Accountability and Assessment

Creating a Culture of Accountability: One Program's Story

by M. Christina Palacios

I do not know of any administrator who does not wish that all employees would assume full responsibility for their job performance regardless of length of service and that each would work responsibly towards helping their programs meet all state and federal performance targets. What administrator would not want students to function responsibly while they participate in their programs? The question is, "What can administrators do to create a culture of accountability where everyone is easily held accountable?"

When Uniform Accountability is Missing…
- NRS performance targets may not be met.
- Audit exceptions may be found.
- Employees begin identifying areas of disparate treatment.
- Good employees feel they are carrying the weight of non-performers.
- Compliant students observe inequitable treatment.

Not Too Good To Be True
Approximately eight years ago, at a one-day management seminar, administrators learned how to better deal with problematic employees. I left–*a changed administrator!* I learned that the five most important tools administrators could use to reduce or prevent job performance problems are:

- Having an accountability statement,
- Current job descriptions with clearly spelled out expectations,
- Thorough and high quality professional development,
- Consistent and thorough documentation of worker performance, and
- Well thought out due process procedures.

I asked, "If these tools really work with employees, might they also work if applied to students?" The answer is that they work exceptionally well with both.

All of the tools are important, but the most important is the accountability statement. I must admit that incorporating an accountability statement was a frightening proposition, because it meant I needed

to hold everyone accountable in a fair and balanced manner so that no one would be able to say that he or she is a victim of disparate treatment. I decided that I would rather spend my time and effort making the accountability statement a living/breathing reality than to spend these two precious commodities dealing with all the unpleasantness that can come from disgruntled students or employees.

Strong Words; Strong Program
We provide the Accountability Statement, a one-page handout, to all students, employees and job applicants. It reads:

> "This applies to all employees [students] who work [study] in the Department of GED Instruction. ACCOUNTABILITY means BEING 100% ACCOUNTABLE, 100% OF THE TIME. It also means that no excuses, no blaming, and no whining are allowed. Each employee [student] is vital to the success of the department [school], the division, and the college. What each member of the team [class] does or does not do matters and affects the entire operation. Therefore, we expect only the best job performance possible from everyone who works [studies] here. It dishonors those who carry their full weight on the job, when a team member does not. [It dishonors those who comply with program rules, when a classmate does not.] Mediocrity does not live here. Attitudes are Contagious: Would anyone want to catch yours?"

All job applicants receive a multi-page handout that includes this statement, a letter from the director outlining expectations, and a job description. The result is that only those who feel comfortable meeting expectations and who are not afraid of being held accountable apply. The information is again reviewed during the interview process to make sure that the applicants are not only qualified for the position, but that they fully understand what will be expected of them.

All students review the accountability statement during monthly first-class-meeting day orientations along with a review of the terms of their Participation Contract. We include discussions of due process procedures during new student orientations and during first-day orientations.

The Program Administrator
As I see it, it is the administrator's duty to give full meaning and expression to the concept of 100% accountability. It takes courage to hold people accountable while never compromising on the core values that undergird it. All employees and students come to understand, with a great degree of certainty, that we will address any action or inaction, which compromises the integrity of the program's design, as soon as we identify a breach. We know that a person's perception becomes his/her reality. It is, therefore, imperative that administrators apply due process procedures equitably, fairly and in a balanced manner without exception.

Impact of Using the Five Tools
In a culture of accountability, we constantly discuss the idea of it and its positive impact on program outcomes and the lives of students. The positive impact includes meeting all state and federal performance targets. Accountability has become part of the air we breathe. In other words, administrators, support personnel, clerical staff and students all work or study in an accountability-driven environment. One positive outcome is that people come to appreciate that we acknowledge and celebrate all meaningful contributions to program efforts and that there is always an assurance that everyone is fully supporting the rest of the unit or student body in their respective roles. The overall feeling is that not doing all one can to support the team or school is incompatible with the program's mission, vision and core values; non-performance or non-compliance seems inappropriate. From an administrator's point of view, it does not get any better than this. It is a privilege to work in a place where there is an absence of interpersonal tensions and where work and study are fun and rewarding to most, if not all, of the staff and students.

About the Author
Chris has over twenty-three years experience in adult education with the last thirteen years as an adult education (AE) program administrator. She was the first AE administrator in Texas to receive the State Administrator's Credential and one in the first cohort in the state to receive the Certified Manager in Program Improvement (CMPI) designation after completing a two-year ProLiteracy Leadership Excellence Academy course. She is currently serving as secretary for the Texas Association for Literacy and Adult Education (TALAE).

M. Christina Palacios, Director, Department of GED Instruction, Del Mar College, 101 Baldwin, Corpus Christi, TX, 78403, 361-698-1781(Office), 361-698-2727 (Fax) *cpalaci@delmar.edu.*

Assessment and Accountability:
It's a Whole New World!

by Harriet Vardiman Smith, TCALL Director

Not since the fall of 1998 has TCALL's quarterly publication focused on a theme of assessment and accountability. I don't need to tell most of our readers that the world of learner assessment and program accountability in adult and family literacy is a very different world from the one we inhabited 11 years ago.

In 1998, standardized assessment had only recently been mandated by the State Board of Education for Texas adult education programs funded by Texas Education Agency under the federal Workforce Investment Act and Texas House Bill (HB) 1640 (1996 Texas 76th Legislative Session). These changes required a major paradigm shift in our field, and the ongoing refinement and implementation of those systems of assessment and accountability still present big challenges – but also tremendous opportunities – for programs and for the learners they serve. We think you will find Chris Palacios' cover article to be an excellent case study of how one program, its staff and learners all benefit from a culture of accountability permeating everything they do.

Eleven years ago, I had just completed my Master's degree in adult education here at Texas A&M University, and joined the TCALL staff as Clearinghouse Librarian. In my graduate assistantship at TCALL, I had assisted Dr. Don Seaman with Even Start external program evaluation. In those days, accountability in Even Start consisted largely of enrollment and attendance data and parent questionnaire results. What a long way we've come, as you will read in State Even Start Coordinator Beth Thompson's article on page 5.

We hope this issue will serve as a helpful resource and reference for literacy programs funded through Texas Education Agency, which must meet the requirements set out in our State Assessment Policy. In the Q & A piece beginning on page 10, staff members of Texas LEARNS have collaborated to answer frequently asked questions about assessment and accountability. Other articles from local program leaders and professional developers look at these issues from a variety of perspectives.

For literacy programs not part of the funding and accountability system described in these articles, this issue of *The Quarterly* may be a bit like a tour of an unfamiliar planet, full of exotic features and unfamiliar acronyms! But in an economic climate where non-governmental funders also want the biggest possible "bang for their buck," community-based, nonprofit, and volunteer literacy programs can benefit from implementing more rigorous systems of assessment and accountability in their programs as well.

In This Issue

Program Administrators: Are You Doing the Best You Can with the *BEST Plus*?

by Denise Guckert

Programs from El Paso to Texarkana and back again are now full of *BEST Plus* test administrators. Thousands of students every year are assessed with the *BEST Plus*, an individually administered face-to-face adaptive oral interview designed to assess the English language proficiency of adult English language learners, developed by the Center for Applied Linguistics (*www.cal.org*).

- Have you stopped to think of the time and money that have been spent by Texas LEARNS, local programs and individual teachers who may not be compensated for travel and/or time to attend *BEST Plus* test administrator training?
- Have you stopped to think of the money you've spent purchasing *BEST Plus* assessments and laptop computers to administer the test?
- Have you stopped to think of the importance of accuracy and reliability and what the difference of a single point up or down could mean to your program's end of year performance?

Now that you've started to think about this, you may have realized that you've already spent an abundance of resources implementing the *BEST Plus* in your programs. And guess what? I'm here to tell you that you need to **spend a little bit more!** Don't waste all of your efforts only to end up with unreliable test scores. Follow the steps outlined below to make sure you're getting the BEST results you can from the *BEST Plus*:

#1 Order the *BEST Plus Scoring Refresher Toolkit* and Use it.

This toolkit with accompanying teacher workbooks can only be ordered by program directors. The materials cost $150, but they're well worth it. Why? The toolkit has been designed to be used in a facilitated environment OR as a self-paced training for previously certified *BEST Plus* test administrators. *Please note – this toolkit is NOT a substitute for the six-hour initial BEST Plus test administrator training.*

For a facilitated training, you can choose as the instructor any *BEST Plus* test administrator known as a proven tester. How can you be certain that your staff member is indeed an exemplary test administrator?

You may ask your potential facilitator to complete one of the three Scoring Activities that are included in the toolkit. When finished, check the results with the included answer sheet to determine if the score falls into the range for recommended testers. If so, then you are ready to convene an in-house *BEST Plus* scoring refresher for your program's *BEST Plus* test administrators. Be aware that this training takes a minimum of four hours to cover the training videos and one of the scoring activities, and if done thoroughly could easily take more time. When possible, it is preferable to split the training into two separate segments as suggested in the toolkit.

At the end of your refresher training, you will have a clear picture of the accuracy of your staff's *BEST Plus* scoring. If you do have staff members with "remediation required," they may check out the toolkit to review materials and complete a different scoring activity to demonstrate improvement. *Hint: Make sure that you remove the scoring activity answer sheets first!*

#2 Perform Periodic *BEST Plus* Recalibration.

