't matter. One day I will understand what that music means." They thought I was crazy because we were living in a small town where there were not a lot of schools. There were not many opportunities to succeed. You started working when you were very young. I only finished elementary school and then I had to work in the corn fields until I came to the U.S.

When I came to the U.S., I was excited about getting to know a new country but I was also sad because I had to leave my family, my friends and my boyfriend. When I arrived here, I saw the big buildings and long highways and I thought, "I'm going to live here." I felt very excited. I had been in big cities before but just visiting family and I just stayed for a little while. Now living in a big city would be an important change in my life. When I went in the stores and other places I saw people from different countries speaking different languages. I felt weird being in a place where so many languages are spoken. I tried to get into high school but they didn't accept me there. They said that I need to go to another place for adults, because I

didn't have any documents to prove my grades and because I was too old to be there. To go to the community college I needed to drive and have money for gas. I didn't have a car, and I didn't have a job. Later I started working in the housekeeping department of a hotel. Then I had money to go school to study English. I started classes at English Now. When I started everything was good. I was learning vocabulary and it wasn't so hard, but when I started to study grammar it became very hard. I left the school but later I realized that I had to learn English no matter how hard it was. If I kept on trying I would do it.

I desired to take GED classes in English. At first I thought, "I won't make it," but now I know that it is not as hard as it looks. It's hard for me because I didn't learn the basics of math and language arts in Spanish when I should have, but I see that it's hard even for English speakers, so I know that I can make it. I also enrolled in computer classes in English in order to be in touch with English speakers and also because knowing about computers is indispensable.

In the future I'm going to get my GED certificate; I'm going to speak, write, and understand English very well. I would like to go to college, even though I don't know yet what I would like to study. First, I have to have a lot of knowledge about different subjects, but I would like to become a successful woman. I would like to get married and have a family with a better life.

A New Mother's GED Success

by Jessica Telford

Bowie-Cass Adult Education Cooperative, Texarkana

I began taking classes for my GED in November 2007 after I had turned 17. I had quit school after becoming pregnant. In school I struggled, especially in math. When I started classes, we took a test just to see what we knew. I was mainly at 8th grade level, but the last grade I attended in school was the 10th. I was a little behind and ready to get past this obstacle for the benefit of my family and me.

My boyfriend and I were living with my mom in Hooks, Texas. The classes I attended were in Texarkana, Texas. We didn't have a vehicle, so my mom would have to take me to class. The other people living in my house were my step-dad, my little brother, my big sister, her boyfriend, and her baby girl, Montana.

I worked hard all the rest of November and December, and when January came around, I was doing great. I was on a 12.8 grade level in writing and even in math, I had moved from an 8.4 to a 12.4 grade level.

At the beginning of January, I was only a few short weeks to having my son, so it was hard for me to go to class. It became unbearable because I felt so bad and very pregnant. I had to stop going to class. The weeks went by and on January 18, 2008 I had my son, Korey Parker Cragg, III. He means so much to me. He makes me want to do better. After having Korey, my boyfriend and I were finally able to get our own apartment. It made us feel more responsible and we were ecstatic about being on our own.

In March, my mother called and told me that she was coming to get me on the 10th to go and take my GED tests. My mom watched Korey while I took my tests

because my boyfriend works. The first day I took the math test. I was worried since I had only had a few days to study, but eventually I finished the math test. The second day I had to take all four other tests. I've always been pretty good at reading and really didn't have problems with science or social studies. I was also a little bit worried about the writing test essay, but things went smoothly.

After two days of testing, I was happy it was over – at least until I got my scores so I could see if I had passed each test or not. A couple of weeks went by and my mom called to tell me that I had passed all of the tests and there is even a chance that I could get a scholarship. I was so proud of myself. I had tried my best and succeeded!

I plan on going to college whether I get the scholarship or not. I'm pretty sure I want to be a cosmetologist, but I also want to wait until my son is a little older to go to college. Being able to go back to school and better myself for my new family was so important to me. I would like to give a special thanks to Vicki Angel. She was my GED teacher and she helped me out a lot. I want to encourage everyone who doesn't have a diploma or GED to get a GED. This will help you better yourself and give you more opportunities.

About the Author

Jessica Telford is a 17-year old mother of a three month old son. She was a student at Bowie-Cass Adult Education Cooperative. She presently lives in DeKalb, Texas with her fiance and their son. She plans to attend college when her son is a little older. For the present time, she is happy to be able to stay at home and give her full attention to her son.

Never Stop Learning

by Blanca Garcia

Dayton Campus in Liberty

I like to learn English because I discovered that in this country, we need to speak English. That's why I try to learn more English every day. When I go to the store and talk with the people, and they're talking to me, I feel very happy because everything I have learned has helped me. Every day, when I go to school, I read and write new words. I feel very satisfied now that I can help my son with his home-

work. I even work now and I don't feel scared. I can speak with the people. Every day is a new day.

The most important thing is never stop learning because we can do anything. To live in America is an opportunity for me and my family. We live happy and my children have a good life.

Quality of Life Improved for English Language Learner

by Alejandra
Richardson Adult Literacy Center

My name is Alejandra. I am 28 years old. I live with my mother, brother and boyfriend. I have been living in this country for four years. My mother was the first to get here. Three years later my brother, boyfriend and I joined her. She lived with two friends. They were drunkards and my mom was different. My boyfriend and I were tired of having discussions with these guys. Then we decided to get another apartment and I took my little brother with me. My mom wasn't sure at first, but finally she came with us. It was hard to get an apartment. Luckily I met a woman who helped me to get the apartment and a job. I started to work, but I needed to speak English. I felt frustrated and I left that job and decided to learn English. English helps me a lot in my family life because I help my brother on his schoolwork and we learn more talking to each other in English. I help my mom when she doesn't understand something. She doesn't speak English and she is afraid to go to school. She thinks she is too old to learn something, but this year she is trying to go to school. My family is glad that I'm learning English. They know that thanks to that I have a better job

in an American restaurant. I started doing prep and sometimes doing dishes. I learned fast and they gave me more hours and more money. I'm happy there because I always learn something new. I know I can get an even better job if I want to. Now things are getting better. I have time to spend with my family. We all like to go shopping and go to the movies. We like to visit the park or zoo and sometimes the museum. One thing I really like about learning English is that when we go to the movies, for example, I can understand what people are saying. We all are looking forward to a better future for my family, and me and my boyfriend because we are going to have our first baby soon.

About the Author

The author is a student in one-to-one tutoring at the Richardson Adult Literacy Center. She and her tutor have been working together about 2 hours a week for almost four years. They started in *Laubach Way to English Book 1* and have completed Book 4 as well as many levels of *Challenger* and the reading of several novels.

Learning Leads to Opportunities in a New Century

by Umberto Sanchez
Dayton Campus in Liberty

Hello! My name is Umberto Sanchez. I was born in 1953, in Zacatecas, Mexico. I came to the United States in 1989, by myself. I was thirty-six years old, alone on a big bus leaving my family. I was going to a strange country, and I was very scared. I didn't know anything about this country.

When I arrived in Houston, Texas my brother and his son were waiting for me at the bus station. They were happy and I was too. I did not know the town, but they took me to their apartment about seven miles away, and we lived together for six years. After that, I moved to Dayton, Texas.

In Dayton, Texas, I began working at Sam's Distribution Center, and I realized that other people could not

understand me because I spoke a different language. That's why I thought that I have to learn English and I began studying in the ESL class. I am learning to speak, write, and read English better and better and people at my place of work understand me better too. I want to thank Ms. Pam Watson for teaching me so much.

The most important thing is to never give up. I am very happy to live in America. My family and I have many opportunities. I am thankful that my children will have better living conditions than I had. My life has changed very much since I began to live in the United States, that's why I thank God every day for the opportunity that he gave me to live in this country.

English...Why? by Rodolfo Diaz

Ysleta Community Learning Center, El Paso

My name is Rodolfo Diaz. I know my name is insignificant to the rest of the people, but I think that for my family, it is not. I probably sound selfish, but I believe each person thinks the most important thing in our life is family. These are the reasons how they are the most important in motivating me. The first reason is I am here because I want to study English. The second reason, I would like to start to study at El Paso Community College this summer for my Associates as a Teaching Assistant. My third reason, teachers after parents, are the most important to evolve people and they have a great responsibility, especially to children.

I was working for a toolmaker for twenty-two years. I have been unemployed since one year ago, and I started studying English since November 5, 2007. I like to study. When I started to know my instructors here in Ysleta Community Learning Center, they have been an example to me and they gave me motivation to change my ways and goals. They also motivate me to continue studying.

I am sure, if people think the most important is family, people, and myself can change our lives to do better, especially for our sons and daughters to give them an

example when someone wants to study whatever they want. The age is not really important, and everybody has a right to change their minds.

The third reason, teachers after parents are the most important to progress people. I am convinced they are the seed to see the future in our children. Children are the seed to construct a good world and to harvest the best fruit for the next generations.

I may be insignificant to the rest of the people, but the most important in life for all parents are their sons and daughters! In my case, I do not know English. My wife, my daughter, and my two sons know and speak English perfectly. Why can't I start to learn English? The only obstacle, I think, is myself. It is time to learn.

I thank you for using some of your time to read part of my story.

About the Author

My name is Rodolfo Diaz. My age is 49 years, nearly 50. I was born on May 5 of 1959 in Moctezuma, Chihuahua, Mexico. I am married and have two sons and a daughter.

Never Give Up by Kayeth Kilpatrick *Dayton Campus in Liberty*

I was born in 1961, in Indonesia. I came to the USA with my boss from Saudi Arabia in 1995. I lived in Oklahoma City where I worked as a babysitter until October of 1997. I ran away from them to Houston because the father of the family was not nice to me. A lady from the Indonesian consulate helped me to come to Houston. I could speak almost no English, but I had a girlfriend in Houston. I stayed with my friend for almost seven years. I met my husband in 2004 and now I'm living in Dayton, Texas with my husband. Before I got married, I didn't speak English and now I'm going to school because I want to learn

English better. It was so difficult for me to learn English, but I never gave up learning to speak English. I talked to my husband every day, and he helped me to practice my English. I read two books every day or the newspaper because I want to learn English better and better.

The most important thing is never to give up. I am very happy to live in America. My family and I have many opportunities here. I'm thankful that we have a better life.

Learning English in Pursuit of a Dream

by Sandra Ramirez

Ysleta Community Learning Center, El Paso

Learning English as a second language is the first step for immigrants to enter the country of “Opportunities and Liberty for all.” Our dream is to integrate into new knowledge and a new society. People like me, want a better life for their families, and therefore we need to adopt a new language, new culture, and new traditions. We need to be realistic and determined about learning English. One reason for me to learn English is to help my family. I want to understand my children and get involved in their goals. I enjoy assisting them in their knowledge development in accomplishing their objectives. I also need to be able to communicate with my children’s teachers.

Furthermore, I want to obtain my teaching degree. I’m a kindergarten teacher in my country, and I love to teach and help children. I need to achieve my goal step by step and master my reading, writing, and speaking skills. I would like to work and get better opportunities. The last reason is that I want to be

a responsible citizen in this country. I always like to improve and learn different topics in order to be a productive person in society. I try to follow the laws of this country and learn about them.

In conclusion, these are some reasons why I want to learn English. I fight every day to be an excellent mother, good wife, better daughter, and a determined student. I have big opportunities in my English school with professional teachers who have been helping me be a well-rounded person in this country, and who evidently, helped me reach the “American Dream.”

About the Author

Sandra Ramirez was born in Parral, Chihuahua, Mexico. She has been married for twelve years and has five wonderful children. She volunteers at Lujan Chavez Elementary School, helping in her children’s activities. She is learning English at Ysleta Community Learning Center in El Paso, Texas.

Nick’s Story

by Jacqui Mohr

San Marcos Public Library Learning Center

In October 2007, a young man came to the learning center during lunchtime. “Do you remember me?” he asked. Nick had been in the library that day working on a plumbing problem and had just advised a younger co-worker to get his GED when he stopped and said, “I should get my GED!”

When I pulled Nick’s card, I discovered we had met the first time exactly 10 years earlier in October 1997. He was 21 years old at the time, had passed three official tests while at Gary Job Corps, and was working as a cashier at a gas station. Between October 1997 and October 2007, Nick had five more “starts and stops” without completing the official GED testing. This time he said he’d get it done for himself and his family and he did! He completed official testing and his GED certificate was issued November 2007.

Nick had been employed by a plumber under the “Tradesman” designation – no GED required, but there are job restrictions, a pay cap, and no chance for advancement without a GED. Since getting his GED, Nick has taken the test for Journeyman, will take the Master Plumber exam, and plans to have his own plumbing company in the future. I predict he will achieve these new goals in less time than it took for him to get his GED!

About the Author

Jacqui Mohr is Coordinator of the San Marcos Public Library Learning Center (A Community Action, Inc. Partner). She shared this story, because the starts and stops on the road to GED success described here are typical of many adult students.)

English Language Learner Pursues Higher Goals

by Frances V. Ortiz

Ysleta Community Learning Center, El Paso

English... I have been enjoying the process since it started. Not even a born English speaker can say that he or she has reached excellence in everything concerning the language or any language. There are many reasons for me to decide learning a new language... spare time, professional issues, personal issues, environmental issues and educational reasons among others. All of them can make a difference in a person's quality of life. The professional reason could be on the top of the list for most people.

How many of us (Spanish speakers) dream about having a better job with better compensation? However, suddenly we wake up and find out that was a dream and that reality is completely different because of the lack of efficiency in the English language; but, what if we can change that? For me, as an ESL student I am willing to give the extra mile to prove that I am completely capable to learn a second language efficiently and that I deserve to be in the competition, in first place and not in the last to gain a better job. Learning English will help to overcome professional obstacles. I am working hard for it, and I am even winning satisfaction within myself.

Almost everybody everywhere wants to be a better person. Learning a second language, in this case English, can make me feel comfortable with myself by improving my self-esteem and confidence, and avoiding the "scatter-brain" situation that sometimes makes people look at us with disdain and prejudice, even on a daily basis with friends and co-workers. When you win that war, you can win the battle against your environment.

