



# TEXAS Adult & Family Literacy QUARTERLY

## Teacher Spotlight

### Letter From the Interim Director

On January 1, Dr. Dominique Chlup stepped down as TCALL's Center Director to focus exclusively on her teaching and scholarship as a full-time adult education professor here at Texas A&M. While the search continues for the next Center Director, I am now acting as Interim Director of TCALL in addition to directing the Clearinghouse Project. This is not news to those of you who subscribe to one of TCALL's email discussion lists. I am grateful for the many messages of support that I received when Dominique announced the transition via listservs in December. Likewise, Dominique was touched by receiving numerous messages of appreciation for her 3-1/2 years of dedicated service to TCALL. I'm sure you join the staff of TCALL in wishing Dr. Chlup the best in her academic pursuits, and we look forward to our paths crossing frequently in the future.

This issue of TCALL's quarterly publication brings another transition – the change in name from *Literacy Links* to *Texas Adult & Family Literacy Quarterly*. At last summer's conference unveiling the *Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks*, we began the name change process by asking attendees to suggest new names for the publication. In the November 2007 issue, readers were asked to vote among the top three suggested names. TCALL offered a modest prize to the person who nominated the winning name, but since the winning name was anonymously suggested, we instead chose a prizewinner by drawing from among the readers who voted to choose *Texas Adult & Family Literacy Quarterly*. Congratulations to the winner, **Alice Gayle of Fort Bend ISD!** And thank you to all our readers who participated by suggesting a name and by voting.

With this first issue of *The Quarterly* and those to come, TCALL hopes to continue serving the adult and family literacy community in our state with relevant, timely, and interesting articles and information. We also ask our readers to help us continually improve the quality and usefulness of this publication by responding to a reader feedback survey. Please visit TCALL's Website ([www-tcall.tamu.edu](http://www-tcall.tamu.edu)), where you will find in the home page "What's New" box a link to *The Quarterly* reader survey, which will be available through the end of April.

For this Teacher Spotlight issue, we thank Clearinghouse Advisory Committee member Tiffany Johnson for serving as Guest Editor. See Tiffany's letter, below. In addition to articles on the Teacher Spotlight theme, Ken Appelt follows his November 2007 article on the terminology of content standards with a related article, "Putting the Content Standards and Benchmarks to Work." Ken's article is paired with a content standards-based ESL lesson plan selected from the online Lesson Plan Bank that is just one of the *Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks* resources found on TCALL's Website. We hope you enjoy reading the first issue of *Texas Adult & Family Literacy Quarterly*.

Harriet Vardiman Smith  
Acting Interim Director of TCALL

#### From the Guest Editor:

The topic for this issue is a Teacher Showcase. This means that we asked teachers for their stories of teaching, their special techniques, and ideas they would like to share with others. We all have our tales of how we wandered in to the field of adult education. I often tell my students who are pondering various career choices that it doesn't matter what path they take as long as they have the courage and the means to continue looking for what type of career makes them happy. I never told my parents, "When I grow up, I want to teach criminals how to write five-paragraph essays." However, fate has brought me a career that I love.

Brenda Dunlap and Debbie Janysek contribute articles that describe how their teaching practice has benefited from the process of earning their Texas Adult Education Teacher Credential. Karen Greer and Vicki Angel's articles focus on a cool way to use our own background, creativity, and student challenges to provide our students with the best education possible. Nancy Meredith and Joan Mishra's articles look at a fantastic new way to bring learning into a classroom, describing how each took an idea, molded it, and made it her own. Dora Espericueta, Rebecca Hastings, and Kathleen Simmons' articles share shining moments that are an inspiration to us all. Deborah A. Mulvany focuses on the importance of building learner confidence and hope. Lester Meriwether writes of his experiences both as a tutor in a church-based literacy program and in encouraging churches and other faith groups to help meet literacy needs. His article is followed by a letter from ESL teacher Paul D. Gonzalez and his 26 students, expressing thanks to members of San Antonio's Windcrest United Methodist Church for their generosity in hosting adult English language classes.

We congratulate these literacy educators, and all of you who put the spotlight on adult learners every day in your classrooms.

Tiffany Johnson  
Adult Education Instructor and Coordinator  
Victoria County Jail

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## \$50,000 Grants Available from the Barbara Bush Texas Fund for Family Literacy

The First Lady's Family Literacy Initiative for Texas, a program of The Barbara Bush Texas Fund for Family Literacy, announces the 2008 grant competition. Laura Bush, who founded this Initiative when she was first lady of Texas, continues to serve as Honorary Chair. The Texas Center for Adult Literacy and Learning at Texas A&M University provides technical assistance to the family literacy programs funded each year. As of July, 2007, the Initiative had awarded over \$3 million to 118 programs in 65 cities across the state. This year will mark the 12<sup>th</sup> annual competition.

The grants of up to \$50,000 each are given to help create family literacy programs by building on existing literacy programs that work with only one generation, i.e. children or adults, so that complete family literacy programs can be created. The grant program also funds innovative projects within existing family literacy programs, as well as replication of successful family literacy programs with new populations or in new locations. Partnerships with other community groups are strongly encouraged.

Past grantees include community-based organizations, libraries, school districts, community colleges, universities, charter schools, pediatric medical clinics, prison programs, Head Start and Even Start programs, as well as other organizations.

Successful family literacy programs must provide reading instruction for parents or primary caregivers, reading or pre-reading activities for their children, and parent/child reading time and interactions. A successful grant application includes clearly stated objectives, along with a solid assessment plan to measure whether or not those objectives have been achieved.

The 2008 application can be downloaded from TCALL's website at [www-tcall.tamu.edu](http://www-tcall.tamu.edu) (note the hyphen after www instead of a period), or email your request to [ppeebler@mcnairgrp.com](mailto:ppeebler@mcnairgrp.com).

***The deadline for submitting applications will be Friday, March 7, 2008***

For more information about these grants please contact Pat Peebler at [ppeebler@mcnairgrp.com](mailto:ppeebler@mcnairgrp.com) or phone 713.336.7889. For more information about the work of the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy and the Barbara Bush Texas Fund, go to the Foundation's website at <http://www.barbarabushfoundation.com>. Please feel free to share this information with other organizations that might be interested in the grant.

# The Texas Adult Education Teacher Credential - Go For It!

by Brenda Dunlap

The funny thing about learning something new is that, going in to it, you don't know what you don't know. When I started working toward the Texas Adult Education Teacher Credential, I *really* didn't know where the road would lead. As I began, my plan seemed pretty straightforward -- attend Professional Development Activities, use what I learned in my ESL classroom, and write reflections about it. I really didn't know what I didn't know! There are so many knowledgeable people who have so much valuable information about Adult Education; I wanted to learn and absorb as much of that information as I could. I gained a strong desire to become a better teacher for my students and for myself.

The great thing about the Credential requirements is that they are structured to include all aspects of Adult Education: understanding the adult learner; different teaching methods and learning activities; ESL and GED specific knowledge; learning styles and abilities, and cultures; assessments and accountability systems; technology in both teaching and organization; and contextual learning situations. If it had not been required, I would not have chosen to learn about all of these topics; I would have focused on ESL specific topics and learning activities. However, through learning what I "didn't know," I came to realize the importance of attaining in-depth knowledge of all of the core content areas and to understand how those content areas inter-relate in practice.

It's fascinating to realize how principles of adult education and facts about learning styles and culture support the success of established classroom activities and teaching methods. It's kind of an "Aha, that's why that works!" When I first started using "getting to know you" types of activities, I had never heard of "community building" in the classroom. When I started getting students on their feet to participate in "active" learning activities, I was just trying to keep them awake and alert; I didn't connect that to learning styles. I was surprised to find out that the observations I had made about the adult learners in my classroom had already been documented in professional adult education literature in the 1920's. Eight years ago, I felt like I was reinventing the wheel with every lesson as I planned, prepared, created and adapted materials for my ESL classes, I had no idea that there is a goldmine of information for adult educators just waiting to be discovered and used and shared.

For me, the process of working toward the Credential was more than just attending Professional Development; it was a commitment to *actually use* what I had learned. In many cases, it really took me out of my personal comfort zone. Trying new things in front of a class full of adult students is risk-taking from my point of view. After a couple of embar-

assing failures, I decided to explain to my students what I was doing and why; then I asked for their help whenever I tried something new in the classroom. I was amazed at the depth and extent of the support they offered me as well as the constructive criticism and suggestions. It was a type of bonding experience in that there was a feeling of reciprocity as I was teaching them, and they were helping me. I felt this experience, while sometimes painful, really helped me stretch and grow as a teacher and as an individual.

From a professional standpoint, I have benefited tremendously from my experience of working toward and earning the Texas Adult Education Teacher Credential. I have learned more about Adult Education and teaching ESL in the two plus years since I started working on the credential than in the previous six years of working in adult education. I have more experience in the variety of teaching strategies I have learned and tried. I have a greater depth of knowledge to draw from as I teach. I feel like I have more to offer my students and my program. I have been given the opportunity to work as a trainer, and I find it to be very satisfying to be able to share what I have learned with other teachers.

From a personal standpoint, I have a great sense of satisfaction and accomplishment in what I consider to be a major achievement. It has rekindled in me a desire for knowledge and learning that I hadn't felt in a long time. Now, I want to keep learning, growing and achieving. I feel more capable and confident and willing to try new things. I have done things I never imagined I could do. I have met and interacted with people who have enriched my life. I wouldn't have missed this experience for anything.

For anyone who is considering the prospect of working toward earning the Texas Adult Education Teacher Credential, or those who have started and "stalled," my advice is-- go for it! You will not regret it!

## About the Author

Brenda Dunlap is the proud Grandma of seven grandsons who loves to spend her spare time (an elusive concept) quilting. With a degree in Home Economics Education, she used her knowledge and skills as the full-time mom of her six children for many years. Ten years ago, she "fell into" Adult Education when she was asked to sub in an ESL class. She continued teaching that same class for nearly eight years. She was the first teacher to earn the Texas Adult Education Teacher Credential. She is currently working as a Program Assistant for Harris County Department of Education in the Katy area.

# To Credential or Not to Credential?

by Debbie Janysek

“To Credential or not to Credential?” That was my question. When I first learned about the Texas Adult Education Teacher Credential Program, I thought, “I have a job, I do it well, and I enjoy my students. Why do I need to spend time working on a Credential? What are the benefits, and what’s in it for me?”

Because I am a professional development “junkie” and take every opportunity presented to me to attend training activities, I attended the introductory workshop that explained the credential process and requirements. At first glance, the process seemed overwhelming. However, as I filled out my professional development plan, I discovered that I had completed enough activities to get started. I just needed to sit down and critically reflect on what I learned from those training sessions. The process of working on earning my credential helped me see what I had learned, what I had used, what was successful, and what wasn’t so successful.