Another great reason to purchase the Scoring Refresher Toolkit is to use its instructions for performing a program-wide *BEST Plus* scoring recalibration. According to Frank Finamore of the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), "as the publisher of *BEST Plus*, CAL would like to remind *BEST Plus* program and test administrators of the importance of periodic scoring recalibration. The reliability of test scores hinges on scoring accuracy. Therefore, periodic scoring recalibration is a good practice in standardized oral proficiency testing."

Though your program is not required to use the refresher toolkit materials to conduct a recalibration, you may find them quite helpful. You will find "Tips for conducting a *BEST Plus* consensus scoring session" in the supplemental materials section of the toolkit.

Briefly summarized from the *BEST Plus* refresher toolkit, steps in doing your own consensus scoring session, or recalibration, involve the following:

- Selection of computer-based practice tests (no

final scores are available) versus actual "paid" tests (final scores are available).

- Selection of recorded versus live *BEST Plus* assessments. The print-based version is also an option.
- Selection and participation of students who represent a variety of proficiency levels.
- Preparation of materials such as sample score sheets, computers, etc.
- Planning of adequate time for *BEST Plus* test administrators (and possibly students) to convene, score, and then compare and discuss scores, coming to consensus.

Though not essential, use of videotaped sessions can greatly facilitate discussion as this allows for thorough review and can be used repeatedly over time.

#3 Follow good testing protocol.
- Teachers should not test their own students, especially posttesting them after spending 60 or more hours with them in class.
- Testing should not occur in a classroom environment where other students can overhear and

where the examinee can be easily distracted.
- Testers should always use the *BEST Plus* Scoring Rubric.
- Testers should never rephrase test questions or otherwise coach or prompt students.

In summary, implementation of the three steps outlined in this article will improve the accuracy of your *BEST Plus* assessments, thereby increasing the value you receive from your *BEST Plus* investment.

References
Center for Applied Linguistics. (2004) *BEST Plus*. Washington, DC.

Center for Applied Linguistics. (2006) *BEST Plus Scoring Refresher Toolkit*. Washington, DC.

About the Author
Denise Guckert, M.A., serves as Coordinator for Central GREAT at The Education Institute, Texas State University-San Marcos. She is one of the original Texas team of *BEST Plus* TEST Administrator Trainers and can be reached via email at *dg21@txstate.edu*.

Texas Even Start Raises the Bar in Accountability

by Elizabeth Thompson, Texas LEARNS

Texas has earned bragging rights for its Even Start program. For the first time since Indicators of Program Quality (IPQ) were implemented in program year 2002, Texas Even Start met or exceeded all six of its IPQs and all ten of its adult education performance measures for the 2008-2009 year. These measures include student retention (persistence), learning outcomes for adults and children, and measures of parental support of children's learning in the home.

To gain a better understanding of this achievement, it is helpful to discuss some specifics. Even Start is authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title I, Part B. Section 1240 of the legislation specifies that each state will develop indicators of program quality, based on the best available research and evaluation data. The indicators shall be used to monitor, evaluate, and improve those programs within the state. The legislation further directs states to include specific measures for adults and children.

Adult measures include achievement in the areas of reading, writing, English-language acquisition, problem solving, and numeracy and receipt of a secondary school diploma or a general equivalency diploma (GED). Child measures include improvement in ability to read on grade level or reading readiness; school attendance; grade retention and promotion. The State may develop other indicators that reflect priorities in the State.

Texas implemented its first set of IPQs in program year 2002. The IPQs were revised for the 2006 program year. The Texas IPQs measure child receptive vocabulary, reading and developmental readiness in children birth through age three. They also measure school attendance while participating in Even Start, child promotion to the next grade level, and parent and child interaction.

The Even Start adult education performance measures mirror the performance measures for adult education programs funded by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) for retention and state gains. Even Start also measures completions using the same definitions and National Reporting System guidelines that are in place for WIA-funded programs, with one difference. Completions are compressed into three measures instead of the 11 separate educational functioning levels used by WIA-funded programs. Even Start reports one completion for all Adult Basic Education (ABE) students and one for all English as a Second Language (ESL) students. Low Adult Secondary Education (ASE) is reported just as Low ASE is reported for WIA-funded programs. Even Start programs serve an average of 73 adult education students each year. Educational functioning levels for ABE and ESL are compressed because calculating percentages for individual educational functioning levels would not be useful for such small numbers.

Even Start uses the same Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS) reports as WIA-funded programs to quantify its performance on completions. Even Start simply looks to the sub-total rows for ABE and ESL performance instead of looking at each individual educational functioning level.

The state tracks GED completions and high school diplomas and reports that information at the state level. Local programs provide data to the state but there is no IPQ at the local level for GED completions or high school diplomas.

Even Start has had an emphasis on program performance for a number of years. The implementation of the program report card in 2006, however, served to focus the use of data for program management. For the first time, Even Start programs earned a performance rating that was based on their adult education outcomes and their early childhood outcomes.

The information was powerful. It led to user-suggested improvements in the data systems that better enabled program coordinators to access information for program management. Coordinators and evaluators became savvier at reading and interpreting reports from the state data systems. Coordinators had more specific information for working with their partners. Texas LEARNS became better at coaching local programs to spot potential trouble spots long before the end of the year. Finally, local programs, Texas LEARNS and the Texas Family Literacy Resource Center all strengthened professional development based on actual results.

The Texas Even Start 2009 Performance is a reflection of all of the above. Clearly, this is a case where information resulted in increased performance.

Where does Even Start go from here? We raise the bar! The U.S. Department of Education requires that Even Start report child outcomes based on progress in Standard English. The reporting requirements are non-negotiable. The 2008-2009 population of Even Start non-teen adults was 79% ESL. Many of their school-aged children are enrolled in bilingual or dual-language classrooms. Even Start must find ways to supplement English instruction for children in prekindergarten and strengthen the use of English in the homes of participating families.

Other challenges mirror those of our adult education partners, including increasing the number of adult students that transition from ESL to ABE, increasing the number of students that earn a GED certificate or high school diploma, and increasing transitions to work or postsecondary education.

The strong performance of Even Start is a tribute to its adult education partners. Adult education cooperatives throughout the state provided sound instruction for Even Start adults. Even Start provided child care, one-on-one support through monthly home visits, and in some cases, assistance with transportation that allowed Even Start participants to remain in adult education long enough to make progress. Adult education cooperatives and Even Start programs benefitted. This achievement is the perfect example of the TEAM concept: Together Everyone Achieves More.

References

Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended in 1988, 20 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq. Retrieved 7/9/2009 from Office of the Law Revision Counsel of the House of Representatives at *http://uscode.house.gov.*

Perry, M. (2003). *Families First, Texas Even Start State wide Family Literacy Initiative Interim and Summative Evaluation Report* 2001-2002. Report prepared for Texas Education Agency.

Texas LEARNS, Texas Even Start Report Card 2008-2009, *http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/texaslearns/esdocs/ pdf/08-09rptcard.pdf*. November 2009.

Using TEAMS Data to Improve Your Program

by Susan Gusler

How is Your Program Doing? How do you know? One way to know for sure is to look at the numbers. "We want to base our decisions on facts and reality, not just intuition," David Borden, Executive Director Austin Community College Adult Education recently told his staff. There is an old saying that conducting classes without analyzing data is like continuously shooting arrows at a target without bothering to see if they have hit.

> *Is what we are doing working?*
> *Are we retaining students?*
> *Are they succeeding?*
> *Which ones aren't?*
> *Will we meet our enrollment goals?*
> *Which teachers, sites, and classes are getting the best results?*
> *Where could we do better?*

Recent enhancements to TEAMS (Texas Educating Adults Management System), the Texas Education Agency required database, make it a powerful tool in answering these and other key questions.

Customizing TEAMS Reports

Adult Education programs have long used TEAMS reports for program results (Table IV, Program Performance Report, and Program Evaluation report). Many users don't realize they can customize these reports–slicing the data by class, employment status, profile variables, goals, or age.

Table IV is even more sophisticated, allowing users to get results by teacher or by site, and even exclude specific sites or classes. This is useful if you want to compare site or teacher results, but have an atypical class you don't want mixed into the results. Table IV also has the capacity to "drill deeper" showing individual student information. If, for example, you see that the percentage of Beginning English as a Second Language students completing a level at a particular site is low, you can click on "Number who did not complete..." and each student, score, hours, baseline date, domain of significance, will be listed. You can print or export this list to email it. Once you have these results, you can start analyzing. What are the exceptional classes or sites doing that can be replicated? Why are results low in some classes or sites?

Table IV Notes: These reports only include students with class hours, not those with only orientation hours. Instructors with Teacher Reader status can see Table IV for all their classes.

Tracking Enrollment

Determining program capacity and current enrollment is vital for planning. One way to get a quick count of ALL students, including those that don't yet have class hours entered, is to click on Classes from the left menu. Click on Participants and TEAMS will sort the classes in ascending order, showing under-enrolled classes first. Click again to see which classes have had the most students enrolled. Total count shows at the bottom. Separated and transferred students show in the count, so classes may appear more crowded than they are. Comparing the counts to enrollment goals or capacity will yield valuable data in just a few minutes.

