



TEXAS Adult & Family Literacy QUARTERLY

Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy & Learning

Texas Reflects on Even Start

by Elizabeth B. Thompson, CFLE, CMPI

Texas LEARNS

Once in a lifetime an educator, if she is very fortunate, has the chance to work in a program that propels students forward, pulls at the heart, and leaves significant legacies in its wake. Even Start was that program for me. Even Start enjoyed funding from 1988 through 2012. Texas Even Start had surprisingly strong outcomes for the neediest and least educated families in our state. There are lessons to be learned from our Even Start experience. I invited several professionals who were influential in Texas Even Start to reflect on the lessons learned in the Texas Even Start experience. What follows is a compilation of the collective experience of state-level staff, professional development staff, local program directors and evaluators.

Legislation and Policy

The requirement to base instructional programs on scientifically-based reading research first appeared in U.S. legislation in a surprising spot: Even Start. Even Start Family Literacy was surprising in a variety of ways. It was designed to help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy. It required integration of early childhood education, adult basic education and parenting education into a unified program. It was one of the first educational programs to require community partnerships in which partners all contributed something tangible to the partnership.

From a policy perspective, Even Start Family Literacy was both an ambitious anti-poverty education program that depended on local-level collaboration and a prescriptive federal program that focused on outcomes. It was a rare and beautiful program that empowered low-income parents and local educators.

The legislation itself evolved over time. The addition of program elements was critical to facilitate accountability. The program elements caused all Even Start programs throughout the nation to follow a similar format of program implementation. Data could be summarized on a state-wide basis that, in turn, fostered more effective planning and program development.

Evaluator and Program Coordinator, Dr. Patricia Williams, notes that Even Start taught us that planning time prior to program implementation is vital to establish goals and indicators, select appropriate assessments, and train staff. New staff members need clear expectations and the appropriate tools to show the expected results.



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Accountability

Even Start came about at the dawn of the accountability era. In the early years, local programs could choose among different assessment instruments. A variety of assessments were in use across the state that were not correlated in any way. It was difficult, if not impossible, to aggregate data on a state-wide basis. That made the quest for continued or increased funding difficult.

Once we understood the importance of accountability, Texas was very intentional in developing indicators of program quality, determining how to measure the indicators, and providing an online data system with the capability of producing reports with specific data for the purpose of program improvement.

The availability of consistent assessment data made it possible to implement program and state-level report cards beginning with 2005-2006 program data. The Texas Even Start Report Cards initiative was a data-driven Even Start milestone that put the spotlight on accountability and brought local programs into the age of data-driven program management.

Data-driven program management was aided by a state-of-the-art online data collection system called TESPIRS. Having a data system, however, is vastly different from using data for program improvement. According to Coordinator Jerre Bergeron, "Much of the success of our program came with the oversight of Texas LEARNS. The data that we learned to keep, the high standards that were expected, the approachable and knowledgeable support staff, and the staff development provided for us all were superb. This set the standard and the foundation for the local programs."

Future programs would benefit from having a well-developed data system that requires programs to enter attendance, assessment, and other data that are linked directly to individual participants in real time. Such data allows coordinators the opportunity to review program data and make program adjustments on an ongoing basis.

Dedication, Collegiality and Flexibility

There was a spirit of cooperation in Texas Even Start. Local coordinators willingly shared their successes with others to help foster

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Getting New and Emerging Literacy Programs “In the Loop”

by Harriet Vardiman Smith, TCALL Director

Do you know of a new or emerging volunteer or community-based literacy program in your area? If so, be sure *they* know about TCALL and we know about them.

How will they benefit?

Getting Out the Word

Any nonprofit adult or family literacy program can be listed in TCALL's online Directory of Literacy Providers. This searchable Directory is used to refer adult learners to local programs when they call **TCALL's statewide Literacy Hotline (800-441-READ)**. It's also used to refer people who want to volunteer in a literacy program, and can help potential partners and funders become aware that a program is out there doing great work in its community.

Making Connections

TCALL can help new programs connect with the Literacy Texas organization, the statewide literacy coalition with a mission to connect and equip literacy programs through resources, training, networking and more.

TCALL hosts **LiteracyTexasLink**, a statewide email discussion list for anyone in Texas who's interested in adult or family literacy in volunteer or community-based settings. Membership in the Literacy Texas organization is not a requirement for subscribers to the **LiteracyTexasLink**. Professional development opportunities, free resources, and funding opportunities are among the types of information shared. The Literacy Texas organization also uses **LiteracyTexasLink** to communicate with a broad spectrum of literacy educators, including but not limited to that organization's members.

Access to Free Resources

TCALL's website (tcall.tamu.edu), this **Texas Adult & Family Quarterly** publication, and the **LiteracyTexasLink** email discussion list mentioned above are all used to promote free online resources as well as hard copy resources available from **TCALL's Clearinghouse Library**, a free mail-order source of instructional and program materials on loan as well as free titles – all available on request to instructional volunteers, staff, and leaders of any non-profit literacy provider in Texas. A great place to start exploring resources is to find the blue **Volunteer Literacy** menu button near the top of TCALL's home page.

Improving Instruction

Through the **Literacy Volunteer Training Initiative** or VTI, the Clearinghouse Project at TCALL collaborates with Texas LEARNS, the eight regional GREAT Centers, and a VTI Statewide Advisory Committee to promote instructional quality in volunteer and community-based literacy service providers that do not have access to federal or state funds for training. This is accomplished by supporting access to quality professional development for volunteers, instructors, and instructional leaders of those programs. That support includes funding of expenses for participation in conferences and other professional development opportunities. For more information, see the Literacy Volunteer Training Initiative web page, found under State Leadership Activities on TCALL's site (tcall.tamu.edu).