The environment sometimes has the power to make me succeed or make me fail, that depends on different things. Nevertheless, learning English is giving me the tools to understand that environment better, that environment where I decided to live. If I learned English, I am able to respect, instruct myself, and help myself integrate into the "American" society. The environment affects me in many ways, because of that; I have been involved in awkward situations that at the end worked against me. If you can reach to be part of the environment, it is going to be another battle

that you are going to win, because you are capable to defend your position in this society, you can show that you are part of this demanding social process. This American nation has a lot of variety in many ways and we need to be open-minded to those varieties. That is why I think learning English will help me to know this environment and society better. I need to study to have the necessary knowledge about what is happening around me.

Last but not least, one never says, "That is enough knowledge." Even as an adult, when we have already achieved the goal of learning an average amount of English to survive in society, one never says that is enough. English will help me to reach my goal of finishing my Bachelor's Degree successfully.

These are just some of the reasons why I am studying English. Every day I get self-motivated to continue in this journey that at the end is going to have many rewards in many ways: professional and personal. I will not stop, I will not quit, and I will continue my studies and conquer my goals!

About the Author

Finally, I would like to give you a brief description about me. My name is Frances V. Ortiz, I'm twenty seven years old, I'm married but I do not have any kids yet. I moved to El Paso, Texas a year and a half ago because my husband works here. I am an active substitute teacher but I have been struggling to have success with that because of my lack of communication with the English language. Being skilled and successful as a substitute teacher is one of my many goals and one of the many reasons of why I am studying English at the Ysleta Community Learning Center at El Paso, Texas. Also, I have a part-time job as a sales associate at the local mall. I really have a lot of hopes and aspirations, learning the English language is going to help me to conquer some of them for example I want to join one of the divisions of the Armed Forces and finish my Bachelor's Degree. I want to be a successful woman professionally and personally in order to give the best of me to a future family. I'm working hard; I know I can do it! I will win this battle no matter what!

Why I Want to Learn English by Gerardo L. Corral *Ysleta Community Learning Center, El Paso*

My name is Gerardo Corral and I just turned 33 years old this past March. I was born in Durango, Mexico. I grew up there, so my first language was Spanish. When I was a student, I always showed very good math skills. I spent nearly all my studying in chemistry, math, and biology. However, I never paid too much attention to my English classes. I remember saying, "If I can read English that is enough." Now I know that I was wrong. I am happily married to my wife and have a beautiful son who is 3 years old. Another new baby is arriving to our family by June. I love my family as much as I love to run. I have been a runner for several years already. I always say "running is part of me". I have had the opportunity to participate in several marathons here in El Paso, Texas and Mexico. I hope one day I can have the opportunity to go run the "New York Marathon" and take my family.

A couple of years ago, my life changed a lot. Fortunately, I became a U.S. resident. Years back I used to come to the United States just as a visitor, and everything was okay because a lot of people are bilingual. But when I moved here and started to look for a job, the problems started. I thought, "You are in a big disadvantage when you are monolingual and the disadvantage is greater if you are a Spanish monolingual." I felt so sad and then my mother-in-law told me

about San Jacinto Adult Learning Center. I could not believe that ESL classes were free, and that there I could go to learn English. I currently work at YISD as a custodian at their central offices. I have been working at YISD since May 2007. I feel so proud of myself because in February 2008, I was recognized as the "Employee of the Month". I was very surprised and very happy for that award. That achievement made me realize that I can go on and accomplish bigger goals.

"Success" is not a place, to succeed is a journey and I started that journey when I was recognized as the "Employee of the Month". I hope I can get to the other end and reach success. Right now I am attending ESL classes at YCLC. My teacher's name is Elizabeth Moya and I believe she is a very good teacher. I am sure that I can improve my English skills in her class, and then, I would like to enroll in the El Paso Community College. I know it is hard, and I need to work a lot, but the best of all is I have my wife's and my family's support. I listen to my classmates that they want to learn English to get a better job and then buy a new house or a new car. I agree, but my first reason is my kids to feel proud of me and see me as an example when they grow up.

Never Go Back by Gloria Fonseca *Dayton Campus in Liberty*

Hello, my name is Gloria Fonseca and I was born in 1954 in Puerto Cortes, in Honduras. I came to the United States in 1981 with my husband. We were leaving our families maybe forever. We had many problems. There was not much food; we also had problems with the war.

When I came to the United States, I left my family and my children too. I could not understand English. I had to learn English. This language was very difficult.

I have lived in this country for 25 years, and I'm very ashamed because I can't speak good English. I had to study hard. Finally, after much practice, I began to speak better, and I write and read better too.

The most important thing is to never go back to my country because many people are hungry and there's no money from jobs. My people live in very precarious conditions and because I live in America, I have many opportunities here. We live very happily now.

Poverty...Education...Hopes

by Sonia G. Apodaca
Ysleta Community Learning Center, El Paso

The sun fell down over us as if it hates us. I must walk around twenty miles every day under a blistering sun from my town to the closest city. I am the oldest of four siblings, we were orphans. We were born in a small land in South America. Also, we were poor people devastated by poverty and the war. We lived in a hut. My siblings and I must seek in the trashcan for something to eat, such as; vegetable waste and restaurant left overs. Every single day for us was a time to survive only. I was a child with a sole purpose...find something to eat. I learned early to suffer but didn't care for the physical pain like blister in my small foot, to be thirsty and walked through a road full of stickers, rocks, hot sand, etc. I grew up feeling the enormous weight of the responsibility to take care of my unique family on my young shoulders. I felt like a cement rock in my back. Under those circumstances I was a child who didn't know to smile; I didn't have the hope to have a different kind of life.

One day, when I was a teenager I found that my poor house was burned down for an unknown reason. I remember I was devastated. I wanted to die and that my siblings die too. But the power of love by my family shot me with enough courage to look to a new horizon. I had nothing that kept me in my poor world. I had to leave not only my land, but my country too. We traveled to South of Mexico where I was still doing whatever to give a less terrible life to my family. However I did not have the opportunity to study. Hiding inside myself, a voice shouted at me that I must improve my mind and my education.

At that time, I have always thought that God didn't know us or maybe he had forgotten about our existence, but one day, I met a man, who's now my husband. He is an American soldier. He brought me to this wonderful country. He reminded me that I must get a school education. I have been studying at Ysleta Community Learning Center in El Paso, Texas, for the last year. My teacher was Liz Moya, she taught me, not only English; she taught me my first writing words. Why? Believe it or not I was illiterate. I didn't know to read or write. I feel so bad about it. I was depressed about myself. That's why I'm studying, even though that I was thirty-two years old. Before I began to study, I didn't go out because I was afraid to lose

my way home. I didn't know to read any signs. I never could sign any written communication with anybody. Can you imagine how I felt when my husband must travel? I felt terrible anxiety, emotional painful, and stressed.

First of all, sometimes teachers sent me information, warnings, records, bulletins, etc about my children- the oldest is six and the youngest is five years old. In those moments I had bad thoughts, believe me, sometimes the suicide idea crossed my mind, but at the same time I thought that everything has a solution, so I began looking for an adequate school for me.

Second, I could not check the mail. I always was asking for help in each of those things. That's why right now I'm studying. I want to have my chin up in front of my two children and my husband. I want that they be proud of me. Now I have a lot of dreams and hopes. Every person must learn about their life. I learned that education is the light of your development. Today I'm fine to go outside my home. I did my first step, learn to Speak English and learn to write and read. It is not easy; it's a hard and long way. However step by step I'm doing that. Yes, it's true a lot times I felt frustrated, but I'm convinced that I must do for all my family.

My biggest dream is some day to go back to my country and help the poor people to receive education, because it is the most important way to give ourselves power... the power to be strong, power of not to be shy at all about your origin, power to break the fear by accomplishing your dreams, power to live better every day. Finally, the most important is to have the power to develop your self worth. During my time that I was not studying, I felt blind in a world of knowledge.

*This story is based on my friend's life.
The name of the countries named have been changed.*

About the Author

I am Sonia G. Apodaca. I have been living in El Paso, Texas since 2000. Actually my life has changes, so, I believe that I must continue studying. Right now I feel more confident. I know that I need more steps in my education, but I can do it. I admire every adult that is studying whatever subject, because we must be a good example for the next generations. We can teach them the value and the power that education gives. If you are an adult you can continue your studies, or begin, please do it. If I'm doing it, you can do it too.

My Successes Learning English *by Alberto Cordoba* *Fuente Learning Center, Austin*

My name is Alberto Cordoba. I am from Veracruz, Mexico. I came from Mexico to the United States because I like it best to live here. It is good for my family members in Mexico too because I help them with the money I can send them.

When I got here to Austin, Texas I started to work in painting jobs but the work finished. I looked for more work and a month after that I started to work at the Omni Hotel in Austin. I do housekeeping at night. I work from 11:00p.m. to 7:00a.m. five days a week. Then I come to the classes at this school-Fuente. The classes are from 6:00 to 9:00p.m. So it is a long day but it is good for me to learn the best English that I can.

I didn't have a car to go to work. Now I have a car. I was able to buy the car because I am working. My family is happy because my success has come because of the English that I am learning and because I have always been a good worker. I do the best that I can for everything. I don't think that I could get if I had stayed in Mexico. I am sure that I would not be able to study English either.

Many people think that we come here to take jobs away from people in the U.S. I never see anyone from here getting jobs that we do. No one wants to work for the little pay and all night as a housekeeper in the hotel. I know that the people here don't want to do

the work that I do. What I want is to live a better life here. If we could do that in Mexico there would be no reason for me to come here to work. An example of what I say is that at work there are two new women working. They are from Jamaica. I always hear them say they are too tired to work quickly. They do not like to work at night. We always get these hours of work. We do the work and are happy to be able to do our work to help people in the U.S. also. We pay rent and buy things here so that we can live here. I take care of paying for my doctor and medicines if I get sick. I don't make enough money for the hotel to take out for medical insurance because it is little pay.

In conclusion, I have been able and succeeded in getting into English classes. I am learning things in English like how to speak it and read and write it. I can use these at my work so I can understand the supervisors and guests that talk to me sometimes. I am happy that I can work and hope that I will keep learning more English if I keep coming to the classes. I don't miss classes except when I really can't come because there is a problem. Sometimes I am too tired or have to go to work. This will not keep me from learning English because I have this as a goal that I will be able to complete.

Well, that is all that I can tell you about my experiences with learning English. It is helping me a lot and it is helping me to help my family in Mexico. Thank you.

Overcoming Obstacles to Learn English *by Adela Van Ruiten* *Ysleta Community Learning Center, El Paso*

I am a proud student of YCLC and my goals are to learn English, to have my citizenship, and to be successful for myself and my family. I am relieved that programs like this exist in this country. This great school has helped many parents and people in giving us an opportunity to grow and learn, giving us the tool to communicate in the U.S.

After I got married, I came to live in the U.S. My initial goal was to learn English. However, when I became pregnant, I waited to go to school until my daughter could go to school. I had no one to take care of her and

daycare was very expensive. As soon as my daughter started her schooling, I got the opportunity to enter my own school. I have been a student here for three years. This school has been my first step to continue to grow in my life and to become a productive person in this country.

About the Author

My name is Adela Van Ruiten, I am married and have a twelve-year-old daughter. I am a proud student of Ysleta Community Learning Center. I love our logo "Teach a Parent... Reach a Child."

Better English Leads to Workplace and Family Success

by Jose Luis Torres

Fuente Learning Center, Austin

My name is Jose Luis Torres. I am from Veracruz, Mexico. I came here in 1999. I came here because I knew that it could change my life economically. Things were not like I thought that they would be. I work very hard every day at my welding job. I think that I can do many things. One of the things that I have had success in and that I know I can do is learn more English to help me in my job.

I have four children. My oldest son is ten years old and my daughter is seven years old. I also have twins that are six months old. That gives me more reasons to improve my skills in language and welding.

I want to do something with my life. Maybe one day it will help me and my family even more. I want to give my children a little more than what I had when I was a child. It is very important to me. I want to learn to speak English and maybe I will find better jobs in the future.

I need to help my family. They live in Mexico. Life is so hard there. Jobs are hard to get and the pay is not enough to buy the necessities. My mother now lives in

Cuernavaca, Mexico. For that reason I need to speak English. That way I hope to understand all the things that I need to know to do a better job. That is my goal for today and I am doing everything I can to learn more and more English.

In this article I wanted you to know that I am happy, that I am learning and understanding more English than when I started these classes. I had never had studied English before in a class. I did have a program at home to learn English. It is called Ingles Sin Barreras. It is ok but not enough. It helped me with just the basic English. I want to know more so that I can become a citizen of the U.S.A. I know and study more in this class, and I have started to write English more. My kids see me and do it too.

Well, that is my article on the successes that I have had. I have succeeded in learning more English. I am using it at my job so the customers get the work that they want. They get it the way they want it done too. All of this is helping me live a more comfortable life and my children and family are making progress every day. Thanks

Juan's Story: GED-to-College Success

by Jacqui Mohr

San Marcos Public Library Learning Center

Juan's father's death when Juan was 16 years old hit him hard; it was an emotional and financial blow. An only child, he quit school so he could support his mother and himself. His mother's death when he was 23 left him without family support. Five years later Juan knew that the direction he wanted his life to take would include an education. The first step was to get his GED certificate. That's when we met Juan. It didn't take long for him to prepare for the official GED examination, and he completed the official testing with a GED average of over 700.

With his GED certificate in hand he spoke with the admissions office of Texas State University, where he was first advised, because he was a GED recipient, to start at the community college. But that wasn't

what Juan wanted to hear; he wanted to go to his "hometown" university. Out-of-district tuition at the community college and the long commute to required courses while holding a full-time job did not fit with the plan Juan had made for himself. Under the guidance of the husband of one of his GED teachers, Juan completed the application process for Texas State, was accepted, and was on the Dean's List his first two semesters. Juan is considering a teaching career when he completes his degree.