Avoiding Pitfalls

Data investigation and analysis may make some instructors and staff nervous. Administrators should assure everyone that data will be used for "wonder" NOT blame. Using data to assign blame is not only dangerous for staff morale; it also isn't appropriate or accurate. Just because a class has low retention or below average completions, doesn't mean the teacher is doing something wrong. The data only tells us "what" is happening, not "why." Brainstorming with key staff and "wondering" will help programs ask the right questions.

> *Are the times and locations workable and well communicated?*
> *Is the curriculum appropriate for the class level(s)?*
> *Is there a large number of students with learning differences or literacy issues?*
> *Are there barriers specific to that class or location, for example, the class is at a jail?*

Often, examining data brings up more questions than

it answers. Sometimes pinpointing the "whys" with 100% certainty is difficult. We can, however, explore ideas for making improvements, pilot those improvements, and then analyze the data again to see if it made a difference.

Another caution is not to jump to conclusions based only on data. Recently, a site had "no show" rates that were much higher than average, 80% for that site compared with 10% overall. We "wondered" what was happening. Our initial hypothesis was that the students, most of whom were reading at below the second grade level, were getting discouraged by the assessments at the orientation and deciding to self-select out. We shared our "wonder" with the instructor, who discovered that the address was printed incorrectly on their class assignment sheets. Most likely, they weren't showing up because they were going to the wrong place.

How did this happen? Simple human error. Why wasn't the problem caught earlier? Because we weren't systematically tracking no-shows and exploring the reasons behind them.

This example also illustrates that data is only as good as its accuracy. This applies to TEAMS as well. If a report doesn't seem right, investigate to be sure the data was entered accurately and that you are requesting the right data.

Most programs have sites with higher no-show rates, lower retention, or lower completions, as well as exemplary sites. We all have limited resources. Systematically analyzing data and investigating the possible causes can improve student success and help us use those limited resources to better serve our students.

About the Author
Susan Gusler serves as Data Management Coordinator for Austin Community College Adult Education. She holds an M.B.A. from the University of Texas and a B.S. in Business with Honors from Indiana University.

Best Practices When Using TABE

by Michelle Yzaguirre

You should always be aware of the implications when administering the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE). It is important to keep the following best practices in mind: following procedures/guidelines, security, testing experience and environment, as well as other implications. By adhering to these best practices, the TABE can be a valuable tool for your program. It gives you a starting place, drives instruction, and allows you a way to document a students' progress. When following best practices, it is more likely that one will have accurate and consistent data, which ultimately leads to enhanced program performance.

The TABE consists of the Locator, which is used to determine a student's testing level (L, E, M, D, A). The level tests should not be used in place of the locator. One thing to keep in mind is that the locator is not an absolute prediction of the student's ability because it has a limited number of items.

When administering TABE, it is important to continu-

ally refer to the test publisher's recommended testing procedures, the National Reporting System (NRS), and state assessment policies regarding the timing and frequency of the assessment. The TABE needs to be administered by trained administrators and/or proctors. Test administrators should follow the step-by-step test directions, read the script verbatim, use the guided test times for both pre- and post- TABE testing and inform the student of test times by displaying the start and stop times for each of the core tests.

It is important to understand the security procedures pertaining to the TABE. Security of TABE should be of the utmost concern; this too will ensure the integrity of the assessment. Best handling practices of testing materials should be of concern and a priority. It is the responsibility of all programs to protect the testing materials by doing the following:

- Follow the TABE procedures in place to ensure test security is safeguarded and upheld.

- Be sure to explain to the students the rules of cell phones before the test directions are given.
- Be sure that test materials are kept in a secure place at all times.
- Be sure to honor CTB/McGraw-Hill copyrights.

The testing experience and environment are also critical. It is always good practice to inform the student about the test experience, the purpose and the use of the scores as well as how their scores affect them. Give the student details of when and where the assessments will be given along with how long it will take. It is a good idea to pass out the TIPS FOR EXAMINEES before the actual assessment is to take place; this will prepare them in advance. Be sure to explain the subject matter and type of questions that will be on the assessment. Inform and assure the student that this is not a pass or fail assessment and that this assessment only determines where they stand in the different core tests of the TABE. Give the student an option of whether or not they want to take the practice questions. Hand out scrap paper before testing starts. Once the participant has completed the TABE and it has been graded, be sure to explain their scores, what it all means to them, and the next steps in the process.

It is important to be mindful of the testing environment. Be sure there is suitable spacing and seating for the students. TABE testing situations should be consistent for all students to promote fairness. Be sure the testing room has a *do not disturb* sign posted where others can view.

The following are other best practices to consider when administering TABE.

- If you are not already familiar with the NRS functioning levels and the Domain of Significance (DOS), it is imperative that you place them at the top of your to do list. By being familiar with the NRS levels and with the purpose of DOS, programs can monitor progress through the use of the TABE.
- According to the TABE assessment guidelines, it is highly recommended to use Scale Scores (SS) rather than Grade Equivalents (GE) to place or promote students.

The TABE can be a valuable tool for your program if best practices are used when it is administered. It can drive instruction, in turn students will make progress, and ultimately your program will meet its measures.

TABE gives a reliable measure of students' performance and plays a very important part in meeting performance measures. Just remember, when in doubt it is best to refer to survey test directions and procedural manual.

Reference
CTB/McGraw-Hill LLC. (2009) *Tests of Basic Education*, Monterey, CA.

About the Author
Michelle Yzaguirre, M.A.A., serves as a Trainer for South Central Project GREAT and a Supervisor for the Adult Education program at Education Service Center, Region 20 in San Antonio, Texas. She can be reached via email at *michelle.yzaguirre@esc20.net*.

Don't Miss these Special Events at TALAE 2010!

Texas Association for Literacy & Adult Education will hold its annual conference in Dallas, February 4-6, 2010.

Vendor Grand Opening
Thursday, February 4, 9:45–10:15 a.m.

TALAE Awards Dinner
(ticket required)
Thursday, February 4, 7:00–10:00 p.m.

Mid-Conference General Session Luncheon *(ticket required)*
Award Presentation-Robert Scott, Commissioner of Education
Dr. Janet N. Zadina, Keynote Speaker on Brain Research & Instruction
Friday, February 5, 12:00–1:30 p.m.

Presidents' Reception
Friday, February 5, 6:00–7:30 p.m.

TALAE Annual Meeting
(ticket required for lunch buffet)
Saturday, February 6, 11:45 a.m.–12:45 p.m.

For more information, see the conference page of the TALAE website, which is linked from TCALL's home page (*www-tcall.tamu.edu*).

Assessment and Accountability: Questions & Answers

From Texas LEARNS

Beth Thompson, CFLE, Assistant State Director and State Even Start & Family Literacy Coordinator, contributes these questions and answers.

Q: *Do I have to assess everybody?*

A: Assessment is the cornerstone to student instruction and to program accountability. Teachers determine what to teach students by reviewing their assessment results and their goals. This prevents students from becoming frustrated with material that is too difficult, too easy, or irrelevant to their needs. Providing students with appropriate instruction meets student needs, which can result in better student retention and better student outcomes.

Assessment is also a mechanism for showing that the program is implementing grant activities as approved in its application for funding. Assessment data can be analyzed and used for continuous program improvement.

Adult education requires assessment before the student becomes eligible to be served with federal funding. Even Start has the same requirement for adults, but assesses children after enrollment. In short, yes, every student must be assessed.

Q: *What are the rules governing assessment and accountability and where can I find them?*

A: This question is very pertinent to every adult education and family literacy program that receives federal and state funds. There are extensive rules governing assessment and accountability. It pays to be familiar with them.

Adult Education

The rules for assessment of adult education students in Texas are set forth in State Assessment and Goal Setting/Attainment Policy for Adult Education, aka The State Assessment Policy. It is posted online on the Texas LEARNS web site at *http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/texaslearns/docs/assmtpol/09assessmentpolicy.pdf*. The policy

is lengthy, but it explains exactly who is to be tested with which assessment and when. It even provides information for ordering assessments and training requirements for those administering assessments. The policy is updated annually, so it is a good idea to check the posting often.

The State Assessment Policy is Texas' formal plan to assess students according to rules established in the National Reporting System for Adult Education or NRS. NRS is an outcome-based reporting system for state-administered, federally-funded adult education programs. It was developed by the U.S. Department of Education's Division of Adult Education and Literacy. All states must follow the business rules established in NRS, providing consistency in reporting across states. A document titled NRS Implementation Guidelines provides guidance on data collection, data matching, and quality control. It also describes the data flow process, provides definitions of core and secondary measures, and discusses NRS reporting requirements. You can find the document online at *http://www.nrsweb.org/foundations/implementation_guidelines.aspx*.

Even Start

The adult education component of Even Start also uses The State Assessment Policy and NRS Implementation Guidelines to measure and account for student enrollment and student progress. In addition, Even Start is required to submit specific data to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Academic Improvement and Teacher Quality Programs. Individual states are responsible for developing Indicators of Program Quality (IPQs) that encompass federal reporting requirements and specify additional state goals. Texas IPQs are posted at *http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/texaslearns/esdocs/esipqcurr.html*. The site contains details of each IPQ and an implementation guide. Additionally, local programs can access a list of IPQs in TESPIRS (Texas Even Start Program Information Reporting System) by clicking on the Annual

IPQs button. IPQs define the student group to be assessed, a minimum time period or number of hours of participation, a performance target, time period between pre- and post- assessment and the instrument to be used or the data source for each indicator.