Even Start – A National Look Back

“Almost a quarter of a century later, Even Start leaves behind a rich history that is too important to lose.” The National Even Start Network published a September 2012 issue of its Even Start Bulletin beginning with those words. In that bulletin, a follow-up report describes the effect of family involvement training on the language skills of children from migrant families. Even Start “Legacy Products” are also described, along with reflections on Even Start in Pennsylvania, making the bulletin an interesting companion piece to this publication's cover article, “Texas Reflects on Even Start.”

Read the September 2012 issue of the national Even Start Bulletin online.
<http://www.evenstartnetwork.net/assets/doc/pdf/bulletin/September2012.pdf>



Texas Reflects on Even Start, continued from page 2

a higher quality program throughout the state. It was quite common for staff from one program to visit another to learn how they might improve their own efforts. Many times ideas from these visits were implemented to improve program quality and foster family successes. That cooperative spirit was in contrast to other externally-funded programs where the prevailing perception among local programs was “competition” instead of “cooperation.” In the words of Dr. Don Seaman, former TCALL Director and Evaluator, “that’s what made the overall program in Texas so great.”

The strongest programs had extremely dedicated and well-qualified staff. Jerre Bergeron described her staff this way, “Our staff is here because they are on a mission, they are experts in their field and they believe that they make a difference in the lives of the families we enroll. Yes, we do have the best jobs in the world, and our work does make a difference.”

Local coordinators had a willingness to “roll with the punches” when state leadership changed. There were several changes in state-level leadership over the years. Each state leader had their particular style of leadership. The quality of leadership at the local level was sometimes tested when a new state leader’s style was different from the predecessor. However, staff in local programs across the state, under the direction of their local coordinators, adjusted and “rolled on” because their number one priority was the families in their communities who desperately needed Even Start. Program quality never suffered even though some changes made program administration somewhat more difficult. Staff persevered and families benefitted. That’s the Texas way!

Leadership

Texas Even Start excelled because of quality of leadership at both state and local levels. Without that ingredient, the Even Start program would have floundered. Representative Bill Goodling of Pennsylvania deserves much credit for fostering the legislation and accompanying funding for Even Start, but state and local coordinators utilized that opportunity to develop high-quality programs that positively affected thousands of families in Texas. Dr. Don Seaman adds, “Without good leadership, other things don’t happen, and they certainly happened in Texas.”

The greatest resource in the Even Start Program was our human capital. Evaluator Dr. Ann Gundy writes, “Over the years I observed the development of our directors, coordinators, faculty, and staff into recognized leaders in their communities as well as across the state. As they grew in professionalism, that expertise was passed on to the families served by each individual program. This was documented by feedback from the families as they expressed appreciation for the knowledge and skills that they had learned from their teachers that helped them be better parents, helped their children learn, and helped them be full participating citizens in their communities.”

Even Start was one of the few programs whose legislation not only made collaboration a requirement, but required increasing levels of collaboration for each year of funding. Effective collaboration requires strong leadership. Texas’ strongest state programs had directors/coordinators with a defined, recognized presence in the community and were dedicated to building the relationships with partners that could support the services of Even Start.

These partnerships were more than a name listed on an MOU (memorandum of understanding). They provided tangible contributions to the program on a regular basis and maintained a presence in the management of the Even Start partnership.

Professional Development

Our strong state programs had a well-organized and defined professional development program for not only the director/coordinator, but for each faculty and staff member as well, regardless if they were full-time or part-time employees. Every professional development opportunity helped teach the purpose of Even Start, instill the value of each position, and add to the professionalism of each participant.

Texas had a strong emphasis on professional development for all Even Start staff. Dr. Deborah Stedman writes, “In my humble opinion, Texas LEARNS accomplished a major Even Start milestone by funding the Texas Family Literacy Resource Center (TFLRC) at Texas State University beginning in 2003-2004.”

TFLRC developed priorities for family literacy professional development through an in-depth statewide needs assessment, research and needs identified in data. The result was effective, high-quality professional development that was much-appreciated by teachers and administrators throughout the state.

Cycle of Poverty Broken: Mission Accomplished

Texas Even Start has a multi-year history of delivering strong academic performance. Adults became more literate. Children were promoted at higher rates than the state average. Children outperformed their peers on state standardized assessments. Parents went to work, bought houses and became active in their children’s education. We have aggregate data. Even more powerful than hard data are the personal stories of how Even Start impacted family lives.

Spring ISD Even Start has been in existence for 17 years. Coordinator Jerre Bergeron reported that over the last six months hundreds of our former students have returned to the program to share their personal experiences and to thank Spring ISD Even Start for the program that changed their lives.

She writes, “Families want to thank us for reinforcing that they are their child’s most influential teacher. They show us scholarship letters that their children have received for college. They thank us for

... pushing them to learn English in order to meet with their children's teacher,
 ... helping them learn math, social studies, science, English and writing skills,
 ...helping them become college students and university graduates,
 ...supporting them as they complete certification programs that let them become self-sufficient,
 ...allowing their teen children an opportunity to volunteer in our program, then use those volunteer hours as a part of their university application process,
 ... teaching them how to best interact by working and playing with their children rather than being dependent upon electronic games and television to entertain them, and
 ... not giving up on them when they needed our strength and guidance the most.

in the process, one can confidently say that Even Start ended on a positive note. The passion for family literacy is still present – it will continue in different ways, but it will continue. In the words of Jerre Bergeron, “I know our work is not finished; it just may come to be under another title. I just know it.”