About the Author

Jacqui Mohr is Coordinator of the San Marcos Public Library Learning Center (A Community Action, Inc. Partner).

English Skills and Job Success Lead to Home Ownership

by Lucio Guerra

Fuente Learning Center, Austin

My name is Lucio. I am from Tamaulipas, Mexico. I came to the United States in 1999. This is one of the goals that I wanted to achieve and that I have been able to get. I also wanted to come here to work. This is the second thing that I have been lucky enough to be able to have had a success in doing. I started working in the area of waste management picking up paper at the landfill. I had to work on the weekends and during the week so that I could pay my rent. I usually would work from six in the morning to five in the afternoon every day of the week. It was at least about 70 hours of work.

At the same time I began at the landfill I started to learn English. In 2006 I started to go to English As A Second Language classes at Fuente Learning Center in Austin, Texas. I can now write and read in English much more than when I first started to learn how to speak in English. This is something that I am very happy to have achieved because it has helped me at work. Some of the things I have studied at Fuente are the verbs..especially present progressive verbs that end in ING because the teacher says that many of the times that we are talking it is with words that are in this tense. Some other things that I do to help me learn more English is to use a hand translator. This little machine helps me because I can learn at least 40 new words that I can use to understand other people and so that they can understand me when I am

trying to have a conversation with them. When I learn the set of 40 words that I practice on the translator, I add a new group of 40 words to learn and to use. It has audio so I can say the words when I practice.

Now, I have succeeded in improving my job skills and have a much better job than when I was just picking up paper. I now operate the large machines at work. When I am working I am responsible for making the new roads that are to make the landfill area larger and more useable because there is always a lot of new waste that is coming in to the landfill. Learning to speak, read, write and understand English has been a very valuable success for me. I have been able to use it when I am working and because I have gotten higher and higher levels of work at the job, I have been able to buy my own house. I am also helping my family in Mexico. I am especially glad because now I have the weekends with my wife and my son. So my success has been in several areas of my life. I started out in Mexico and now live in Austin, Texas. When I first came here I wanted to have a good job and I wanted to learn English so that I could help my family in Mexico and my own family here. I was able to get from the bottom of the job to a skilled area of work. It pays more money and this helps me to live a better life. Success in these areas has been a blessing to me and to my family.

Kudos to the Standards Team

This recent letter was addressed to Federico Salas-Isnardi,
Assistant State Director, Texas LEARNS

I just wanted to reiterate what I expressed to you at COABE. I was asked by the Idaho's State ABE Office to review ABE content standards from as many states as I could find. I researched all the states that I could-whose standards were available on their web-sites. I made a compilation of samples from these states and we reviewed them as a team at our state conference last fall. We were in 100% agreement that we wanted to use the Texas format because of its clear and concise nature. We want to express appreciation to all those from your state who labored so diligently to produce such an excellent product.

Being a small state with very limited resources makes it virtually impossible to start these projects from scratch and finish them in a timely manner. Because of the groundwork you have laid and your willingness to make it available to other states, you have put us years ahead on what we could have done by ourselves. THANK YOU so very much.

Sincerely,
Melody Clegg, M.Ed.
Idaho Adult Basic Education Specialist

Family Health and Parenting Benefit from Better English Skills *by Maria de la Luz Cruz* *Fuente Learning Center, Austin*

This is an article about my successes. I had a goal of learning to understand English. I am happy because I have learned more and more. This goal is one that I have gotten to reach. In the article I am going to tell you a little about when I was growing up, work and the things that have happened since I came to live in the United States.

I was born in Guanajuato, Mexico. When I was a little girl my family moved to Mexico City. I went to school but I was not able to finish the last year. I even went to school at night to try to finish. I was happy when I lived in Mexico because I was with my family and I was working.

I came to the U.S. , not because I really wanted to but my aunt that lived here convinced me so I could help her too. I started by taking care of her children. My aunt spoke English and that helped me learn a little English.

Since I was able to live here I had a goal of learning English to better my life and to be able to work. I wanted to go to school to learn English. I began to take English classes after I wasn't working with my aunt and when I married my husband. I wanted to speak and read English. Before the classes I could not do that. Learning English helped me do things I was not able to do like filling out a doctor's form.

Now, I can do that and it has really helped me and my family. Some other things like understanding how to get things at the stores. I always had to look for someone that could speak Spanish so I could buy what I needed. The people at the stores understand me now when I

ask for something. You can imagine how basic that is for everyday living.

I use the English I know to help others. When my husband needs to go to the doctor I make the appointments. That happened when we lived in North Carolina. I was able to help so that they could do some exams. He received the treatment he needed for some problems with his stomach.

I am lucky now that we live in the U.S. we are able to send presents sometimes to my family. We do that on special occasions.

Sometimes I help my two young sons with their homework. My oldest son is twelve and the second is ten years old. My twelve year old has learned English very well. He is also taking classes to learn to read and write in Spanish. My ten year old helps me learn English too. I always go to Friday parent meetings, platicas, at the school. We speak in English and learn about what is going on at school.

Now I am not working. I am a housewife and take care of my kids. I also was sick for some time and cannot continue to work.

In conclusion, my success with English learning has helped me to know how to write better in English. I help other students in our class. I can write notes to my children's teachers. It is easy for me to make appointments to see doctors. The only thing that is hard for me is that I miss my family in Mexico. I also miss my friends.

Musician Finds Success in Music City *by Pablo Partida* *Fuente Learning Center, Austin*

I came to the U.S.A. because I wanted to do better with my English and have a better opportunity for work in Mexico. When I arrived in the U.S. it was a different experience for me because I had never lived here before. I only came to visit and for vacations before. One of the different things is the driving. The second thing is that the culture is different. When you come with an objective in mind you can do it. My objective was learning English 100% and to promote my music. Now that I'm here I need to start a business to make it.

I have some business partners. I can say I have 4 partners because three are for the band and the other one is for a pool care business that I have been able to start. The band is now playing at parties. This is helping us get into the music business.

I knew some English-maybe 60% before I came to the U.S.A. I started making plans to reach my goals at the end of 2006. This was because I started thinking about being here for about six to eight months to learn good English.

I knew a friend from the U.S. for about four years before coming here. On one of his trips to Monterey, Mexico he asked if I wanted to come here. I could stay with him. So I made an appointment to talk with him. He agreed and five months later I came to live with him in Houston, Texas. I started going to San Jacinto College to study English. That is where I started to work on my goal of bettering my English skills. My friend had to move to Austin, Texas. One of my roommates in Houston said that Austin was cool because of the music scene on 6th Street.

When I arrived in Austin I helped my friend start the pool care business. You may ask, Why a pool care business? Well this is the long-short story. A friend who works for a pool servicing business explained that many companies only service the pools. They don't sell the chemicals. He told us all about the chemicals and said it would be easy. I found almost everything on the web. I made flyers and I searched the area to know who had a pool. I made and left the flyers at those places. They started calling us. Now we have our business.

Another thing is the music business I have gotten into. When I got to Austin I had a party. I met a guy at the party who used

to have a band. We talked about music. I told him that I play drums and bass. We exchanged phones and he called me to play one time just for fun. We started calling friends who knew how to play other instruments and here we are – a band. We play at parties. Sometimes it's stressful because we practice a lot. That's O.K. since I like doing that anyway.

So the first success was starting to take English classes. Next, I helped my friend start our pool care products business. Finally, I got to work on the music business. On a personal note, I started to date an American girl recently. That's great because we are getting to know each other. I make an effort to speak with my professor and my classmates only in English. I use the internet in class to send the work to my professor and to learn more English from the web pages recommended. I listen to music in English. I like rock, rock punk and I watch T.V. so I can learn more English. Sometimes I watch the news but, I like MTV and Spike better.

All these things make my future bigger and more successful. Well, I hope so. Special thanks to my professor, Tomas Rodriguez, for all the effort he makes teaching all kinds of people from all over.

From Carpenter's Helper to Business Success by Jose Martinez Fuente Learning Center, Austin

This is about the successes that I have had by getting to live in the U.S.A. My name is Jose Martinez. I was born in Guanajuato, Mexico. I was fourteen years old there when I started working as a carpenter's helper. I lived with my mother and we lived O.K. but I decided to come to the U.S. in 1996. I started work as a construction helper here too. In one year I was starting to be moved up to working with power tools and not just being a helper like when I started. In just two years they promoted me to the lead operator job.

My first lead job was with a backhoe to prepare the land for construction work. Then I got another promotion with another machine used to set the foundation of houses being made. I worked for eight years with that company. After those years I left the company. I decided to try start my own business. This is the success that I have had and that is helping me to be better. I started a landscaping business here.

Things have gone well with my business and with my family. Now, I am studying English so that I can communicate better with my clients. The clients are very good people and they help me when I am having a problem understanding. I want to understand everything that they are telling me so that I can give them

a quality job. The things that I do help me to get more experience about what I do every day in landscaping. I have been able to have an Anglo girl that helps with the office kinds of things that I need to get done. She can do scheduling and finalizing the jobs that I have. She doesn't speak Spanish and I don't have as much ability to be exact when I am with customers. She can also get me the maps that make it easy to get to the work. This is good because we are both helping each other and learning to speak in English and Spanish. I am also helping her to make a living with the work that I get and the money that I am making.

I live with my wife and my three children. I just had a baby a few months ago. My sons were born in the U.S. Two of them are now studying English so that in the future they will be able to succeed in life without problems.

So that is the story of the success that I have been able to accomplish. I have been learning English going to classes at night. I am using the English in my business. I have really been lucky because even if I started with just a carpenter helper job in Mexico I now have my own business. That way I am helping this country also. This is where I now call home.

You, Me and The Texas Adult Education Administrator Credential

by Chris Palacios

Del Mar College, Department of GED Instruction, Corpus Christi

Having been the first administrator to successfully complete the Texas Adult Education Administrator credential pilot in mid-January 2008, I have had a little over five months to reflect on its value. Did it meet my expectations? Were there any surprises? Does this credential have any value for other administrators? What might be the impact of having completed the credential on program management and program improvement? Is it good enough to add greater value to our daily efforts to manage the myriad of changes, challenges and the occasional crises we face?

Did it meet my expectations? Yes! It helped me increase the depth and breadth of my understanding of what every AE administrator should know and be able to do. It also helped validate what I have had to learn heuristically over the past eleven years.

Were there any surprises? Yes! I discovered and came to understand more completely my areas of weakness, but I also learned what I needed to do to

improve each.

Does the credential have any value for other administrators? Oh, yes, especially for administrators with less than two years of experience as it will help shorten their learning curve. Seasoned administrators may have a similar experience as my own.

What might be its impact on program management and program improvement? The credential helps the administrator with program assessment because it helps identify weaknesses. It aids with program management because it provides a comprehensive picture of program components that must be managed.

Finally, is the credential good enough to add greater value to an administrator's daily efforts? You bet! In fact, the pilot revealed that only one additional area of knowledge needed to be added to the core content areas: National Reporting System (NRS).

How terrific is that? **VERY!!!**



1st Cohort to complete The Texas Adult Education Administrators' Credential

(pictured from left to right)

Stacey Weaver, Brenda Dunlap, Debbie Janysek,
Beth Rolingson, Chris Palacios
not pictured - Tiffany Johnson

JOIN NEW TEAMS USERS LISTSERV

Texas LEARNS invites you to join a new TEAMS Users Listserv. The target audience of this new email discussion list includes program directors, coordinators, and data entry staff who work in TEAMS (the Texas Educating Adult Management System), as well as an Advisory Technical Group for TEAMS that helps Texas LEARNS to plan and prioritize enhancements to TEAMS. The objective of the TEAMS Users Listserv will be to talk about system use, enhancements, glitches, changes to TEAMS, and training opportunities, and for Texas LEARNS to disseminate information normally posted in the TEAMS memo to people who otherwise might not see it. To subscribe, please send an email to TCALL's Listserv Manager Lea Ann Schroeder (lschroeder@tamu.edu) and ask for a subscription to the TEAMS Users Listserv

Texas Tech Tutor Perspective

by Rebecca Neitzel
ESL Initiative, Texas Tech University

I have always wanted to do something worthwhile in my life; something that mattered. This idea has floated around in my consciousness for years and until just this semester was, I thought, doomed to stay there. Yet, this semester I was blindsided by this opportunity which, I will admit, at first, I was unhappy about. On the first day of class I was hit with the realization that I was going to be doing a lot of work. I was going to have to tutor.

I have never tutored anyone on anything in my life. I have never had another person rely on me for help in anything. I had just changed my minor from education because of the fact I was terrified to have to teach something and that I would teach it wrong and ruin someone's life somehow. Tutoring, therefore, was unnerving. And tutoring adults! This was downright frightening. I wanted to drop the class, but I had nowhere to go and I needed the credits.

No amount of preparation could have prepared me for what I encountered in my first few days of tutoring. There were ups and downs. There were times when I thought that I would rather die than miss a session and there were times when I would rather die than go. The one thing that kept me going was my student.

I had a very unique experience in that I was able to be a one-on-one tutor to only one student for the whole semester. My student was all mine and I was all his. I could not afford to miss because he completely relied on me, and I was useless to the rest of the students at our site if he missed. We had our own style and they had theirs.

My student was also unique in what he wanted from our sessions. He had left school in the 3rd grade in Mexico and never learned how to write. He can read Spanish and speak both it and English very well. He could not, however, write even his name without struggling. He could not form the letters without complete concentration let alone spell them correctly. He said that the only thing he wanted from me was to help him write. He didn't care what he wrote; he just wanted to do it.

This was an extremely difficult situation for me. I was so afraid that I would make it too hard or too simple for him. I wanted to help him the best way I could and I was having to just make it all up as we went along.

Sometimes he would get frustrated at his mistakes and those were the days I had to give him the most praise and slow down or even stop the lesson completely so that we could just talk and get him to a relaxed state so that we could keep going. I knew that if he got too down on himself, I could lose him. What we did and what we achieved could not have been done without working on some very difficult aspects of the English language and I am still amazed at how a man who, at the age of seven, stopped going to school so he could go work in the fields of West Texas and help his family survive, could go from struggling to write his own name to writing full sentences with ease.

