



# TEXAS Adult & Family Literacy QUARTERLY

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Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy & Learning, Texas A&M University



## Success Stories

Annual Issue Highlighting Adult Learner, Teacher, and Program Success in Texas

### Celebration of Reading

by Lester Benton

*(This speech was given by Mr. Benton at the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy's annual Celebration of Reading in Houston on April 22, 2010.)*

Thank you, Mrs. Bush. I am very honored to be here tonight.

I have struggled with my reading since I was in elementary school right here in Houston. I was a pretty good student in math and science, but reading was always a problem for me.

I was labeled a slow learner when I was about 12 years old and put in an alternative school. The chance to learn stopped with that school where all we did was play games.

By the time I convinced my mother to help get me back into regular school, I was two years behind. I was moved along in high school and graduated, and I tried college—but it didn't work out. All my life I was embarrassed about my reading and writing problems, and I hid them away as best I could.

But these problems affected my life in many ways, from my marriage to my ability to make a good living. I had low paying jobs for most of my life. My family always knew I had a problem and tried to help me. I always asked them for help with spelling and I relied on them to help me understand the meaning of words.

You see, for me, words were just words on paper. I couldn't grasp the meaning of them when they were strung together.

*continued on page 2*



Lester Benton; President and Mrs. Bush  
*(Picture courtesy of David Shutts Photography)*

### *Celebration of Reading, continued from page 1*

And then, two things happened that changed my life. My sons, Kevin and Christopher helped me with reading as they were developing their own reading skills.

Two years ago, Christopher, when he was just eight years old and in the third grade, was helping me with the meaning of some words. He said to me, "Dad, you are *old*, why can't you read?"

I realized at that moment that I was going to go somewhere to find someone to help me.

I had always believed that I was smart enough to fix my problem if someone could help me figure it out. I knew I couldn't do it on my own. I googled READING on the computer and began to search for help. And...I found it. I found Literacy Advance of Houston and in a very short time, after putting aside the embarrassment about my reading and writing, I was working with my first volunteer tutor.

Lucky for me, he was a Frenchman. He would say to me "you have to fall in love with the story." One day, he had me read a section in a book and then write down what it meant to me. I read and I wrote—crossed it out, wrote it again and crossed it out. This continued until I finally wrote something that really made sense to me.

I realized I had just written the first paragraph I could remember. Tears came to my eyes, and I could not stop crying.

My second tutor, Pat McCracken, who is here tonight, has helped me make more progress in my reading skills. I finished reading my first book, *The Things They Carried*, a wonderful book about soldiers in the Vietnam War by Tim O'Brien. I learned what it is like to "fall in love with a story."

After all the years of struggling, my life has changed. I am taking courses at Houston Community College. I will get my degree, one course at a time. I have the best job I have ever had at Walgreens Distribution Center. I have been able to grow in my job because of my new skills and the confidence I have in myself.

Over the years, my wife and I encouraged our children to learn to read and to do the best they can in everything they do. My children are here tonight — my sons, Kevin and Christopher, and one of our daughters, Jessica. Our other daughter, Elsa, who is studying to be a CPA, lives in Washington, DC. When Jessica was in high school her teachers called us in to tell us she was an exceptional student — I was afraid that meant she was in *trouble*.

Jessica earned her degree in Chemical Engineering from RPI, and in June, she will receive her MBA from Stanford. I hope you will allow me, the proud father, to ask my family to stand so I can introduce them to you.

In our city, there are thousands of people like me who have serious problems with reading and writing. I hope my experience will teach my children and others that it is never too late to learn and that you should never, ever give up.

I no longer feel the shame as I am able to read and write. I continue to push myself, and I know I can overcome any problem standing in my way.

I want to thank everyone at Literacy Advance for changing my life.

And I want to thank Barbara Bush and all of you here tonight who support the essential cause of literacy.

Thank you very much.

*(Email received from Jane Holston April 29, 2010)*

*Lester first came to Literacy Advance on April 15, 2008. On April 22, 2008 he started class with volunteer tutor Hervé Chain, where he was tested and his reading and writing skills revealed a level 3 ABE. Through hard work and dedication, Lester advanced to a level 4 ABE at the end of his first 12 weeks of classes. Many skills characterize each literacy level and Lester continued to gain in proficiency within level 4. He tested earlier this month at a level 5 ABE.*

*Lester is now able to write emails and reports at work. His manager said during a staff meeting, that Lester is one of her best employees; he reads and responds to her emails, and his reports are very descriptive and well written. Lester has provided for his family all his adult life; his daughter Jessica will be receiving her Masters from Stanford next month. Now is Lester's time.*

*Please enjoy this photograph with President and Mrs. George Bush, as well as the text of Lester's presentation.*

*I hope you will share this and pass it on. Thank you for helping us to achieve our mission to transform lives through the doorway of literacy.*

For more information about Lester's inspirational story, please visit...



*Transforming lives and communities through the doorway of literacy.*

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# Letter From Guest Editor

by Federico Salas-Isnardi, TCALL Adult Literacy Specialist

Dear Readers,

Our annual Success Stories issue is sure to inspire students and educators alike. Those of us who have committed our lives to the cause of literacy and adult education will rediscover in many of the stories of student success the reasons why we chose to work in this field. Students reading these pages will be inspired to continue striving reassured that they too can overcome obstacles and succeed.

Student success comes in many different shapes, and we find that each personal story inspires us in different ways. Some stories will be the motivation needed to keep trying; other stories will show us new ways to reach our students; reading the obstacles faced by some will put our own in perspective, helping us to go on.

It is a fascinating problem to have when we, at TCALL, cannot decide which story of success should be featured on the first page of *The Quarterly*: should it be the inspiring story of Anna, an educated Russian immigrant who within a year of her first ESL classes at Literacy Advance won a national award for her gift of talent and time to volunteer countless hours for her program? Should it be the story of Lester, a husband and father struggling to make sense of the written word who enlists his family's help for years before deciding to take classes and learn to read?

In these pages, we read the story of Henry, from Temple, who at 81 years of age will be the "senior of seniors" when he receives his GED this year nearly 65 years after he stopped going to school to join the army. This is a man who does not let age be an excuse not to achieve one's dreams. As Suzanne Barnes, of Temple College, says, Mr. Henry "is a reminder of why we love doing what we do in [adult] education."

We also meet Esther, who refused to give up in spite of overwhelming odds and who overcame a history that included kidnapping and an unsupportive mother to tell us without hesitation that "nothing is impossible when you have a goal in your life." After working in manufacturing for over 30 years, Esther got her GED and is now pursuing her goal to be an oncology nurse!

There are many other student success stories in this issue along with an article of how a successful teacher helped students create their personal storybooks to get them interested in writing. We read the students' voices expressing the pride and excitement of writing their own stories. Another teacher shares her success using the magazine *The Change Agent*, which regularly publishes stories written by students, as a catalyst to generate student writing in her own class. TCALL subscribes to *The Change Agent* and you can ask for a copy to see what kind of student generated writing is published by that magazine.

As in the past, the stories of adult learners' successes are published in their own words respecting their voices, making only the minor corrections necessary to render the story easier to read and understand. The adult learners' words remain essentially as they were submitted.