This article was edited by Elizabeth B. Thompson, CFLE, CMPI. Elizabeth managed a local Even Start program before assuming the role of State Even Start Coordinator.

Contributors are listed in alphabetical order, followed by their role(s) in Even Start.

Jerre Bergeron, Coordinator
 Dr. Ann Gundy, Evaluator
 Dr. Don Seaman, Prior TCALL Director, Evaluator
 Dr. Deborah Stedman, Interim State Director, Evaluator,
 Director of Texas Family Literacy Resource Center
 Dr. Patricia Williams, Coordinator, Evaluator

Reflecting on all of the lives that were changed as a result of participation in Even Start and all of the leaders that were developed

Even Start Indicators of Program Performance 2011-2012

INDICATOR	STATE TARGET	ACTUAL STATE PERFORMANCE
Attendance: Kindergarten, first and second grade children will attend 95% or more of possible school days	85%	90%
Promotion: Kindergarten, first and second grade children will be promoted	90%	99%
Screening: Birth through 3 year olds will be screened for developmental delays and referred if necessary	85%	96%
Home Inventory: Parents will demonstrate an overall +1 mean post-test score on the Caldwell and Bradley Home Inventory	80%	97%
Reading: Kindergarten, first and second grade children will meet or exceed their district's reading standard on the district-selected reading assessment	80%	91%
PPVT: pre-kindergarten students will achieve at least a four-point gain on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (receptive vocabulary)	70%	93%
PALS PreK: pre-kindergarten students will recognize a minimum of 20 uppercase and 20 lowercase alphabet letters	70%	80%

Ideas for Teachers of Adults

Emotional Literacy: The Elephant in the Room for Adult Learners and Programs

by Anthony Gabriel

On a sunny Monday morning in the city of New Orleans, Jessica prepares breakfast for her three children ages 5, 7, and 8. As she rushes to get them ready for school, the phone rings. It's her manager from the local fast food restaurant. She's informed that because of the slow economy he has to cut her hours from 40 to only 15 per week. Jessica is an adult learner, trying to obtain her GED by attending classes during the day while also working to support her family. The news of reduced hours weighs heavily on Jessica. She relies on her income from the fast food job to make her car payment and buy little extras for her children. Depressed, Jessica decides not to go to class and begins thinking of finding a second job.

Like Jessica in our brief scenario above, adult learners bring their emotional challenges to class and sometimes vent or act them out in negative ways or simply don't show up at all. I believe that an understanding and an active or intentional effort that focuses on emotional literacy should be a primary part of adult education curriculums. This may help keep more adult learners engaged and enable them to cope when life issues challenge their participation in adult education classes or adult learner environments.

Here in New Orleans, through a curriculum called "**Emotional Literacy 101**," ground breaking efforts are under way to educate a corps of facilitators and practitioners around the idea of creating an *Emotional Literacy: environment, awareness, cultural sensitivity and curriculum* for the adult learners they serve.

Jessica's story and many like it play out all across America, as adult learners struggle to lift themselves "**without the proper boot straps**" out of poverty or low literacy by increasing their educational levels. Too often, personal problems or issues impact the retention rates and success of many adult learners and programs. Emotionally, many adult learners are walking a fine line between moving forward, standing still, or just giving up. It is this emotional construct (*all the factors that affect the emotions of adult learner thinking, decision making, and reactions or lack thereof*) that then becomes one of the most vital elements of changing the lives and mindsets of not just adult learners, but of all learners. Simply put, emotional constructs refer to how our emotions are built within us and affect the way we act.

Monthly, I've led a group of new and veteran Literacy AmeriCorps members from Loyola University through a journey of first steps and new possibilities as we explored the elements of this thing called "Emotional Literacy" and how it relates to adult learners like Jessica and the field of adult education.

Dr. Claude Steiner (2003) in his book, *Emotional Literacy ; Intelligence with a Heart* says that "Being emotionally literate means that you know what emotions you and others have" (page 23). For me, I see it as a process that allows the learner as well as the instructor or facilitator an opportunity to learn about and from each other using our emotions as the vehicle.

"Anyone can become angry---that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose and in the right way---this is not easy"

Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*

Dr. Daniel Goleman (1997) in his book *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ* (page ix), uses the above quote to open his discussion regarding the link between emotion and intellect. This quote is one my favorites and resonates with me because it has been my experience that adult learners often enter education programs with limited tolerance and patience with themselves. Thus, when they encounter a challenging problem, subject matter they are unfamiliar with, or are asked to recall past knowledge they may have forgotten, their frustration easily turns into anger. Sometimes that anger is projected toward the instructor, their fellow classmates or themselves.

Having been involved with teaching adult education and workforce development for the past 16 years, I think I share many common or similar perspectives that are echoed in many adult learner environments. One of the constants of these environments is that many adult learners are challenged on all levels as they fight to continue going to class while at the same time trying to cope with the problems of daily life. They can become stressed, frustrated, and ultimately angry at not being able to achieve their goals. For adults like Jessica, having a curriculum that focuses on coping with emotions as they relate to life and learning can only help to strengthen her

resolve to finish her classes.

The History

As I began researching how adult education programs were using emotional discovery and understanding as part of their adult education curriculum, surprisingly, I found the best examples in the K-12 education arena. Additionally, institutional environments like prisons and other rehabilitative vehicles were also fertile ground for emotional investigation activities. However, outside these entities, I did not discover many adult education programs that specifically featured Emotional Literacy as primary parts of their curriculum or instruction. Maybe it's time that the "elephant in the room" namely, adult learner emotional coping, discovery, and awareness receive as much attention as grade-level increases in literacy or academics.