Performance of local Even Start programs is evaluated according to performance on IPQs and adult education performance targets.

Note: Texas Administrative Code, Texas Education Code, and the Texas Human Resources Code also contain rules that apply to adult education and family literacy in Texas.

Q: *How do I know if I'm using the right baseline (pre) and progress (post) tests?*
A: Begin by following the assessment rules as discussed above. Obtain training in test administration of each specific assessment to be used. Next, keep in mind that baseline (pre) and progress (post) tests need to be "matched" sets. If you assess with TABE Reading as a baseline or pretest, then a progress or posttest with TABE Language, you do not have a "matched" set of assessments. Publishers often produce more than one version of the assessment to deter the practice effect. These versions are labeled so that you can tell the difference. For example, one version might be Form A while the other is Form B. Follow the publisher's recommendations for selecting the appropriate form to use in any assessment.

Q: *How do I check my data in TEAMS/TESPIRS to make sure it is correct?*
A: This is where the data collection systems, TEAMS (Texas Educating Adults Management System) and TESPIRS, become useful. Both systems produce a number of reports that are designed to help programs manage better. Training is necessary to become proficient in TEAMS and TESPIRS. Contact your GREAT Center for TEAMS training and contact Texas LEARNS for TESPIRS training.

TEAMS has a variety of reports that can be used to verify data. Users can run a variety of reports on everything from staff qualifications to students who have not yet been assessed. There is no substitute, however, for double-checking data before it is entered and spot-checking data for accuracy after it is entered.

Programs are encouraged to develop a system for collecting, verifying and entering data in a timely fashion. Data entry should be an ongoing process so that reports can reflect up-to-date information for teachers and program staff to use.

Q: *How do I know if I met my targets?*
A: Once again, the data collection systems produce a variety of reports that identify your performance. If your data system is current, it can provide you with an ongoing picture of your program's performance. Examples of particularly useful reports in TEAMS are Table IV and IVB Combined, State Participant Gains Report, Performance Report, the GED Match Report, and the Participant Roster. Useful reports in TESPIRS are the Annual IPQ Report, Status Reports for each indicator and Performance Report for each indicator.

Janell Baker, Assistant State Director, contributes these questions and answers related to TEAMS – the Texas Educating Adults Management System. Janell advises programs to keep in mind that the procedures below are very general. Each case needs to be reviewed before determining the appropriate action.

Q: *What is the process to change student demographics in TEAMS?*
A: If the student enrolled this program year and has no history from previous program years in TEAMS, the local program can correct the date of birth, ethnicity, or gender.

If the student was enrolled in a previous program year, email the information that needs to be corrected to me or to your Grant Services Manager, and we will request the change be made. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis to determine if the change can be made. A change will not be considered unless we receive the request in writing.

Q: *How do we handle duplicate Social Security Numbers (SSN)?*
A: Make an effort to determine if the SSN is valid (physically view the card). If you determine that the SSN is not valid, use a Texas Drivers License, locally assigned number, or other acceptable documentation.

If the SSN is determined to be valid, contact the other program that entered the SSN (adult education director or EL Civics coordinator) to see if the SSN can be verified. If the SSN has been verified, you will need to use another acceptable document for identification.

If the participant is no longer enrolled or attending in the other program and you have verified the SSN is valid, contact me or your Grant Service Manager.

You can notify the student in your program about the situation, but do not give advice.

Q: *How do we determine when to posttest?*
A: Several reports are being considered for modification to make it easier to determine when a participant has the required 60 instructional hours before administering a posttest. The one thing that seems to make an immediate difference is keeping the data current in your local program. Inputting daily attendance in TEAMS on a weekly basis instead of monthly makes it much easier to monitor the hours accrued by each participant.

Q: *With performance-based funding being considered, how can I determine the effectiveness of the professional development that my teachers are attending?*
A: One of the enhancements made to TEAMS last year was the ability to flag a class being taught by a teacher who has participated in one of the intensive professional development activities such as Special Learning Needs, STAR Reading Project, ESOL Academy and other master teacher trainings. These activities involve more than one workshop. The teacher tries the activities in the classroom, analyzes and reflects on the results, and undergoes more training and/or mentoring. More than one professional development activity can be flagged if that teacher has participated in numerous activities. This enhancement should assist you in monitoring student progress in the classes and evaluate the effectiveness of your professional development activities.

Tracy Hendrix, Grant Service Manager for the East Region, contributes these questions and answers.

Q: *Why should you give a posttest in subtests that are not the Domain of Significance?*
A: For each subtest that has a preassessment, administer a postassessment. Postassessments in other subtest areas are accounted for in the State Gains Reports. See pages 3 and 4 of the State Assessment Policy.

Q: *How often should testing staff take a refresher course for TABE? BEST Plus? BEST Literacy?*
A: TABE – annually or periodically; *BEST Plus* – must be done every 2 years; *BEST Literacy* – recommended every 2 years. See pages 11 and 12 of the State Assessment Policy.

Q: *Which tests will show up on the Participants with less than 60 hour Report?*
A: Any test given between instruments that do not reflect 60 hours between the set of tests. So, any DOS (Domain of Significance) test and/or gain test could show up on the report.

Q: *Programs may not decide program-wide to test in one subject area. Can your program only preassess every student with the BEST Oral and/or TABE Math only? Why or why not?*
A: Each student determines his/her needs. The only exception to the rule of administering all subtests in the approved assessment instrument group is if an individual student specifically requests to study one area as determined in the student's goal setting activities. All subtest areas should be administered to all students as a preassessment to establish a baseline unless there is an exception. See pages 5 and 16 of the State Assessment Policy.

Q: *Programs are not required to enter assessments into TEAMS that are used to inform instructional practices and not used for placement or posttesting. Do you have to enter every assessment test given into TEAMS? Why or why not?*
A: Those tests should be clearly marked in the student folders "For Instructional Purposes Only." See page 4 of the State Assessment Policy.

John Gilbert Stevenson, Grant Service Manager for the South Central Region, is most commonly asked:

Q: *What are the business rules and timelines that determine which instructional domain is counted as DOS?*

A: Programs have to give any new assessments before the returning student starts class; otherwise, TEAMS will look back into the previous program year and roll over the last assessment and count it as the baseline.

If programs wish to roll over assessments from the previous year, they need to provide assessments in all of the domains. Domain assessments have to be administered within 30 days of each other to be considered as a DOS.

A second domain assessment can be given after a student starts class, but it must be administered within 15 days of the first class day.

Some programs have elected to deliver curriculum in components, permitting students to study just math or just language if they wish. In these cases, where the student does not request to take classes in a given domain, an assessment need not be given. That way a student does not have the burden of having a DOS in, say, math when he is not enrolled in any math instruction.

Q: *How should my program respond to the rule change requiring 60 hours of instruction between pretesting and posttesting learners?*
A: When the 60-hour rule was first announced, some sites actually looked at this as good news because it meant they had less work to do. Since most students had fewer than 60 hours, they did not need to be posttested. Later, when poor performance reports plunged these programs into Program Improvement Plans, these sites faced challenges they did not initially think through, both in terms of increasing intensity of instruction and increasing the number of post-tested students.

TEAMS Table IVB Data Analysis and Its Implications for the Improvement of Curriculum, Teacher Training and Program Performance

by David Joost

"Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, `and what is the use of a book,' thought Alice `without pictures or conversation?'" – Alice in Wonderland.

Peeping into TEAMS can be very much like the experience Alice had when she found herself falling through the rabbit hole. It seems to go on forever, you have plenty to look at and after a while time seems to stand still until you inexplicably resume conscious thought (usually the phone rings or someone comes into your office and shakes you back to reality) and wonder how long you have been staring at the endless charts, columns and figures. Like the book being read by Alice's sister, TEAMS has no pictures or conversation in it. So what is the use of such data?

"We drown in knowledge but still thirst for wisdom" - Anonymous. Aside from the painfully obvious uses of TEAMS for counting things like enrollment, contact hours, student attributes and assessments administered, the use of its mountainous data silos for the management of curriculum and instruction remains, to quote Churchill, "a puzzle inside a riddle wrapped in an enigma." TEAMS data is superb for answering questions of "What Kind? How Much? How Many? and How Often?" These questions are the equivalent of Alice's "pictures and conversation." In Alice's child-like and simple-mindedness, data should provide answers that should be superficially obvious to be of value, like the impressions one gains by looking at a picture. To answer questions of "Why?" requires a level of analysis that is most times not obvious, apparent or even absolute when looking to data alone. TEAMS data can lead us to explore for

instructional and curriculum management answers but it does not draw us a picture. Effectively using TEAMS data to manage instruction requires the wisdom to understand how and where to explore for answers, not just knowledge of the need to explore.

"Knowledge rests not upon the truth alone but error also." – Carl Jung. We must accept that TEAMS has limited value for identifying answers to "Why"-type questions. The numbers and percentages in the TEAMS reports are materially accurate, but how much those numbers are influenced by the quality of assessment, curriculum and teaching practices is not readily discernible. However, while other tables clearly describe areas of poor program performance when they occur, TEAMS Table IVB data is the most helpful for leading us to identify the cause(s). Setting aside variations in assessment practices, admittedly a presumptive leap, Table IVB results are linked most closely to the effects of teacher and curriculum quality.