We are asked often why we publish an annual issue with stories of success. The reason is simple: the stories of our students remind us of the value of our work and the impact adult education has in the lives not only of those whom we teach but also their families for generations. If teachers share *The Quarterly* with their students the issue will help other learners who see stories they can relate to. The stories of program and teacher success give us the models needed to work harder in our efforts to improve our programs and our professionalism. At TCALL we believe in the power of sharing our stories of success to inspire us in the important work we do.

Enjoy your reading!

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# 81-Year-Old Uses Lifetime of Learning to Earn GED

by Janice Gibbs, reprinted from Temple Daily Telegram, May 27, 2010

When Fred Henry, 81, walks across the stage during the GED graduation ceremony at Temple College on Friday he'll be the senior of the seniors. Henry left Ralls High School to join the Marines in the 1940s and was sworn in six days after he turned 17. "I really wanted to join up," he said. "I got in after the war was over, but during the occupation."

In addition to a number of other jobs, including farming, Henry worked in commercial refrigeration for 42 years, running his own companies. "Then he decided he didn't want to stay home all day so he went to work for La Quinta for seven years," said his wife of 18 years, Lila Henry.

In his spare time, Henry takes care of his dog, tends to his garden and on occasion entertains the diners at the French Quarter with his harmonica-playing abilities. It wasn't until recently, Henry said, that he's had the time to even think about going back to school.

Henry went to TC to sign up for a computer class and found that since he didn't have a high school diploma he would have to get a GED. The GED is a high school equivalency diploma. Henry approached the situation like many older adults, believing they are too old to get their GED, said Suzanne Barnes, TEAMS coordinator at Temple College. "He flew through the program," Barnes said. "He was very diligent and super nice."

Now when people come in with the belief they are too old, Barnes said she can use Henry as an example that age has little to do with the ability to succeed. "It's about determination, and Henry was fabulous," she said. Henry said the only part of the GED that he was concerned about was the English.

"I knew enough to pass the tests ... I think most of us know more than we think," he said. "Henry's life experiences helped him succeed," Barnes said. Running his own business made him proficient in many of the skills tested. Henry completed the necessary work for the GED in about three weeks, was able to take his first computer course and has plans to take more.

"Mr. Henry was one of the best — if not the best — success stories of the ABE program this year," said Kay Hall Snipes, Adult Basic Education instructor. "He was a pleasure to work with and a true asset to our program."

Patrick Finnegan, Adult Basic Education coordinator, will be the guest speaker at the graduation ceremony. Finnegan said he will be talking about overcoming challenges. There are people who

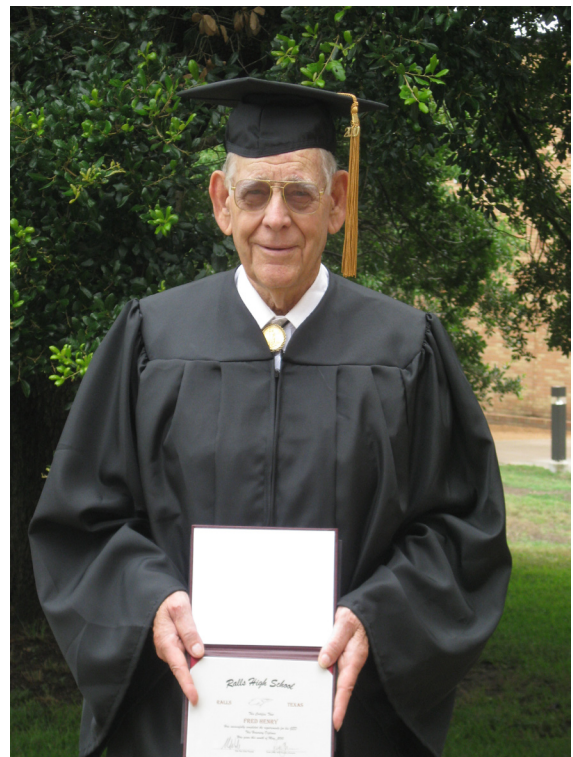
make it from kindergarten through high school with no problems, while others are not so fortunate, Finnegan said. "This is a group of people who may have gotten knocked off track, but are back on track because that's where they want to be," he said of the graduates.

It's also important to recognize the families who have supported these students during this effort, Finnegan said. On Friday, Henry's family, some from out of town, will attend the GED graduation to see him walk across the stage in his cap and gown. "We're very proud of him," Mrs. Henry said.

The ceremony is at 6 p.m. Friday at the Mary Alice Marshall Performing Arts Center on the TC campus. The public is invited.

## About the Author

Ms. Gibbs is a staff writer for the Temple Daily Telegram. You may contact her at [jgibbs@tdtnews.com](mailto:jgibbs@tdtnews.com) or 254-778-4444 ext. 288.



In the picture Mr. Henry is holding an honorary diploma from Ralls High School, this is where he would have graduated from, 40+ years ago. The article didn't mention it because it was a surprise on graduation night.



# Nothing is Impossible

by Esther Ramos

My name is Esther Ramos. I am from Mexico. When I was eight years old my mother left us and came to the United States. I was in third grade. Two weeks after my mother left, I stopped going to school to take care of my brothers and sister. At that time, one brother was three, my sister was five, and my littlest brother was nine months old. There was nobody at home to take care of them. I did everything like a mother would do. My father worked all day in the sugarcane fields so we were alone most of the time. Every week he gave me money to buy food and other things we needed. And since that time, I have taken care of my siblings like my own kids.

My mother came back six years later and kidnapped us because she wanted to bring us to the United States without anybody's permission. My brothers didn't even know who she was. I remember looking out the back window of the taxi seeing my father running after us to try and stop her from taking us.

When we got to Chicago, we had to live in a closet for two years because my uncle's wife did not let us go into the living room or into the kitchen. We got very hungry and bored. When everybody left, I would get food from the refrigerator and give it to my brothers and sister. One night when my mother came home, I told "the kids" to stay in the closet while I went to take an English class at an adult school. My mother didn't like it and told me it was a waste of time. I met this lady in the class. She was a student, too. She asked me how old I was and I told her I was 14. She told me I wasn't supposed to be there, so she helped us enroll in school. I was first put in seventh grade and then they moved me to the eighth grade. I liked school a lot and wanted to go to high school, but my mother told me she didn't believe in education for girls. I tried to go anyway, but she wouldn't give me the bus money to go and it was too far to walk.

My mother wanted me to get a job and help pay for food. I found a cashier job at a small grocery store. The lady told me I was too young, but let me work for food. Every Friday, I could go around the store and pick out what we needed for the week.

When I was 15, I met my husband. He asked me out on a date, but I told him I couldn't because I had three kids. He told me I was too young to have kids, so I told him my story. So from that time, all five of us went places together. He paid for everything. We got married when I was 18 years old and my siblings moved in with us. Since that time, my husband has been like a father to them. In the beginning of our marriage we didn't want kids. We had plenty of kids at home. I was 22 when I had my first of three girls. After

I got married, I found a job in a company that made laminator equipment for offices. I worked for that company for 30 years until it closed. To help with finding a new job, they gave me the opportunity to go to college. But to go to college, I first needed my GED.

After we moved to Texas, I came to the Kyle Learning Center to get my GED with no academic skills and no hope of getting it. I went to class everyday in the morning and in the evening. I worked hard. My husband and I didn't have much money, so I walked back and forth to school from home. I studied for the GED in English, but took it in Spanish. But because I learned so much of my math in English, I had to learn to read and understand math applications in Spanish! I got my GED in January 2010.