Of course, many adult education practitioners, professionals, and programs know the emotional barriers that affect learning, but may not have the resources, vision, time, or leadership to address the issue on a daily basis. Conversely, there are practitioners and programs that are unaware of the importance of emotional discovery and its impact on their adult learners.

So when I was given the opportunity to instruct a group of 20 Literacy AmeriCorps members that affect the majority of adult education programs here in the city of New Orleans, I knew I had to introduce them to the concepts of emotional literacy and how they could incorporate it into their teaching and tutoring assignments. So, I began by analyzing and researching how emotional literacy would look or operate in an adult learner environment. To do this, I knew I had to look at the types of learners that generally occupy my class and how would I develop opportunities to introduce a discussion or learning moment around the subject of emotion. I decided to use writing activities as an emotional stimulus for my learners and AmeriCorps members to build an atmosphere of community among my students, but more importantly help them see the differences and commonalities of how each of them perceives emotion.

The activity begins by separating them into teams or groups. Each group or team is given a different scenario and ending sentence involving a particular character or characters. Their assignment was to then complete the middle of the story by selecting one of the following themes of emotional triggers: **fear, hate, love, excitement, and disappointment, etc.** to write about. I set the ground rules of respect and honor as well as give each participant the freedom to pass at any time they feel uncomfortable in sharing their emotional views or experiences. The first layer serves as a team building mechanism and allows the groups to brainstorm in creating their stories around the given scenarios. The second layer allows groups to present their scenarios to the class and discuss what emotions occur in the story. The third layer of the activity then asks participants to reflect individually on their own lives, and then write about emotions or feelings from a particular incident or problem they've faced or are going to face.

Volunteers are then asked to read their writings to the class or the

teacher or facilitator randomly selects writings and anonymously reads them to the group for discussion. This hopefully spurs a larger discussion of how other classmates or participants have dealt with the same or similar emotional challenges. It is vital that adult learners be given an opportunity to discuss or write about their emotions. For some this may be the first time anyone was interested in anything they had to say or write. For others, this may be the only time they have to reflect on their own lives without outside distractions or influences. Ultimately, writing and discussing their emotions gives voice which in turn builds a sense of empowerment as well as builds self-esteem. This exercise was just one small sample of how emotional discovery can be intentionally introduced to adult learners. Key to this process is the relationship and atmosphere learners feel that allow them to feel safe in sharing their thoughts and emotions. Some may even prefer to share their feelings in a more private way by journaling and that's okay as well. The bottom line is to get them to talk, or write about their emotions or feelings.

Fractured Learners

Many adults arrive at adult education program door steps "fractured learners." By this, I mean that at some point in their lives, they've had "to split or break" from their educational pursuits to deal with personal issues or emotional storms that prevent them from moving forward. By establishing, trusting relationships and intentional opportunities for communities of learners that see the class or learning environment as a safe haven where they can express their emotions, adult education programs can then begin to lay the ground work for a stronger and more robust adult learner engagement. This is important to fractured learners because it gives them the security of knowing that they will be welcomed back to class regardless of how many times they may stumble or what obstacles they may have to overcome or face.

Outside of her financial difficulties, learners like Jessica need the support and encouragement of an emotional literacy curriculum or environment to help them understand and find ways to cope with life challenges while at the same time continuing to reach for their dreams and goals. It is my hope that many adult education programs or adult learner environments that are not using emotional literacy curriculums begin to take a serious look at how they can purposely create emotional literacy opportunities for their learners on a daily or regular basis.

About the Author

Anthony Gabriel has been involved with literacy, adult education, and workforce development for more than 16 years. Prior to his literacy teaching background he was a classroom teacher for middle and high school students in New Orleans. As a founding planning committee member for the genesis of the Literacy Alliance of Greater New Orleans, Mr. Gabriel continues to champion the voice of adult learners through his new project focusing on developing Emotional Literacy awareness within adult learner environments. For more info you can contact him at gabrteach3831@gmail.com or gabrielliteracy@gmail.com.

Language, Local History, and Culture Merge in Cemetery Project at Levelland's Carver Learning Center

by *Philomena DiGennaro*

In August, 2011, Jim Hogue, president of the Hockley County Historical Commission, gave a presentation to the Carver Learning Staff about the Native Americans and early residents of Hockley County. He talked about the Hockley County Cemetery, the "triangular" Mexican section at the intersection of Ellis and Highway 114 and the "Black" section across the highway. Two of our staff who are also members of the advanced ESL class and Cynthia Garcia and Philomena DiGennaro, GED and ESL teacher, volunteered to "do something" about the poorly kept cemeteries.

We decided to ask local welders to make crosses that a local powder-coating business would coat. The cost of this process was covered by a local electrical business. A local scrap metal yard owner donated lots of metal which was used by the local welders, the high school welding class, and the South Plains College welding classes to make the crosses. We needed about 225 crosses to have one cross represent each person buried in the "triangle" and about another 100 for the south section.

When the list of names and the plot of the cemeteries were compared, it was very obvious that most of the buried were in unmarked, not-located graves. We placed the crosses already made (about 150) in an order for maintenance. We will work on securing the remaining needed crosses and placing them this fall before dia de los muertos, November 2, Day of the Dead.

We are now planning to erect a memorial wall (probably from donated brick from a local brick layer) which will contain the names of those buried in the "triangle." One of the mem-

bers of the Historical Commission (Barbara Beadles) has searched out the layout of the "triangle" cemetery and the names, dates of death, and names of the parents whose children are buried there.

The ESL class helped in the placement of the crosses. They also arranged two memorial prayer services—one in the afternoon and one in the evening as is the custom in their hometowns in Mexico. We spent November 2, dia de los muertos, at the cemetery.