Working on the credential changed my classroom practices and therefore benefited my students. My classroom activities shifted from teacher-directed to student-directed, from passive to active. Prior to enrolling in the credential, I would attend a professional development activity, take notes, learn new activities, receive my certificate, and then go back to what I was doing in the classroom. After enrolling in the credential, I learned how to analyze my classroom practices and activities through critical reflection and how to adjust activities to meet the needs of my students. I also learned how to involve students in the process of incorporating new practices into our classroom.

One area of the credential that was very beneficial to me is Principles of Adult Learning. By participating in and reflecting on professional development activities in this category, I have a better understanding of adult learners. Prior to my working with adults, I worked with children. One key principle that I learned is that adults have prior knowledge that needs to be activated and used in the learning process. Helping adults realize and activate their prior knowledge increases their confidence and helps develop their desire to know more and anchors their new knowledge to their previous knowledge.

The most meaningful component of the credential process for me was writing critical reflections. Writing something on paper makes it more real. Critically reflecting on my teaching helped me value my professional development activities more because I actually put into practice what I learned. Recognizing that failures will happen and using failures to plan for success was a valuable lesson.

My perspective of professional development activities did

not change much; I still like to attend and learn. I believe that to be a good teacher, I need to be a good learner. What did change was what I do with the information or knowledge I gain from the training. Instead of filing it away, I incorporate at least one new activity into my classroom. I have also begun the practice of informing my students when I plan to attend a workshop, so they are ready for something new that we can work on together.

Due to the credential process, I learned the skill of critical reflection. In my busy world, time is precious. After learning how to analyze and critically reflect on professional development activities, I now use that skill to make choices in my life outside the classroom. I also learned the value of a voluntary activity. The credential process is voluntary. I participated of my own free will without the promise of any rewards. From the process, I increased student involvement in my classroom, learned some new skills, and also received a promotion after completion of the credential. I highly recommend participating in the Texas Adult Education Teacher Credential Program. It **IS** worth the effort. All you have to do is start.

## About the Author

Debbie Janysek is the ESL Coordinator for the Victoria College Adult Education program. She has been in adult education for five years. She has a Bachelor of Science Degree from Texas A&M University. She received her Texas Adult Education Teacher Credential in April 2007 and is participating in the pilot of the Texas Adult Education Administrator’s Credential.

## Chris Palacios is First to Complete Texas Adult Education Administrator Credential

On Monday, January 14, 2008 Chris Palacios became the first administrator to complete the Texas Adult Education Administrator Credential. Palacios, who has served as the Director of the Department of GED Instruction at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi for the past 11 years, is the first member of the initial pilot group of administrators to complete the necessary requirements to earn the Administrator Credential.

In order to complete the Administrator Credential, Ms. Palacios submitted an electronic portfolio in which she demonstrated that she possessed the knowledge and skills detailed in the Administrator Credential Content Framework. The Content Framework was developed by Texas administrators and specifies the knowledge and skills that administrators in the State of Texas have determined to be necessary in order to perform the role of administrator.

Administrators interested in volunteering to participate in the second pilot group should contact the Credential Project by email ([acredential@txstate.edu](mailto:acredential@txstate.edu)) or by calling 866-798-8767.

# Deal Me In: Using Playing Cards to Reinforce Math Skills

by Karen Greer

Coming from a Vocational Home Economics background, I am constantly searching for ways to teach my lessons with a practical, hands-on approach. As Adult Education Instructors we are encouraged by the workplace and the workforce entities to help our students learn and use skills that can be carried into their jobs. I have never been a textbook-questions-at-the-end-of-the-chapter teacher (or student), so manipulative tools are my cup of tea!

My class is the lowest student level and most have learning difficulties which call for different methods. When starting a new semester, I decided to use playing cards as a math manipulative. As each new skill was introduced, I found new ways to use the cards. After seeing my students enjoy each session, I was challenged to come up with even more ways. You might say I became a card shark!

The new Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks (see <http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/taesp/guide/cover.html>) presented me with a reason for rewriting my curriculum and scope and sequence. Armed with my new wonderful tool, I inserted this into each math lesson where possible. I tried to keep a log of all the games and quickly filled several pages (senior moments required me writing them down). Several teachers asked me to share the games, so I decided to write this article.

I began with number sense and had the students lay the cards face up one at a time and say the numbers as fast as they could. This was difficult for some. Next, we did two cards and did greater than less than. A simple game of solitaire provides the skill of arranging in descending order and determining greater than less than. After the game was finished, I had the students add all the cards using the calculator and by pencil and paper. Another number sense game was for four of the students to draw a card and place the students in the order that would give the largest number and the smallest number. This brought out the leader traits in the students.

Moving on to addition, we started by laying two cards up at a time and timed ourselves in adding them as fast as we could. For several days we tried to increase our times and created a progress chart. Increasing the number of cards to two on top and two on bottom made more of a challenge. All these games saved making copies therefore I am making a "greener" class! I expanded the cards to four on the top and bottom, and this made for real practice. Subtraction was a different story. The students dreaded getting the face cards which were a value of 10 and all agreed that those 0's made is hard to borrow. I reminded them that this was "The luck of the draw." In subtraction you always have fewer cards on the bottom row.

Higher level skills such as fractions were fun because two cards can make some strange fractions. We used the larger number on the top and then reversed the order. We added, subtracted, multiplied, and divided card fractions and used lots of skills to convert and reduce. For fun we even drew cards and made up word problems. I have not found many math concepts that could not be reinforced with the use of playing cards from the Dollar Store. Gifts of cards make great prizes and incentives. The students don't realize you are giving them endless homework!

By sharing this manipulative, I hope I have interested you in trying to use cards in your classroom. I will continue to come up with more games to try. Teaching presents us with many challenges, and we are usually open to use anything that works. Be willing to put down the textbooks, manuals, and worksheets and give this a try. Then you can deal your students in to better math skills and gains in their progress.

## About the Author

Karen Greer is a native Texan from Garland and has taught in many areas. She is an avid sewer and has been a sample maker for a high end company. Having 10 grandchildren gives her opportunity to practice her hobby. She is currently training in the learning disabilities area with Texas LEARNS. Victoria College Adult Education is her current teaching home.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

For the latest information on upcoming events, visit the Calendars linked from the TCALL Website home page menu.

**Conferences & Events Calendar** – a comprehensive list of local, state, and national events and professional development opportunities of interest to literacy practitioners in Texas

**Texas LEARNS Calendar** - events and deadlines of statewide significance to program administrators

**GREAT Center Regional Calendars** – professional development and training events taking place in the eight service regions

**Texas Family Literacy Resource Center Calendar**

**Texas Workforce Commission Upcoming Events**

**National Institute for Literacy Calendar** – upcoming events of national significance

TCALL Website: [www-tcall.tamu.edu](http://www-tcall.tamu.edu)

# Mozart and ESL OR One Principle of the Suzuki Music Method Applied to Language Teaching

by Joan Mishra

As I was thinking about what sort of new or unusual perspective on language teaching I might have to offer another ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher reading this article, I could only come up with one thing. I figured most of what I do is fairly common to most teachers: lessons from grammar texts, reading and discussing, writing compositions, group conversations, various games, etc. The one angle on ESL teaching that I possess that is unusual is that I also teach music according to the Suzuki Method (see <http://www.Suzuki-Method.com>). The Suzuki Method is filled with oceans of creative, nature-based ways to teach so many concepts and habits, but in this article I want to stay with one basic idea that seems to me to be fundamental to learning music or language: the idea of focused repetition.

In case you have never heard of the Suzuki Method of music education, allow me to give you the nutshell version. The method was invented several decades ago by Shinichi Suzuki, a young violinist in Japan. He contemplated how to teach violin to a four-year-old and had the revelation that children could be taught music along the same lines as they learned their native language. That is, first by listening a lot, then by copying and becoming fluent, and later by learning to read the written notation. (Traditional music teaching starts with the written notation instead.) This simple idea had wide ranging teaching implications. Later, Dr. Suzuki and scores of his young violin students playing Vivaldi concertos were on the cover of Time magazine, and Pablo Casals, the great cellist, wept at the beauty of their concert. The method spread all over the world, and is now used to teach a wide variety of instruments. Anyone who has seen one of these young Suzuki students play such complex material so happily and fluently is usually filled with questions about how it came about. I have seen many astounded faces over the years! However, since explaining the whole method is beyond the scope of this article, I'll just return to the basic principle of focused repetition.

Mozart once said, "The best way to learn many things is to learn only one thing at a time." This, of course, is the opposite of our hectic, modern lifestyle habit of doing many things at the same time, such as talking on the cell phone, driving, and chewing gum simultaneously. Most of us seem to believe that we can get a lot more done by packing each moment with as many activities as possible. It seems so strange to think that we could actually accomplish more by staying with only one thing at a time. So what did Mozart

mean by that?

One thing Suzuki teachers do when teaching a child a new piece is to find a rough spot in the piece and have the child play it repeatedly. This not only smoothes out the performance of the piece, but also promotes mental focus in the child. Once that one little section is understood thoroughly, mentally and physically, often other parts of the piece or other pieces improve magically at the same time. In other words, by focusing on one small part, the whole comes together faster than it would have otherwise.

Having worked with this focused repetition activity so much in my music teaching, it naturally crept into my ESL teaching. I noticed that students who were fairly conversant in English still didn't seem to understand some of the basic structures of the language, such as adding "s" to third person present tense verbs or using "do" or "does" correctly. I decided to begin each class when everyone was the freshest and most receptive with some focused repetition on simple grammatical concepts. First, I thought they might be insulted that I was starting with such basic material in an intermediate class. However, I began to see they really appreciated it, and as I did it more and more, I noticed it helped them be more precise when speaking.

You probably still wonder what I am talking about, so now I'll try to be more specific and less philosophical. To begin my last class, for example, I wrote on the board, "We drink coffee every day." Then I pointed at a student and said, "Frank." The student responded, "Frank drinks coffee every day." Then I said, "I", or "the dog" or "they" etc. I would do this drill for five or ten minutes until I thought everyone had a crystal clear picture of the concept. Then I said, let's make it into a question. I wrote on the board, "Does Frank drink coffee every day?", and again, I pointed to a student with a word, such as "I" or "they."

Obviously, this type of focused drill can be used with any aspect of grammar the teacher is hoping to get across. The point is to stay on one simple, basic point and to give lots of repetition to everyone in the class, really nail it down, so to speak.

I use it most often to get across the use of verb tenses. Sometimes I may want to contrast the use of two verb tenses, for example, present and present progressive. In that case, I would write a sentence on the board, such as Car-

los drives to school. And I would say to the student, “now.” He would respond, “Carlos is driving to school now.” Then I might say “we, every day.” The correct answer then would be, “We drive to school every day.” Or I might say, “question, now, they”, and the answer would be, “Are they driving to school now?”

The key points are: First, explain the point you want to get across with lots of examples. Stay on one simple point, and call on lots of students. Be sure everyone understands and experiences lots of success and clarity. Do this exercise at the beginning of class when people are fresh and can really focus. Repeat important exercises on several different days to really get the ideas to sink in.