Now I am attending a technical college because I want to be a medical assistant. The reason I want to be a medical assistant is because when my daughter was 11 years old she was diagnosed with bone cancer. She had chemotherapy and radiation. I know how much she suffered! I decided to become an oncology nurse to help everybody who suffers from cancer. I know how they are feeling and I know I will always have a smile for them because I know that I am going to be there for them.

Right now I am working very hard. I still study hard and go to class early. Nothing is impossible when you have a goal in your life. I didn't have much education when I was a child, but now that I am a woman, I am going to be successful in school and be an oncology nurse. All you need to do is to have a goal and to work hard to achieve it.

## About the Author

Esther Ramos obtained her GED in January and is currently enrolled at Cyber Tex Technological College to become a medical assistant.

## STEPPING OUT ON NOTHING

CBS News' Byron Pitts spent many agonizing years overcoming his illiteracy and in this report he travels from Pittsburgh to Baltimore to meet those who are also faced with this disability.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/10/04/sunday/main5362089.shtml?tag=cbsnewsTwoColUpperPromoArea>

# Student Volunteer From Houston Wins National Recognition

by Federico Salas-Isnardi

(Reporting provided by Jane Holston and staff from Literacy Advance of Houston)

An ESL student and literacy volunteer in Houston, Anna Zubkova won the 2010 Ruth Colvin and Frank Laubach Award for Excellence in Individual Achievement. This is the highest award given by ProLiteracy to recognize an individual's contributions to the field of Literacy and English as a Second Language. She received the award in Chicago during the ProLiteracy/COABE conference on March 17. Anna was born in Russia, grew up in Moscow, and obtained her Master's Degree in Education from Moscow's Teacher Training University, graduating with honors. She moved to the United States in December 2007 to join her husband, who was working in Houston. In the summer of 2008 she enrolled in Literacy Advance of Houston and within 10 months she had completed her ESL instruction. But even while she was learning the language, Anna recognized the privilege of her education and decided to give rather than to take by offering Literacy Advance the gift of her talent and her time as a volunteer.

Since 2009, she has been a Literacy Advance volunteer in administration and IT, helped as a tutor assistant and literacy advocate, and been greatly involved in the Student Alumni. Anna also volunteers at a local social service agency, helping in the food pantry and teaching computer classes; she also helps at a Neighborhood Tax Center. She has also been significant in dramatically increasing the volunteer hours contributed. In 2009, she helped increase the number of hours given by volunteers (non-tutors) to Literacy Advance by more than 200%.

Anna represented her agency at six major United Way fairs from September to November 2009, speaking to employees at a variety of companies, giving the Literacy Advance message and encouraging people to consider volunteering.

Anna's personal attributes make her an ideal volunteer – she is helpful, friendly, personable and inclusive. She is able to draw on her time as an ESL student in Literacy Advance programs to empathize with and include current ESL students and to identify with problems they may be having and needs that should be met. Her outgoing nature allows her to engage equally with the students within the program and with potential supporters, explaining the Literacy Advance mission and story and encouraging involvement. Her organizational abilities make her very popular when there are tasks to be done and her leadership and perspective as a one-time learner are unique.

In her speech at the awards ceremony, Anna summarized the drive behind her desire to give back to her community. Her speech reflected the kind of leader she is: *"Volunteering is not just a good way to say 'thank you' for all they did - and do - for me. It is also a great feeling that I can make someone else's life different. What we do here is not temporary. This education improves our whole life. People start to understand that everything is in their hands; they just need to believe in themselves... They can be a good part of their community; they can see new opportunities for themselves. I'm so proud to be part of a community of people and organizations who try to make someone else's life different."*

Jane Holston, Director of Literacy Advance wrote in her nomination letter for the award *"that someone relatively new to Houston has already given so much to the community is very deserving of recognition, praise and gratitude."*



Jane Holston, Executive Director of Literacy Advance; Dr. Bob Laubach, Former President of Laubach Literacy; Ruth J. Colvin, Founder of Literacy Volunteers of America; and Anna Zubkova, Award Winner

*Dr. Bob and Mrs. Ruth (as everybody calls them) are considered the founders of ProLiteracy since their two organizations merged into one; the award is named after her and Dr. Frank Laubach (father of Dr. Bob).*

# Getting My GED at Age 58

by Brenda Whisenhunt

I am a 58-year-old mother of two and grandmother of six. Getting my high school diploma was never very important to me. Now at this late stage in my life, I realized how important it should have been. I wanted to work as a secretary or bookkeeper; therefore, in high school I took typing and bookkeeping courses feeling that was enough. I was very naive at the age of 17 not knowing the competition that was ahead of me in the work force.

In 1969, I was starting my senior year in high school and after two weeks I quit because I wanted to get married. I dropped out of school, got married to my high school sweetheart; we had a son, and moved to Germany when my husband was drafted into the army. We lived there for a year and a half and then returned home. It was then necessary for me to find a job and help my husband make a living for our family.

I was very fortunate in finding a job without a high school education, because I had worked as a part time long distance operator starting the summer before my junior year in high school. That gave me some work experience. I started work at Texas Instruments in the switchboard room and worked for the company a total of seven years. We were able to apply for jobs available within the company. After interviewing for a job as accounting manager's secretary, I was hired (more experience). I took pride in my work and stayed long term in the few jobs I had.

Moving to Northeast Texas, raising two sons alone as a divorced mother, I landed the job of my dreams. A neighbor of mine worked with the accounting manager's wife and knew they needed someone in the accounts payable department. She told me about it, so I called and sent in a resume. I was hired as an accounts payable auditor for Lone Star Steel Inc. It was a job I very much enjoyed doing in every way. The company was bought by U. S. Steel Tubular Products and the home office was located out of Pittsburgh, PA. Four years later, the company decided to transfer payroll, benefits, accounts payable, and accounts receivable to their home office. We were all devastated! They brought in employees we had to train for our jobs. After working there for twenty one years, I didn't want to burn bridges, therefore I trained them with the best of my ability. Then I was laid off.

Now unemployed and looking for a job, I was devastated. No one will hire you without a high school diploma and in many cases college. At the age of 57, I was not interested in going back to school much less college, but my husband was encouraging and gave me the confidence to give it a try. After doing some research, I

choose Kilgore College Adult Education program. They had an outstanding reputation.

I started adult education night classes and learned something new at each class. I was older this time around and it was so exciting. I met Mrs. Bobbie McGee Benson the director/instructor of adult education and it changed my life. She told me about a program called I-BEST. This is a college program that you can enroll in while taking your GED classes. One of those programs was Office Professional. And I just couldn't wait to enroll. I took the test to enroll in college, passed, enrolled, and am now a very proud college student. Attending the adult education classes for four months I felt ready to take the GED test. I passed with grades I was truly proud of and now have my GED.

I am now registering for my second semester in college. Planning to attend college for two years, I will then have an Associate of Applied Science Degree. At Kilgore College in the Office Professional courses you can choose between legal and medical; my choice is medical. With my experience and education, I will be able to compete with any job I choose to apply for. In the past, not wanting to continue my education was such a mistake. I truly believe when something bad happens in your life you can always find some good from it, and I did. After being laid off from work, it put me back into the search mode for employment. If it hadn't been for my encouraging husband who gave me confidence, I don't think I would have ever tried to continue my education. I am now exactly where I want to be in life.