Graphic design by Jorge Goyco, TCALL

The GED class became involved by graphically analyzing the demographics of the deceased. We charted by gender, age, date of death. We realized that most of the deaths of newborn and their mothers occurred during the time of the "braceros migration" to work on the cotton farms. We decided we needed to investigate the old newspapers for possibilities of contagious outbreaks or, most unlikely, reports about the poor care given to migrants at the local health units as the stories go. We also discussed research about segregation. All of the students are too young to really know about segregation. We watched Southern Poverty Law's video, "Come to the Table." We also talked about Dr. George Washington Carver, our Center namesake, and a person we try to emulate.

This learning experience sparked a lengthy discussion on the status of the immigrant. This discussion will continue next year. Also to be continued is the completion of the cross placements, the memorial wall with mounted plaques at the memorial wall, and more research in the local paper archives, locating information about as many people, events, occurrences as we can.

Strategies for Assessing Listening Comprehension

by Dr. Nancy Montgomery

Listening comprehension is considered the first step in acquiring language. English language learners (ELL) have greater comprehension skills than language production skills. It is to the advantage of the teacher to assess listening comprehension to have a grasp of the extent to which students understand oral language.

In assessing the listening comprehension of adult ELL there are some issues that must be considered. Where do we start? What are some strategies to use in the assessment? Is assessing listening skills fruitful, and will it help students with language acquisition?

All of these are good questions, so let's start by considering what impact listening has on the literacy development of the ELL. Oral language development proceeds in basically two languages: the language of school and the language of home. Although listening and speaking interact, listening comprehension is the first step in a student acquiring language. Students generally have greater listening comprehension than ability to produce the appropriate word (Gottlieb, 2006). Listening to a second language entails the same auditory processing as listening to the first language, and learners make the same type of errors whether learning their first or second language *but for different reasons!* So let's explore a few of the reasons why ELLs commit these errors.

There are four major reasons why the ELL makes listening errors:

- Not acclimated to the linguistic system of English;
- Unfamiliar with the socio-cultural context of the message;
- Differing background knowledge;
- Influence of their first language in terms of vocabulary, phonetic system, and cultural nuances. (Buck, 2001)

So, the question now is how can the listening of ELLs be assessed?

First, the purpose of the assessment must be determined. If the purpose of the assessment is only to gauge the student's progress in listening, then there are two choices for assessment. One of the choices is discrete-point testing in which the elements of language are isolated and may be appropriate for diagnosing specific linguistic aspects of listening. A good example of this assessment is students being able to discriminate phonological tasks such as recognizing minimal pairs [where the sole distinction between words is a sound or a phoneme (the smallest unit of sound)], as in *chip* and *ship*, *pat* and *pet*, *dear* and *deal* (Gottlieb, 2006). An excellent way of assessing this skill is through minimal pair bingo. Adult learners love to play this game!

Another choice for gauging the student's progress in listening is performance-based assessment which is based on the communicative approach (Cohen, 1994). There are several types of performance activities that may be used for assessment during instruction. Activities that most adult learners enjoy are sorting pictures or matching pictures, words, and phrases based on oral descriptors, reenacting or role playing scenes from a narrative text read aloud, and constructing and filling in models, maps, and timelines from oral directions. Other performance activities for assessment of listening comprehension, all of which are based on oral directions, are designing and evaluating information on charts, graphs, and tables; or responding to oral commands as well as sequencing illustrations developed by the student or teacher. Even though there is a tendency to think of assessing listening comprehension as too time-consuming or to misunderstand its impact on language acquisition, there are many strategies that can be used effectively for assessment.

Secondly, in addition to determining the purpose of assessment, we need to consider *how we document the results* of our listening comprehension assessment. Needless to say, there has to be a plan – one that reflects how often assessments will take place as well as what strategies will be used. Basically, teachers have three ways of documenting listening assessment. They include

- Anecdotal evidence (an informal recording of notes on the results of strategies used).
- Performance indicators for listening; mark during the week of the performance or tasks used and date them. This helps teachers monitor how often and how they assess listening skills and the results.
- A checklist where the teacher simply checks the name of students when they have met the language demands of the assessment.

As ELL educators, we must keep in mind that listening is the first step in language acquisition, and we must take the time to assess and keep records of the progress of our students.

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About the Author

Dr. Nancy Montgomery has taught and served as an administrator

in public and private schools in Texas, Illinois, and Indonesia focusing on the English language learner in grades 5 through adult. During her years of working with the English language learner, Dr. Montgomery has presented at many state, national, and international conferences on the topic of reading and language development for the English language learner particularly those from South East Asia and Africa. These conferences include TESOL at the national and state level, Multi-lingual conferences in Washington, DC, the nations of Cyprus, Indonesia, Thailand,

and South Africa, as well as literacy and language related conferences in the United States.

Presently, she is an Assistant Clinical Professor at Southern Methodist University in the Teaching and Learning Department in the Simmons School of Education. Dr. Montgomery is the Professor for the Newcomer's Academy which is a program that prepares teachers to work with students who come to our country as refugees and new immigrants.

Language Education vs. Language Training

by Ted Klein

A friendly school teacher once asked me how long I had been a "language educator." My answer, which came out rather spontaneously was "I'm not a language educator, I'm a language trainer."

She looked puzzled and changed the subject. I thought some more about what I had said and have decided to finally write it down.