"It takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place." – The Red Queen. Performance numbers and percentages for Adult Education Program retention goals are affected most directly by the number of progress assessments administered to learners. As a result, the obvious solution to improving program performance in most cases, is simply to administer progress tests to more learners. However, increasing the progress assessment administration rate only works if (1) the completion rate on TEAMS Table IVB is equal to or greater than the (2) goal for completion of the corresponding functioning level. Witness the following examples:

Provider A is not meeting the completion goal of 50% for a particular functioning level and the provider's completion rate on Table IVB is 70%. In this case, if the provider simply administers the appropriate progress test to enough students, the provider will eventually meet the benchmark as long as the Table IVB rate stays at or above the completion goal of 50%.

Contrastingly, Provider B is not meeting the completion goal of 50% for a particular functioning level and the provider's corresponding completion rate on Table IVB is 48%. In this case, if the Table IVB completion rate does not increase, the provider will never achieve the completion goal regardless of how many additional learners receive progress assessments. In fact, the providers in both examples can expect the completion rate to decline because it is likely that the learners

with the best attendance and proficiency have already been tested.

"Curiouser and curiouser." – Alice. Results like those for Provider B beg the "Why"-type question, "Why is the completion rate so low?" Because TEAMS data, as was earlier discussed, does not answer these kinds of questions well, we are therefore forced to look to other data sources for the solutions. TEAMS in the instance of Provider B, has actually eliminated assessment as the culprit for poor performance, leaving mainly curriculum quality and teacher quality as the major remaining likely suspects. To identify the degree to which those two or other variables are influencing performance, Provider B must drill down into data sources like classroom observations, student surveys and teacher evaluations. Only by using these more complex and robust data sources can Provider B discern how to improve the completion rate on Table IVB and ultimately reach the completion goal. Alice's sister would be pleased.

References

Carl Jung Quotes. (n.d.). Retrieved October 25, 2009, from *http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/c/ carl_g_jung.htm*

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass. (n.d.). Retrieved October 25, 2009, from *http://www.sabian.org/alice.htm*

About the Author
Dr. David Joost is the Director of Adult Education at Houston Community College, Texas' largest provider of adult literacy services.

Utilizing Assessment Results for Goal Setting

by Yvette Ortiz and Alicia Cubero

In an attempt to assure positive student outcomes, the Corpus Christi Independent School District Adult Learning Center has developed a three-step process with student assessment and goal setting at its heart. We have found that establishing a good rapport during a student's first visit to the campus, a positive testing experience, and student-driven goal setting have had a positive impact on student success.

STEP 1: INTAKE AND BASELINE ASSESSMENT

On the initial visit to the campus, a potential student will meet with the case manager and assessment specialist prior to baseline assessment and establishing the domain of significance (DOS). At this time, an effort to establishing rapport with the student is begun. Required paperwork is completed and personal goals and possible barriers are explored. The student is then accompanied by the case manager to the assessment specialist's offices where the *BEST Plus* and *BEST Literacy* assessments are administered. The oral exam starts with "small talk" in order to calm any test anxiety that a student may be experiencing. Once the student seems relaxed, both oral and written testing is initiated by informing the student that a series of questions will be asked in order to determine their level of placement; without ever mentioning the word "test." This process has had a positive effect on most student outcomes, and when returning for progress testing, the examinees are more confident.

STEP 2: ASSESSMENT REVIEW AND GOAL SETTING

Following the administration of both the *BEST Plus* and the *BEST Literacy* exams, the results are reviewed by the assessment specialist and a DOS (domain of significance) is established. The results are reviewed by the test administrator, student and respective teacher. Utilizing the Texas Educational Functioning Level Descriptors (located in the State Assessment Policy), the work on short- and long-term goals begins. Academic goals are established by the student based on their assessment scores and particular needs.

The student is encouraged to work on identified areas for at least 60 class hours, after which time a progress test is administered.

STEP 3: POSTTEST AND GOAL REVIEW

Once the assessment specialist determines that a student has reached the minimum of 60 class hours and that a test is required, the specialist will meet with the student to determine appropriateness for progress testing. Students are then administered both the *BEST Plus* (oral) and *BEST Literacy* (written) assessments. The *BEST Plus* is administered individually, while *BEST Literacy* Assessment is administered in a group setting. The results of posttesting are reviewed to determine gains. The assessment specialist will meet with students individually to inform them of their test results and discuss how the results impact their initial goals. When the student has met their initial goals, new goals are established. In those cases where progress was not made and goals not met, an improvement plan is created with the student to assure success on the next progress test.

DOS gain certificates and other incentives are awarded to those who have met a goal or made gains or both. Students are acknowledged publicly among their peers to serve as motivation for them as well as for the rest of the student body.

Testing can be challenging for most students; however once the student is comfortable and confident, specific goals are set and met, and consistent follow-through and motivation is maintained by the assessment staff and teachers, the students are more likely to show gains.

About the Authors

Yvette Ortiz is the Evaluation Specialist at the Corpus Christi Adult Learning Center as well as a *BEST Plus* and TABE trainer for the South Region GREAT Center. She graduated from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi with a Degree in Psychology and minor in Sociology.

Alicia Cubero is the Case Manager for the Adult Learning Center Family Literacy Program. She has a degree in Psychology from Baylor University.

The Research-Based Assessment of Adult Reading Skills

by Ken Appelt, TCALL Professional Development Specialist

Silent reading comprehension scores help us place students into classes of the proper level. However, accurately assessing the reading skills of adults when they enroll in adult education classes is not really as simple as it seems. Reading with comprehension requires readers to use many different subskills or "components of reading" as well as their general knowledge and experience. Does a simple assessment of silent reading comprehension provide enough information for teachers to give each student the instruction that will help them improve reading skills? What information do teachers of adults need to plan and deliver instruction for reading improvement?

In the mid-1980s, reading researcher John Strucker first began teaching in an adult education program in Massachusetts. He noticed that the students with the same silent reading score had very different reading needs and strengths. Some students had large vocabularies, some did not. Some students read aloud fluently, others sounded out each word laboriously and often inaccurately. Some students had few spelling errors; others could hardly spell words at all.

To understand these differences, Strucker and his colleagues began using multi-component reading assessments. Students who scored below grade equivalent (GE) 8 on their normal test of silent reading comprehension or who reported serious reading problems as a child received additional testing. Each student's skills were assessed in word analysis (phonics), word recognition, oral reading fluency, spelling, and oral vocabulary. They found that an adult student with a silent reading score of GE 8 may have scores on the individual reading components that vary by as much as three to five grade levels.

John Strucker made a chart for each student showing the grade-level-equivalent scores on the various tests. The charts or "reading profiles" were useful in planning instruction and tracking student progress. As the staff continued making reading profiles for students, they began to notice patterns in the reading profiles for different groups of students. ESL students had certain profiles depending on their educational attainment in their native language. Students with dyslexia

had a typical profile. Students whose education had been interrupted or who had dropped out had different profiles as well. The different profiles indicated different needs and consequently, different instructional focus.

Strucker's research on reading assessment and adult reading profiles continued through his doctoral dissertation at Harvard (1995), culminating in the *Adult Reading Component Study* (ARCS) which was published in 2003. A total of 955 adult students from 7 states participated in the *ARCS* conducted by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) at Harvard University. With the large group they were able to refine the reading profiles and compare results across states.

A follow-up study, *The Relationship of the Component Skills of Reading to IALS Performance: Tipping Points and Five Classes of Adult Literacy Learners* in 2005 found that literacy performance level on the *International Adult Literacy Survey* does have a relationship to print and word meaning skills. Here is a key finding of the study (emphasis mine).

> The IALS is an un-timed literacy assessment containing real-world items embedded in a functional context. This has led some to argue that IALS performance is primarily a function of adults' life experiences and their familiarity with the socio-cultural content of the items. *In sharp contrast, this research suggests that well known basic reading skills like word recognition and vocabulary play critical roles in real-life literacy performances, much as they do in more traditional academic, school-based literacy assessments. The good news about these basic skills is that, unlike life experience and cultural context, word recognition and vocabulary are readily teachable by ABE practitioners.*

This study also found that "simply knowing a reader's score on a reading comprehension test usually does not give teachers enough information to plan efficient instruction that is focused on the root causes of comprehension difficulties."

How can you learn more about assessment and reading profiles?

Fortunately, there is an fantastic online resource hosted by the National Institute for Literacy which has been newly revised in 2009. If you have previously visited the **Assessment Strategies and Reading Profiles (ASRP)** Website, I encourage you to take a second look at the updated site. This is a resource you will want to bookmark as a favorite: *www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/index.htm.*

They have added new resources and made it easier to navigate. *"Revisions included a more streamlined menu and alignment of the ASRP profiles with the National Reporting System. New content was added in the areas of Fluency, Word Meaning (Vocabulary), and the needs of the Non-native Speakers of English enrolled in ABE classes."*

An excellent new feature of the ASRP site is the **video** which models student interviewing and testing procedures. There are **free tests** which can be downloaded as well as information on the available commercially published diagnostic reading tests. You will also find a **glossary** of all terms used on the website related to reading instruction, reading assessment, and adult education. I was surprised at number of excellent links to **resource materials** on the Internet.