I had always thought that it would be later on in my life when I would be able to make a difference; sometime long after college. This class, however, gave me the opportunity to do something today. I was forced to jump right in and do something that scared me and made me uncomfortable and in the end, I have been filled with the most amazing feelings of accomplishment and pride. When I was putting my workbook together for this project, I would look back and see what my student had done with whichever activity it was that I was creating and would sometimes just stare at the progress he had made. I still cannot believe sometimes that I was a part of that. This thing that I was reluctant about just a few months ago has now become something very important to me. My student is important to me. He has helped me just as much if not more that I have helped him. He has helped me realize that being a contributing part of my community does not have to be put off until after college. Helping does not have to wait. It can be done in just two days a week for a little over an hour at a time.

Now, I don't know if my workbook will be helpful to other students or tutors in the future, but it will be a lasting reminder that, at one time, one student and one tutor came together to become better at something, and we did just that.

About the Author

Rebecca Neitzel is a Texas Tech University Junior majoring in linguistics. She is one of the students in the Texas Tech ESL Initiative, a joint project in which Texas Tech students get course credit for tutoring students through Literacy Lubbock.

Caution Adult Learners: Futures Under Construction!

by Dr. Robert G. Tatman

Crosby ISD

Working with adults trying to get their GED reminds me of Wyatt Earp's quip about gunfights. The successful lawman noted that in a gunfight you should, "Take your time, but hurry!" GED students are often in dire straights also. Though not life and death situations, their plight is between futures of hope or despair. Students aren't always ready or able to learn, and sometimes both. A teaching colleague recently shared that one of her students exclaimed, "Why Miss, you're trying to teach us things we don't know!" Exactly. A young learner's simple observation holds profundity for all adult education teachers. Ours is the challenge to teach our students many things that they don't know as we fill in canyon-like learning gaps. To bridge such chasms we must get students ready and willing to learn utilizing all the creativity we can muster. Strategies are presented that provide a sampling of different pedagogical approaches I attempt in my quest to reach all students.

- 1) Make a variety of efforts to introduce students to themselves. Students need to become acquainted with their abilities, limitations, dreams, and the assets and liabilities associated with their personalities and learning styles. Students write in every class on personally reflective topics such as goals, persons of influence, major life moments and decisions.
- 2) Be vigilant to maintain assessments throughout the semester in order to know when re-teaching and re-evaluating will be necessary. Mastery learning must drive instruction in order to promote students' test-taking success.
- 3) Be a detective when getting to know your students. Leonard Pellicer wrote that true leaders aren't the ones out ahead of everyone else in the pack. "Rather, the best leaders are precisely in the middle of the beliefs, dreams, and values of those whom they lead."
- 4) Affirm students genuinely and regularly. Since everyone does something good at some point in time, make the effort to publicly notice students. According to Ann Landers, all people wear signs that say, "Look at me!" In the words of the best fortune cookie fortune I ever received: "Spend the rest of your life lifting people up!"
- 5) Ensure that students know that you love them for who they are as people, not for what they do, accomplish, or produce. Encourage them with what they can become. The Pennsylvania School Board Journal from the 1800's noted that poorest

man is not one without a cent, but the one without a dream.

- 6) Expose students to as many different learning environments as possible. Since I hold classes in a local high school, I have my students work in computer labs to incorporate on-line GED practice testing, and use the library for resources.
- 7) Stress to students that a major component of their success on the GED test will be the work they do outside of class. I give students homework they must complete before the following class, and are instructed to bring questions they have to class. This method saves more time for in-class instruction and contributes to students taking test preparation seriously.
- 8) Promote peer teaching during the class. Benefits to this arrangement abound. Students reinforce their own learning, build confidence in their own abilities, and feel good about helping others.
- 9) Facilitate students bring organization to their lives. Students need support and guidance in setting goals, designing schedules which allow them to study, and making the necessary preparations for post-GED education. Students living out balancing acts because of jobs, families, and other commitments appreciate your efforts to improve their lives.
- 10) Emphasize relationships with and among the students. Teach students that it is okay to depend on each other. Leonardo De Vinci said that an arch is simply two weaknesses that come together to form a strength – a perfect picture of a classroom built on co-dependency and collaboration.

In addition to these strategies, I have students read excerpts from Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay *Self-Reliance* and then have them script reflective thoughts about conforming to the crowd or following the voice of their own conscience. We watch segments of a documentary about Robert F. Kennedy and ask what makes a great leader. A discussion ensues wherein students capture those traits which make the man or woman a great leader. Students then discuss the convictions that leaders espouse. For example, RFK found it immoral to not challenge injustice. To help the adult learner be successful, I also have them do plenty of board work and take every opportunity to have students read their writings aloud. The whole class – and the teacher – benefit from a class context where the students are the key actors and the

teacher is simply the director/facilitator.

I view students as always being able to become better than they are. I teach that adult students owe it to themselves and their families to improve in all areas of life. I teach that they might grow, develop, and mature. I reinforce that truth spoken by Harry Emerson Fosdick that no person need stay the way he or she is! I also adhere religiously to Thomas Friedman's inequality that a student's curiosity quotient (CQ) added to their passion quotient (PQ) is always greater than their intelligence quotient. With purposeful direction, I draw out student's innate curiosity knowing that for the most part that few if any have been asked their advice, opinions, or viewpoints!

In the spirit of NCLB, join with me in swearing allegiance to not leaving any adult learners behind. The success of my dreams must rest on the fulfillment of the dreams of those I teach. I believe in students. I believe that they can and do make me better. I count student input as significant enough for me to grow, think better, and more importantly, be better.

Since every educator for adult learners owes something to the up-building of adult education, think about the contribution you could make. Meditate on what was spoken by a supporter of Martin Luther King who said that one of his greatest gifts was giving people the feeling that they could be bigger and stronger and more courageous and more loving than they thought they could be. Sounds like a great job description for all those who call their professional home the adult education classroom. Love your students since, also according to MLK, you must first love those whom you wish to change. Not everyone can be a good teacher, and hardly anyone can be a great teacher – so get to work!

Successful adult education instructors, in each class, must live out personal traits that include flexibility, humor, teachability, story-telling skill, patience, self-control, and endurance. These effective teachers must also be proficient in all the subject areas, and have a keen sense and ability to always make time for individual attention without neglecting group plans and goals. My desire is that you teach so well that, just like the student singing *To Sir With Love* to her teacher, you also will be called 'best friend' by those who call you teacher. So, be the best so your students can be the best. Love your students for who they are as people. In the words of Andy Taylor to his son from an episode of *The Andy Griffith Show*, when Opie had run away from home for changing some F's to A's on his report card, "Opie, I don't love you because of what you do, I love you because you're my son!"

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About the Author

Dr. Robert G. Tatman is the district personnel administrator for Crosby ISD. He graduated from Purdue University with a B.S. in Math, a Master in Theology from Dallas Seminary, a M.Ed. from Stephen F. Austin State University, and a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Sam Houston State University. He taught secondary-level math for 16 years, and has been an administrator for 12 years with experience in community college education, transportation, special education, career and technology, federal programs, NCLB, and personnel. He has been married for 26 years and has four children.

From Home School to College..., cont'd from page 3

The big day came, and I attended GED Test Orientation and took my first test which was math. I was very nervous during the test, but afterwards I felt confident that I had done well. I took the four remaining tests the following day. I was really drained after almost seven hours of testing, but the next day I felt much better and eagerly awaited my scores.

Two weeks later I received a phone call from my GED teacher, Mrs. Angel, and she said "Congratulations Ashton, you have your GED!" What a relief it was to realize I was now finished with high school and ready to start a new chapter of my life by going to college. I enrolled for the spring semester.

I'm loving college; it's everything I thought it would be. I can hardly believe that in only three months time I had gone from home school to college. I would encourage everybody who doesn't have a diploma to give GED classes a try. You might surprise yourself too.

About the Author

Ashton Anderson is an 18-year old student at Texarkana College. He attended GED class at the Academic Learning Center (ALC) in Texarkana. The ALC is a site within the Bowie-Cass Adult Education Cooperative.

Life-Saving Lessons: AVANCE's Bilingual Parent-Child Education Program Teaches More Than Basic Education

by Ricardo Brambila

AVANCE - Rio Grande Valley, McAllen

Throughout the nine months of the Parent-Child Education course, instructors measure students' achievements from enhanced parenting skills to greater English language proficiency. We even track graduating students to find out whether they go on to get their GED, Associate's Degree or technical certificate that will help them build a better life for themselves and their families. Often the challenge lies in attempting to quantify the intangible impact this type of instruction provides.

At one of our recent Parent-Child graduation ceremonies, one of my students approached me and said, "I owe AVANCE my life and the lives of my children."

I admit to being caught off guard. "Well, thank you," I answered, "But it is because of your great effort that you are succeeding."

This AVANCE 'mom' replied, "You do not understand, I literally owe my life to AVANCE."

"What exactly do you mean?" I asked. "I was invited to come to this class by a good friend of mine," she explained, "At that time, I was terribly troubled and going through a deep depression. I was taking this out on my children—blaming them for all my troubles. Still, my friend would not give up on me and she kept inviting me to attend."

"Two days before I came to my first AVANCE class, I was planning to take my life," she continued, "Or abandon my three children. I remember the subject of the lesson that first day was Do Parents Make a Difference?"

"I was changed by that class," confessed the woman. "I felt like a blindfold had been taken from my eyes. It was then that I realized three things 1) I need to prepare my children for life. It is my duty and no one else's responsibility, 2) My children do not have to go through what I have been through. I can make a difference in my life and in theirs just focusing all my energy on what I love most: my children, and 3) I was a miserable mother and I was making my children miserable. I was a neglected child who became a

neglectful mother—but the class helped me to realize I had the power to change everything, and I did."

I was speechless as I listened to her amazing story. As her instructor, how did I fail to notice all of these things? How is it that one of my students arrived hopeless and desperate, and was now departing optimistic and determined to do everything differently?

"I can assure you," she stated, "I am not who I was. I used to reject my children's hugs and kisses; now I see so many missed opportunities to show them love! Today I want to hold them and kiss them to make up for those times."

"I am also trying to get my GED," she added. "I want to make my children proud. I am working part-time while my youngest daughter goes to school, and now I have dreams and aspirations for the future, and you've given me the tools."

In the end, I am reminded this is why I teach. Although my purpose is administering AVANCE's Parent-Child Education Program, fostering healthy families, promoting basic education, and providing ESL and literacy support to families; it is important not to lose sight of the 'big picture'. This humbling experience has taught me it is a privilege and a responsibility to be a part of our students' lives—and my true purpose is to honor this in every classroom.

About the Author

Ricardo Brambila has been employed with AVANCE-Rio Grande Valley for two years. He has a B.A. in Business Administration from Universidad Valle del Bravo, and a B.A.S. in Theology from Howard Payne University.

AVANCE, Inc.'s core program is the nationally-recognized, bilingual model for Parent-Child Education. While the curriculum focuses on providing parents with instruction concerning the social, cognitive, emotional and physical developmental needs of young children age 0-3, program participants benefit from increased exposure to written and conversational English, and many gain the self-confidence necessary to return to a classroom—any classroom.

Learning About Writing from Both Sides of the Desk

by Kenneth Appelt
TCALL Professional Development Specialist

“Success Stories” can inspire readers to strive for their personal goals, and it is certainly a moment of triumph for the writer who sees his or her writing “in print” for the first time. Each summer the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning (TCALL) publishes the “Success Stories” issue of our quarterly publication, and each year the number of submitted stories rises. In fact, we received so many great stories in recent years that we decided to begin posting a new success story on our Website each month. (*Click the “Success Stories” link in the “What’s New” area of the TCALL Website homepage for the story archive.*) The demand for copies of the issue has also increased because more and more teachers find the inspiring stories useful and encouraging to students in their classrooms.

In this article, I want to share a personal narrative of my experiences working with “remedial writers” in the Writing Center at the University of Iowa during the early 1980s under the direction of Lou Kelly. However, before I became a tutor of other students, I sat on the “other side of the desk” – *as a student*.

On reflection, I can say that throughout high school and my undergraduate degree program (late 60s to early 70s), I never had a teacher who actually *taught* me writing. Sure papers were assigned and sometimes we had to turn in an outline *before* we wrote the paper, but most of our class time focused on “how great” the GREAT writers in literary history were. We did plenty of vocabulary study to prepare for the SAT, but “writing” instruction was mainly about grammar and punctuation and what one should NOT do. Writing appeared to be a field of land mines, and my teachers nearly convinced me that I could never become a writer. It was not my gift.

I returned to graduate school almost six years after completing my undergraduate degree. The jobs I held during those six years did not require much writing. When I started graduate school, the meager writing skills I did have were uncomfortably rusty. I had certainly not been writing the kinds of analytical and critical papers required in my graduate courses. In this

new environment, I was experiencing major culture shock; I was a “remedial” writer.

Feeling embarrassed, desperate, and unprepared, I went to the University of Iowa Writing Lab to sign up for tutoring sessions. While signing up, I was calmly assured that the tutors have helped many graduate students with their academic writing. Although I was not aware of it at the time, the Iowa Writing Center began in 1934 and is the first university writing center established in the United States.

While the politically correct term is now “Writing Center,” the first writing tutor at Iowa, Miss Carrie Ellen Stanley, intentionally chose the term *Laboratory* because it was the place where students *labored* to become better writers. From the beginning, the “Lab” was not a “fix-it-up” shop. The goal was always to help struggling writers develop strategies for researching, organizing, drafting, editing, and revising.

My first day as a student in the Writing Lab began with introductions and a conversation with my assigned writing tutor. She asked about the difficulties I was having and what things I felt needed improvement. After a short time, she excused herself to work with another student and asked me to continue our conversation by “talking on paper” about myself as a writer. She asked that I use my everyday conversational voice without worrying about “correctness” and encouraged me to tell her as much as I possibly could.