I looked up these two words in a dictionary and noticed that among the first definitions of education was "to inform and enlighten the understanding of." I checked training and found "to teach to perform certain actions," also "to subject to proper regimen and exercise for the purpose of some special exertion or feat" and "to entice." What I thought of at that point was that a lot of ESL and other language instructors all over the world were doing too much educating and not enough training. You can spend years "informing and enlightening the understanding of English," for example and that doesn't necessarily mean that one's students can function and communicate in the English language. However a "relentless" trainer who "subjects the students to "proper regimen and exercise" and teaches the students to "perform certain actions," tends to get the most results. Also, one of the best favors that a teacher can do for his students is to ENTICE them to continue to learn their target language so that their functionality will pay off in real-life.

If my objective is to have my offspring ride a bicycle, do I have to send him to Old Tech University to study "bicycle engineering?" Would he be able to ride a bicycle after four years of exposure to gear ratio theory, two-wheel gravity defiance theory, the history of bicycle construction, brake and chain design, etc? Or should I put my kid on a bike with training wheels, tell him where he should and shouldn't go, and remove the training wheels a few days later? The latter seems to work well if the objective is function and look at the money I've saved. Formal education has

gotten really expensive.

I have "inherited" ESL students from countries, where they have been in English classes for five or six years, and in some cases have vocabularies exceeding those of some native speakers of English. Some also have classically good information on English grammar and could easily pass a test on that subject. The problem is that many of these same students do not know what to say or how to say it, when they need directions to the restroom, want to buy something in a mall or need a good meal or a place to stay. I'm NOT saying that a good vocabulary and some information on how structures work in English is useless; not by a long shot. However, given a CHOICE, its function two to one! Plus, it should come FIRST.

The story is the same. These students were most often taught English, using their native languages as the medium of instruction. This was easier for both the teacher and the students. In many cases the teachers themselves also couldn't really speak or understand spoken English. The culprit is often a ministry or department of education, where test results are more important than tangible accomplishment in a subject. Worldwide, most language tests are based on translation methodology with priority given to the written language and grammatical information about the language, which is also provided in the native language. The reality is that the persons who most need to learn to translate are translators! Competent translators should be fully bilingual and bicultural **before** they begin translation training. ¿Egg before chicken, eh?

Function doesn't interfere with knowledge. As a matter of fact it accelerates it. Language production and understanding is a gift that the vast majority of humans seem to have. My wife and I had a family member who was intellectually limited. She spent fifteen years in an institution for the handicapped. Levels of intellectual limitations there ran the full gamut. However, the vast majority of persons in that institution could communicate verbally and rela-

tively correctly.

The interesting thing is that perhaps one third of the residents were bilingual in English and Spanish and were capable of instant code switching, going from one language to another depending on my input. One of the residents seemed to be equally fluent in Magyar, which was his native language; German, which was his second language and English, which was his third language. He did not have the intellectual capacity to fend for himself in the real world, but he was able to communicate in these three linguistic dimensions. Ergo, functionality in two or three languages is NOT a question of "intellect." It seems to be a natural gift that is a result of communicative needs. I'm functional in several languages and always manage to get in a good laugh when people tell me that I'm "smart." I remember the institution and the many limits the residents had. I'm NOT claiming that their conversations were particularly interesting or enlightening. That's where education comes in and not everybody is educable. Quite a few of the residents also had speech problems, possibly as a result of brain damage.

If I'm functional in several languages, it's because I've lived in several countries, where my survival depended on knowing a language other than my own. Motivation really helps, although not everybody is motivated. It's so much easier for some persons to find an interpreter.

Conclusion

We all need to take a look at what we are really doing with our ESL students. Are we feeding them too much information and not enough performance? Is this because that's how our French teachers taught us French? Are we REALLY functional in French? Don't we want to do better for OUR students?

About the Author

Mr. Klein is an independent consultant in language and intercultural training. He is also an ESL instructor of adult education at Austin Community College. His website may be viewed at www.tedklein-ESL.com.

Building Collaboration & Program Involvement

A Framework for Utilizing Long-Term Volunteers

by Josh Gahr

Walking the halls of an adult and family literacy center during program hours is akin to stepping into the Big Top. Something is happening in every class and every corner: multi-level language instruction, tutoring sessions, parenting classes, journaling stations, technology mentoring, story time with preschoolers, nervous test taking. Amidst the jostling and shifting and juggling is a unique spirit of new discovery that accompanies the journey of learning. Those who have witnessed the transformation of individuals and their families in these magical places *know* that it is the "greatest show on earth."

Drawing such disparate components into consonance, however, can become a complex task. Given the complexity, most family literacy centers jump at the prospect of having additional help around. While short term, periodic volunteers can help mitigate some of the workload, there are real limitations to training and integrating them into program rhythms. Long-term volunteers, or interns, however, can sometimes offer a more sustainable volun-

teer option that can provide real benefit to a literacy center and its clients. This article aims to elucidate those benefits and provide a framework for hosting a long-term volunteer or intern in a literacy center.

The Benefits of Longer Terms of Service

Hosting a dedicated, long-term volunteer deviates sharply from the manner in which most centers utilize volunteer assistance. In contrast to a short-term volunteer, integrating a long-term volunteer into a program means carving out and articulating meaningful roles suitable to his/her experiences as well as creating supervisory structures appropriate for his/her professional needs. Organizations such as Literacy AmeriCorps act as a clearinghouse for volunteers interested in yearlong service commitments and can assist centers in pinpointing qualified candidates. In addition, Literacy AmeriCorps eases the burden of launching a long-term internship by providing ongoing literacy training and support for volunteers.

The effort to ramp up a fledgling program is largely offset by three principal benefits. First, as was the case at our center, additional manpower can be added to the program at a fraction of the cost of adding a new staff member. Because the Literacy AmeriCorps is a federally- subsidized volunteer program, the cost incurred to a program amounts to a modest stipend. Toward the end of the service year, a program can expect a well-trained and supervised volunteer to act very nearly in the capacity of a full time staff member, making an equal contribution.