Here is a list of **what you can do** on the ASRP Website:

- learn about the components of reading

- learn about reading profiles and instruction

- watch videos of a teacher giving diagnostic reading tests to an adult learner

- download free tests with directions for administering and interpreting them

- match your adult learners' test scores to research-based adult reading profiles

- get instructional suggestions for teaching your learners based on their profile matches

- access additional resources and references on reading, assessment, and instruction

Spend some time on this amazing resource; you will not regret it!

Resources

National Institute for Literacy. (2003). ARCS: *The adult reading components study at NCSALL.* Retrieved December 16, 2009 from the NCSALL Web site (Note: this is the 4-page Brief Edition of the report; other versions are also available on the NCSALL Web site). *http://www.ncsall.net/file admin/resources/research/brief_strucker2.pdf*

Strucker, J. (1997). What silent reading tests alone can't tell you. *Focus on Basics*, 1, pp. 13-17. Retrieved September 18, 2008, from *www.ncsall. net/?id=456*

Strucker, J. with (Davidson, R., & Hilferty, A.) (NCSALL Occasional Paper, 2000). *How the ARCS was done.* Retrieved November 10, 2009 from the NCSALL Website - *http://www.ncsall.net/ fileadmin/resources/research/op_arcs.pdf*

Strucker, J., Yamamoto, K., & Kirsch, I. (NCSALL Report #29, 2007). *The Relationship of the Component Skills of Reading to IALS Performance: Tipping Points and Five Classes of Adult Literacy Learners.* Retrieved November 10, 2009 from the NCSALL Web site - *www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/research/report_29_ials.pdf*

NOTE: These resources are also available through the TCALL Clearinghouse Library, *www-tcall.tamu. edu/library.htm.*

Don't miss the LIBRARY resources beginning on page 18 and FREE resources that begin on page 22!

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 to request materials by mail or information on the Library's services.

Assessment for Adult Education & Literacy

Adult Literacy Assessment Tool Kit. Knell, Suzanne and Scogins, Janet (2000). Chicago, IL: Office for Literacy and Outreach Services, American Library Association. Developed through the Illinois Literacy Resource Development Center, this book is a guide to building an effective accountability system for an adult literacy program housed in a public library. Field-tested by libraries around the country, this book advises how to: identify and evaluate the skill levels of learners; make changes to your program based on users' aptitudes; write thorough and convincing grant proposals based on assessment results; and most importantly, meet the needs of learners, instructors, and funders.

Assessing Adult Learning: A Guide for Practitioners, Revised Edition. Moran, Joseph J. (2001). Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company. This book "shows adult educators how to use informal assessments to improve the learning of those they serve. It explains well-established assessment principles and demonstrates how educators can use those principles to devise and conduct assessments in collaboration with their learners. Great care is taken to illustrate how the techniques of informal assessment can be implemented across the full range of adult learning settings. Consideration is also given to several current issues and trends in assessing adult learning including multiculturalism, distance learning, learners with disabilities, and using performance/portfolio assessments." -- Editorial Description.

Assessing Adult Learning in Diverse Settings: Current Issues and Approaches. Rose, Amy D. and Leahy, Meredyth A., Editors (1997). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers. Number 75 in the New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education series. This issue addresses the concerns of assessing adult students. The contributors discuss issues such as the principles of assessment, multicultural approaches, assessment in adult basic education and workplace education.

Authentic Reading Assessment: Practices and Possibilities. Valencia, Sheila, et al, Editors (1994). Newark, DE: International Reading Association. This overview of nine projects describes how all are developing nontraditional forms of assessment. Some of the projects are statewide, and others are small programs.

Conquering Test Writing Anxiety: Helping Adult Learners Develop Confidence and Skills. Long, Ellen (2000). Toronto, Canada: Irwin Publishing. Fear of test writing can be a painful and paralyzing barrier to learning and advancement in education. This book offers a variety of exercises, which can be reproduced as handouts, to help learners better understand the nature of their fear of test writing and develop strategies for success. A self-directed tutorial on computer disk (also reproducible) is included.

How Are We Doing? An Inquiry Guide for Adult Education Programs. Bingman, Beth and Ebert, Olga (2001). Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. From the Introduction: "What difference are we making? How do we know? How can we show it? This guide is designed to be used by local adult education programs to facilitate a systematic inquiry process answering these kinds of questions. In this process, program staff take part in activities that involve them in identifying and clarifying program goals, examining current documentation processes, addressing the challenges of performance accountability and outcomes documentation at the program level. They produce a number of documents that their program can use (a) to make a decision about implementing ongoing improvement work and (b) to conduct this ongoing work." Book is available on loan to Texas educators ONLY, but is also available on NCSALL website (www.ncsall.net).

How Do They Know They Know? Evaluating Adult Learning. Vella, Jane, et al. (1998). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers. In "Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach" (a separate loan item), Vella described an approach to adult learning based on popular education, which emphasizes participation, dialogue, and learning by doing. In order to evaluate the results of a program that uses these strategies, the authors give a step-by-step approach to evaluating adult education programs using the principles and concepts of popular education. Real-life case studies show how the model works in a variety of settings to help trainers evaluate adult learning.

Knowing What Students Know: The Science and Design of Educational Assessment. Pellegrino, James W., et al, Editors, (2001). Washington, DC: National Academy Press. From the Executive Summary: Educational assessment "provides feedback to students, educators, parents, policy makers, and the public about the effectiveness of educational services. ... Advances in cognitive and measurement sciences make this an opportune time to rethink the fundamental scientific principles and philosophical assumptions serving as the foundations for current approaches to assessment. ... The Committee on the Foundations of Assessment, supported by

the National Science Foundation, was established to review and synthesize advances in the cognitive sciences and measurement and to explore their implications for improving educational assessment. ... This report addresses assessments used in both classroom and large-scale contexts for three broad purposes: to assist learning, to measure individual achievement, and to evaluate programs."

Learner-Directed Assessment in ESL. Ekbatani, Glayol and Pierson, Herbert, Editors (2000). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. This book examines the relationship between the language learner and language assessment processes, and promotes approaches to assessment that involve the learner in the testing process. Particular attention is given to issues of reliability and validity. Grounded in current pedagogical applications of authentic assessment measures, this book is intended for classroom teachers and program directors looking for ways to include their students in the evaluation process. Two chapters address the use of portfolios for learner-directed or self-assessment.

Learning to Change: Teaching Beyond Subjects and Standards. Hargreaves, Andy and Earl, Lorna, et al (2001). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. Based on the perceptions of 29 teachers in grades 7 and 8 as they grapple with such educational reform initiatives as integrated curriculum, common learning standards, and alternative modes of assessment, this book may be of interest to adult educators who are contending with similar reform initiatives. The authors focus on how reform proposals have brought new complexities to teaching practice and the intense emotional demands that change imposes on teachers. They also outline strategies for helping teachers through the difficult process of educational reform.

Measuring Literacy: Performance Levels for Adults. Hauser, Robert M. and Edley, Christopher F., Jr. and Koenig, Judith Anderson and Elliott, Stuart W., Editors (December 2005). Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. This book presents an alternative to the official 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) report by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Writers and editors are among the members of the Committee on Performance Levels for Adult Literacy at the Board of Testing and Assessment, National Research Council of the National Academies. The committee also included Judith A. Alamprese, Andrew J. Hartman, Rima E. Rudd, Mary Jane Schmitt, Heide Spruck Wrigley, and others. This group was formed in 2002 as an interdisciplinary panel tasked with setting performance standards for the 2003 NAAL, conducted by the NCES. This report presents the findings and recommendations that resulted from the committee's deliberations. It also includes background information about the measurement of

adult literacy in general, and about the NAAL and its predecessor, the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS). The final chapters offer strategies for reporting and communicating about the results of NAAL, ways for using the results, and suggestions for improving future assessments of adults' literacy skills. The book also points toward the need to define adult literacy more broadly, such as including writing and media literacy and to consider speakers of languages other than Spanish in the background questionnaire.

Meeting Standards and Raising Test Scores When You Don't Have Much Time or Money. Payne, Ruby K. and Magee, Donna S. (1999). Highlands, TX: RFT Publishing Company. Intended for staff development and written mainly for a target audience of K-12 educators, many concepts also apply to adult education. Chapter titles include: Identifying Belief Systems; Identifying Students by Quartile; Understanding Test Scores, Test Development, and Cognitive Issues; Building Critical Mass; Assigning Time and Aligning Instruction; Measuring Student Growth; Intervening to Meet Student Needs; Analyzing and Writing Test Questions; Embedding Monitoring Strategies; Utilizing the Training; and a Bibliography. Also available as a separate loan titles is a ***Meeting Standards Resource Manual*** with supplemental resources.

New Ways of Classroom Assessment. Brown, J.D., Editor (1998). Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. Teachers confronted with large-scale standardized testing practices can use this book to explore alternative methods of classroom assessment. This volume offers activities practiced by colleagues around the world and suggests ways of observing or scoring students' performances and giving feedback that enlightens students and teachers about the effectiveness of the learning and teaching involved.

Overcoming Resistance to Self-Direction in Adult Learning. Hiemstra, Roger and Brockett, Ralph G., Editors (1994). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers. Number 64 from the new Directions for Adult and Continuing Education series. This issue discusses how to help adult students become self-directed learners. Some of the topics addressed are: portfolio assessment as a strategy; using technology; instructional techniques; and helping learners take responsibility. Each chapter is written by a different author.