My tutor began the second session by acknowledging my “talking on paper” and said she enjoyed hearing my “voice” in the writing. We talked briefly about goals. Then she gave me another “invitation” to write. The Iowa Writing Lab “invitations” began with Lou Kelly, director of the center from 1965 to 1989, and are designed to prompt freewriting by stimulating memory and reflection leading students to “talk on paper,” connecting experiences, ideas, and feelings.

Kelly’s “invitations” begin with *autobiographical* subjects: the writer’s reading and writing habits, home,
continued on page 22

Learning About Writing..., continued from page 21 special talents, or dreams. *Creative* “invitations” prompt wordplay and experimentations with form and style. The progression of assignments leads toward more *academic* topics as students are invited to form opinions and support them with evidence and reasoning. (Many of these invitations are available on the University of Iowa Writing Center Website at <http://www.uiowa.edu/~writingc/>)

My experience as a student in the Iowa Writing Lab was a blessing. My rusty skills were polished up and my confidence built as I learned to *experiment* with my writing until it said what I wanted it to say. I was able to move from “talking on paper” about my personal experiences to “thinking on paper” about new ideas and information. I looked forward to my writing time; it was a place to *discover* rather than a place to produce a product for a grade.

Two semesters later I took Lou Kelly’s graduate level course, Teaching in a Writing Lab. The following semester I served as tutor to other “remedial” students as they also *labored* to improve their writing ability. It was fascinating and enriching to reflect on the experiences of my students and my own experiences from “*both sides of the desk.*” For my own development as teacher of writing, the insights gained have lasted a lifetime.

Resource

The University of Iowa Writing Center – The oldest writing center in the U.S.! “Tutors are oriented not to “fix” individual papers but rather to assist writers in improving their strategies for researching, organizing, drafting, editing, and revising.” Resources area of this Website has links to great resources, ESL instruction tips, and other writing Websites. <http://www.uiowa.edu/~writingc/>



Literacy Texas, formerly Texas Association of Adult Literacy Councils (TAALC), has a NEW NAME and a NEW LOOK – but its 2008 conference has not changed! It will still be the same great two days of outstanding workshops, excellent networking opportunities, and first-rate vendors. Watch your mail in the coming weeks for the conference brochure.

Literacy Texas 7th Annual Conference

August 4 & 5, 2008

Austin Marriott South Hotel

Conference Co-Chairs:

Gloria Moritz and Jim Ratliff

*For hotel and registration information,
visit the Literacy Texas Website*

www.literacytexas.org

Literacy Texas connects and equips nonprofit literacy programs that serve adults in Texas.

Asking Everyday Life Questions as a Successful Adult ESL Classroom Activity

by Dr. Clarena Larrotta
Texas State University - San Marcos

This paper draws on data collected through a qualitative study designed as a curricular intervention implementing negotiation practices in an adult ESL (English as a second language) literacy classroom (Larrotta, 2005). Implementing inquiry cycles (Short, Harste, & Burke, 1996) was one of the main activities in this curricular intervention. The goal was to invite the students to participate in the decision making process of what they wanted to learn and study in their English class. As a result, they formulated and investigated questions relevant to them as adult learners and transferred their classroom learning to their daily lives. More than a literacy exercise this activity highlighted students' higher order thinking skills.

Setting and participants: The study was conducted in a free of cost Adult Literacy Program in Central Texas. Class met twice a week for two hours over 16 weeks. Seventeen Hispanic adults were registered in this intermediate ESL literacy class. They were between the ages of 21 and 43 and had lived in the U.S. from three to seven years.

The inquiry cycle: The students formulated questions related to their daily life experiences outside the classroom. A good question had to fulfill three requirements: 1) be connected to the student's life, 2) be interesting enough for the student to be willing to invest time researching the answer(s) and 3) allow for English language learning to happen.

The process: In order to implement the inquiry cycle activity we followed five steps: formulating the question, identifying sources of information, doing a preliminary report of progress, performing an oral presentation with a poster, and coming up with the next inquiry question to start a new cycle.

The implementation: The process of implementing inquiry cycles revealed the students' higher order thinking skills capability. By asking everyday life questions the students' motivation and investment in learning English increased. The following paragraphs describe the type of questions they asked. All names are pseudonyms.

What is cancer? Federico's sister was diagnosed with cancer. Through investigating this question, he learned about the symptoms, treatment, and how to help his sister cope with this illness. He learned specialized vocabulary and delivered a concise and clear poster presentation for his classmates to also learn about cancer.

How can I provide good nutrition for my children? Carlos was worried about his children not eating well. He investigated balanced nutrition, created a set of menus for home, and made a list of healthy snacks for his children to take to school. Carlos prepared a handout for his classmates to also follow a balanced nutrition system.

Why is there racism in America? Arturo was starting to feel discrimination at work. At the beginning of the term he did not like reading; "it was boring." However, through investigating the topic of racism, he came across with Martin Luther King Jr. and became fascinated with his life story and the civil rights movement. Arturo read a lot for his project and told us in class that: "Reading can be interesting; before, I was just not making the right choices for what to read."

What is the origin of terrorism between the U.S. and Iraq? Flora was a cook at a hotel restaurant. This question did not seem to be related to her daily life. However, she explained that her coworkers were frequently talking about this topic and she felt left out of the conversation. She collected articles about September 11th to gain a better understanding of the event. Flora was the quietest student in the group and this activity helped her to start participating more often in class.

The success behind inquiry cycles: Implementing the inquiry cycle activity encouraged the students to use English for communication purposes outside the classroom. They gained new understandings of their world. The questions posed by the students in our class depict them as sophisticated literacy users with personal curiosities and real life problems to solve. Literacy development emerged as a necessity and

continued on page 24

Asking Everyday Life...continued from page 23

served to improve the students' life conditions. The implementation of the inquiry cycle activity provided the students with the opportunity to:

- Integrate and practice speaking, listening, reading, writing, and culture while doing one assignment
- Expand their English vocabulary by learning to use, spell, and pronounce new words related to their inquiry topic
- Make decisions selecting relevant information for answering their questions
- Become independent learners and become experts in at least one topic
- Develop new academic habits by consulting and using different types of literacy such as the Internet, newspapers, specialized books, popular magazines, and verbal exchanges with experts

As an experienced adult ESL literacy educator, I believe that a

successful instructional activity allows the students to transfer what they learn in the lessons to their life outside the classroom. A successful instructional activity serves as a bridge to connect these two worlds and motivates students to invest in their learning.

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About the Author

Clarena Larrotta is Assistant Professor at Texas State University-San Marcos in the Adult, Professional, and Community Education Ph.D. Program.

Workforce Literacy Summit in San Antonio a Success by Barbara Tondre-El Zorkani Texas LEARNS

This first annual summit focused on addressing the training and employment needs of Texas' rapidly growing limited English workforce was hosted by the Alamo Community College District April 21-23 in San Antonio. Host partners included Texas LEARNS, Alamo Work Source, and the City of San Antonio.

Dr. Federico Zaragoza, Vice Chancellor for Professional, Technical, and Workforce Education, challenged participants to take a hard look at work-based literacy models for a 21st century economy. Joanie Rethlake, State Director of Texas LEARNS, and Chakib Chehadi, Executive Director of Alamo Work Source, welcomed participants and restated the challenges set for the summit gathering. The summit attracted individuals representing workforce development networks, adult basic education programs, community-based organizations, GREAT Centers, literacy coalitions, SER Jobs for Progress National, Texas community colleges, and Texas employers.

Keynote speakers included Dr. Heide Spruck Wrigley, President of LiteracyWork International, a small social science research firm focused on language and literacy issues for hard-to-serve youth and adults. She is the author of *The Language of Opportunity: Expanding Education and Employment Prospects for Adults with Limited English Skills*.

Dr. Alec Levenson, a research scientist at the Center for Effective Organizations at the University of Southern California, focused his remarks on paths to improving workplace-centered basic skills programs, including improving design and employer funding.

Dr. C. Adolfo Bermeo is a senior scholar with the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education and works closely with the Council for Opportunity in Education (COE). Dr Bermeo works with state, national, and international organizations committed to increasing access to higher education for historically underrepresented, first generation, low income, and immigrant students. Highlights of his presentation entitled, *Creating a Culture of Excellence*, will be made available via TCALL, as will those of other presenters.

Summit participants spent an afternoon learning first hand about six "Models in Action" featuring a variety of responses to the workforce literacy needs of English language learners. Presentations included the following:

- *Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST)* initiative from Washington State, which pairs English as a Second Language instruction with workforce training and career pathway opportunities (<http://www.northseattle.edu/services/ibest>);
- *Making Connections*: a systems collaboration between El Paso Community College and El Paso ISD's Adult Education program focused on helping adult learners make successful transitions into post-secondary education and training;
- *Adult Technology Training for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency* (grants from the Texas Workforce Commission to the Alamo Community College District, the San Jacinto Community College District, Harris County Department of Adult Education, and Work-Source/Greater Austin Area Workforce for innovative

continued on page 34

Three Concepts for My Success Teaching ESL

by Tomas Rodriguez

Fuente Learning Center, Austin

In this essay I will discuss three truisms that have made teaching English to adult immigrants successful for me. The truisms are that 1) Knowledge is Socially Distributed, 2) Behavioral Objectives (B.F. Skinner) are powerful tools to teach ESL, and 3) The Development of Student Self-Concept leads to language and personal growth.

Knowledge is socially distributed. I was a graduate student at the University of Houston when I first was introduced to this idea. I borrow it from an excellent mentor and friend, Dr. Silvia Pena. It seems so obvious yet so easy to over look. As the occasion permits I present this idea to my students. We have examined how learning a language cannot be done in a vacuum. When we were children we learned to communicate from our adult models. We trained our hearing to know the meaning of certain sounds in the setting used. We repeated and were rewarded for correctly using the language.

I ask my students to keep a diary of the interactions that they have with others so that they can quantify the social network where they are using their first AND English languages. They are able to comprehend the value of increasing interactions with English speakers to enlarge their sphere of social contact and use of English. Here's a quick example of its application in my class. Each student must teach the class [and me] how to do the work they do. It is done in English by the student and the rest of the class must come up with questions about the work. We're learning about tee-shirt printing, landscaping, landfills etc. and using English. A second example is from request for help with letters – scams- that students receive. I turn this into a whole class “teachable moment.” Other students share scams that they have had to deal with and the knowledge of how to deal with these goes on and on.

Use Behavioral Objectives. In the early 70's I had to good fortune of meeting B. F. Skinner. His logical, observable and quantifiable approach has been a tool I use in many ways. My students enter the class and “Drop Everything And Read.” It's become automatic, observable and useful to the students. They also know that the objectives written on the board will need

to be demonstrated before they leave. I call it the **ticket out first** tool.

For example, if we are conjugating a verb in the present progressive, the student must say the verb in that tense and use it in a sentence to leave before the others. They know they'll have to teach the class a skill we are learning. So they know what is expected, when and how to show it. I suggest that they use written objectives for their own weekly, monthly, annual and ten-year goal setting. I let them know that it is the map they will use to avoid continuously circling the metropolitan traffic loops.

Building student self-concept. We all feel good when others commend us. That's true of our students too. In my class we have a rule that **I CAN'T or No Puedo...**is not allowed. I often hear a new student being told by the class that, “you can't say – NO PUEDO” in this class. We'll help you. A fantastic example of this is a recent project with student teachers from the University of Texas and Fuente. I explained the idea to the student teachers and they ran with it. The student teachers helped the students in groups of two or three. They were able to expand the writing and presentations of my students' work presentations and songs. We compared negative baggage across cultures recently. My Mexican student was explaining to Guatemalan and Ethiopian students how women are looked down upon. Seems it was the same for the others and for most persons that are lower on the economic and educational ladder. Our discussions lead to ways to counter this. The students tallied the number of times they personally said negative things about themselves for one week. It hit home. We don't allow negative talk in class and many are using my example of not using the words, **I Should.** You either do or don't do something. That includes using English in formal and informal settings.

When our classes first start meeting I begin with a demonstration of body language. I walk in hunched and head downcast. Then I walk with the shoulders and head up-right and make eye contact. The students are able to tell me which of the two demonstrates confidence and a positive image.

continued on page 26

Three Concepts...continued from page 25

Conclusion. I've been fortunate to have retired from years of doing educational research and public middle school teaching. I believe that I have acquired a vast storehouse of knowledge because of the social interaction. Knowledge is socially distributed. The use of behavioral objectives in educational and personal realms has given me much comfort. I made a map and adjusted as needed. It leads me to yet more interesting adventures. I feel that I am worth doing good things for myself and others. A positive mental image

is a vehicle for learning, sharing our knowledge and appreciating this good earth.

About the Author

Tomas Rodriguez is currently an ESL teacher with Fuente Learning Center in Austin. He is a graduate of the University of Houston with a M.Ed. and Administration Certification. His early educational work was in research of Follow Through Programs and Bilingual Education programs in Los Angeles and Philadelphia. He was a Ford Fellow with the Department of Education in Washington D.C. Tomas taught science for ESL Middle Schools in Austin ISD prior to retirement. He has been an ESL teacher trainer/ESL adult ESL professor for the past four years with Fuente School.

Let's Do Lunch!

by Sue Barker

Northeast Texas Community College, Mt. Pleasant

Once a month, in Mt. Pleasant, Texas, approximately six to eight key Mt. Pleasant Independent School District (MPISD) Even Start personnel and Northeast Texas Community College (NTCC) Adult Education Department personnel have lunch together. Reservations are made (even in Mt. Pleasant) and email reminders with agendas are sent by the MPISD Even Start Director. Agendas are sent to participating personnel before the meeting for review and to allow anyone to add to the agenda items for discussion. Getting together for lunch has been found to be the best and most productive place for the meeting of the minds to stay abreast of recent program activities, evaluation and future program planning. Staff arrive with their appetites, calendars and any other pertinent information in hand.

To document for program evaluation, an agenda is passed for attendees to initial, proving their attendance. After lunch orders are placed, the Even Start Program Director begins the meeting.