Second, the addition of an instructor to our small staff had the effect of lowering the teacher-student ratio by 25%. Placing a volunteer in the classroom has the dual benefit of reducing instructional burden on our staff members and increasing student access to instructional staff. Our volunteer was immediately available to assist in testing and teaching classes which meant our instructors were freed to dedicate more time to preparation and development of classroom resources. At the same time, students benefited from smaller classes, more individualized instruction, and more direct contact with instructors. This translated into a surprising 26% increase in daily attendance for the language classes that interacted with the volunteer most regularly.

Third, we added “fresh eyes” and an additional caring presence. Professionally, a well-placed volunteer offers the benefit of new and innovative teaching methods. Our staff benefitted from our volunteer’s TESOL training as well as his ongoing training through Literacy AmeriCorps. In humanistic terms, a volunteer offers an additional caring presence to meet the needs and concerns of our clients.

How to Integrate an Intern Effectively

Our adult education component has developed the guidelines below that act as a framework around which a positive and productive experience can be shaped for a volunteer:

Structure the experience tightly. The component that will host the volunteer must discern in advance of the arrival of a volunteer among assigning project-oriented tasks, program-oriented tasks, or administrative-oriented tasks. It must be determined whether the volunteer should engage in organizing and launching a new project or in taking over programing responsibilities of an existing employee so that that employee can work on an outstanding project. Perhaps the greatest need is in a “non-essential,” i.e. non-client oriented, support staff role executing administrative tasks. How the same volunteer is oriented within the center can yield very different results. Ask the question, “How will the volunteer best be utilized?”

Structure the experience loosely. Be open to how the skills, abilities, and interests of the volunteer might change the initial roles and structures for the service term. Have several contingencies prepared in case the roles envisioned for the volunteer cannot be

satisfactorily fulfilled because of variable skill sets or unforeseen logistical circumstances. Prepare more than one way that an individual may serve your organization over the service period. This may mean a shift from programming-oriented tasks to project-oriented tasks or vice versa. Ask the question, “What is a productive plan B? Plan C?”

Engage in the same supervision structure that is afforded to staff members. Interns are largely volunteering their time to build their professional experience and develop professional skill sets. They deserve to be mentored, guided, and supported towards those ends. If you do not have the time or energy to supervise your regular full time staff employees, it is ill advised to invite a volunteer or intern. Put simply, internships are communication intensive and require reasonably attentive supervision. Ask the question, “How would I want to be supervised, guided, or mentored if I were in a volunteer position?”

Focus on projects that are viable after the life of the volunteer service. Leverage the presence of another person working with your staff in order accomplish the “wish-list” items...develop the curriculum, digitize resources, write a program orientation manual, develop marketing materials, develop a database, start a short term volunteer program, collaborate with other organizations. Give broad guidelines to your intern to accomplish these goals or else assign them a role that wins yourself or other staff members the time and space to accomplish these long lasting goals. Ask the question, “What ‘product’ will we have to show for the work of the volunteer after he/she has completed his/her service term?”

Think of developing a young person’s skills as a service to the profession. There is possibly no better means to recruit committed and talented people into the area of literacy education than providing a positive, transformational, and up-building professional experience. No professional development course is more preparatory than a yearlong, intensive work internship for developing a competent and adequately trained field of practitioners. Ask the question, “How can I enhance this experience so that it is meaningful, inspiring, and imparts a true sense of vocation?”

Because of new funding and resource realities, adult and family literacy programs are being forced to rethink the way they staff and deliver programing. One very viable option for programs that cannot secure funding for full time staff is recruiting volunteers to fill dedicated roles for longer terms of service. Utilizing long-term volunteers and interns, when done thoughtfully, can become a vital means of preserving the “greatest show on earth” for subsequent generations of students and families.

About the Author

Josh Gahr is the Adult Education Coordinator for ASPIRE Family Literacy Center with Communities of Schools of Central Texas.

Translating Research into Literacy Practice

Improving Literacy Education Through Options of Practice and Research: An Overview for Adult Educators

by Federico Salas-Isnardi, Adult Literacy Specialist, TCALL

In May 2012, the National Academy of Sciences, through its publishing arm, the National Academies Press, published a major report on adult literacy called *Improving Literacy Education: Options for Practice and Research* which looks at the current status of adult literacy in the United States and makes recommendations to improve outcomes by investing on the instructional infrastructure of adult education, research, professional development, and program evaluation.

Improving Literacy Education defines literacy as “the ability to read, write, and communicate using a symbol system (in this case English) and using appropriate tools and technologies to meet the goals and demands of individuals, their families, and U.S. society” (p. 2) and starts with the premise that, while a high level of literacy is necessary to succeed in most aspects of life in the 21st century, more than 90 million adults in this country don’t have sufficient literacy skills to meet modern demands. The study makes a sobering acknowledgment that “a significant portion of the U.S. population is likely to continue, at least in the near term, to experience inadequate literacy and require instruction as adults” because, researchers note, “only 38 percent of twelfth graders performed at or above the proficient level in reading” according to the 2009 National Assessment of Education Progress with 26 percent of graduating high-school seniors performing at the lowest levels of literacy (p. 13).

The report indicates, as practitioners in the field know all too well, that “there is a surprising lack of rigorous research on effective approaches to adult literacy instruction” (p. 2) and explains that because of this dearth the researchers made adaptations of research on learning and literacy with other populations to reach a number of conclusions that impact the work of adult basic education, literacy, and ESL instructors.