## About the Author

Brenda is married to Ronnie Whisenhunt, has two grown sons, two granddaughters, and four grandsons. She also helps to care for her eighty-four year old widowed mother. During the spring semester Mrs. Whisenhunt completed sixteen hours of college credit along with earning her GED. She will participate in the June GED graduation and continue with college in the fall.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

For the latest information on upcoming events, visit the calendars linked from the TCALL website:

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

# TALAE 2010 Scholarship Recipient

by Ray Durrent

Hello, Thank You All, Howdy Ma, etc. Pleasure to be here. Well, the last time I gave a speech like this I was nervous out of my mind. Thankfully, I am now enrolled at Del Mar College, nice place by the way, and in the process of taking a public speaking course. After a full 3 and one half weeks I feel confident this speech should be brilliant, that, or a certain instructor, who shall remain nameless, has a drop slip in her future.

Speaking of which, I have a persuasive speech coming up shortly in that class, so if I start trying to convince you to eat less red meat, I'm giving you the wrong speech and you'll know why. But in all seriousness, I can hardly express what a joy and honor it is to be standing here today.

If someone had told me a year ago I was going to be the highest scoring GED graduate in Texas and recipient of the Texas Association for Literacy & Adult Education scholarship, why, I would have told them, naturally. And was this before or after the dream where I have super powers and I'm dating Salma Hayek. Or since I'm having to give a speech maybe it's more like the one where I show up at work in my underwear.

Now I have been told I am supposed to talk about my journey here and goals for the future. But there's really nothing special about my life. I grew up in a bus, I worked in the circus, and I spent summers in Belize and Guatemala. Pretty standard stuff really. I'm seeing some heads shaking, maybe not. Alright, a few words.

Now I really did spend the first 20 years or so of my life in a modified school bus, RV, boat, trailer, or other relocateable habitat while my parents traveled from one end of the country to the other, looking for the perfect place to raise us kids. And during that time I spent about a year in the circus around the age of 6. Oh, and for the record I wasn't swinging from a high-wire or running around in a clown suit, well not during actual performances anyway, my dad just helped set up and kept things running, but hey, LIVED IN A CIRCUS! Show me a kid who never wanted to do that.

And after my parents gave up looking for the perfect place in America, we moved to Central America when I was 9, while my dad worked on a ranch. We never found that perfect place. But we ended up in Texas, take that for what you will. But none of those things are what brought me here. Well technically the bus did.

So what did bring me here? What brought me here are some of the most amazing people I have had the good fortune to meet. What brought me here is a staff who never seemed to treat what

they did like a job, but like some higher calling. What brought me here is an outstanding program that has some of the highest graduation rates in the state, despite a lack of funding, respect, and copy paper. What brought me here is the GED center at Del Mar.

And, credit where credit is due, what brought me here is my long suffering and infinitely loving mother, who homeschooled me the whole time we traveled the nation and beyond. Looks like ya did an alright job, mom. I'm sorry, I had to slip that in, you guys at the GED center did a bang up job, but you had me in and out the door in about a month; my mom has been stuck with me for 25 years.

Yes, all that, and a one dollar loan from Ms. Harrison to cover dues. That one dollar it would seem goes quite a long way. As I understand it, the TALAE scholarship is funded by the dollars collected from students like me and members like you. To be the recipient of such a generous gift is both an honor and an opportunity that I plan to take full advantage of. Thank you all so much for your dollars, I will use them wisely.

Now I've said it before and I'll say it again. I cannot thank all the people who helped bring me here enough. Your never ending encouragement and dedication proved to me that I did have the skills to succeed, and perhaps more importantly, you gave me the confidence to take me into college and my dreams beyond. So what's my dream? I wish I could tell you with an absolute clarity what my future holds. But in all honesty, I don't know. And ya know what? That's what gets me up in the morning. And I don't mean fright or worry that I have no grand plan for life. But the magnificent adventure of it all, the fresh discoveries of each day, the new places, people, experiences, and knowledge that make life, at least for me, worth living.

Some might say that I'm naïve, and that the crushing reality of real life is bound to catch up with me eventually. But it hasn't yet, and if I have my way it never will, because as far as I'm concerned I can think of no better way to live. Or as Elwyn Brooks White put it, "I arise in the morning torn between a desire to improve the world and a desire to enjoy the world. This makes it hard to plan the day."

Thank you all once again, and Ms. Harrison. About that dollar, would ya take cash or a check?

## About the Author

Ray received a \$4,000 scholarship for having scored 3710 points on his GED test.



# I Wrote in English Today

by Maria L. Rangel-Contreras

When I decided to write about something successful in my life, I found a never ending list. My mind was in the same way as my desk, it was a mess. I wrote ten, twenty or maybe more sheets of paper whose destiny was the trashcan. Although my head was full of thoughts in Spanish, the universe of my brain was unable to create the connection between mind and hand. Because this language and I could never been good friends, it was almost impossible write in English, though fortunately, I never learned the meaning of surrender.

We moved to this country in 2004, and I could survive for one year in spite of my ignorance of its culture and language. After the normal process of culture shock, I comprehended the necessity of communication. I felt impotent when I had a lot of questions concerning school, or the sports of my sons, and I was incapable of linking my mind with my tongue. Frustration was another word to explain the feeling that I experienced when I spent hours and hours trying to decode the that looked like hieroglyphics instead of English words.

The necessity of communicating with teachers, counselors, and coaches as well as help in the searching process for the appropriate university for my sons was the trigger for my vehement desire to understand this language. September and October of 2005 were the hardest months of my life. Without a wide English knowledge, and a total ignorance of the higher education system of this country, I was involved in the processes of investigation and admission, my English dictionary an unconditional friend in this process. Finally, all the requirements were reached and sent on time to the chosen universities. Three months later, we received by mail the best notice of the world, my son had been accepted with full scholarship at Kalamazoo College MI.

I continued studying English independently, because by being a chauffer, doctor, nurse, teacher, mother, etc, at the same time, I did not have time to attend a formal English school. In February of 2008, I made arrangements with my family in order to attend Ysleta Community Learning Center (YCLC), since then it has been easier to communicate with all kinds of people, and to understand the complex university educational system. Last year, I walked with my little boy the same path that I walked before with the eldest of my children, but this time with best knowledge of the necessaries steps to follow the right road. Once more in January 15, 2010 the postman arrived at our home bringing excellent news, a full scholarship attached to an acceptance letter addresses to my youngest son to attend Kenyon College in the state of Ohio.

I always said that the triumph of my children would be the family triumph. This success was built working all together with struggles and renunciations. My husband, an industrious man of 73 years, continues working to provide material necessities for all of us. My sons, with their lives of hard work, look for the balance between the classroom and the pool, without time to socialize. My contribution to this great team was my time, my love, and put in stand by my career. We do not have material wealth, but we have richness of ideas. We are not owners of a house, but we are owners of our dreams and decisions.

After two years of studying English, my brain and hand became friends again .The universe of my brain was able to make the necessary connection between mind and hand, and I finally created the first link of my success chain, I wrote in English today.