The rest of the class can be used for more real life language experiences, like reading, writing and conversations,

or doing lessons out of grammar books.

Teaching English to speakers of other languages is such a pleasure, since nearly all the students are highly motivated to learn and are so appreciative of their teachers' efforts. And we teachers are so fortunate now to have so many imaginative and practical materials to use. My hope is that this article gave you at least one more useful technique to add to your repertoire of teaching ideas.

#### **About the Author**

Joan Mishra has taught ESL for over 15 years in a variety of settings from private schools to community colleges. Her masters degree is in education (ESL) from Boston University. She currently teaches ESL to adults at Austin Community College and Suzuki piano and guitar to young children in her private studio.

## Reading for Pleasure, Reading for Life

by Nancy Meredith

“Okay, you may stop reading when you get to a good place,” I say softly as I try to reach my own good place to stop. At the end of a half hour of silent reading in my multi-level ESL class, I see some students making notes, some writing in their reading logs, and many still reading, trying to reach a good place to stop.

When I first introduced sustained silent reading (SSR) to my class last spring, I expected resistance, but I met none. There was an initial period of apprehension, but that was quickly replaced with a mounting level of confidence as students discovered that they could read and understand much more than they expected they would.

#### **Getting Started**

I was driven to SSR by a desire to help students become *readers*, as opposed to simply people who can read. My first attempt was to use leveled readers for adults as a whole-class activity. I chose novels over short stories because Steven Krashen's (2004) argument for “narrow reading” appealed to me. A novel is likely to provide repeated exposure to the same words and phrases, thus providing continual reinforcement for new vocabulary. We read *Rain Man* and *Amistad*, and students demonstrated comprehension, but I was dissatisfied with the fact that I was coming between them and the text. I was directing the reading and providing background information, probing for evidence of comprehension, and the reading activity was missing the mark. Students were not getting the message that they are capable of reading for pleasure on their own.

Then I attended the 2005 TESOL convention in San Antonio, where I was inspired by a session on using SSR with

beginning-level adults (see Banke & Kurzet, 2005), but it took me a year and a half to work out how to implement SSR in my classroom and to have the courage to put it in motion. From the presenters' information and other reading I'd done, I knew that the key to a successful SSR program is accessibility to appropriate text. I would need books in a wide range of reading levels on a variety of topics. I took advantage of the leveled readers available from my department, to which I added some young adult books for more advanced students. My biggest obstacle then was to figure out how to organize and present the program to my students.

#### **How It Works**

I am fortunate in having a class that meets three hours a day, five days a week, so we read every day for half an hour. A total of another ten to fifteen minutes is absorbed with getting started, returning books after reading, and questions and observations that students have from their reading.

My SSR library of 65 books is housed in a plastic file box with six envelope-style manila folders—one for each of six levels of readers. I also have a binder with reading logs that students keep as a record of the books they have read. If they finish a book during reading time, they quietly get their log from the notebook, record their observations about the book, choose their next book, and continue reading.

Nobody talks during the reading half-hour. If students have questions, they write them down to ask later. I discourage the use of dictionaries, but I don't make an issue of it. The

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### *Reading for Pleasure...*, continued from page 7

most important thing is for students to be comfortable with their reading, and for some that means translating every word. For others it means taking copious notes. I have observed both of these crutches fall into disuse—or at least into diminished use—as students gain experience and confidence.

#### **Results**

Student reaction to SSR has been phenomenal! I don't know what effect it has on their BEST scores, but I do see them developing confidence in their ability to read on their own, enjoying the reading they do, and voluntarily sharing their reading experiences with others. They do not take tests on the books they read. They do not do the activities and exercises that the publishers often provide at the end of the books. Apart from the reading logs, the only accountability activity they engage in is occasionally to meet in small groups for a book discussion. I find validation for the process in their engagement—and in seeing their slow return to the real world from the worlds of their books as they find a good place to stop reading—for today.

#### **References**

Banke, S. and Kurtzet, R. (2005). Modified sustained silent reading: Does it benefit beginning learners of English? *Focus on Basics*, 8(A). Retrieved October 6, 2007 from

<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=990>

Krashen, S. (2004). The case for narrow reading. *Language Magazine* 3(5):17-19. Retrieved October 6, 2007 from <http://sdrkrashen.com/articles/narrow/index.html>

#### **Resources**

Cambridge English Readers.

<http://www.cambridge.org/elt/readers>

Extensive Reading, [www.extensivereading.net](http://www.extensivereading.net)

Using Graded Readers. <http://www.oup.com/elt>

Penguin Readers. <http://www.penguinreaders.com>

#### **About the Author**

Nancy Meredith holds an M.A. in speech from Northwestern University and a B.A. with Honors from the University of Texas at Austin. After a career as a technical writer and editor and volunteering with immigrant advocacy organizations in various capacities, she taught ESL in grades K–12, and for the past three years has taught EL/Civics in the Adult Education Department of Austin Community College. She is currently enrolled in the Texas Adult Education Credential Project.

## **Sisters Push Each Other to Do the Extra Lap** by Dora Espericueta

The most rewarding teaching experience that I have had was the opportunity to teach two sisters that enrolled at the Pharr Adult Learning Center. While both sisters started at the pre-lit level, I did not start working with them until they were at the Pre-GED level.

I started working with Elia first. She came to the Center with a very low self-esteem. She could barely make eye contact with me or anyone else. She was very soft spoken and shy. As her GED instructor, I was able to work with her on a one to one basis. Elia was able to express herself through her essays providing me the opportunity to feel her pain and depression. As time went by, it was obvious to everyone around her that she was gaining inner confidence. Her way of dressing, communicating, and physical appearance was so visible that you could see the metamorphosis from a cocoon to a beautiful butterfly. Her written thoughts and ideas helped me understand her more and allowed me to interact with her more freely. Working with her individu-



ally, allowed her to feel more comfortable in speaking or asking questions. Once she overcame her shyness, she became very determined to get her GED and set a goal to further her education. Eventually, Elia encountered transportation problems. Her only ride to class was her sister. Elia motivated Veronica to enroll so that she wouldn't waste gas needlessly. By both of them attending, they could benefit from the program and better themselves at the same time.

When her sister was promoted from the Pre-GED class to my GED class, I felt like this gave Elia more of an initiative or more self confidence. When her sister, Veronica, came into my writing class, it was like lighting a flame under both of them. I could see that they would work together and encourage and motivate each other. It was apparent to me that Veronica was different from Elia in many ways. She was more interactive, more sociable, and more approachable. This allowed me to use Veronica's attributes to make



Elia a stronger person. It was exciting to see that no matter what obstacles came their way, they both showed determination and dedication. Veronica was Elia's only means of transportation and it was wonderful to see the family unity when it came to them having each other for support.

I can honestly say that these two young ladies had to make many sacrifices and overcome many obstacles to achieve what they had set as their goal, to obtain their GED and enroll at South Texas College. Through perseverance they were able to achieve what they had both set out to do. They are both currently in their third semester at South Tex-

as College and are well on their way to successful careers in Nursing and Education.

#### **About the Author**

Dora Espericueta is a native of Monte Alto, Texas. She is married to Robert and has three children. She has taught all areas of the adult education program. She holds a certification in Interdisciplinary Studies and Generic Special Education and has taught adult education for thirteen years. She is currently the Lead Instructor for the Pharr Adult Learning Center. Her passion is working with adults and motivating them to succeed.

## **Why I Work With Adults**

**by Rebecca Hastings**

I worked in public education for 27 years until retiring in 2006. At that time, I had no intentions of getting into education again. A close friend and former principal told me about adult education. When she first asked me about teaching part time, my response was a very emphatic NO WAY! Then she told me it was working with adults teaching ESL. Since I had trusted her in the past to guide me in making career decisions, I decided to trust her again and agreed to try it.

It was the best decision I made since retiring. I took over an ESL class in January meeting at Gardens Elementary in Pasadena. There were about 18 ladies who were enrolled in the class. They were so eager to learn that I found myself looking forward to going to work. We met three days a week for five hours each day.

At first I wasn't sure if I would be able to keep the ladies interested. I had been told to teach all subjects since I had the higher intermediate group. So, I began preparing lessons in math, science, and history as well as reading and grammar.

The ladies made me feel more like a teacher than most of my 27 years in the public education system. They worked very hard and were all quite willing to attempt everything I assigned. Part of their assignments included doing book reports and research projects every month. They were very nervous and scared at first, but did a great job.

There was one project I assigned that I was not sure would turn out well. The ladies had to work in groups to do research on a body system and present it to the class together. They were AWESOME! They did even better than I had ever imagined. They really seemed to enjoy working together as a group.

I feel much appreciated by these ladies. When they call me "teacher," I can tell that they mean it with much respect.

One day I will never forget was during teacher appreciation week. I arrived at work early Thursday morning as normal. There on my table were a dozen red roses. They had written on the board a message of love and appreciation. I was so touched by it that I had tears in my eyes as I thanked them. It was hard to get back to business that morning.

Another unforgettable moment was when one of the ladies called me at home one evening. Her seventh grade son was having problems understanding a math problem. Laura called me and asked if I would explain the problem to her son. I was so honored that she felt comfortable enough with me that she could call me for help.

The love and appreciation I feel from these ladies never seems to stop impressing me. My husband had surgery in March, just over two months since I had taken over the class as their teacher. The ladies brought not only a card but some flowers for me to take home to my husband. I just can't express the feelings this kindness brought to me.

I have seen such growth in all my ladies. One project they had was to learn all the states and capitals. All but one was able to pass the test I gave them. They have also studied the Constitution, Revolutionary War and the Civil War. In science we have covered the solar system, body systems, DNA, and are now working on mammals. I really like it when the ladies ask me to cover a certain idea in a subject. For example, the body systems study was their idea.

They are just so eager to learn and tell me over and over again how they have been able to help their children with homework. A couple of times one of the ladies brought in a math problem that their child was having difficulty with. We used it to teach our math lesson for the day.

I am very happy that my friend and mentor got me involved with adult education. I had no idea teaching adults could be

*continued on page 10*

*Why I Work With Adults, continued from page 9*

so fulfilling. Since I started teaching this class, I have been telling every teacher I know about the rewards of being involved with adult education.

#### **About the Author**

Rebecca Hastings was born in Texas but has traveled extensively

both inside and outside the United States. She has been in education for 27 years as both a teacher and an administrator. She is retired and lives in Pasadena with her husband. She is currently teaching ESL in Adult Education through Harris County Department of Education.

## **Jigsaw Reading Using *Reader's Digest*®**

by Vicki Angel

I first learned about Jigsaw Reading at a Master Teachers' Institute which I attended last year. Instead of assigning an entire story or article to a class to read individually, the reading is divided up into passages and each student is assigned one passage to read silently. After the class has had enough time to read their passages, each student will give an oral summary of his individual passage to the class.