Portfolios and Beyond: Collaborative Assessment in Reading and Writing. Glazer, Susan Mandel and Brown, Carol Smullen (1993). Norwood, MA: Christopher Gordon Publishers, Inc. Although this book is directed towards elementary education, it has

many ideas that can apply to adult education. The chapter titles are: 1) An Alternative Approach to Classroom Assessment: Why Change? 2) Assessing Classroom Environments; 3) Frameworks for Getting Started; 4) Assessing Writing; 5) Assessing Comprehension Processes; 6) Assessing Comprehension Products; 7) Reporting Progress: Students, Teachers, and Parents Collaborate; and 8) Questions Teacher Ask.

The Role of Classroom Assessment in Teaching and Learning.
Shepard, Lorrie A. (2000). Santa Cruz, CA: Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence. The purpose of CREDE's research on assessment is to investigate alternative methods for evaluating the academic achievement of language minority students. This report develops a framework for understanding a reformed view of assessment, in which assessment plays an integral role in teaching and learning. The author explains how classroom assessment practices must be transformed in two ways to help students learn. First, the content and character of assessments must be improved by representing important thinking and problem-solving skills in each of the disciplines. Second, the gathering, use, and view of assessment information by teachers and students must become a part of the ongoing learning process.

Scenarios for ESL Standards-Based Assessment.
Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (2001). Alexandria, VA: TESOL. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. ESL Standards are the starting point for discussions about how best to serve the needs of ESOL students. Building rich curricula and designing effective instruction are key components of effective programs. This book adds assessment to that discussion. It presents an assessment process for measuring students' progress in attaining ESL standards. A series of classroom-based scenarios illustrates how to weave the assessment process into ongoing instruction.

Standards for Adult Education ESL Programs.
TESOL Task Force on Adult Education Program Standards (2003). Alexandria,VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. What are the components of a quality adult ESL program? This publication answers that question by defining quality components from a national perspective. The standards can be used to review an existing program or as a guide in setting up a new ESOL program. Standards include program indicators in eight distinct areas: program structure, administration, and planning; curriculum and instructional materials; instruction; learner recruitment, intake, and orientation; learner retention and transition; assessment and learner gains; employment conditions and staffing; professional development and staff evaluation; and support services. A program self-review instrument enables users to analyze their program's strengths and areas for improvement and develop an action plan.

Student-Involved Classroom Assessment, Third Edition.
Stiggins, Richard J. (2001). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall. Offering a variety of alternatives to standardized assessment, this book addresses ways to assess progress on a day-to-day basis, emphasizing student self-assessment. Some chapter topics include: Personal Communication - Immediate Information about Achievement; Assessing Reasoning [and Problem-Solving] Proficiency; Portfolios - Capturing the Details; and Communicating with Conferences. Book is available on loan to Texas educators ONLY.

Teaching Strategies in the Online Environment.
Conceicao, Simone C. O., Editor (Spring 2007). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers. Number 113 in the New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education series. From the Editor: "One of the challenges for adult educators who teach online is identifying the teaching strategies that fit the needs of learners, content, and the environment. This volume describes a variety of teaching strategies research on their use in the online environment, examples of how they have been used in online courses, a consideration of their effectiveness and limitations, and implications for the practice of adult and continuing education." A chapter by Steve Rocco focuses on how instructors can assess individual learners in the online environment, including current research as well as types and methods of assessment available to online instructors.

Tools for Teaching Content Literacy.
Allen, Janet (2004). Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers. Reading and writing across content areas is emphasized in this compact tabbed flipchart book designed as a ready reference for content reading and writing instruction. Each of thirty-three instructional strategies includes: a brief description and purpose for each strategy; a research base that documents the origin and effectiveness of the strategy; graphic organizers to support the lesson; and classroom vignettes from different grade levels and content areas to illustrate the strategy in use. The definitions, descriptions, and research sources also provide a quick reference when implementing state and national standards, designing assessments, writing grants, or evaluating resources for literacy instruction.

Understanding by Design, Expanded Second Edition.
Wiggins, Grant and McTighe, Jay (2005). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Understanding by Design is a framework for designing curriculum, assessments, and instruction that explores questions like: What is teaching for understanding? How can you unpack content standards to identify the important big ideas that you want students to understand? How do you know that students truly understand and can apply their understanding in a meaningful way? How can you design courses and units to emphasize understanding rather than coverage? What instructional practices are both engaging and effective for developing student understanding?

Understanding by Design: Professional Development Workbook.
Wiggins, Grant and McTighe, Jay (2004). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Workbook extends the ideas presented in Understanding by Design (a separate Clearinghouse loan title) by focusing on professional development and the practical matters of curriculum design. Workbook serves as a resource to educators in developing curricula and

assessments with a focus on developing and deepening students' understanding of important ideas. Among other tools, the workbook describes though-provoking workshop activities, including review and reflection.

Workplace Instructor Training CD-ROM and Workbook. Cozzolino, Laurie Gifford (1999). San Diego, CA: Workplace Learning Resource Center, San Diego Community College District. Developed at the Workplace Learning Resource Center at the San Diego Community College District, this training package is intended to be used interactively and flexibly, in either a group or individual setting. Ten modules on the CD-ROM include: 1) Roles of the Workplace Instructor; 2) Overview of a Workplace Basic Skills Contract; 3) Workplace Needs Assessment; 4) Program Evaluation; 5) Methods of Assessment; 6) Creating a Course Outline; 7) Teaching Listening & Speaking in the Workplace; 8) Teaching Reading in the Workplace; 9) Teaching Writing in the Workplace; and 10) Teaching Math in the Workplace. The accompanying Instructor Workbook is intended to promote discussion of critical workplace issues, provide practice in solving typical workplace problems, and expand knowledge through readings and application of knowledge to specific workplace tasks. For each module on the CD, an accompanying chapter in the workbook provides discussion questions, critical thinking/problem solving, reading, application, and suggested further readings/appendix. Book with CD-ROM is available on loan to Texas educators ONLY.

Assessment in Family Literacy

Assessing Success in Family Literacy and Adult ESL, Revised Edition. Holt, Daniel D. and Van Duzer, Carol H., Editors (2000). McHenry, IL: Center for Applied Linguistics and Delta Systems Co., Inc. Programs that teach adult English language learners now face increased accountability demands from their funders to meet program and learner goals. This updated and revised version of Holt's 1994 "Assessing Success in Family Literacy Projects" provides guidance on developing an effective evaluation plan for adult English language programs -- whether in the context of family literacy, workplace and workforce literacy, or general language development. With an emphasis on surveys, interviews, observation measures, and performance samples, the authors show how staff members and learners can gain accurate information about how well they are meeting their goals. The book provides many sample assessment tools and examples of strategies for summarizing and analyzing assessment data that can be customized.

The Classroom Observer: Developing Observation Skills in Early Childhood Settings, Third Edition. Boehm, Ann E. and Weinberg, Richard A. (1997). New York, NY: Teachers College Press. Systematic observation is essential for educators to evaluate properly the effectiveness of curricula and to address the problems of individual students. This new third edition emphasizes early childhood, and focuses on those skills that will enable the observer to make appropriate, valid inferences and to arrive at decisions based on objective observation data gathered in natural learning environments and diverse educational settings. Includes

new focuses on: procedures for observing environmental factors that affect learning and behavior; the importance of understanding the cultural and linguistic characteristics of children's learning environments; the key role of observation in the assessment process; the forms of observation, with illustrative examples; and the exploration of reliability, sampling behavior, recording formats, summarizing observational outcomes, and validity. Using photographs, sample worksheets, a simple format, and straight-forward language, the authors cite real-life examples from early childhood that can be applied to a variety of classroom experiences.

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.

HOME Inventory Administration Manual: Comprehensive Edition. Caldwell, Bettye M. and Bradley, Robert H. (2003). Little Rock, AR: University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and University of Arkansas at Little Rock. The HOME (Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment) Inventory is a tool for gathering data in a home visit with parents and their young children, in order to systematically measure the home environment. Manual provides instructions for administering three versions of the HOME: Infant/Toddler (birth - 3 yrs.), Early Childhood (3 - 6 yrs.); and Middle Childhood (6 - 10 yrs.). Manual does NOT include rationale, standardization or validity information on this updated version of the HOME. That information is included in the "Home Inventory Administration Manual: Comprehensive Edition", a separate Clearinghouse loan title. Book is available on loan to Texas educators ONLY.

User's Guide to the Early Language & Literacy Classroom Observation Toolkit, Research Edition. Smith, Miriam W. and Dickinson, David K., et al (2002). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. ELLCO is a three-part assessment including the classroom literacy environment, classroom observation and teacher interview, and a literacy activities ratings scale. The age range addressed is prekindergarten to third grade. An in-depth technical appendix, resource list, effective elements of early literacy discussion, and a how to use ELLCO section are presented in the user's guide. The toolkit includes the user's guide and an observation record to review for program adoption. "ELLCO advances the field by not just assessing but improving the quality of language and literacy practices in early childhood classrooms, and educating teachers in the process," says Sue Bredekamp, Director of Research, Council for Professional Recognition. Book with Sample Observation Record are available on loan to Texas educators ONLY.

Free Things to Send For . . .