Typical agenda items include the following:

1. Participants for Even Start: number of families, active, dropped, new parents that participated in New Student Orientation; verifying and cross referencing names for accuracy in TESPIRS and in TEAMS and waiting lists.
2. Curriculum: the need for lesson plans in case of teacher absences; parenting; Adult Education alignment with the new Texas Content Standards and Benchmarks; summer curriculum; results of input from student survey regarding curriculum and Project-Based Learning activities.
3. Calendar: the school district calendar vs. the

community college calendar; 12-hour New Student Orientation; conferences/workshops; staff development; Thinkfinity Literacy Network; night class and day class schedules; computer lab schedule; GED graduation; Even Start/Adult Education Recognition events; TETN grant trainings; summer school hours; progress assessments and last day of class.

4. Questions and Concerns: available grant applications; sharing of local program, district and area statistics; need surveys; staffing for next year; letters of collaboration; book fair and visit by external evaluators.

Formal minutes are not kept. However, notes are made on calendars and penciled in on agendas. Meetings are kept casual and all participants look forward to being together and discussing their common bond, the education of those in need.

The most recent collaborative activity shared between the two partners has been two Even Start Parent Needs Assessment Surveys; one for *Summer School Opportunities* and one for *Experiences This Past Year (2007-2008)*. Results were provided directly to the adult education department.

The top classes chosen for summer school in preference order were:

1. A+ Computer Program
2. Basic Computer Skills (Keyboarding and Word Documents)
3. Grammar and Vocabulary
4. Math
5. Creating a Book for Your Child

The number one favorite experience for the parents was English/how to speak better English/vocabulary. Goals set by parents for summer 2008 include:

1. Take my child/children to the park
2. Read to my child/children every day
3. Attend day classes
4. Read daily

These goals were created to encourage parents to plan ahead in regard to their education and their parent involvement, and also to plan ahead for their children's education, because, historically, participation numbers have been down in summer months.

Before leaving the restaurant, next month's meeting date is set. Staff members pay for their own lunches. This lunch time meeting is an example of the MPISD Even Start and NTCC Adult Education Department's successful collaboration. The idea is to keep all of the players informed; no surprises! The programs never fail to have a number of activities and action items to discuss each month. Each partner supports and respects the other's program. The partners participate in

each other's events. Both are providers of educational services and are stakeholders.

The lunch meetings have worked well for these two educational partners. Everyone must eat lunch. Other programs might try it. And, don't worry if your agenda has a catsup stain, just read around it and see what's next!

About the Author

After teaching first grade for 13 years, Sue Barker began work for Northeast Texas Community College (NTCC). In 1987, through NTCC and a Title 6 grant, she established The Franklin County Library Literacy Program in her hometown of Mt. Vernon, Texas. Today, Sue serves as Director of Adult Education at NTCC. Recently, she has worked with the East Region Project GREAT Center providing Literacy and Reading training for teachers. Sue and her husband, Ronny, live in Mt. Vernon, Texas. They have a daughter, Dr. Karen McClard of Dallas, and a son, Cole, of Georgetown, Colorado. Their grandson Hayden, age 3, is Sue's current Family Literacy participant, reading together, side by side with Grandmother, better known as Gige.

Fashion, Food and Fun - All in a Day's Work *by Kathleen Simmons* *Literacy Council of Tyler*

As a teacher, I'm always looking for ways to energize and excite my students about learning English. Of course, this is true for any teacher of any age student, child or adult and for any subject. I think sometimes we forget that children are not the only ones who like to have fun while learning. It's very easy to fall into the hum-drum routine of books, lectures and worksheets. These are all well and good and for the most part they will have the desired effect but motivating students to try new things and encouraging them to think outside the box will not only help them to discover their own creativity but do amazing things for their self-confidence. Two thematic units that I really have fun with and that my students really seem to enjoy are food and fashion.

Clothing is one of those subjects that you can do a lot with anyway, from describing outfits in fashion magazines to creating a department store in your classroom, the list of fun activities goes on and on. I incorporate all of these things in my day to day teaching of the unit but our grand finale is a full-blown, no

holds barred fashion show. My classroom is currently all women but I think with a little tweaking and maybe some cajoling and compromising, men could easily get involved. Students are paired up with someone and the first step is thinking about and writing a description of the outfit they plan to wear for the show and sharing it with their partner. (This is something they have in their closet at home.) The next few days are spent practicing the dialog, organization and rhythm of the show. While one partner is walking the runway, the other is giving a short commentary of their outfit. (I use a karaoke machine) This partnership requires some real coordination and focus from the students.

On the day of the performance, the students are naturally somewhat nervous but very excited. Everything is ready, the overhead lights are dimmed, the runway is lit up (strings of Christmas lights), the music is cued (pre-recorded CD with appropriate fashion show music), a microphone is set up and ready and the

continued on page 28

Fashion, Food and Fun...continued from page 27

audience is in place. (I invite other students, classes and teachers.) Ten minutes later the show is over but what an accomplishment! This event has always been a huge success and a great favorite of my students. Most language learners as a rule are very self-conscious and introverted and this activity really helps them come out of their shell, try something new and get their first taste of public speaking.

Food is also a great thematic unit to teach. I use the same approach and strategy as with fashion, making sure students have successfully managed the vocabulary including nouns, verbs, measuring terms, etc. Once again, so many fun activities can be utilized here – restaurant ordering and role play, grocery store shopping, cookbooks, etc. I like to finish up this unit with a big bang also, letting students participate in their own cooking show and brunch. They will prepare a specified recipe, ala cooking show style using dialogue while working. I have a cooking show video that I bring and show so that they have an idea of what will be required. (The video includes both male and female chefs so the students can see this activity is not gender specific.) I then separate them into small groups and assign each group a recipe. (I choose no cook recipes that can be prepared and eaten without a stove or oven and also simple recipes with just a few ingredients.) Each group prepares a “cooking show” presentation which also includes a poster with the ingredients listed and preparation instructions on it for the class to see. On the day of the brunch, each group presents their cooking show

segment which includes displaying their poster, reading the list of ingredients and preparing the recipe while explaining each of the steps. When each group has finished their presentations, we all sit down to a delicious brunch prepared by the students themselves. I also like for each small group to serve the others what they have prepared and then compliment one another on the different dishes.

This has been a huge success each time we’ve done it with lots of fun and laughter. The activity can be modified to fit different levels, for example allowing beginner students to use note cards or read their scripts, etc. to make it a little less stressful for them. Some of the simple recipes I’ve used include tuna fish/spinach roll-ups, cherry cheesecake tarts, deviled eggs, and all types of salads.

These activities may sound complicated but they are really quite easy to implement and will get your students up and out of their normal routine. They will also bring a real sense of community to your classroom.

About the Author

Kathleen Simmons works for the Literacy Council of Tyler and is the Adult Education Supervisor at the Family Learning Center of Tyler. She currently teaches an ESL beginner class. She’s been in adult education for three and one-half years. She has a B.S. degree from The University of Texas at Tyler. She also has her ESL teaching certification from UT Tyler.

A Volunteer Literacy Program’s Successful Collaboration *by Paul L. Murad* *Literacy Volunteers of America, Montgomery*

Our success story comes from the personal efforts of the students attending our classes. We use as a text book, the *Oxford Picture Dictionary*, which has a basic and intermediate work book for activities to be performed by the students. Our classes commence at 5:30 PM and finish at 7:30 PM, however, normally the lights are turned off around 8:00 PM, because of last minute questions or some personal matters one or more of the students might want to review with the Tutors. Our group has, at the present time, 12 participants of different backgrounds and come from diverse countries, such as Mexico, Honduras, Bolivia, France, and China.

Originally our meetings were held at one of the lo-

cal schools, but due to not being able to give classes there when school holidays came about, we obtained permission from one local interdenominational church to use a classroom in their annex building, we have an access door key, therefore we can teach according to our own schedule. As a matter of fact, we utilize two of the classrooms, because we allow the adults to bring their children, and they get reading classes addressed to their individual age groups.

So where is the success story? It is a multiple situation. First, that along with actual continuous attendance and participation of at least nine of the students, they got employment in different local stores. Two sisters work as cooks in a local restaurant. One

student got employment at one of the McDonald's outlets, another one at Jack-in-the-box. Two of the students opened their own business. Three of the students received their Citizenship, now they are Naturalized Americans; 2 more are ready to take their final review at the end of June 2008. The lady from China eight months ago did not know a single word in English, now she has a fair comprehension, and can maintain basic conversations. One student never attended school in her country, now she can read and speak, and is making great progress in learning to write. She also is in line to obtain Citizenship.

Part of their success comes from the efforts of the Tutors, some representing directly LVA, but also from contributing volunteers from the church. Originally, the one to one student suddenly grew into a group, no progress was achieved there until a basic test was given to figure out a placement level for each student. Alongside, a request was made for assisting Tutors; as they came, advanced students had the opportunity to receive one-to-one attention, and this drastically improved their know how.

In addition, one of the instructors developed a novel method to instruct the classes having the student write the English words as they hear them pronounced, but as they would write them in their native tongue, this being a great success, learning did accelerate.

Further progress is being made by a recurrent appeal to the local congregation to come and assist one or two hours, whenever they can, and the students are

therefore exposed to different persons in their practice of expressing what they learned, practice and repetition makes perfect. In addition, we contacted the High School and received cooperation from students doing Social Studies, they work with the group of children, and thus being exposed themselves to the experiences of teaching.

The result we obtain from our efforts is that the parents become better citizens adhering to our culture, while we learn from theirs. Their children develop a greater perception in making their parents participants of their lives and interests, since they now are mastering the subject in English. Our society gains from these success stories, for these persons don't become a burden to the city or state, on the contrary, they are an integral part of our daily environment.

About the Author

Paul L. Murad (plm0937@yayoo.com) has been a Tutor for more than 50 years, recently named twice *Tutor of the Year* by the Montgomery, Texas Chapter of Literacy Volunteers of America. Paul is also a Trainer of Tutors. Aside from his classes on a one-to-one with small children at the local schools, he teaches a group of adults, and participates in helping promote the knowledge that free help is available for anyone interested in learning to read. Paul is also an accomplished artist, recently having completed a new mural for his local church, he writes and translates books or documents; teaches art and Spanish at the Conroe Recreation Center. He mastered a program of facilitating the pronunciation of English (or any foreign language words) by using a method he calls Spanglish, this being successful in teaching to his past and current students.

Advocacy Outreach Awarded One of Ten National Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy Grants

The Barbara Bush Foundation announced that it has awarded a \$65,000 grant to Advocacy Outreach in Elgin, Texas to fund the continuation of the Advocacy Outreach Family Literacy Program. Advocacy Outreach was one of ten national grant recipients chosen from nearly 400 applications. Since its inception in 1989, the Foundation has awarded \$30 million to more than 700 family literacy programs in 49 different states and the nation's capital.

These ten national awards made annually by The Barbara Bush Foundation are a separate project from the First Lady's Family Literacy Initiative for Texas (FLFLIT), through which the Barbara Bush Texas Fund for Family Literacy awards up to ten one-year grants each year, all within the state of Texas. See information about the ten FLFLIT grantees for 2008-2009 in the TCALL Director's Letter, page 2.

Advocacy Outreach has provided family literacy services in the Elgin area for ten years. The organization was awarded funding in 1998, in the second year of the First Lady's Family Literacy Initiative for Texas. Two (four year) cycles of the federally funded Even Start Family Literacy Program followed and in 2006 Advocacy Outreach was awarded a second grant from the First Lady's Family Literacy Initiative for Texas. Last year, the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy selected Advocacy Outreach as one of only ten programs nation-wide to feature in a book about long-running family literacy programs being published by Mrs. Barbara Bush.

This year's grant recipients were announced at the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy's fourteenth annual fundraiser, A Celebration of Reading, held at the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts in Houston on April 24th. The evening was hosted by George and Barbara Bush.

The nine other national grant recipients are in Massachusetts, Utah, Louisiana, Vermont, South Dakota, Alaska, Indiana, Mississippi, and Illinois.

Welcome to Our Library. . .

"I was impressed with the recent publication dates of the books – Super!"

Judy Morris
ESL Teacher
East Texas Literacy Council



WRITING INSTRUCTION

See more writing resources featured in the Library section of the May 2008 Quarterly

The Adventures of Dr. Alphabet: 104 Unusual Ways to Write Poetry in the Classroom and the Community. Morice, Dave (1995). New York, NY: Teachers and Writers Collaborative. As described in the ERIC Digest, "Poetry in the Adult ESL Classroom" (Peyton and Rigg, 1999), poetry can be used in adult English as a second language classes with all learners, even those with limited literacy and proficiency in English. Learners can read, discuss, and write about poems and how they speak to their life situations. They can also create poems of their own to express their feelings, thoughts, or beliefs. This book offers a compendium of poetry writing methods, providing for each exercise an introduction, project description, list of (inexpensive) materials, suggested topics, and alternative methods. Designed for students of all ages, the book contains numerous student-written poems.

Bringing Literacy to Life: Issues and Options in Adult ESL Literacy. Wrigley, Heide Spruck and Guth, Gloria J. A. (1992). San Diego, CA: Dominic Press. A handbook for ESL teachers and programs. Chapters include a discussion of meaning and practice in adult ESL literacy; a consideration of how computers and video technology can best be used to support effective programs; and sample curricular modules and activities that teachers can use to advance the goals of individuals within their particular programs. Attention is also given to such issues as teaching in multi-level classrooms and providing literacy instruction in a learner's native language.

Dialogue Journal Writing with Nonnative English Speakers: A Handbook for Teachers. Peyton, Joy Kreeft and Reed, Leslee (1990). Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL Inc.) Offers practical advice in an easy-to-use format free of jargon. Covers how to start dialogue journal writing with students, how to maintain the dialogue once begun, and how to deal with typical problems that may arise.

Enriching Our Lives: Poetry Lessons for Adult Literacy Teachers and Tutors. Kazemek, Francis E. and Rigg, Pat (1995). Newark, DE: International Reading Association. This ready-to-use handbook provides nine complete, detailed lessons using poetry that will help teachers and tutors of adult new readers and writers. Each lesson focuses on a different type of poetry and is written in a clear, step-by-step format. Chapters deal with skills such as spelling, punctuation, and grammar; ways to incorporate computers; ways to initiate student publishing; and additional resources for teachers and tutors.