Instead of working with the class as a whole, you can group the students and have each group read a different article. Then each student in a group will share his passage from the article with the other students in his group. Another way to use groups is to assign each group a different passage from the same article and have one student from each group summarize the group's passage. Then you could ask if anyone in the group wanted to add to this summary.

I have used articles from the *Reader's Digest*® with my ABE/GED classes. They are not very lengthy, but they are generally about topics of interest to most students. The reading level makes most students comfortable with the vocabulary. Since they are reading with the purpose of summarizing, I find that having a specific purpose helps my students focus while reading.

I have discovered several advantages of Jigsaw Reading. One advantage is that each student's passage is relatively short and doesn't take much time to read. Another is that the students learn to look for the main ideas when reading. Jigsaw reading can also build cooperation among students. The student can learn about the entire article, even though he or she is only assigned a small portion to read. Also, students gain confidence in sharing with the class. The articles chosen can be from various content areas, such as science, health, geography or government. You may also want to use a particular reading as a springboard into a discussion of a particular topic and allow the students to share their own opinions about the subject.

#### **About the Author**

With a background in teaching math at the community college and secondary level, Vicki Angel joined the Bowie-Cass Adult Education Cooperative in Texarkana five years ago. She works with ABE and GED students. She is teaching at the Academic Learning Center and the Texarkana Youth Association. Vicki has completed the Master Teacher Institute and is currently a participant in the Special Learning Needs Resource Specialist Training Program and the Teacher Credential Program. She has a B.S. in Math from Sam Houston State University and an M.S. in Education and Math from East Texas State University at Texarkana.

## **WE NEED YOU! to Provide Reader Feedback**

Under the new name *Texas Adult & Family Literacy Quarterly*, TCALL hopes to continue serving the adult and family literacy community in our state with relevant, timely, and interesting articles and information. We also ask our readers to help us continually improve the quality and usefulness of this publication by responding to a reader feedback survey. Please visit TCALL's Website ([www-tcall.tamu.edu](http://www-tcall.tamu.edu)), where you will find in the home page "What's New" box a link to the *Quarterly* reader feedback survey, which will be available through the end of April.

# A Faith-Based Literacy Leader's Tutoring Experience

by Lester Meriwether

Perhaps the word "literacy" on the check had caught her eye. After I explained to the clerk that my work is to help churches help persons with literacy needs, she said, "My husband can't read." Immediately, I offered to help, and thus, began a two-and-a-half year journey through the Laubach Way to Reading.

I had been a promoter, a trainer, a minister encouraging churches to help people with literacy needs. Now, I was challenged with the opportunity to slow down my travel and invest more personally in the process. My "territory" was the whole state of Texas. Could I commit to meeting with an adult student once or twice a week? Could I trade breadth for depth?

My student was a disabled sixty-two year old veteran who often took phone messages at home for his wife. However, take them was all he did. He couldn't write them. He couldn't read his Bible or the newspaper, but he was willing to try to learn.

"This is a bird with a long tail and a round body. Say bird. This looks like a bird with a long tail and a round body. Say bird." Slowly we progressed through the consonants, then the vowels. I was amazed that an adult would really be interested in the stories in the little green, yellow, and blue readers. My student read them carefully and deliberately. Next, he moved to verses and chapters in his Bible and then on to newspaper articles. Along the way, he learned to write those messages for his wife, too.

He wasn't the only one who was learning. He was forty years older than I was. He had raised a family, fought in a war, and worked on an assembly line. His experiences were rich though not written. He became my teacher, too.

My calling as a minister is not the traditional one. As Executive Director of Literacy ConneXus, a nonprofit organization, I continue to promote literacy and train trainers. I still travel as a minister, encouraging churches to help people with literacy needs. I'm also teaching another adult to read better and teaching in my church's ESL program. Through my work with both churches and state literacy initiatives, I have discovered that we need each other. Together, we can accomplish more than we can separately. (See page 12 for a letter to Windcrest United Methodist Church regarding the impact of faith-based programs of English language learners.)

It's estimated that 3.8 million adults in Texas lack sufficient literacy skills. Texas LEARNS estimates that 108,000 plus are currently served through state-funded adult education

in Texas. No one knows how many are served through other programs (including faith-based). Probably, all told, fewer than 200,000 adults in Texas receive the assistance they require.

Sunday school. Perhaps you've participated. Did you know that Sunday school began in London in the eighteenth century as a response to child laborers who roamed the streets on their day off? Churches began to provide basic education to these children on Sunday. The idea spread to the United States. Now Sunday school has a different look. Times change.

I'm convinced that churches and other faith groups are greatly underutilized in helping persons with literacy needs across Texas. I'm confident that there are dozens of ways churches can help people with literacy needs, in addition to teaching basic literacy and ESL. Providing books to children in support of family literacy could transform the next generation of learners. Mentoring in schools changes lives, too. I also believe it is urgent that we advocate on behalf of education at the federal, state, and local levels.

A recent survey conducted by the Baylor Center for Literacy (Dr. Rob Rogers, Director) identified 158 literacy programs facilitated by churches in Texas. These were surveyed following more than 3,500 contacts with faith groups throughout the state. It's good to know that these programs help approximately 4,800 persons monthly. It's also obvious that more could be done. Just imagine: if 158 churches can help 4,800 persons, what could 1,000 do? 5,000? 10,000?

## About the Author

Lester Meriwether is Executive Director of Literacy ConneXus – a faith-based organization tasked to help churches help persons with literacy needs. Lester is a graduate of the University of North Texas (M.Ed. in Adult Education) and was on the writing team for the recent Content Standards project. He enjoys reading to his granddaughter, Olivia.

## BAYLOR CENTER FOR LITERACY

You can still respond to the survey of religiously-affiliated literacy programs mentioned in the above article. You will find a link to the survey on the Website of The Center for Literacy at Baylor University. The Center's Website also includes free resources on building capacity for literacy ministry in churches, how to start a church literacy program, and more.

**Baylor Center for Literacy Website:**  
[www.baylor.edu/social\\_work/literacy](http://www.baylor.edu/social_work/literacy)

# Church is Appreciated for Hosting ESL Class

by Paul D. Gonzalez and his ESL I Class

October 15, 2007

Windcrest United Methodist Church  
8101 Midcrown  
San Antonio, TX 78239

Dear Church Members:

On behalf of all of the students who have participated in ESL I classes at Windcrest United Methodist Church (WUMC) over the years, we would like to thank you for providing the facilities to accommodate our classes. Through your support, we have been able to fulfill our dreams of learning English, which has allowed us to read, write, speak and understand English.

There are many personal successes that can be counted among those who have attended classes at WUMC. Some of us who are parents can now attend parent/teacher conferences and are able to communicate with the teacher. We are able to help our children with homework in English. Being able to read to our children in English has improved their school success. In addition, we have become better members of the community because we understand the roles and how to communicate with the fire department, police department, banks, grocery stores and other necessities of daily life.

Through the generosity of WUMC many of us have successfully learned English, contributing to the economy of our adopted country. Over the years, some students who are professionally licensed doctors, dentists, teachers, musicians and business people have moved on to become licensed in their fields in the United States as a result of the ESL classes. Others have become successful tradesman as carpenters, electricians, plumbers, mechanics and workers in the agricultural field. We have gained the needed English skills to successfully practice our fields of expertise. Additionally, there are those students, who due to lack of schools in their country of origin, were not able to become literate in their native language. They have had the opportunity to become literate in English, move through the ESL classes, and become successful GED students.

As a result of attending the ESL classes, some of us have become citizens of the United States enabling us to vote and become part of our democratic society. For many, democracy is not something that has been a part of our lives before arriving in the United States. Through the generous Christian sharing of the facilities of WUMC, these students have been able to fulfill a dream of becoming active citizens and participating in our democratic process.

There is a saying in English that if you give a man a fish, he can eat for one day. However, if you teach him to fish, he can feed himself for a lifetime. The members of WUMC have no idea how many lives have been touched, how many families have been affected and how many success stories there are to tell as a result of the generous Christian giving on the part of the church members. Your generosity has not been overlooked and is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Paul D. Gonzalez, ESL I Teacher  
and 26 members of the ESL I Class, Fall 2007

If your religious or other community-based organization is considering beginning a literacy outreach program, TCALL's Clearinghouse Library can send you a free guide called ***New Beginnings: Creating and Establishing an Adult Literacy Program***. See the Free Resources section on page 21.

# Worthwhile - You Better Believe It!

by Kathleen Simmons

Most of my friends are a little envious of me. No, unfortunately it's not because of my looks or my money, it's because I am constantly telling them how much I love my job and find meaning in what I do. What a privilege it is in this day and age to be able to enjoy your work. The rewards of teaching adults and in my case, teaching immigrants English are too numerous to count. Some rewards are expected but then there are those that are totally unexpected.

Almost any ESL teacher will tell you that opening the door of opportunity for men and women through language is intensely gratifying. Seeing them begin to communicate, slowly and hesitantly at first but then confidently and proudly with other English speakers in their lives and in their communities is amazing to see. As English teachers, we are usually the first to experience this transformation. I've been lucky enough to be on the receiving end of someone's first attempts at forming a question or actually putting two or three sentences together to initiate an English conversation. With a smile and much head nodding, I've encouraged them to try, entreated them to continue when they would stumble or make a mistake and then seen the look of pride and accomplishment on their face when they were successful. And gratitude! The wonderful thing about adults is that they are very aware of what they are gaining in this process. Unlike teaching children (which has its own very special rewards), adults are able to appreciate what they are receiving, understand the importance of it, and recognize the blessings and opportunities that it will bring into their lives. My students are the most generous and appreciative people I've ever met. In a world where so many people take so much for granted (including myself), it's refreshing and very humbling at times to realize that you are impacting people and families in such a powerful and positive way.

My students are all learning English but their reasons for doing so are different. Each one of them has different ideas, different dreams and unique goals in their personal lives, and for them, learning English is the first and most important step in this process. It's a foundational step and one that they can build on in the future.

There are moments and conversations that have touched me in such a profound way that I doubt and certainly hope I'll never forget them. I remember a beautiful day during my first year of teaching when I was walking with a student to class. She was young and pretty, married with two little boys. She was telling me in her halting English how much she enjoyed the class and how much it was helping her. She said she was currently working at a restaurant as a dishwasher but that with my help and with her new English skills, she had a dream of becoming a hostess at the res-

taurant. She said she thought it would be so wonderful to talk to people as they came in and when they left. I was so taken aback and completely humbled by her words. I was aware at that moment of just how valuable a gift language can be to someone. She was a social person and being able to have conversations with customers was very important to her.

Another instance that happened recently was with a long-time student who has struggled with trying to learn English while being illiterate in her first language. This woman has been the most committed, eager, motivated student I've probably ever had. She has worked tirelessly for years at learning how to read and write. Although it's taken her longer and she's had to work harder than other students, she never gave up. Several months ago she took her citizenship test and passed! What an accomplishment for her, and what a change her education has made in her life and in her self-esteem. She is a strong, confident woman who pushed herself and never gave up – a lesson that she has taught me.