Assessment for Transitions to Work

Assessment Without Tests. Lengel, Beth (November 2005). West Columbia, SC: Lengel Vocational Services. The author presented these workshop materials in a November 2005 Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development symposium on youth development. While tests have their place, workforce development professionals do not have to be "testing experts" to collect and use important data to help plan job search and training services. Lengel takes a critical look at three tools workforce development professionals can integrate to develop comprehensive information that will help their clients with job search, wage, progression, and career growth. Those tools are self-assessment, observation, and the structured interview.

Career Portfolios. Wonacott, Michael E. (2000). Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. Career portfolios provide evidence of individuals' knowledge and skills in working with data, people, and things. Developing a portfolio can be a valuable career awareness and career planning activity for youth, including those with special needs, and adults; a productive instructional activity involving critical reflection and analytical thinking; and a very useful tool in job search and career change. This ERIC Practice Application Brief describes practices in developing and using portfolios for career-related purposes.

Culturally Sensitive Career Assessment: A Quandary. Austin, James T. (1999). Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. In the domains of working and schooling, cultural diversity has become an important concept and a source of leverage for those who dare to surf on turbulent waves that involve new ways of thinking and new ways of doing (Jackson et al. 1992). This ERIC Digest discusses progress in the area of multicultural assessment, and questions such as whether the notions of work and career are viewed similarly across cultures.

Assessment for Adult English Language Learners

Assessment with Adult English Language Learners. NCLE, Center for Applied Linguistics (January 2002). Washington, DC: National Center for ESL Literacy Education. The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998) requires each state to report educational gains of learners in terms of level descriptors defined by the National Reporting System (NRS) document. This requirement has intensified the debate among practitioners, researchers, and policy makers as to what constitutes success and how to measure it. This NCLE Fact Sheet discusses trends and issues and best practices relating to assessment with adult ESL learners, and suggests resources for further information.

Evaluating Phonological Skills in Adult ESOL Learners Schwarz, Robin Lovrien (October 2006). College Station, TX: Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy & Learning. Recent studies with adult learners and their process of becoming literate in languages other than English indicate that the correlation of phonological skills with learners' success or lack of success in learning to speak, understand or read in their native langue is similar to that in children. To increase understanding of the role of phonological skills in the learning of adult learners of English, twenty-nine learners at five sites in Texas were evaluated using a screening tool adapted from commercially available tests of phonological processing skills. Results indicate that, as expected, learners with higher levels of literacy generally have stronger phonological skills in English than those with lower literacy, but low literacy does not in itself predict weak phonological awareness, the skill supporting literacy. Repeating sentences was the most prominent weakness across factors such as levels of literacy, time in the US, time studying English and language background. Theories are suggested for this finding.

Effects of Instructional Hours and Intensity of Instruction on NRS Level Gain in Listening and Speaking. Young, Sarah (December 2007). Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics. This digest reports on a descriptive study examining two questions related to adult English language learners' educational level gains in the National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS), as measured by the standardized oral proficiency assessment *BEST Plus*: (1) What is the relationship between instructional hours and educational level gain on *BEST Plus*? and (2) What is the relationship between intensity of instruction and educational level gain on *BEST Plus*? To provide guidance to users on the number of instructional hours needed for students to show a level gain on *BEST Plus*, the Center for Applied Linguistics collected pretest and posttest data on more than 6,500 students from two states. Results showed that across NRS educational functioning levels, the greater the number of instructional hours, the higher the percentage of students who made level gain. There was also a general trend toward greater NRS level gain for students with high levels of instructional intensity than for those with low intensity. Intensity of instruction had the greatest impact on students at the Beginning ESL Literacy, Low Intermediate, and Advanced ESL levels.

Learner Assessment in Adult ESL Literacy. Wrigley, Heide Spruck (September 1992). Washington, DC: National Center for ESL Literacy Education. Learner assessment is one of the most troublesome areas of adult English as a Second Language (ESL) literacy. On the one hand, programs face demands for valid and reliable tests that can be used for program comparison; on the other, there are strong calls to keep assessment program-based and learner-centered. Disillusioned with standardized tests and concerned about ongoing demands for accountability and documentation of effectiveness, literacy educators are searching for assessments that are fair to learners, informative to teachers, and accept-

able to funders and other outside stakeholders. Implementing or developing sound assessments for ESL literacy has become a big challenge-a task made even more difficult because a framework for assessments that provide useful data for ESL literacy programs has not yet been developed. To help clarify some of the issues, this ERIC Q&A compares standardized tests and alternative assessments and provides some examples of effective alternative assessments used in the field.

Needs Assessment for Adult ESL Learners. Weddel, Kathleen Santopietro and Van Duzer, Carol (May 1997). Washington, DC: National Center for ESL Literacy Education. Assessment of literacy needs from the learner's perspective is an important part of an instructional program. Learners come to adult English as a second language (ESL) literacy programs for diverse reasons. Although they may say they just want to "learn English", they frequently have very specific learning goals and needs: for example, to be able to read to their children, to get a job, or to become a citizen. If their needs are not met, they are more likely to drop out than to voice their dissatisfaction (Grant & Shank, 1993). The needs assessment process can be used as the basis for developing curricula and classroom practice that are responsive to these needs. This ERIC Digest focuses on ways to determine what learners want or believe they need to learn. Many of the activities described can also include or lead to assessment of proficiencies, and many of the sources cited include both types of assessment.

Assessment for Adult Basic Education

Indicators of Program Quality Study Circle Guide. Pennsylvania ABLE and Kraus, Sally (2003). Commonwealth of Pennsylvania: Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education. The Indicators of Program Quality provide a comprehensive framework to guide local program improvement efforts. This Study Circle Guide, designed for local administrators and practitioners in Pennsylvania, creates a forum for understanding the meaning of the indicators and discuss their respective use in quality improvement. The guide is based on Pennsylvania's Indicators of Program Quality, but it could be used to structure a study circle or seminar in using Texas' IPQs, which include an area on Learner Outcomes covering the following: Academic Development, Real World Applications, Preparation for Transition, Work Force Development, and Personal Development. The Texas IPQs can be found on the Administrators' page of TCALL's website in the Adult Education Administrators' Manual.

It Belongs to Me: A Guide to Portfolio Assessment in Adult Education Programs. Fingeret, Hanna Arlene (1993). Durham, NC: Literacy South. The need for alternative methods of learner assessment has long been recognized by many adult literacy educators. This guide is designed to introduce the concept of portfolio assessment and suggest ways in which portfolios might be integrated into a total assessment plan. This is a valuable tool for those who have decided that standardized tests "do not tell me what I need to know about individual students in order to work with them effectively," or who have tried "folders" that did not work.

Outcomes of Participation in Adult Basic Education: The Importance of Learners' Perspectives. Bingman, Mary Beth et al (January 2000). Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. The Center for Literacy Studies in Tennessee conducted a longitudinal study examining the outcomes of participation in literacy programs as reported by learners. In this study, adults reported a broad and complex set of outcomes that were affected by the contexts of learners' lives. This paper examines the implications of these findings for policy makers who are developing measurements of outcomes used to assess performance of adult education programs.

Verizon Life Span Literacy Matrix: Relevant Outcomes, Measures and Research-based Practices and Strategies Westberg, Laura and McShane, Susan and Smith, Lisa (October 2006). Louisville, KY: National Center for Family Literacy. Developed in collaboration among the National Center for Family Literacy, ProLiteracy Worldwide, the National Coalition for Literacy, the Verizon Foundation, the American Library Association, and Georgetown University, this matrix identifies relevant literacy outcomes, appropriate instruments for measuring the outcomes, and effective research-based practices that allow programs and individuals to increase the development of literacy at all stages of life. This tool is intended to minimize confusion for providers over what works in literacy instruction, and to guide funders in ascertaining what programs are worth funding. Most importantly, it is intended to help providers better serve learners from children's earliest literacy (ages birth to three years) all the way through adult learners in basic education and literacy programs, including English language learners. A glossary defines terms as they are used in the matrix, and lists of references and standardized measures are provided as well.

Family Literacy

Assessing Adult/Child Storybook Reading Practices. DeBruin-Parecki, Andrea (June 1999). Ann Arbor, MI: Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement. In this paper, DeBruin-Parecki reviews the existing research on joint storybook reading practices, outlining the behaviors essential for success. She then describes and reports on the efficacy of her assessment instrument, the Adult/Child Interactive Reading Inventory (ACIRI), an observational tool for assessing the joint reading behaviors of both adults and children. The ACIRI is intended to encourage good instruction, authentic and friendly assessment, and guidance for teachers working with parents and children as to where to focus their instructional efforts. The ACIRI evaluates 12 literacy behaviors and was piloted by Even Start teachers, who collected data on 29 mothers and their children in September and again in May. The ACIRI instrument, a single-page matrix for documenting observation of adult and child behaviors, is included as an appendix.

Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy (TROLL): A Research-Based Tool. Dickinson, David K. and McCabe, Allyssa and Sprague, Kim (September 2001). Ann Arbor, MI: Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement. Article describes (and includes) the Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy (TROLL), an instrument that measures skills identified as critical in the New Standards for Speaking and Listening (Tucker & Codding, 1998) for children ages three through five. In five to ten minutes and without prior training, teachers can assess an individual child's current standing with respect to skills that research has identified as critical for literacy acquisition. Skills assessed include language, reading, and writing abilities. TROLL has been used with over 900 low-income children, is reliable, and has strong internal consistency. Its validity has been established in numerous ways; TROLL correlates significantly with scores on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Early Phonemic Awareness Profile given to the same children by trained researchers.