Learning From Our Lives: Using Educational Biographies With Adults. Dominicé, Pierre (2000). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. The author describes educational biographies as a means to empower learners to take control of their learning

and development. From the editorial description: Educational biography helps adult learners "understand what they already know, how and why they learned in the past, and what motivates them to pursue new educational opportunities. Through .. talking in groups and writing their histories, participants can not only reflect on their learning experiences, but enhance their critical thinking, collaborate in their own educational journeys, and build their awareness of such situational influences as family, work, and community."

The Multiple Intelligences of Reading and Writing: Making the Words Come Alive. Armstrong, Thomas (2003). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Armstrong shows how involving the other seven intelligences can help students acquire reading and writing skills. Book combines Howard Gardner's MI theory and recent brain research on reading and writing with a variety of other perspectives on literacy, synthesizing the research to show how to engage students at all levels by infusing the study of words with imagery, logic, oral language, physical activity, emotion, music, social involvement, and nature experiences.

Oral Language and Early Literacy in Preschool: Talking Reading, and Writing. Roskos, Kathleen A. and Tabors, Paton O. and Lenhart, Lisa A. (2004). Newark, DE: International Reading Association. From the International Reading Association's Preschool Literacy Collection, this book is a guide to planning a program and curriculum that is language-rich. Chapters include the following: oral language and early literacy; planning for talking, reading, and writing; creating learning conditions; using instructional strategies; classroom examples; and daily literacy routines for infants and toddlers. Charts and specific examples are given throughout the book.

The Power of Personal Storytelling: Spinning Tales to Connect With Others. Maguire, Jack (1998). New York, NY: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam. Professional storyteller Jack Maguire explains how to "mine your memories to communicate more effectively". Sections include: Why Tell Personal Stories? Reclaiming Your Storyloving Self, Getting Story Ideas, Bringing Your Stories to Life, and Your Storytelling Powers in Action. Storytelling ideas could be useful in language arts instruction to encourage journal writing, or in ESL classes to encourage speaking skills.

Promoting Journal Writing in Adult Education. English, Leona M. and Gillen, Marie A., Editors (Summer 2001). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers. Number 90 in the *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* series. The goal of this volume is to establish journal writing as an integral part of the teaching and learning process, point out how journal writing can blur the boundaries between personal and professional, and suggest ways that adult educators can play a role in using journal writing to enhance reflection in learning. The chapter authors give examples of how journal writing can be, and has been, integrated into educational areas as diverse as health education, higher education, education for women, and English as a Second Language ... and raise practical and ethical issues about the use and place of journal writing.

HOW DOES THIS MAIL ORDER LENDING LIBRARY WORK?

Books and other resources described in the Library section may be requested for a 30-day loan. We will mail each borrower up to five loan items at a time (just two for first-time borrowers), and even include a postage-paid return address sticker for mailing them back to us! Borrowers must be affiliated with a non-profit program providing adult or family literacy services. Annotated bibliographies of our entire library of resources are available in hard copy by request, and the library can also be searched in 'real time' on our website (www.tcall.tamu.edu). Call 800-441-7323 or email tcall@tamu.edu to check out materials described here or to request hard copy listings of even more resources.

Teaching Adolescent Writers. Gallagher, Kelly (2006). Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers. From the requirements of standardized tests to those of the wired workplace, the ability to write well has become a necessity. Gallagher describes how students can be taught to write effectively using a number of classroom-tested strategies that enable teachers to: understand the importance of teaching writing; motivate young writers; see the importance modeling plays in building young writers (modeling from both the teacher and from real-world text); understand how providing choice elevates adolescent writing (and how to allow for choice within a rigorous curriculum); help students recognize the importance of purpose and audience; assess essays in ways that drive better writing performance.

Teaching Adolescents Who Struggle with Reading: Practical Strategies. Moore, David W. and Hinchman, Kathleen A. (2006). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc. The authors emphasize the important preliminary steps to take during the first few days and weeks of class, when teaching adolescents who struggle as readers and writers. Book offers a balanced perspective on literacy learning, focusing on both embedding literacy instruction in regular subject matter instructional units, and special reading classes as well. The authors also discuss classroom management as essential for effective literacy teaching.

Teaching Developmental Writing: Background Readings, Second edition. Bernstein, Susan Naomi (2004). New York, NY: Bedford/St. Martin's. This is a teacher's resource containing 35 articles covering a wide range of topics and perspectives. This book is often used in college-level teacher education courses. The new edition of this comprehensive volume includes revised chapters on technology and the writing process and focuses on topics relevant to non-native speakers of English in the developmental writing course. Classic scholars from the field such as Mina Shaughnessy and June Jordan along with several new voices, offer practical, sound insight for instructors both in and outside the classroom.

Teaching Writing Primer. Thomas, P. L. (2005). New York, NY: Peter Lang. "Until a few decades ago, student writing stood as a distant third in the three R's. Since the late 1970s, however, students have been asked to write more, and teachers have been expected to teach writing more specifically. In spite of this mandate, however, little has been done to prepare teachers for this shift in the curriculum. This primer provides a brief history of the field, as well as an exploration of what we now know about teaching. Teachers entering the field as well as seasoned veterans will find how to foster student writers, and to grow as writers themselves." -- from Editorial Description.

Think, Write, Share: Process Writing for Adult ESL and Basic Education Students. Scane, Joyce; Guy, Anne Marie, and Wenstrom, Lauren (1994). San Diego, CA: Dominic Press, Inc. This book offers insight from research on the writing process. Also includes suggestions for techniques and activities to use in teaching the writing process, including using computers in process writing.

Write for Insight: Empowering Content Area Learning, Grades 6-12. Strong, William (2006). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc. Prompted by what he deems the "near-total

neglect of writing" in content areas outside English, Strong explores the question: "Why does writing matter?" He argues that in a knowledge-based society with high-stakes writing tests for college admission, students need far more than "basic" literacy skills. This book offers strategies for enhancing long-term learning across middle and high school content, with potential applicability to adult secondary/GED instruction. Strong argues for insightful teaching and learning — balancing more emphasis on writing-to-learn (ungraded) assignments with a rich array of process writing (graded) tasks.

Writing Our Lives: Reflections on Dialogue Journal Writing With Adults Learning English. Peyton, Joy Kreeft and Staton, Jana (1996). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents. Representing the latest thinking on developing adult literacy in English as a second language, the authors discuss various approaches to promoting dialogue with students, tutors, and teachers in many types of ESL programs. Contains a comprehensive resource list for further reading about dialogue journal practice and research.

Writing to Make a Difference: Classroom Projects for Community Change. Benson, Chris and Christian, Scott, Editors (2002). New York, NY: Teachers College Press. From the editorial description: "The student projects in this book demonstrate a powerful approach to teaching writing -- one that requires no special equipment or resources and can be adapted for students of any age. The key is getting students involved in action research and in writing about issues that are important to them and their communities. ... Chapters describe projects covering a variety of issues including avoiding teenage health risks, preserving oral histories, fighting racism, investigating environmental hazards, decreasing instances of teen pregnancy, and much more."

Writing Your Life: Developing Skills Through Life Story Writing. Phifer, Nan Merrick (1995). Westerville, OH: Glencoe-McGraw Hill. This adult writing program guides students to write about what they know best -- their own memories, goals, and personal experiences. Features include: student text with writing prompts; topical introductions to help students begin the writing process; editing rules relevant to each topic; grammar, punctuation, and spelling guidance; sentence structure practice and tips; use of peers as proofreaders; and Chapter Checklists to help students integrate revisions into a final draft. In addition to the student text, checkout set includes instructor manual/key in pamphlet form.

FAMILY LITERACY

Bonding With Baby Developmental Books. Developing Hearts Systems, Inc. (2002). Stratford, CT: Developing Hearts Systems, Inc. Four picture books are accompanied by a "Parent's Guide to Book-Sharing for a Happy Baby" booklet in both English and Spanish. Books include no written text other than suggested goals, actions, and tips for parents to talk or sing about the book with a particular age of baby.

Book-Sharing for a Happy Baby: Parent Education Video. Developing Hearts Systems, Inc. (2002). Stratford, CT: Devel-

continued on page 32

oping Hearts Systems, Inc. Video in both English and Spanish is a parent education resource to accompany “Bonding With Baby Developmental Books.”

Families at School: A Handbook for Parents. Thomas, Adele and Fazio, Lynn and Stiefelmeyer, Betty L. (1999). Newark, DE: International Reading Association. Handbook is intended for parents looking for ways to develop literacy at home. The authors explain why reading and writing are important and how children learn about literacy, and provide lists of recommended books for both parents and children, guides for reading aloud, and instructions on how to design activities to help a child learn about the world.

Helping Your Preschool Child Become a Reader: Ideas for Parents. Epstein, Ann S. (2002). Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press. Booklet provides simple, enjoyable ideas for how parents can turn everyday experiences into opportunities to help get their child ready to read. Epstein tells how reading stories, singing songs, and saying silly rhymes make a child aware of sounds in words -- an important skill in learning to read and write. She also describes how to make the home a showcase for reading and writing by providing inexpensive materials that encourage literacy and by showing a child the many ways reading and writing are used in everyday life.

Home School Interaction with Cultural or Language Diverse Families. Ada, Alma Flor and Campoy, F. Isabel (1998). Westlake, OH: Del Sol Publishing. This book emphasizes the need to recognize and build upon parent strengths in order to create strong connections between home and school. Topics include transformative education, educational reform, parents as educators, parents as authors and protagonists, language development at home, and the value of bilingualism. Field-tested activities and approaches are described.

Parents are Lifesavers: A Handbook for Parent Involvement in Schools. Carol S. Batey (1996). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. The literature on reform and restructuring often calls for increasing parents' participation as a way to maximize schools' effectiveness. Book contains the real, down-to-earth skills and tips you need to turn parents into active, sharing participants in their children's education. Batey provides you with step-by-step guidelines for getting parents involved in your school and your classrooms. You'll learn proven techniques that encourage participation by all. Written by a parent who's been there, this new workbook gives you outlines for use by school professionals or parents, sample volunteer forms, sample donation letters, parent and staff surveys, teacher improvement plans for parental involvement, a “wish list” request form, and more! If you want to motivate parents to become working partners at your school, this book is for you. improvement plans for parental involvement, a “wish list” request form, and more!

Poems to Learn to Read By: Building Literacy with Love. Bardige, Betty S. and Segal, Marilyn M. (2005). Washington, DC: Zero to Three. Book includes a collection of poems that children from birth to school age will enjoy with adults. Some of the poems are humorous, some are informative, and some are evocative or instructive. Some tell stories, and others simply play with sounds and words. The poems address the interests, feelings, and questions of young children in words that they can understand and enjoy. Book also serves as a guide for caregivers, early childhood educators, and parents, offering information and ideas on how to use the poems to strengthen children's language, build their literacy skills, help them manage strong emotions, and enhance their relationships.

Raising Children in a New Country: A Toolkit for Working with Newcomer Parents. Schmidt, Susan (November 2005). Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Refugee parents need support in maintaining strong relationships with their children and in preventing problems that can limit their children's success in a new country. To aid refugee serving agencies in helping parents, BRYCS has created Raising Children in a New Country: A Toolkit for Working with Refugee Parents. Toolkit includes an overview of research and good practice in parent education programs for refugees; detailed information about free and fee-based parent support and education resources for refugee-serving agencies, including free access to certain curricula, handouts in different languages and reports; and program development guidance. This Parenting Toolkit is useful for mutual assistance associations (MAAs), refugee resettlement agencies, and other organizations providing parent support and education programs for refugees and newcomers.

Raising Children in a New Country: An Illustrated Handbook. Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services (2007). Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Printed materials to use as a resource to better work with children from different ethnic backgrounds and understand their cultures and traditions. The handbook focuses on parenting younger children, and it covers five themes: Nurture, Supervision/Protection, Structure/Limits, Discipline/Respect, and Educational Participation. The handbook also includes a list of links to government document, laws, and many other resources about child welfare and child protection.

Read-Alouds With Young Children. Campbell, Robin (2001). Newark, DE: International Reading Association. Regardless of a child's experience with or exposure to books when he or she enters elementary school, teachers can greatly extend a child's literacy development through interactive classroom read-alouds. Reading a story aloud presents endless opportunities for related activities such as classroom discussions, role plays, shared readings, group writings, arts and crafts, and songs. This book explores read-alouds in both home and school settings and encourages the use of read-alouds as a starting point for further learning in several curricular areas.

Shared Storybook Reading: Building Young Children's Language and Emergent Literacy Skills. Ezell, Helen K. and Justice, Laura M. (2005). Baltimore, MD: Paul Brookes Publishing. Reading storybooks with young children is one of the most important things adults can do to support early language and literacy skills, including print awareness, vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, and social and conversational skills. Making the most of shared reading is the goal of this practical guide; ideal for early childhood educators in preschool, Head Start, and child care programs. Step-by-step strategies help educators engage, respond to, and teach young children during storybook reading — information they can share with parents to continue the learning at home.

Teachers as Collaborative Partners: Working with Diverse Families and Communities. Tutwiler, Sandra J. Winn (2005). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Teachers as Collaborative Partners assist future and inservice teachers in developing a research-based framework for understanding the dynamics of school, family, and community relations. The text is designed to engage the critical reflective capability of teachers in ways that will support their ability to work with diverse families in a variety of teaching contexts. The goals of the text are supported by pedagogical tools that provide opportunities for readers to make connections between information in each chapter and realistic family-community-school situations.



"It is wonderful to be able to get the information you need."

Clarence Reece
Literacy Volunteer
Van Community Library

Things to Send For...

RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

QEd: Scientific Evidence for Adult Literacy Educators, Issue 1. Kruidenier, John R., Editor (2007). Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy. This is the first in a five-issue series for the adult education community published by the National Institute for Literacy. The series will cover ideas and information on the expanding scientific research base on how adults learn to read. This first issue tells the story of how researchers are using the high quality, scientific standards that adult literacy deserves and demands. The issue also discusses another publication, *Applying Research in Reading Instruction for Adults: First Steps for Teachers* (available as a separate title from the Clearinghouse). The series will also offer other useful resources and discussion lists.

Implications of NCSALL Research for Program Administrators: NCSALL Seminar Guide. NCSALL (April 2006). Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. Seminar Guide was created to assist program administrators in accessing, understanding, judging, and using research for themselves and for their staff. Participants explore the "Program Administrators' Sourcebook: A Resource on NCSALL's Research for Adult Education Program Administrators" and other training materials available from NCSALL. Professional developers may want to use this seminar in place of a regularly scheduled meeting, such as a statewide training. Seminar design assumes a 3-1/2 hour seminar for between 15 and 25 adult education program administrators/coordinators.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE & CITIZENSHIP

English Literacy and Civics Education. Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (February 2006). Washington, DC: Center for Adult English Language Acquisition. This brief, written by CAELA staff members, explains the purpose and content of the U.S. Department of Education's English Literacy and Civics (EL/Civics) Education program. The brief also describes some ways that teachers can develop EL/Civics classes appropriate for learners at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels of English proficiency.

ESL GED Civics Curriculum CD, Version 1.0. Simmons, Jane (July 2007). Tyler, TX: Literacy Council of Tyler, Inc. This curriculum promotes civic responsibility while also integrating other instruction for the typical ESL student. Some examples of these skills are sentence structure, parts of speech, and vocabulary building. The GED lessons also cover other instruction needed by the typical GED student. Some examples of these skills are reading comprehension, essay writing, and mathematical analysis. As the curriculum is distributed and used in the field, it will continue to be revised and other lessons added. The CD (available free on request) contains both PDF and Publisher files. The PDF files duplicate the best but cannot be changed; however, the Publisher files allow you to change the names of elected officials to reflect the people serving in your local area.

Problem-Based Learning and Adult English Language Learners. Mathews-Aydinli, Julie (April 2007). Washington, DC: Center

for Adult English Language Acquisition. This brief describes how problem-based learning aligns with research on second language acquisition, gives guidelines for teachers and administrators on implementing problem-based learning in classes or programs for adults learning English as a second language (ESL), and outlines the benefits and challenges of using a problem-based learning approach with adult English language learners.

Understanding Adult ESL Content Standards. Young, Sarah and Smith, Cristine (September 2006). Washington, DC: Center for Adult English Language Acquisition. Adult education programs serve learners who are native English speakers and those whose first, or native, language is not English. Native English speakers attend adult basic education (ABE) classes to learn the skills needed to earn high school equivalency certificates or to achieve other goals related to job, family, or further education. English language learners attend English as a second language (ESL) or ABE classes to improve their oral and written skills in English and to achieve goals similar to those of native English speakers. This brief is written for adult ESL teachers and program administrators, as well as educational researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders who work with adult English language students in ESL classes or in mixed ABE classes (with native English speakers and English language students).

Workplace Instruction and Workforce Preparation for Adult Immigrants. Burt, Miriam and Mathews-Aydinli, Julie (September 2007). Washington, DC: Center for Adult English Language Acquisition. Adult educators across the country are seeking ways to ensure that foreign-born adults will be successful in gaining English proficiency and in entering and advancing at the workplace. This brief reviews the three venues in which federally funded instruction to help immigrants become successful at work is offered – at the workplace, in vocational classes, and in adult English as a second language (ESL) classes. Basic program features and the strengths and challenges of each type of program are described, and recommendations are given for addressing the challenges. This information will help program administrators and teachers select, establish, and improve programs for the adult immigrants they serve. Brief is written for adult ESL teachers and program administrators, as well as educational researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders.

WRITING INSTRUCTION

The Transition from Adult Literacy ESL Programs to Academic Reading and Writing: Next Steps for English Language Learners. Flores, Lisa Gardner and Chlup, Dominique T. (2005). College Station, TX: Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning. During her year as a fellow at the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning (TCALL), researcher Lisa Gardner Flores has chosen to research how to successfully transition English language learners into content area classrooms. She began her research work with a sample of teachers at a community college located in Washington State. Her research in Washington State is serving as a pilot study for subsequent work in Texas. In this report, Flores documents the research she conducted in Washington State and her findings after working closely with twenty practitioners to discover how they are addressing

continued on page 34

Free Things to Send For, continued from page 33

ing instruction across the language curriculum. While Flores' research is specific to one state and practitioners at one community college, it is hoped that her findings from this initial pilot study will be useful more broadly for instructors and administrators working with ELL students across the country.

Narrative and Stories in Adult Teaching and Learning: ERIC Digest. Rossiter, Marsha (2002). Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. Narrative and stories in education have been the focus of increasing attention in recent years. The idea of narrative is fertile ground for adult educators who know intuitively the value of stories in teaching and learning. Narrative is deeply appealing and richly satisfying to the human soul, with an allure that transcends cultures, centuries, ideologies, and academic disciplines. In connection with adult education, narrative can be understood as an orientation that carries with it implications for both method and content. This Digest presents a brief overview of a narrative orientation to teaching and learning and then explores how stories and autobiographical writing promote learning.

Journal Writing and Adult Learning: ERIC Digest. Kerka, Sandra (1996). Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. Several themes prevalent in adult learning--coming to voice, developing the capacity for critical reflection, and making meaning--are reflected in the way journals can be used in adult education. This digest focuses on several types of journals, exploring their value in assisting adults through their learning journey and summarizing advice from the literature on effective ways to use journals.

Integrating Reading and Writing into Adult ESL Instruction: ERIC Digest. Rabideau, Dan (March 1993). Washington, DC: National Center for ESL Literacy Education. Reading and writing play a larger role in language instruction for adult learners today than they have in the recent past. Reading and writing were never completely removed from adult English as a Second Language (ESL) curricula, but during the early 1980s there was a shift toward oral/aural instructional goals and practices. That shift was motivated by learners' needs; many adults had a limited amount of time to spend in a program, and their most immediate need seemed to be oral communication. Some learners came to adult programs with very limited formal schooling, and an oral/aural approach allowed them more opportunities to participate in class. In fact, oral communicative ability is still a primary goal of much adult ESL instruction, but the pendulum is swinging back toward a greater emphasis on reading and writing.

FAMILY LITERACY

Connecting with Parents in the Early Years: Executive Summary. Mendoza, Jean, et al (December 2003). Champaign, IL: Early Childhood and Parenting Collaborative. This 8-page document summarizes the book *Connecting with Parents in the Early Years* from the Early Childhood and Parenting Collaborative. (Book is available as a loan item.) This review of interdisciplinary literature concerns parent/teacher connections in the early years. Communication strategies for families that are difficult to reach are highlighted with suggestions to strengthen family connections. School readiness and early childhood programs are discussed with the focus on involving the family.

Making a Difference: A Framework for Supporting First and Second Language Development in Preschool Children of Migrant Farm Workers. Stechuk, Robert A. and Burns, M. Susan (2005). Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development. The authors share the research base, important findings, and recommendations for teaching practices and program policies related to first and second language development in preschool

children. Information is presented as responses to four key questions: 1) Can we facilitate children's acquisition of English without the loss of Spanish (i.e., their first language)? 2) How can we understand the how and when of developmental processes related to first and second language acquisition? 3) Does it matter how adults use English and the children's home language when they talk to children? 4) When we continue development of the first language and facilitate English, what does it look like day-to-day?

Promoting ELL Parental Involvement: Challenges in Contested Times. Arias, M. Beatriz and Morillo-Campbell, Milagros (January 2008). East Lansing, MI: The Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice. This policy brief analyzes the factors involved with generating effective parental involvement of English Language Learners (ELLs). Parents of ELLs face daunting barriers when they attempt to become informed and involved in their child's school. This, in turn, limits communication and participation. Given the achievement gap between ELLs and English proficient students, it is critical to identify practices that improve ELL parental involvement and, in turn, student achievement. While diversity speaks to the need for both traditional and non-traditional models, with a dual-model approach variation in language proficiency is acknowledged, communication is facilitated and communities are recognized and integrated within the school culture. The center recommends that policymakers fund the implementation of non-traditional parental involvement programs that reflect a reciprocal involvement in the school/parent community.

Workforce Literacy...continued from page 24

approaches to work-based language skills development for high demand occupations;

- *Adult Bilingual Training Models* presented by Dr. Ana Macias of the University of Texas at El Paso, makes the case for accelerating learning by English language learners by providing an integrated educational model delivered via two languages;
- *The Entrepreneurial Connection*, a San Antonio SEED Program sponsored by the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) which promotes micro enterprises as a means of growing business leaders among those facing multiple barriers to economic self-sufficiency; and
- Milwaukee Area Technical College's *Workforce Initiative: Transitioning English Language Learners into Bilingual Occupational Education Programs*, offering concurrent services in English language improvement, workforce readiness, career path opportunities, higher education, and gainful employment.

Summit participants heard from employers who hire workers with limited English proficiency as they described the challenges and tremendous need to engage English language learners in career path opportunities in healthcare (UT Health Science Center), manufacturing (Tier 1 suppliers to Toyota Mfg), and industry (Houston Business Roundtable).

Dignitaries addressing the participants included U.S. Congressman Ciro Rodriguez, State Senator Carlos Uresti, Alamo Community Colleges Trustee Chair Robert Zarate, President and CEO of the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and Cheryl Fuller, Director of the Texas Workforce Investment Council. Ms. Fuller's remarks were followed by group activities to assist summit participants in moving toward solutions and implementing promising practices in their communities. Each group identified challenges and made recommendations for "next steps".

Notes from group activities, along with recommendations and highlights of speakers' presentations will be made available via the *Workforce Partnerships* page found on the website of the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning (TCALL) at <http://www-tcall.tamu.edu>. Alamo Community College District hopes to establish a Work-Based ESL Collaborative Network and to sponsor quarterly follow ups to the summit proceedings. Additional information will be posted via the **SHOP TALK** series and the WorkforceLit email discussion list, as it becomes available.

This article was first published in May 2008 as #21 in the SHOP TALK series sponsored by Texas LEARNS to highlight promising practices and address issues, concerns, and questions related to meeting the adult education needs of Texas' emerging, incumbent, and displaced workers. See all releases in the SHOP TALKS series on the Workforce Partnerships Web page linked from TCALL's home page (www-tcall.tamu.edu).

Click on Over. . .

Browsing the Web, TCALL staff found these literacy-related sites particularly relevant, helpful, or just plain fun.



Citation Machine

This site prompts you to enter the necessary information of a wide variety of resources and then returns the citation in either MLA, APA, Chicago, or Turabian styles. This is a great tool for showing GED students about the various research styles. It is like having a tutor guide you through the process of creating a proper citation. Try it; you'll like it! <http://citationmachine.net/>

English Literacy/Civics Professional Development Courses Online

This site helps to assist teachers in creating interesting and effective lessons that integrate U.S. history and U.S. government into adult ESL classes. The Adult Learning Resource Center in Illinois developed this FREE training with guidance from the Center for Applied Linguistics under an agreement with OVAE and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Office of Citizenship.

www.elciviconline.org/

GED Changes Coming in 2012

The General Educational Development Testing Service (GEDTS) has announced that the fifth GED test series will be ready by January 1, 2012 (other non English-language editions will be released in 2013). A Web page about the 2012 release is now available, and includes both the official announcement and a comprehensive list of frequently asked questions for GED administrators, policymakers, researchers, prospective test-takers, and teachers, and a sample template letter to alert new test-takers to the transition.

www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ProgramsServices/GEDTS/2012/index.htm

MakeBeliefsComix.com

This site lets you create your own comic strip. Make believe that your characters can talk to each other. <http://makebeliefscomix.com/>

Research in Writing: Implications for Adult Literacy Education

In this chapter from Volume 2 of NCSALL's Review of Adult Learning and Literacy (a book that is available on loan from the Clearinghouse Library), Gillespie summarizes three decades of research on writing and describes models of the writing process such as that developed by Flower and Hayes. The author also presents alternative writing models and notes a shift in thinking about writing in the early 1980s that added a consideration of socio-cultural dimensions to the study of writing. While tracing writing research that examines a variety of learners -- including children in K-12, college students classified as "basic" writers, second language learners and adult literacy learners -- Gillespie focuses on issues and trends of interest to adult literacy educators. She notes the apparent connections between changing beliefs and identity in the adult literacy learning process and calls for research to shed light on the potential of writing to play a role in the personal transformation of adult learners. www.ncsall.net/?id=561

Safe Riders Traffic Safety Program

This program is sponsored by the Texas Department of State Health Services in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation. The Safe Riders website is an excellent resource for educating parents about child passenger safety seats.

www.dshs.state.tx.us/saferiders/

Teacher Tube

This site operates on a concept similar to YouTube, but everything is for teachers. The goal at TeacherTube.com is to provide an online community for sharing instructional teacher videos. It contains a variety of "Channels" for different content areas, teacher blogs, instructional videos and more. This could be a helpful resource, especially for teachers in remote areas. It has the advantage of not being blocked by most local school districts (although YouTube is often blocked) and it does have some issues common to all Web 2.0 resources - the content may not always be accurate, so it is a great resource, but content should be checked for accuracy prior to use in a classroom. Quite worthwhile, and especially powerful if you incorporate it into a webquest or ask educators/students to prepare their own TeacherTube lesson. <http://teachertube.com/>

Texas Adult & Family Literacy Quarterly is the publication of the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy & Learning (TCALL). The publication is free to adult educators, literacy providers, and others interested in adult and family literacy. **The Quarterly** is dedicated to advancing knowledge in the field by addressing topics of concern to adult and family literacy practitioners, adult learners, and scholars. The audience includes teachers, students, administrators, program coordinators, researchers, literacy volunteers, and in general individuals interested in the fields of adult and family literacy.

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TEXAS ADULT & FAMILY LITERACY CLEARINGHOUSE PROJECT

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