These are just two inspiring stories, there are dozens more, and I know that as I continue to teach, the stories will continue to inspire me. Does teaching English make a difference, is it worthwhile?

YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT!

## 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. She has a 23-year old married daughter.

## Would Your Adult Students Like to be Published Writers?

*Texas Adult & Family Literacy Quarterly* will continue the tradition of publishing an annual Success Stories issue each summer, a popular annual feature of *Literacy Links* since 2003. While program successes and teacher-written success stories such as Kathleen Simmons' article are often included, the particular goal of the Success Stories issue is to feature the stories of adult learners, written by the learners themselves.

If your adult learners would like to be published in *The Quarterly*, ask them to write their own stories of how success in learning has led to success as workers, citizens, and family members. Contact Quarterly Editor Peggy Sue Durbin for more information or to submit your learners' stories for the summer 2008 Success Stories issue. See back page of this *Quarterly* for Ms. Durbin's contact information.

# GED Students Need Hope and Confidence, Not Just Skills

by Deborah A. Mulvany

Close your eyes for a moment and imagine, what it must feel like to have no self esteem, no self-confidence, and no hope for yourself and for your future. Can you imagine feeling that way every day?

When many of our students come to us, they are already down on themselves and project a poor self-image. Some have made bad decisions for themselves, and have been told over and over again by parents, bosses, friends, family, probation officers, teachers and others that they have ruined their lives and “really messed up.” They have been told they will never amount to anything. Many of them have no positive role models or anyone in their lives to encourage them.

Three years ago I was hired to join a GED teaching team. I would teach English and literature while the other two teachers taught math, science, and social studies. I had worked with mostly intermediate students up to this point in my 24 year teaching career, and I thought I had seen and heard everything. However, I was in for a big surprise, and I was about to experience the most rewarding teaching job I have ever had.

The students slowly filed in class that first day of school in August. Like all students, they were apprehensive about returning to school. There weren't many smiles that first morning as many of them had only been in traditional classrooms where they had not experienced feelings of accomplishment or success. They had now made the decision to return to school by enrolling in a GED program. Wanting to make sure they had not made another bad decision, they sized us up with scared eyes, nervous laughter, well-guarded attitudes, and slightly defensive tones in their voices. They listened intently, but skeptically, as they weren't sure they could trust us just yet and wanted to make sure we were for real. They filled out registration forms and tended carefully to other tedious first day of school chores.

As time passed and I learned more and more about each student, I discovered that for some of them daily attendance in class was difficult. They would come when they could which sometimes was two or three days a week. Sometimes when they came, they could barely stay awake as they had worked late the night before or spent the night caring for their crying or sick child. They wanted to get their education and complete their GED, but their choices had dealt them a hard life. Often they came to class, they immediately fell asleep from exhaustion.

As I came to understand them more and feel more compassion for them, my expectations for them still remained high, but I learned to adjust the way I paced my lessons and

goals for each individual student and each day. When they could work hard, ready to tackle a concept, we would forge ahead with great stride. The individual help they received from the teaching team seemed to be the attention they wanted the most.

When we would work with them and encourage them, it seemed to sustain them for the next day or maybe even the next week. Just a few words of kindness had such a long lasting effect in their minds. “I knew you could do it,” “You did a great job today,” “We missed you yesterday, but we're glad you are here today,” “Thanks for working so hard today,” “You have accomplished so much, keep up the good work.” For some it had been a long time since they had heard words of encouragement, kindness and praise and, sadly, some have never heard those words before.

However, for many, they had never heard the powerful endearing words, “I am proud of you.” Such simple words really, but enough to catapult those young lives into a life of success, a life that has a future, and most of all a life that is finally filled with hope. They now had someone who was really proud of them, and they in turn could truly be proud of themselves.

Although this is the most rewarding teaching job I have ever had, it isn't about me. It's about the students who come to us without plans, without goals, without futures. It's about helping them make progress educationally and about giving hope to those who need it the most. It's about helping students become successful and productive. It's about giving them dreams for their life and future. It's about building self-esteem, self-confidence and about having someone in your life who knows YOU CAN DO IT.

## About the Author

Deborah A. Mulvany is currently a GED teacher in Pasadena ISD at Tegeler. This is her third year in this position, and she has found it to be one of the most rewarding jobs of her career. Her Bachelor of Science Degree is from Wichita State University, Kansas. She has been a teacher for 26 years and has taught in five different states: Kansas, Oklahoma, Illinois, Mississippi and Texas.

**Office of Citizenship Director,  
U.S. Citizenship & Information Services  
To Speak at English Literacy, Civics and Citizenship  
Teacher Training Conference -- May 30 in Houston**

Texas LEARNS will host a free one-day teacher training conference on behalf of the federal Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, to provide adult educators with the information they need to help their students prepare for the redesigned naturalization test. For more information on this FREE day-long conference with a target audience of EL Civics and Citizenship/Naturalization teachers, watch the calendars on TCALL's Website ([www-tcall.tamu.edu](http://www-tcall.tamu.edu)) or call 800-441-READ.

# Putting the Content Standards and Benchmarks to Work

by Ken Appelt, TCALL Professional Development Specialist

The November 2007 issue of *Literacy Links* focused on the new *Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks for ABE/ASE and ESL Learners (Implementation Guide)* available at <http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/taesp/guide/cover.html>). My article for the issue explained the essential terminology of the Texas Content Standards and Benchmarks and reviewed the history of Standards-Based Educational Reform in adult education. Now that we *have* content standards and benchmarks for Texas adult education programs, how do we *use* them within our programs and in our classrooms?

Content standards and benchmarks provide a means to communicate more clearly about the ongoing educational activities within Texas' adult education programs. It will take time for all of the teachers and administrators in Texas to become comfortably fluent speaking "Content Standards and Benchmarks," but the effort will be worthwhile. It will increase the accuracy of our communications about educational goals and instruction among teachers, between teachers and students, and between programs and the community.

Because *content standards* define "what is important for students to know and be able to do within a specific content area," (*Implementation Guide*, p. 114) we can put them to use during the new student orientation process. Adult learners come into adult education programs with a life goal in mind – to get a job, to learn English, to pass the GED, or to find a better job. Standards can help us describe clearly the educational steps learners will need to take to reach their life goals.

During intake and student orientation, we begin a conversation with students about their goals and the classes and services that the program offers. Using information from the intake interview and placement test results, the content standards can help us translate life goals into appropriate learning goals and an educational plan. However, since the Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks are *written for teachers*, it would be confusing to most adult learners if we shared them directly. Teachers will have to *translate* the content standards for students, put them into *context*, and *discuss* them when assessing progress and setting goals with students.

With students, begin by sharing the Examples of Proficient Performance found in the *Implementation Guide Version 1.0* (pp. 43-47 and pp. 75-81). These examples are written *to be shared with learners*. The examples will help learners "see" the progression of learning goals to be mastered and the skills they will need to develop to reach their life goals. The Proficient Performance examples for each of the con-

tent standards describe real-life activities and applications at each of the six NRS Educational Functioning Levels. Once learners can recognize their progress toward their overall goals, motivation often increases, and they begin to take more control of their own learning.

Content standards also help adult education programs communicate information about the services we provide to the broader community. The Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks reflect what the stakeholders of the adult education system believe should be taught and learned. We can now clearly say, "This is the educational content that we are committed to deliver to our clients."

The content standards and benchmarks are also important as teachers discuss, design and deliver instruction on the local level. Local programs have the responsibility to develop curricula and instruction that meets the needs of the students in the program. Curricula normally address learner and community needs and often suggest textbooks, teaching methods, learning activities, or sequence. The content standards describe *what* should be learned, but the local programs decide *how* that content can best be taught to meet the needs of the adult learners in their local programs.

Today we live in a highly mobile society, and content standards can simplify student transfers from one program to another. While local programs will have different ways of delivering instruction, the educational goals described by the Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks provide an overall, program-to-program consistency for the adult education system. It should make placing transfer students into classes easier, and it will make the transfer easier for our adult learners as well.

Learner-centered educational practice asks teachers to meet the students "where they are" and lead them toward their educational goals. To do this, teachers need as much information as possible about each student's skill level in many content areas. Placement and progress tests are not specific enough to reveal definite areas of need. However, teachers can use the Benchmarks to guide their classroom observations and determine a student's skill level on many tasks.

Teachers can use Benchmarks as a guide because they describe the abilities students are expected to demonstrate at each level of each strand of each content standard. The Texas Content Standards have been divided into sub-skill areas or *strands*. The strands represent areas of knowledge, skill, or a strategy that students need to develop to be able to meet the standard. For example, several of

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### *Putting the Content Standards..., continued from page 15*

the strands under the content standard **Read with Understanding** are *Determine Purpose*, *Vocabulary Development*, and *Decode and Recognize Words*. Every strand would have Benchmarks written for each of the six NRS levels that describe what a student should be able to do upon exiting that level. For each benchmark, real-life examples are provided which describe the kinds of tasks students should be able to perform at that level.

With information gathered by ongoing classroom observation and from the student's class work, teachers can use the benchmarks to determine the student's functioning level. You might discover that two students, who scored the same on the placement exam, are actually quite different in certain skill areas. One may be very good at decoding words but is a level or two lower in his or her vocabulary development. Another student may be just the opposite.

This is the kind of information that is useful if teachers are to meet students "where they are." The information can be used to decide what kind of individual assignments would be best for each student. This more detailed information can also be used when assigning students to work in pairs or on small group projects.

As Texas adult educators continue to work with the Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks in the classroom, they will discover many other ways to use them. When you make a discovery in your classroom as you continue to implement and experiment with content standards, be sure to share your discovery with others in your program. We would also love to hear about your discoveries at TCALL.

#### **References**

American Institutes for Research, Adult Education Content Standards Warehouse Project. (2005, August). *A Process Guide for Establishing State Adult Education Content Standards*. Developed under contract to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, available [http://www.adultedcontentstandards.ed.gov/Reference-Files/Guide/Adult\\_Education\\_Process\\_Guide\\_050907.pdf](http://www.adultedcontentstandards.ed.gov/Reference-Files/Guide/Adult_Education_Process_Guide_050907.pdf)

Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning, College Station, TX, Texas Adult Education Standards Project. (2007, June). *Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks for ABE/ASE and ESL Learners: Implementation Guide, Version 1.0*. Retrieved August 22, 2007 from the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning Web site: <http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/taesp/guide/cover.html>

## **If You Teach Adults in Texas, Join the "Teachers Only" E-mail Discussion List**

This email discussion list is for those who teach or tutor adults in basic or secondary education or English as a second language, including those in family literacy programs. It is open to administrators only if they actively teach at least one class of adult students.