## About the Author

Maria Rangel-Contreras is a native of Guanajuato, Mexico. She is a married woman, mother of two wonderful sons, 18 and 21. They have been residing in El Paso, TX, since 2004. Student of YCLC or “the school of the opportunities” as she calls it, and proud to have as her teacher Liz Moya, since two years ago.

## STUDENTS WRITING AND GETTING PUBLISHED

by Kristen McKenna

As a teacher, I seek out meaningful, socially relevant publications to use in my ABE classes. How much more meaningful a magazine is when it includes pieces by other adult learners – spoken from the heart and rooted in lived experience. And even more meaningful than that: sometimes the pieces are written by my own students!

*The Change Agent*, a national magazine published by the New England Literacy Resource Center at World Education, includes writing by adult learners. Twice a year, *The Change Agent* sends out a “Call for Articles,” inviting students to submit their essays, poems, illustrations, and reflections.

I always take advantage of the “Call for Articles” because it acts as a writing prompt and it leads to a real-world process: submitting a piece of writing to be evaluated and possibly accepted for publication. Preparing to write a piece for *The Change Agent* is a group activity that fosters community-building among our students. When one of our own student’s articles is published, all the students seem to take pride in their fellow students’ accomplishment

Knowing someone who got published or knowing that many of your peers in adult education are being published provides a great gateway to more reading and exploring. Students might initially be attracted to the magazine because they recognize the writers, but then they hold on to the magazine and browse through the other stories. They enjoy being able to hold something in their hands that is fully accessible, engaging, and relevant to their everyday lives.

Many students in our program receive a copy of *The Change Agent* as if it were a textbook. (Except that it is a lot cheaper – only about a dollar per copy when you buy in bulk.) The articles are written at a variety of levels so teachers can make adjustments to their lessons to suit the right audience. A new and value-added feature is the online lessons that accompany and extend the articles. These “Extras,” along with the current issue and all the back issues of *The Change Agent* can be found at [www.nelrc.org/change-agent](http://www.nelrc.org/change-agent). To order, call 617-482-9485 or visit the web site.

*Kristen McKenna is an ABE teacher at Bristol Community College in Attleboro, MA.*

# Creating a Storybook in an English as a Second Language Class for Parents

by Dr. Clarena Larrotta

This article reports on a storybook project implemented in an adult ESL (English as a second language) class as an activity that led to student success. The project took place after school hours in partnership with Ojeda Junior High School in central Texas. This was an ESL class for parents of children enrolled at the school. A group of 35 parents enrolled in class; however, only fifteen of them attended regularly (50-100% rate). They were from Mexico, Colombia, and Panama and were between the ages of 33 and 48. They were housewives, worked in housekeeping and construction, or were looking for a job. Their level of schooling was a variation of elementary to some high school and one year of college. We met once a week for two hours during ten weeks in fall 2009. Storytelling and dialogue were central to curriculum planning and implementation. These were project-based lessons, and class activities included building a personal glossary, creating a storybook, and using mini-lessons on grammar topics, language functions, vocabulary, and pronunciation. There was a wide range of English proficiency among the participants and all of them were able to read and write in Spanish, their native language.

The process of creating the storybook took eight weeks. The first step was to read short stories selected by the instructor and have discussions that motivated students to tell other related stories. These stories illustrated different levels of language difficulties among class members. We also discussed the elements in a story (beginning, middle and end). Next, students selected a topic and used disposable cameras (provided by the school) to take pictures to accompany the stories. There was a limit of ten pictures to keep focused on the self-selected topic. Once students were done taking the pictures, we brainstormed for ideas to start writing. We used class time for drafting and obtaining individualized feedback. The students selected topics related to their neighborhoods, homes, families, pets, and children. By the fourth class meeting, the students became very excited about writing the stories and started to work outside of class writing portions of the story. They received help in class to polish their English and to improve the stories in terms of content and coherence. They wrote at least three drafts (skipping lines) in a bluebook and in class they received grammar explanations focusing on their writing mistakes. Next, we used the school computer lab and students typed the stories. Then, the school developed the pictures and put them onto CDs for us to be able to manipulate them. We put pictures and text together using Microsoft Power Point and the school provided the means to print them in color and put them in binders. During the last day of class the students received the final version

of their books and manifested feeling pride and excitement about having accomplished a final product from being enrolled in the ESL class. They took turns reading their books out loud and we had a last chance to do a mini-lesson in pronunciation for verbs in past tense since that was the main issue that emerged while the students were reading the books.

As a result, during individual interviews with them, students reported having developed a personal connection with writing and telling stories. They learned about word choice, sentence structure, and the writing process (drafting, revising, and publishing). The following names are pseudonyms and the excerpts illustrate typical comments about the storybook activity shared by the students.

—I like the storybook [activity] because I am telling [stories] about my family and can practice writing. It helps me to think [in] English and practice writing [skills] (Moni).

—I like the storybook because it's about my children and I really enjoy telling [stories] about them. Sharing the storybook with my classmates made me feel good (Yesenia).

—Writing the storybook I realized that I miss my old neighborhood in New York and that I am starting to like my new life in Texas. I also learned that writing is more complex than speaking (Nefali).

—Writing the storybook was hard for me, but it was rewarding to see the final product. I was proud of my storybook. I read it to the school teachers in a meeting. I felt nervous but proud (Maria).

As Clark & Rossiter (2008) remind us: "Stories are powerful precisely because they engage learners at a deeply human level. Stories draw us into an experience at more than a cognitive level; they engage our spirit, our imagination, our heart, and this engagement is complex and holistic" (p. 65). In telling stories we establish connections and recall other related experiences and as a result new learning happens. These students learned English and learned about themselves as people and as learners. This writing exercise helped them to understand more about the mechanics of writing in English and the writing process. More important, this class activity instilled pride in the students and helped them realize their capabilities as learners.

## References

Clark, C. M., & Rossiter, M. (2008). Narrative learning in adulthood. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 119, 61-70.

## About the Author

Clarena Larrotta is Assistant Professor of Adult Education at Texas State University-San Marcos.

# Region 6 Adapts TISESL to the Needs of Learners

by Barbara Tondre-El Zorkani

This is a success story. It breaks all the molds, and sustaining it requires some serious thinking outside the box by all parties involved. Read on and become inspired...

Education Service Center Region 6 is not new to workforce literacy endeavors. Over the years it has offered a variety of workforce-related instruction, using a variety of funding sources. One of its most recent successes has been to offer industry-related English language instruction to employees at the Hilton Hotel in College Station.

Hilton's Director of Human Resources, Angela Orozco, went looking for ESL instruction for hotel employees in the housekeeping, maintenance, kitchen, wait staff, and laundry departments. She found community classes full and distant from the hotel, but was put in touch with Lupe Schneider, Region 6's instructional coordinator for that area. Region 6 agreed to offer instruction at the hotel and proceeded to assess the employees' needs. Assessment results indicated that employees had extremely limited English language skills and were functioning at a low beginning level – actually below the recommended level for using TISESL. Every effort was made to introduce the TISESL Sales and Service curriculum to this group of employees, but the materials were deemed too advanced for the learners. Still, Lupe and instructor Carla Horelica persisted. They adopted the concept of TISESL and adapted the materials until they felt they could adequately respond to the employees' needs.

The instructor can make all the difference. Determined to meet the needs of the learners, Carla photographed every aspect of "hotel life". She turned the photos into a power point representation of the "back of the house", capturing the work stations and job tasks of the employees in housekeeping, maintenance, kitchen, restaurant, and laundry departments. Her photos included snapshots of the "front of the house" operations as well, since employees sometimes rotate positions and find themselves interacting with hotel guests in unexpected ways. With a flash drive and an LCD projector provided by the hotel, Carla started the classes.

In addition, the instructor procured samples of job-related products for the classroom – everything from guest size shampoo and cleaning supplies to tools and room service information. Finally, the instructor pulled from the TISESL Sales and Service curriculum and complemented it with specific vocabulary for every hotel department represented by the employees. Soon, instructor and employees came up with a list of questions they were likely to be asked by hotel guests and wanted to be able to answer.

What began as one class a year and a half ago has grown to two classes. Employees are now identified as either beginning or low intermediate. Even now skill levels and proficiencies vary greatly. Employees are progressing and are requesting additional instruction time. Region 6 hopes to utilize Retention Education's Sed de Saber to supplement classroom instruction. The hotel management's support is phenomenal. Although employees attend classes on their own time, the hotel provides a number of incentives and supports. Employees have access to the hotel's internet service and two computer stations at the hotel. They also have opportunities to build their computer literacy on lap top computers provided by Region 6. Learners have completed their online insurance enrollment as well as twenty hours of driver awareness and safety training. The instructor has access to the hotel's business center for whatever is needed in the way of photocopying.

Hotel management is committed to continuing the classes indefinitely. Management finds that employees are better able to participate in weekly meetings. Their self confidence has increased and they are more comfortable interacting with hotel management. Longevity in employment has increased, and trust in the instructor and hotel personnel has grown. Management also encourages employees to participate in job rotation opportunities so they learn more about other employment options within the hotel. One employee moved on to become the night shift supervisor for housekeeping; another is starting his own pool service business and now cares for the hotel's pool and spa areas.

Another plus to this partnership is that the hotel's general manager serves on the board of the Texas Hotels and Lodging Association. Wouldn't it be great to engage the hotel and lodging industry on a greater scale? There's something to think about. For additional information about this initiative, contact Lupe Schneider at [lschneider@esc6.net](mailto:lschneider@esc6.net).

This article is reprinted from SHOP TALK, a series sponsored by Texas LEARNS to highlight promising practices and address issues, concerns, and questions related to meeting adult learners' needs for workforce development and successful transitions. For additional information or to request that a particular topic be addressed, contact Barbara Tondre-El Zorkani at [btondre@earthlink.net](mailto:btondre@earthlink.net)



# Welcome to Our Library. . .

TCALL Student Worker Ashley Matus, Librarian Susan Morris, and Student Worker Emily Webb (not pictured) are ready to fill your order for Clearinghouse Library resources. Call them at 800-441-READ (7323) or email [tcall@tamu.edu](mailto:tcall@tamu.edu) to request materials by mail or information on the Library's services.



*In this issue, we are featuring the most popular loan titles in the Clearinghouse Library over the past year. These are listed in descending order of most-borrowed titles.*

**GED Connection Video Series: DVDs.** PBS LiteracyLink and Kentucky Educational Television (2001). Lexington, KY: The Kentucky Network Enterprise Division. This series of video DVDs includes 39 half-hour programs that use a documentary style to introduce content in the five major subject areas of the GED exam as revised in January 2002. GED Connection is a flexible multimedia instructional series featuring the skills and knowledge needed to prepare for the newly revised GED exam. The GED Connection series combines 39 video programs (broadcast by public television), three student workbooks, and free Internet learning activities, quizzes, and practice tests. (The workbooks are available through KET at the GED Connection website, not through the Texas Adult Literacy Clearinghouse, but ask for the Texas discount when ordering. A Pre-GED level series of workbooks is also available.) These components can be used together or apart by learners preparing for the GED either at home or in an adult education program. This loan set of all episodes including the Orientation video on DVD may be checked out from the Clearinghouse Library by Preferred Borrowers only\* and may be duplicated by Texas educational programs through November 1, 2011 under terms of a statewide educational use rights "license" negotiated by Texas Education Agency. A VHS version of the set is also available. The GED Connection website (<http://litlink.ket.org/wesged.aspl>) offers web-based activities to accompany the video and workbook components of GED Connection. Learners can register on the site for a free portfolio that contains GED practice tests and quizzes with automatic scoring and feedback, plus extensive learning modules for each of the five GED subject areas. Online teachers from several states are available to coach adult learners working online. Ask us how to become a Preferred Borrower.

**English for All DVD: Episodes 1-20.** Division of Adult and Career Education, Los Angeles Unified School District (2005). Berkeley, CA: Cyberstep. English for All is a free, multimedia system for adult ESL (low intermediate and above), funded under the CyberSTEP Project, a federal grant by the United States Department of Education. The program consists of a ESL/basic skills/life skills course, combines High Beginning Level of ESL (California standards) and the Skills Modules found in the Latino Adult Education Services (LAES) Project.

English for All includes twenty 15-minute video segments, in which five real-life stories feature a multi-ethnic cast and are hosted by a friendly "Wizard", who explains language and skill content throughout each show. This loan set includes all 20 episodes, four episodes per DVD. English for All Print Materials, over 400 pages of print materials in Portable Document Format (PDF), are downloadable from the Web site, and can also be requested on a free CD-ROM from the Clearinghouse. Those are exercises and activities that support the content of the videos. The English for All Website includes interactive student activities, streaming video (for broadband connections), 'Flash'-based audio, the downloadable print materials, and a course management system for teachers to track student progress. One teacher who used the videos commented, "All are real life situations that are relevant to the students' lives." Clearinghouse loans the set of 5 DVDs to Texas educators ONLY. The 20 video segments can also be accessed in streaming video online. [www.myefa.org/login.cfm](http://www.myefa.org/login.cfm)

**190 Ready-to-Use Activities That Make Math Fun!** Watson, George (2003). San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons; Jossey Bass. Instructional resource provides 190 high-interest, ready-to-use, reproducible activities to help students master basic math skills -- including whole numbers, decimals, fractions, percentages, money concepts, geometry and measurement, charts and graphs, and pre-algebra -- for use with students of varying ability levels. Activities are presented in a variety of formats, such as puzzles, crosswords, matching, word/number searches, number substitutions, and more.

**Bag of Tricks II: Photocopy Handouts for Regular and Substitute ESL Teachers.** Hamel, Paul J. (1992). McHenry, IL: Delta Systems Co., Inc. Organized by level of difficulty (beginning, intermediate, and advanced), this collection of reproducible sheets deals with life skills and language skills. Some of the skills addressed are: forming plurals, telling time, safety signs, past tense, and reading job ads. Each section also includes teaching tips. This book is a follow-up to the first Bag of Tricks collection.