The Teachers Discussion List was created for these purposes:

- To be the central point of distribution of information from Texas LEARNS and the Adult and Family Literacy Clearinghouse to teachers, from teachers to teachers, and from teachers to the Clearinghouse;
- To inform teachers of opportunities and resources for their professional development;
- For teachers to share ideas and thoughts about issues/concerns relevant to teaching adult education;
- To share resources and locally produced materials;
- To create a network of teachers helping teachers; and
- To help the Clearinghouse provide better services to teachers by receiving input from teachers about their needs.

All you need in order to subscribe is an email address. Send your subscription request to Lea Ann Schroeder ([lschroeder@tamu.edu](mailto:lschroeder@tamu.edu)). Be sure to include your first and last name as well as the name of your local literacy program.



# Lesson Plan for ESL

## Using the Texas Adult Education Content Standards

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### Grocery List for a Party!

*For a Lesson Plan Bank including this and many other lessons based on the Texas Adult Education Content Standards, visit TCALL's website ([www-tcall.tamu.edu](http://www-tcall.tamu.edu)). The Lesson Plan Bank located at <http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/taesp/lpb.html> includes lessons for ABE, ASE, and ESL learners. Teachers are invited to submit new lesson plans for possible inclusion in the Bank. Call 800-441-READ or email [TCALL@tamu.edu](mailto:TCALL@tamu.edu) for more information.*

#### Before you begin

**Setting:** ESL

**NRS Level(s):** Level 2: Low Beginning

**Open entry/exit:** Yes

**Context:** Family

**Standard(s):** ESL Convey Ideas in Writing

**Benchmark(s):** 1.2

**Objective:** To create a grocery list for a party.

**Materials:** Grocery store sale papers, picture dictionary

**Estimated time needed to prepare for this lesson plan:** 30 minutes

**Estimated time needed to complete this lesson plan:** 1 hour

#### The Lesson Plan

##### Introduce the lesson:

Ask who wants to have a party. Brainstorm about what type of food items you would want/need at a party. Have the students list them on the board. Ask questions like "Who uses lists? What kinds of lists?"

##### Teach the lesson:

Pass out grocery store sales paper. Have group make a list and plan a meal for the class. The students can use the dictionary, internet and other resources.

##### Practice the lesson:

Present the list to the class. Did they forget anything? Will it be a good meal?

##### Assess the lesson:

Matching exercise of vocabulary words/meaning. Have students write at least three do's and don'ts independently.

##### Apply the lesson to the real world:

Have the students bring a list to the next class time (ex. List of what they ate in one day).

## SUSTAINED SILENT READING (SSR)

**Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement Research on What Works in Schools.** Marzano, Robert J. (2004). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, insufficient background knowledge is a chronic cause of low achievement in reading. Drawing from 35 years of research, Marzano uses detailed vignettes to describe how a carefully structured combination of two approaches – sustained silent reading and instruction in subject-specific vocabulary – can help rescue low achievers and boost the academic performance of all students. Some of the tools described include: a five-step silent reading (SSR) program that extends through grade level 10; eight factors that determine the success of an SSR program; a six-step process for vocabulary instruction in the major disciplines; and the vocabulary terms that are critical to students' success in every academic subject.

**The SSR Handbook: How to Organize and Manage a Sustained Silent Reading Program.** Pilgreen, Janice L. (2000). Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook. It comes as no surprise that the students who read often are the students who read well. How, then, can we get the rest of our students reading? Is it enough to set aside in-class time for sustained silent reading? Or should we set up a more structured program, one that ensures *all* of our students are engaged in their reading and that they do so on a regular basis for the pleasure of it? Janice Pilgreen knows from hard-won experience that it takes a lot of time, effort, and know-how to put an effective sustained silent reading program into practice. In *The SSR Handbook*, she's done most of the work for you, not only providing an overview of the underlying research, but also reviewing eight essential factors that ensure a program's success. Pilgreen explicitly identifies these factors, then explains in detail how to incorporate them into your own program. The book also features lots of resources to help you implement your program, including support organizations, book clubs, classroom magazine subscription titles/addresses, favorite young adult series books within various genres, comic book titles, lower-level reading books for adolescents, and publishing company names, addresses, and phone numbers. Best of all, there are reproducible student and parent inventories, reading records, and other forms to assist you with the process. Readers will come away from this book with an understanding of what SSR is, why it's important, and how to implement it in their own schools and classrooms. Just as important, they will be motivated and energized enough to want to develop new programs or modify existing programs right away.

## JIGSAW METHOD

**All Sides of the Issue: Activities for Cooperative Jigsaw Groups.** Coelho, Elizabeth and Winer, Lise and Olsen, Judy Winn-Bell (1998). San Francisco, CA: Alta Book Center Publishers. Editorial Description: "A young Guyanese man seeks

permission to stay in the United States for a heart operation, but immigration officials refuse him an extension of his visitor's visa, believing he is involved with political groups that use violence . . . is this fair? Some say Columbus discovered America, but ancient stories from Europe claim the Vikings did. Who's right? Based on the principles of cooperative learning strategies, this dynamic resource promotes language development and critical thinking skills through photocopiable readings, discussions, and problem-solving activities on poignant issues from immigration to environmental pollution. Each of the five issues is presented from four points of view at four different language levels. Students work in cooperative jigsaw groups to discuss and present each side of the issue to their classmates." Book includes teacher's guide with introductory material about cooperative learning and the jigsaw approach, along with seven reproducible activities for use with multilevel classes.

**Callan's Thematic Jigsaws: Interactive, Multilevel Stories for ESL, Books 1 and 2.** Callan, Nancy (2006). San Francisco, CA: Alta Book Center Publishers. Available for two levels (beginner and intermediate), each book contains 16 stories that use the "zero prep" jigsaw form of instruction: the story is divided into four parts and distributed to small groups to learn. When these groups have mastered their material, they regroup to present the story as a whole. Ideally suited for multi-level classrooms, this jigsaw approach encourages every student, regardless of his or her level, to participate! Every lesson includes a variety of photocopiable comprehension worksheets, from group discussion questions and cloze exercises to sentence strips. Themes include: Family and Personal Information; Daily Routines; Housing; Health; Transportation; Clothes Shopping; Personal Descriptions; Banking, and more.

**Keep Talking: Communicative Fluency Activities for Language Teaching.** Klippel, Friederike (1998). San Francisco, CA: Alta Book Center Publishers. Designed for every level and age, the over 100 different exercises in this teacher resource include interviews, guessing games, jigsaw tasks, problem solving, values clarification techniques, mime, role play, and story telling. Quick-reference tables reflect the topic type, level, organization, preparation, and time needed for each activity, in addition to clearly listing everything with the individual activity and step-by-step procedure. A separate part contains photocopiable worksheets for instant availability and an introduction shares helpful advice.

## NEW FOR SCIENCE & MATH

**Dr. Art Does Science.** Sussman, Art (2006). San Francisco, CA: WestEd. This DVD companion to the book "Dr. Art's Guide to Science" (a separate Clearinghouse loan item) features the complete "Dr. Art's Planet Earth Show," combining exciting scientific demonstrations with audience participation to teach how our planet works. 90-minute video features 12 segments in which experiments, demonstrations, and animations illuminate key sci-

## 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](http://www-tcall.tamu.edu)). Call 800-441-7323 or email [tcall@tamu.edu](mailto:tcall@tamu.edu) to check out materials described here or to request hard copy listings of even more resources.

entific concepts and model effective ways to teach topics including elements, energy, magnetism, electromagnetism, static electricity, chemical reactions, respiration, carbon cycle, greenhouse effect, international emissions, and DNA.

***Dr. Art's Guide to Science: Connecting Atoms, Galaxies, and Everything in Between.*** Sussman, Art (2006). San Francisco, CA: WestEd. Illustrated with full-color graphics, this book offers engages learners in a journey into the awesome ideas of science. What does science tell us about our universe? How do atoms behave? What is DNA? And how are we connected to the stars? Using humor, Dr. Art shows why science is important while discussing concepts such as the carbon cycle and the connections between electricity, magnetism, and gravity. In the companion DVD, "Dr. Art Does Science" (a separate Clearinghouse loan item), key topics are further explored.

***Making Science Accessible to English Learners: A Guidebook for Teachers.*** Carr, John and Sexton, Ursula and Lagunoff, Rachel (2006). San Francisco, CA: WestEd. This guidebook is for science teachers of learners ranging from upper elementary through secondary level, who have ample knowledge of science standards and concepts, are comfortable with basic teaching and classroom management methodologies, but may have had limited preparation for teaching science in classrooms where at least some students are also English learners. The book offers science teachers guidance and concrete ways to help the English learners in their classrooms better learn the language and processes of science. Features include: charts of the most important language skills by developmental levels for English learners; specific strategies for promoting academic language and scientific discourse; concrete tips and tools for teaching science vocabulary; seven ways to scaffold English learners' understanding of science and differentiate instruction for different levels of English ability; classroom assessment techniques that lower communication barriers for English learners; and two integrated lesson scenarios demonstrating how to combine and embed these various strategies, techniques, and approaches.

***Reading and Writing the World with Mathematics: Toward a Pedagogy for Social Justice.*** Gutstein, Eric (2006). New York, NY: Taylor and Francis Group. "Mathematics education in the United States can reproduce social inequalities whether schools use 'basic-skills' curricula to prepare mainly low-income students of color for low-skilled service jobs, or 'standards-based' curricula to ready students for knowledge-intensive positions. And working for fundamental social change and rectifying injustice are rarely included in any mathematics curriculum. In contrast, Eric Gutstein argues [in this book] that mathematics education should prepare students to investigate and critique injustice, and to challenge, in words and actions, oppressive structures and acts. Gutstein offers a theoretical framework and practical examples for how math educators can connect schooling to larger sociopolitical contexts. Based on teacher-research, he explains how to teach mathematics to develop students' socio-political awareness and sense of

themselves as people who can contribute to meaningful social change." -- from the editorial description. See also "Rethinking Mathematics: Teaching Social Justice by the Numbers", a separate Clearinghouse Library title that includes teaching ideas, lesson plans, and reflections by math educators.

***Rethinking Mathematics: Teaching Social Justice by the Numbers.*** Gutstein, Eric and Peterson, Bob, Editors (2006). Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools. This is a companion to Gutstein's book, "Reading and Writing the World with Mathematics: Toward a Pedagogy for Social Justice", a separate Clearinghouse Library title. Book includes over 30 articles on how to weave social justice issues throughout the mathematics curriculum, as well as how to integrate mathematics into other curricular areas, deepening students' understanding of society and helping prepare them to be critical, active participants in a democracy. The book offers teaching ideas, lesson plans, and reflections by practitioners and mathematics educators.

## CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION

***Barriers and Promising Approaches to Workforce and Youth Development for Young Offenders: Toolkit.*** Brown, David and Maxwell, Sarah and DeJesus, Edward and Schiraldi, Vincent (2002). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation. This toolkit was created to address three objectives: identify barriers to success in juvenile justice -- both for the system and for the young people in it; survey innovative state and local policy initiatives; and showcase exemplary employment and development programs for court-involved youth. Toolkit includes three books: Overview outlining problems and identifying solutions; Program Profiles describing programs that display promising practices; and Policy Profiles highlighting creative uses of the public sector.