**Connect with English: Unit 1.** WGBH Boston and Tiberia, Pam, et al (1998). Boston, MA: The Annenberg/CPB Collection. This video instructional series in English as a second language for college and high school classrooms and adult learners includes



## 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.

48 fifteen-minute video programs and coordinated books for levels from high beginning through low and high intermediate. On the program's website, you can view video on demand, download support materials for courses and workshops, and download streaming media, all free. Through the story of Rebecca, an aspiring singer on a journey across America, Connect With English touches on life's important issues: leaving home, parenting, education, work, love, success, and loss. All of the characters use meaningful, natural language that students can put to work immediately in their own lives. Each episode features dialogue that is slightly slowed down and subtly simplified. Key lines are repeated, idioms paraphrased, and important events retold. There are constant visual clues to meaning, such as written signs, notes, and documents. Facial expressions, gestures, and body language also reveal meaning for students. Closed captioning can be used as a teaching and literacy resource. This loan set includes Unit 1 (Episodes 1 through 12) on two VHS tapes, Unit 1 Video Comprehension Book, Unit 1 Conversation Book, and Unit 1 Grammar Guide. Instructor's Manuals are available as a separate loan item, as are units 2 through 4 of the instructional materials. Clearinghouse loans the set to Preferred Borrowers only.

**TV 411 Video Series.** Adult Literacy Media Alliance (1998, 2000, 2003). New York: Education Development Center, Inc. TV411 is made up of a television series, accompanying print workbooks and an interactive website. The 30-minute video programs, print materials and web site can be used together or independently, and are designed to provide the opportunity for accessible, self-paced learning. They can be used by individual learners from their homes or in classroom and community settings, and are designed for adults at the pre-GED level who are in need of improving their reading, writing and mathematics skills. The magazine format combines situation comedy, documentary, sports entertainment, and talk show, with a rigorous instructional focus based on real-life skills enhancement. Episodes 1-13 were produced in 1998; Episodes 14-20 in 2000; and Episodes 21-30 in 2003. The episodes may be checked out individually, or a loan set including all 30 episodes (in either VHS or DVD format) may be checked out from the Clearinghouse Library by Texas educators who are Preferred Borrowers only. Ask us how to become a Preferred Borrower. Under terms of an educational use rights "license" negotiated by Texas Education Agency, this series can be duplicated by any educational program in Texas through November 1, 2011. The workbooks are available only from Kentucky Educational Television (800-354-9067). The TV 411 website offers interactive lessons and teacher resources. <http://www.tv411.org>

**Accepting the Challenges of Fatherhood Video Series, Version 1.1.** Center for Successful Fathering, Inc. (1996). Austin, TX: Center for Successful Fathering, Inc. Series of five videos (between 29 and 43 minutes each) on parenting skills for fathering and importance of fathers. Topics include: Who Needs a Dad Anyway?; The Consequences of Lost Dads; What's a Dad To Do? (Session 1); What's a Dad To Do? (Session 2); and Accepting the Challenge. This set of 5 videocassette tapes is available on loan to Preferred Borrowers ONLY.

**Catch 'Em Being Good: Happier Kids, Happier Parents Through Effective Praise.** Father Flanagan's Boys' Home (1988). Boys Town, NE: Boys Town Press. Boys Town Videos for Parents offer practical, how-to advice to parents with children struggling through the often difficult preadolescent and teenage years. This title shows parents how to focus on the good things their youngster does, rather than having to frequently scold or punish them for misbehavior. Ten-minute video is accompanied by a booklet summarizing the ideas presented.

**50 Creative Training Openers and Energizers: Innovative Ways to Start Your Training with a BANG!** Pike, Bob and Solem, Lynn (2000). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer. One of the hardest tasks in a professional development workshop or presentation is to get not only their attention, but engagement. Following up on the 1998 book "50 Creative Training Closers" (a separate Clearinghouse loan title), the same authors suggest 50 lively, interactive session openers, ice breakers, and attention grabbers intended to inspire continued application, learning, and skill development. This book is available on loan to Texas educators ONLY.

**180 Icebreakers to Strengthen Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills.** Forte, Imogene and Schurr, Sandra (1996). Nashville, TN: Incentive Publications, Inc. Each icebreaker offers an interesting fact, a question to consider, and a project to pursue. Incorporating Williams' and Bloom's taxonomies, the icebreakers address multiple intelligences and the six levels of thinking.

**All About the USA: A Cultural Reader.** Broukal, Milada and Murphy, Peter (1991). White Plains, NY: Longman. Features thirty units focusing on a uniquely American cultural phenomenon or personality -- from the Pony Express, Mark Twain, and chewing gum, to Mount Rushmore, the hamburger, and tumbleweed. Enhanced with amusing illustrations, each reading is followed by comprehension, vocabulary, grammar and discussion activities.



*"It always excites me to receive that large orange envelope. I know there's always some good stuff inside and will be of great use! Thanks!"*

Maria S. Almanza  
ESL Instructor  
Carver Learning Center  
Navasota

## Free Things to Send For . . .

*Free Things to Send For...In this issue, we are featuring the most popular free titles in the Clearinghouse Library over the past year. These are listed in descending order of most-requested free titles.*

**Things to Do in the ESL Classroom Series on CD-ROM.** UTSA ESL Professional Development Center (2002). College Station, TX: TCALL. Book 1 includes a variety of activities for grouping, "getting to know you", and team building. Book 2 describes over a dozen activities that address reading, writing, and numeracy skill development in the context of language learning, rather than as isolated tasks. Book 3 offers advice on using classroom games, recommends commercial and Internet games, and includes four reproducible games developed by the ESL Professional Development Center at UT - San Antonio. All three books are included on this free CD-ROM. This resource is also available on TCALL's website. Search site for the title.

**Picture Stories for Adult ESL Health Literacy.** Singleton, Kate (2001). Washington, DC: National Center for ESL Literacy Education. Instructional materials include four reproducible picture stories designed to help ESOL instructors address topics that affect the health and well-being of their beginner and low-literacy students. Words are kept to a minimum in the stories to give just enough information to convey an idea without becoming too distracting for students with very low literacy. The stories are designed to be safe, impersonal prompts to allow students to discuss difficult topics, ask questions, and obtain information. As the stories are about cartoon characters, the students should not feel pressure to disclose their own experiences on the topic if they don't want to.

**Teaching US History Through Feature Films.** Duval, Andree et al (no date). Boston, MA: New England Literacy Resource Center. This resource funded by the Massachusetts Department of Education provides an outline for incorporating videos in the classroom. For each of four films (Jeremiah Johnson, Glory, Mississippi Burning, and Casablanca), a curriculum is provided, complete with references to related learning standards. The curriculum targets basic literacy, pre-GED, and beginning to intermediate ESL classes, and can be adapted for GED classes.

**Project FORWARD Curriculum.** Baird, Barbara and El Paso Community College (1991). Austin, TX: Texas Education Agency, Division of Adult and Community Education. In 1990-91, the TEA Adult and Community Education Program Development Division funded a special project at El Paso Community College (EPCC) to develop an 80-lesson life skills-based curriculum for Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) Training Program participants. (The curriculum was updated/revised in 1997.) The Project FORWARD curriculum was designed to help families receiving AFDC become more self-sufficient by increasing the

reading, writing, thinking, speaking, listening and life-coping skills of the participants through a whole language approach, enabling disadvantaged adults for literate functioning, job training and employment. The eight units in this integrated life skills curriculum provide ten lessons in each of the following subject areas: Personal Discovery; Family and Childcare; Culture; Career; Communication; Money Matters; School and Education; and Health and Nutrition. Numerous adult basic education programs in public school, correctional, and other settings around the state currently use the curriculum. It is also used in many Christian Women's Job Corps programs all over the country. An Instructional Guide (available only on paper at this time) includes an introduction to the curriculum, teaching tips, and sections on learner motivation and self esteem-building techniques and learner portfolios.