***Locked Up and Locked Out: An Educational Perspective on the U.S. Prison Population.*** Coley, Richard J. and Barton, Paul E. (2006). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service. This Policy Information Report describes the rising prison population and its characteristics, examines the status of prison education programs and their impact, and describes programs that try to help ex-prisoners reenter society. Section on "The Children of Prisoners" describes the effect on children when a father or mother is incarcerated, and gives examples of efforts to help children and families. Another section focuses on "The Special Case of the Black Male".

***Teaching on the Inside: A Survival Handbook for the New Correctional Teacher.*** Geraci, Pauline (2002). Scandia, MN: Greystone Educational Materials. The author describes this book as "not about how to teach offenders, but rather an overview of what it can be like to teach in a correctional setting." She also states that teaching inmates can be an "extremely rewarding," yet "daunting task." The author introduces new teachers to inmate

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*Welcome to Our Library, continued from page 19*

culture and its significance to correctional education, with chapters filled with advice and vignettes drawn from the author's experience. A teacher's self-assessment and bibliography are included.

***When Bonds are Broken: Family Literacy for Incarcerated Fathers and Their Children.*** Northampton Community College Adult Literacy Division (1993). Bethlehem, PA: Pennsylvania State Department of Education. This manual was developed for use in a 17-session family literacy program for incarcerated fathers and their children. The activities in the first eight sessions, which are designed to be completed before the children's first visit, are based on a mix of children's literature and reading materials dealing with child development and parenting. In session 9, the fathers are asked to write about their children's first visit and to complete activities dealing with reflective listening and communicating with children. Among the topics covered in the remaining sessions are the following: learning styles, newspaper reading, low-cost gifts for children, empowerment, reading to children, family communication, dealing with children's problems, problem solving, consequences, and natural and logical consequences.

***When Words Are Bars.*** Paul, Marianne (1991). Kitchener, Ontario, Canada: Core Literacy. Set of two publications is relevant to educators who work within correctional institutions. The Guide to Literacy Programming (120 pages) includes these topics: issues affecting learning behind bars, strategies to promote literacy, setting up a program, and continuing the service upon release. The accompanying Tutor Training Component (139 pages) contains 15 modules with ideas, tips, activities, and resource references to help workshop trainers prepare community tutors to work with students in correctional institutions.

## FAMILY LITERACY

***Family Math II: Achieving Success in Mathematics.*** Coates, Grace Dávila and Thompson, Virginia (2003). Berkeley, CA: Lawrence Hall of Science: University of California. Follow-up to 1986 Family Math publication presents mathematics activities, games, and investigations that provide a fresh approach to understanding algebra, number sense, geometry, and probability and statistics and help families learn and enjoy mathematics together. In these activities, parents learn ways to boost a child's success and confidence in mathematics. Also included are easy-to-follow instructions to organize family math classes.

***Guide to Improving Parenting Education in Even Start Family Literacy Programs.*** Powell, Douglas R. and D'Angelo, Diane (September 2000). Washington, DC: United States Department of Education. Developed in response to the growing body of research on parenting and children's school-related success, this guide provides a framework and suggestions for strengthening the quality and impact of parenting education services. It is intended for use by Even Start state coordinators, local program administrators, and program staff responsible for designing and implementing parenting education services. Included are: a content framework for parenting education in Even Start; illustrative practices for putting the content framework into action; and suggestions for measuring parenting education outcomes.

***¡Leamos! Let's Read! 101 Ideas to Help Your Child Learn to Read and Write, Bilingual Edition, Revised.*** Behm, Richard

and Behm, Mary (2000). Bloomington, IN: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English and Communication. With text in both English and Spanish, the suggestions in this book enable parents to help their child develop a lifelong love for reading and writing. Tips show how to make learning fun, help children succeed in school, and at the same time, build the parent-child relationship. This revision of the book originally published in 1993 includes a new preface by Josefina V. Tinajero, Associate Professor and Director of the Mother-Daughter Program at the University of Texas at El Paso.

***Read It Aloud! A Parent's Guide to Sharing Books with Young Children.*** Haas, Monty and Haas, Laurie Joy (2000). Natick, MA: The Reading Railroad. Written as a resource for parents, teachers, daycare providers, librarians, and everyone who shares books with children, the authors of this book draw on 25 years in the field of communication skill development and provide the tools, techniques, and skills to enrich communication at home through reading aloud and having fun in the process. The authors advocate what they call "performance reading" (vibrant reading filled with dramatic involvement to fire children's imagination) along with follow-up discussion, related activities, and word play.

***School-to-Home Idea Bags for the Kitchen.*** MacDonald, Sharon (2002). Grand Rapids, MI: McGraw-Hill Children's Publishing. Simple take-home cooking activities in this book are intended to help promote parent involvement in the learning process. Book includes all the reproducibles needed to create dozens of Idea Bags -- brown paper lunch bags filled with recipes parents can prepare at home with their kids. Each Idea Bag includes: a simple recipe designed to help parents reinforce math, language, and science concepts; step-by-step instructions that allow parents to present each concept with knowledge and confidence; a list of common, inexpensive ingredients; and fun cooking facts and questions to share with children.

***Stories of Impact: Improving Parent Involvement Through Family Literacy in the Elementary School.*** NCFL (2004). Louisville, KY: National Center for Family Literacy. This publication highlights the many successes of parents, children and teachers through the Toyota Families in Schools program, implemented in 45 Title I elementary schools. The book examines how family literacy impacts children's outcomes by engaging parents in schools while also supporting parents' efforts to improve their own skills. Also included is a look at the many public policy and funding opportunities that impact program sustainability. But the most important stories of impact are those that come from the students themselves, included throughout the book as a testament to the power of parent involvement.

***Teaching Your Child to Love Learning: A Guide to Doing Projects at Home.*** Helm, Judy Harris and Berg, Stacy and Scranton, Pam (2004). New York, NY: Teachers College Press. The authors describe proactive steps parents can take to provide children with meaningful experiences that will result in growth and family fun by doing meaningful and exciting projects in their home and community. Book features: an explanation of the benefits to parents and children of doing projects together; ideas on transforming the home into a place to learn; appropriate expectations and how to build a child's skills in reading and writing, mathematical development, scientific thinking, and more; and ideas for adapting the project approach for use in family day care centers, home schooling, and gifted education.



“The materials are up-to-date and excellent.”

Luann Slover  
Teacher

Windham School District, Roach Unit

## Things to Send For. . .

### BEGINNING A LITERACY PROGRAM

**New Beginnings: Creating and Establishing an Adult Literacy Program.** Normand, Amy J., Executive Editor (June 2002). San Marcos, TX: Volunteers in Training for Adult Literacy. This compact guide was created to assist literacy groups, school districts, community-based, and faith-based organizations in the process of beginning an adult literacy program in their community. It is designed for groups who have never experienced the process of starting a nonprofit organization and have little or no background knowledge of adult literacy, adult basic or secondary education, English as a Second Language, or GED Preparation. Chapters were written by Texas adult education practitioners and include: Program Planning (Amy Normand); Fund Development (Connie Munn); Volunteer Recruitment and Retention (Jean Villa); Tutor Training (Robert Pinhero); Student Recruitment, Orientation, and Retention (Janell Baker); Literacy and Adult Basic Education (Cletis Tatum); English as a Second Language (UT-San Antonio ESL Professional Development Center Staff); and Adult Secondary Education and GED (Jeanni Pruitt).

### SUSTAINED SILENT READING

**Sustained Silent Reading: A Useful Model.** This article by Susanne Campagna was featured in the November 2005 issue of *Focus on Basics*, published by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. Teaching reading, writing, and math while allowing learners to stay focused on their individual goals requires careful planning, excellent time management skills, and flexibility. This is no easy task when an instructor sees her students a mere 10.5 hours a week or less. So why, you might ask, would our program set aside an hour and a half of instructional time every week to have our students engage in sustained silent reading?

**Modified Sustained Silent Reading - Does it benefit beginning learners of English?** This conversation with FOB was featured in the March 2005 issue of *Focus on Basics*, published by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. One of the many research projects carried out at NCSALL's National Adult ESOL Labsite, or Lab School, in Portland, Oregon, focused on beginning-level reading. The research project tested the use of sustained silent reading (SSR) as a methodology for teaching reading to very beginning learners of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Classes were conducted by Portland Community College (PCC). Sandra Banke, one of the teacher/researchers in the project, and Reuel Kurzet, professional development associate/researcher for the project and chair of PCC's English as a second language (ESL) department, spoke to *Focus on Basics* about the project and what they learned from it.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING WITH ADULTS

**Adult Learning in Cohort Groups.** Imel, Susan (2002). Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. A form of group learning – cohorts – has emerged as an attractive option for administrators, instructors, and participants. Cohorts are usually defined as groups of students who enroll at the same time and go through a program by taking the same courses at the same time. This ERIC Practice Application Brief highlights findings from research and theory on adult learning cohorts to examine how cohorts are structured or formed and the experience of the learning process within cohorts. Recommendations for practice are provided.

**Considering Culture in the Selection of Teaching Approaches for Adults.** Ziegahn, Linda (2001). Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. Adult educators are increasingly committed to designing learning that takes into account cultural differences. This ERIC Digest examines the different dimensions of culture that are relevant to the adult learning context, speaking primarily to the case of the United States, including both the personal cultures of learners and educators, and the culture of the larger social political environment. It explores how cultural values permeate instruction and looks at several approaches that take culture into account.

**Teaching Style vs. Learning Style.** Brown, Bettina Lankard (2003). Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. Teaching and learning styles are the behaviors or actions that teachers and learners exhibit in the learning exchange. Over the years, questions about the congruence of teaching and learning styles and the potential for flexibility in their use have surfaced: Do the teaching styles of teachers match students' learning styles? Can individuals learn effectively when instructional delivery does not match their preferred learning style? Can teaching and learning styles be adapted or modified? These and similar questions are explored in this publication from the ERIC Myths and Realities series.

### CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION

**Current Issues in Correctional Education: A Compilation and Discussion.** Spangenberg, Gail (February 2004). New York, NY: Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy. This paper is based primarily on interviews and subsequent consultations with 15 national and state leaders in correctional education. Its purpose is to help focus attention on the need for more and better correctional education in America and to open the door to a fresh consideration of policy development, the need for increased and better-directed funding, and more effective advocacy for correctional literacy and adult education services.

**Educating Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students in Correctional Settings.** Collier, V. P. and Thomas, W. P. (2001). Moscow, ID: Northwest LINCS Project. Originally published in the *Journal of Correctional Education* {52(2), 68-73}, this article provides an overview of the unique academic and sociocultural challenges of serving linguistically and culturally diverse populations in a correctional setting, particularly immigrants or those from a bilingual/bicultural community with ancient ethnolinguistic roots. Teaching strategies are suggested, such as the use of learners' life stories and building new knowledge on the learners' their existing linguistic and cultural knowledge.

**Education Reduces Crime: Three-State Recidivism Study Executive Summary.** Steurer, Stephen J. and Smith, Linda G. (February 2003). Lanham, MD: Correctional Education Association and Management & Training Corporation. From Preface: “With the increased numbers of inmates crowding our jails and prisons, it is imperative for the public to reconsider the traditional view of the purpose of incarceration. Rather than accepting the old adage of locking them up and ‘throwing away the key,’ we must consider recent research findings that show many prisoners can be rehabilitated, through education and training, and eventually contribute constructively to society upon reentry. These studies are demonstrating that prison can be a place where criminals are transformed into law-abiding citizens, productive workers, and good parents. If you think this is important, continue reading.” The complete Three State

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Recidivism Study report published in 2001 is also available on loan from the Clearinghouse Library.

**Employment-Focused Programs for Ex-Prisoners: What Have We Learned, What Are We Learning, and Where Should We Go from Here?** Bloom, Dan (July 2006). New York, NY: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation. Each year, more than 600,000 people are released from prison. The obstacles to successful reentry are daunting, starting with the challenge of finding stable work. Indeed, a large proportion of released inmates return to prison within a relatively short time. In recognition of the enormous human and financial toll of recidivism, there is new interest among researchers, community advocates, and public officials in prisoner reentry initiatives, particularly those focused on employment. In May 2006, the National Poverty Center at the University of Michigan hosted a meeting — “Research on Prisoner Reentry: What Do We Know and What Do We Want to Know?” — to discuss the state of research on employment-focused prisoner reentry programs. This paper, written as background for the meeting, reviews previous research, describes some planned or ongoing evaluations, and proposes some ideas for future research.

**Transition Programs: Bridging the Gap.** Hudson River Center for Program Development, Inc. (1998). Albany, NY: University of the State of New York. New York’s state education department administers education programs for youth age 16-20 incarcerated in county and municipal correctional facilities. This document was developed to share the collective wisdom and experience of education professionals who have successfully guided the transition of hundreds of incarcerated youth and adults back to the community. Key elements of transition programs are identified in the areas of providing instruction, promoting job readiness, and creating a supportive network. Characteristics of the effective transition coordinator are also discussed in terms of meeting the needs of both clients and the community.

#### PARENTING VIDEOS FROM THE I AM YOUR CHILD SERIES

*In 1997, Rob and Michele Reiner joined forces with leading child development experts to help raise public awareness about the critical importance of the prenatal period through the early years in a child’s healthy brain development. Already a renowned film director, Reiner turned his talents to helping educate parents on this and other topics of interest to the caregivers of our youngest children. The critically-acclaimed I Am Your Child series began with the release of The First Years Last Forever in 1997. The star-studded series has grown throughout the years to comprise 13 productions in English and 11 in Spanish, published by Parents’ Action for Children.*

*Contact the Clearinghouse Library to request a free copy of any of the videos described below. Each video is between 24 and 32 minutes long. All are available on videotape, with a smaller supply of some titles on DVD. Many are available in Spanish as well as English, and come with a booklet summarizing the content.*

**A Child with Special Needs** - Sylvester Stallone hosts families of children with special needs who share their stories to help others in similar circumstances understand that, while every child is unique, there are common experiences, emotions, and challenges they are likely to encounter as they work to help their child. Spanish language version is hosted by Cristina Saralegui.

**Discipline: Teaching Limits With Love** - Pediatrician Dr. T. Berry Brazelton shows parents that setting limits is not punishment, but a loving way to teach a child how to control his or her own behavior. Subjects include: why a child actually looks for limits; why a firm but gentle approach is most effective; and how parents can manage their own emotions and avoid physical punishment. Spanish language version is hosted by former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Antonia Novello.

**The First Years Last Forever** - Host Rob Reiner helps new parents understand the importance of the first three years of life in the healthy development of their children. Video summarizes brain research and gives parents specific tips on how to build stronger bonds with their babies. This video covers a wide range of parenting topics including: bonding and attachment, communication, discipline, self-esteem, health and nutrition, and child care. Spanish language version is hosted by Gloria Estefan.

**Food and Fitness Matter: Raising Healthy, Active Kids** - Host Julia Louis-Dreyfus provides parents with information and support they need to improve children’s health and wellness. Spanish language version is hosted by George Lopez.

**Preparing for Parenthood** - Whoopi Goldberg hosts this video explaining the importance of prenatal care and showing expectant parents how to give their baby the best chance for a healthy start to life. Spanish language version is hosted by Lili Estefan.

**Quality Child Care: Making the Right Choice for You and Your Child** - Host Maria Shriver shares information on why quality child care is important, what parents should look for when choosing child care, questions to ask a potential caregiver, and important information to communicate to a caregiver. Spanish language version is hosted by Cristina Saralegui.

**Ready to Learn: Essential Tips for Early Literacy** - Hosts Jamie Lee Curtis and LeVar Burton show parents and caregivers many things they can do to help build a child’s literacy skills from the time he is born. Spanish language version is hosted by Edward James Olmos.

**Safe From the Start** - Gloria Estefan shows parents and caregivers how to keep children safe from accidental injuries. The video includes information on automobile child safety seats, toy and gun safety, and provides practical advice to keep children safe both inside and outside the home. Spanish language version is hosted by Andy Garcia.

**Stop Smoking Now: Reasons Not to Smoke When You’re Pregnant.** Host Rob Reiner emphasizes the reasons a woman should stop smoking before or when pregnant. Video provides support, guidance, and information about resources to help resist the urge to smoke.

**To Be a Father.** Host Ray Romano features information on what fathers can do to help promote and participate in their young children’s healthy development. Spanish language version is hosted by Antonio Banderas.

**Your Healthy Baby.** Children’s health and nutrition is the focus of this video. Host Phylicia Rashad discusses children’s changing health needs as they grow and provides useful information on prenatal care, breastfeeding, visiting the pediatrician, children’s nutritional needs and exercise. Spanish language version is hosted by Cristina Saralegui.

Also available free from the Clearinghouse – but in very limited supply – is **Building a Healthy Start: A Parent Educator’s Manual for the I Am Your Child Video Series.** This book and CD-ROM were developed in association with Zero to Three to help parent educators most effectively use the I Am Your Child video series. 84-page manual offers detailed activities for sessions with parents or caregivers, and tips on how to run effective sessions. A section is devoted to each video and includes: Overview of the Video; Using the Video; Introductory Activity; Other Activities; Closing Activity. The accompanying CD-ROM contains an extensive set of over 40 printable and reproducible handouts for use in the education sessions. The manual includes training modules for these six videos: The First Years Last Forever; Discipline; Ready to Learn; Safe from the Start; Quality Child Care; and Your Healthy Baby.

Last, Rob Reiner hosted a 10-minute video, **Why Early Childhood Matters: Inspiring Action in Your Community,** in which leaders in government, business, crime prevention, and academia voice their commitment to our nation’s youngest children and emphasize the crucial need for increased investments in early childhood.

# Click on Over. . .

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



**GCF LEARN FREE.** Supported by the Goodwill Community Foundation, this website offers Everyday Life interactive lessons that give learners the opportunity to experience daily challenges without real-world consequences. Lessons in the growing database include such topics as using an automatic teller, completing a bank deposit form, filling out a job application, and using a bus map. A short tutorial helps low-literacy learners understand how to complete the lessons, which have both audio and text directions. GFC Learn Free also offers a Computer Training section with such topics as computer basics, Internet safety, and many popular software programs. The Computer Training lessons are primarily text and screenshot-based, so may not be appropriate for all learners; however, they are moving to a video-based lesson format with supplemental text. And don't worry – when you create a site user account, CFC Learn Free promises they will never share your information with others or email you unless you request their newsletter. [www.GFCLearnFree.org/](http://www.GFCLearnFree.org/)

**COMPUTER-BASED INTERACTIVE LITERACY ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS IN FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMS.** On the National Center for Family Literacy Website ([www.familit.org](http://www.familit.org)), use the site search feature to find "Using Computers". (Developed by National Center for Family Literacy, this is also available as a book that can be checked out from TCALL's Clearinghouse Library.)

## FREE ONLINE GAMES AND ACTIVITIES YOUNG CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS CAN DO TOGETHER

On the Fisher Price Website ([www.fisherprice.com](http://www.fisherprice.com)), see the menu link to "Fun & Family Time."

Funbrain – Family Education Network sponsored by Pearson Education. [www.funbrain.com](http://www.funbrain.com)

Hamster Tours – by children's book author Peggy Rathman. [www.hamstertours.com](http://www.hamstertours.com)

Learning Games For Kids – multiple sponsors offering a multitude of free games. [www.learninggamesforkids.com](http://www.learninggamesforkids.com)

LiteracyCenter.net Play and Learn – nonprofit site with variety of lessons and exercises. [www.literacycenter.net](http://www.literacycenter.net)

MaMaMedia - safe and fun learning activities that encourage kids to create, play, publish, and share online. [www.mamamedia.com](http://www.mamamedia.com)

Nellie Edge: Excellence in Kindergarten - Nellie Edge is a kindergarten teacher researcher, literacy coach, nationally recognized early literacy trainer, storyteller, musician, and recording artist. [www.nellieedge.com](http://www.nellieedge.com)

Nickelodeon's Nick Jr. Website – free games and activities (some educational, some bilingual) based on popular children's television shows. [www.nickjr.co.uk](http://www.nickjr.co.uk)

**PARENTS' SECTION OF THE READING IS FUNDAMENTAL WEBSITE** – resources to help parents motivate their children from preschool throughout their school years, from the oldest and largest children's and family nonprofit literacy organization in the nation. <http://rif.org/parents>

**PARENTS' SECTION OF VERIZON'S THINKFINITY LITERACY NETWORK** – fun, interactive resources to support early literacy and vocabulary development, plus learn easy ways to incorporate literacy activities into everyday routines. Look for the Parent Resources section on the the Thinkfinity home page ([www.thinkfinity.org](http://www.thinkfinity.org)).

**PBS KIDS** – stories, games, and printable activities based on Public Broadcasting System's children's programs. <http://pbskids.org>

**SUSTAINED SILENT READING** helps develop dependent readers (and writers). Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) -- or DEAR (Drop Everything And Read), as some people call it -- can be one more tool for developing lifelong readers. Article includes links to related resources. [www.educationworld.com/a\\_curr/curr038.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/curr038.shtml)

**USING NEWSPAPER ARTICLES COMMUNICATIVELY IN THE ESL CLASSROOM.** Newspaper articles are a readily available way of introducing students to real and topical English in the classroom. This article offers one way of exploiting newspaper articles based on a variation of the classic jigsaw reading technique in which the class is divided into groups and each group is given a different article to read which they then have to explain to others in the class. The variation on jigsaw reading presented in this article offers teachers a way of maximising student involvement and of covering the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Clifton-Newspaper.html>

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