**Spelling: A Key to Good Communication.** Steckler, Melinda (1999). Kent, OH: Midwest LINC. These materials for teaching the basics of spelling were developed by an ABE/ASE instructor at the Dickinson, North Dakota Adult Learning Center. After researching the current formats in which spelling is taught, Steckler created this group of lessons and exercises that can be used by adult educators for a wide range of students. For example, she uses the materials with students reading at the third grade level, as well as students preparing for the GED. Lessons and exercises may be duplicated for use with students.

**A Child Becomes a Reader: Birth Through Preschool: Proven Ideas from Research for Parents, Third Edition.** Armbruster, Bonnie B and Lehr, Fran and Osborn, Jean (2006). Washington, DC: The Partnership for Reading. When does a child learn to read? Many people might say in kindergarten or first grade. But researchers have told us that children can begin to learn reading and writing at home, long before they go to school. This booklet offers advice for parents of children from birth to preschool on how to support reading development at home, and how to recognize preschool and day care activities that start children on the road to becoming readers. Clearinghouse Library provides free copies to Texas educators ONLY. The booklets are also available free by mail from EdPubs (800-228-8813).

**A Child Becomes a Reader: Kindergarten Through Grade 3: Proven Ideas from Research for Parents, Third Edition.** Armbruster, Bonnie B and Lehr, Fran and Osborn, Jean (2006). Washington, DC: The Partnership for Reading. The road to becoming a reader begins the day a child is born and continues through the end of third grade. At that point, a child must read with ease and understanding to take advantage of the learning opportunities in fourth grade and beyond. This booklet offers advice for parents of children from grades K-3 on how to support reading development at home, and how to recognize effective instruction in their children's classrooms. Clearinghouse Library provides free copies to Texas educators ONLY. The booklets are also available free by mail from EdPubs (800-228-8813).

**A Primer on Adult Education in Texas.** Texas Workforce Investment Council (January 2010). Austin, TX: Office of the Governor. During 2010, the Texas Workforce Investment Council will review aspects of adult education and the programs and services offered by three system partner agencies: the TEA, the TWC, and the THECB. This initial report focuses largely on TEA's adult education programs funded by Title II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-220). Recent legislation has encouraged collaboration between the three agencies and increased the roles of TWC and THECB in the Texas adult education system. However, the scope of this report is focused on the primary programs responsible for the ongoing provision of adult education services while recognizing the importance of adult education initiatives designed to supplement or complement other training programs. Future briefs will go into more detail in one or more of these areas and will focus on specific issues. Recommendations for policy and program administration will be offered in these future companion publications. Free copies are available to Texas educators ONLY. The report can also be found on the Texas Workforce Investment Council website. <http://governor.state.tx.us/twic/>

**Standards-in-Action: Innovations for Standards-Based Education.** MPR Associates, Inc. and Chemus, Kathy, et al (November 2009). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. The Standards-in-Action (SIA) innovations are professional development methods and materials that support the implementation of content standards in adult education programs. The SIA innovations address four priority areas of standards-based reform: 1) Building instructors' understanding of the standards taught; 2) Translating the standards into curriculum; 3) Aligning student assignments to standards; and 4) Assessing the extent to which instructors are teaching to the standards and using effective instruction. Clearinghouse Library provides free copies to Texas educators ONLY. This resource can also be found on the U.S. Department of Education website. <http://www.adultedcontentstandards.ed.gov>

**The Texas Family Guide to Personal Money Management.** Texas Investor Education Project (1997). Austin, TX: American Association of Retired Persons. A workbook containing "action steps" and "notebook items" to help organize financial records, apply sound money management principles to finances and think through plans for the future.

**Beyond the GED: Making Conscious Choices About the GED and Your Future: Lesson Plans and Materials for the GED Classroom.** Fass, Sandra and Garner, Barbara (2006 Update). Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. Revised by Eileen Barry in 2006 from the original 2000 guide to include new data and information on the Internet, this guide for GED instructors offers lesson plans and helps teachers develop as professionals. Gleaners with practice in graph and chart reading, calculation, analyzing information, and writing, while they examine the labor market, the role of higher education, and the economic impact of the GED. The intent is to prepare learners to make wise decisions about their work lives as well as being better prepared to pass the GED. It also gives adult learners an opportunity to practice writing, use graphs, read charts, and analyze research findings on the economic impact of the GED. Clearinghouse Library provides free copies to Texas educators ONLY. This resource can also be found on the NCSALL website. <http://www.ncsall.net>

**The Hire Me Guide.** ABE Online (1999). Saint Paul, MN: Minnesota State Department of Children, Families, and Learning. This is a work readiness course that has been written to supply learners with the appropriate training, information, encouragement, discipline, and support for work readiness. This course is for anyone who is looking for employment or is looking to change careers. The basic reading level of this course is 8.0.

**Intergenerational Literacy Notebook.** Carr, Karen, Project Coordinator (February 2004). Denver, CO: Colorado Department of Education. This collection of thematically based activities for adults and their children to complete together was designed for adult education, Even Start, and Migrant Even Start programs in Colorado. A majority of the activities are designed for English language learners and are life skills based. Science and social studies activities primarily target the ABE/GED learner. Themes include: Community Services, Consumer Economics, Employment, Health, Housing, Transportation, Science, and Social Studies. Each thematic unit includes group activities as well as some that require minimal teacher support and could be used as take-home activities. Numerous reproducible elements are included. Clearinghouse Library provides free copies to Texas educators ONLY. This resource can also be found on the Colorado Department of Education website. <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/iglindex.htm>

**Tennessee Adult ESOL Curriculum Resource Book.** Sawyer, Patricia, Editor (June 2001). Knoxville, TN: Center for Literacy Studies, The University of Tennessee. The culmination of a yearlong action research project in Tennessee, this resource book includes information about the National Reporting System, competencies, and student lesson plans for all levels of ESOL students. Lesson plans are in three sections: general ESOL competencies incorporating conversational and life skills, English Language/Civics Competencies, and Workplace Competencies. All lessons are correlated with Equipped for the Future Content Standards (a separate item available free from the Clearinghouse). Clearinghouse Library disseminates free electronic copies of this Resource Book on CD-ROM. It is also available on the Center for Literacy Studies website. <http://aeonline.coe.utk.edu/esolcrg.pdf>

**Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE/ESOL Classroom.** Oesch, Martha and Bower, Carol (2009). Boston, MA: National College Transitions Network and System for Adult Basic Education Support. This curriculum helps practitioners equip learners with career planning skills using lessons and activities correlated to the SCANS competencies. It is designed for classroom instruction and/or counseling and geared toward all levels. Section I includes 5 lessons on The Cultural Context for Career Awareness. Section II includes 12 lessons on The Self-Exploration Process. Section III includes 6 lessons on Occupational Exploration. Section IV includes 24 lessons on Career Planning Skills. Some of the career planning skills covered in Section IV are reality checking, goal setting, problem solving, college awareness, college vocabulary, being a smart consumer of education, comparing schools, the admissions process, placement tests, navigating college, college success skills, self-advocacy, financial aid, financial planning, and planning for career and education. Appendices provide additional resources on lesson planning, the SCANS Competencies, Multicultural Career Education and Development, and Career Awareness Resources. Clearinghouse Library provides free copies of the print materials and CD to Texas educators ONLY.

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