Conclusion 1: Literacy students are a diverse group - The

first conclusion is one that those of us in the field are familiar with, namely, that adult learners are a heterogeneous bunch and that reading and writing instruction must vary to meet the needs of a very diverse population who are learning in many different contexts. What is important, however familiar this conclusion is to us in the field, is to focus on the recommendation that teachers must “have the requisite tools for instruction and the technical knowledge and expertise, professional development, and ongoing supports as needed for effective implementation” (p. 240).

Conclusion 2: We can identify principles of effective literacy instruction - *Effective Literacy Instruction* is characterized by the following principles:

- [*Effective Literacy Instruction*] targets (as needed) word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension, background knowledge, strategies for deeper analysis and understanding of texts, and the component skills of writing;
- combines explicit teaching and extensive practice with motivating and varied texts, tools, and tasks matched to the learner’s skills, educational and cultural backgrounds, and literacy needs and goals;
- explicitly targets the automation and integration of component skills and the transfer of skills to tasks valued by society and the learner; and
- includes formative assessments to monitor progress, provide feedback, and adjust instruction.

For adult educators this means that we must target specific learning difficulties using reading and writing instruction presented in broader contexts; it also means that we must use explicit instruction that facilitates transfer of knowledge and offers opportunities to practice both inside and outside the classroom.

Conclusion 3: Research with youth can inform understanding of adult motivation - The third conclusion of the study is

that while “knowledge of effective literacy instruction for adults is lacking, research with younger populations can be used to guide the development of instructional approaches for adults” (p. 241) as long as instruction is modified to account for the experience of adults and the effect of aging on cognitive processes. The study suggests (p. 242) programs must keep in mind that the motivation to read and write is different for adults than for younger populations. Instructors must keep in mind the differences in development between adults and children and should not wait for all gaps in knowledge to be filled before presenting literacy tasks appropriate for the world of education, work, and life.

For practical classroom purposes, this suggests that rather than presenting information as a continuum of increasing complexity, instructors must help learners tackle complex tasks by offering learning supports in the form of visuals, charts, stories, etc., rather than avoiding tasks until gaps are filled. The real life challenges presented to adults are complex.

Conclusion 4: We must identify the instructional approaches that foster persistence- Many factors keep adults from persisting long enough to make significant development of literacy skills. The study also voices a concern with the lack of research indicating what instructional methods are most effective in supporting persistence and recommends that future interventions be developed on the premise that significant outcomes are not achieved because of lack of persistence (p. 243). The study indicates that “technology has the potential to expand time for practice beyond what institutions can afford to provide via human instructors” (p. 244) and suggests that adult literacy programs need to engage in partnerships that will help adult learners access learning technologies.

For adult educators, this means that our approaches and curriculum materials must provide ample opportunities for students to persist in and outside the classroom including providing access to distance education opportunities so that adults who have barriers to participation can persist in their efforts without having to go to a specific location. Access to technology being one challenge, another will be providing sufficient professional development to ensure that programs and teachers are prepared to integrate learning technologies into their instructional delivery options.

Conclusion 5: The principles of effective literacy instruction apply to ESL learners- The fifth conclusion pertains to the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) learners and suggests that the principles of effective literacy instruction identified above apply equally to ESL learners as long as instructors keep in mind that the developmental needs of language learners. This includes understanding that the level of first language literacy impacts the development of literacy in the second language, and that “a particular challenge to address in adult literacy instruction for English learners is developing their language and literacy skills

at the same time” (p. 246). The researchers indicate that, in adulthood, learning a second language is accomplished better through explicit instruction and is more closely related to reading than it is with younger learners. In the classroom, the study recommends an integrated focus on oral language, reading and writing in meaningful contexts with materials that are relevant to adults.

Conclusion 6: The field needs new comprehensive assessments of adult literacy- The study reports that, currently, there is no instrument able to assess the whole range of literacy skills adult learners already possess and how those skills grow over time and the researchers find that improving literacy programs will require the development of new measures and a comprehensive system of assessments that should include not only the broad range of literacy tasks, knowledge and abilities learners are expected to exhibit but also the variety of outcomes our programs expect both functional as well as psychological. While they don’t make claims as how to assess these outcomes, the researchers suggest that these “non-cognitive outcomes contribute to a complete view of the effectiveness of adult literacy instruction” (p. 246-247). The study finds that the use of grade level equivalents to measure adults is inappropriate because of the varied skills that adults exhibit cannot be fit into grade level categories and recommends the undertaking of longitudinal research “to inform the development of valid measures able to account for the variations in the growth of adults’ literacy skills across the lifespan” (p. 247).

Conclusion 7: Technology can help with learning, persistence, and assessment – The report suggests that learning technology and social networking tools make it possible to expand delivery of literacy instruction beyond the traditional classroom. Technology can be used to create motivational environments where students acquire literacy skills while engaging in the use of collaborative technologies (p.249). Learning technology can assist with motivation, skill development through scaffolding of literacy activities, tracking progress, and assessment but, to take advantage of the rich opportunities, teachers must receive training on how best to use the technologies.

Conclusion 8: Broader and more complex forms of literacy – as our society evolves, literacy practice has also changed; today an adult cannot be considered literate without the ability to use modern technologies including searching for information and using digital forms of communication for work, education, social or civic participation and other life tasks (p. 249). The study calls for research on how digital media influences performance in online reading, writing, and learning. Three questions specifically related to instruction that need further research, according to the study, are: 1- what are the competencies involved in reading and writing online? 2- what instructional materials and programs are effective in developing digital literacy skills? and 3- should literacy development always start with print-based texts or should it start with texts in multimodal and digital media. The implications of these

questions for the classroom are that teachers and programs may have to structure their learning environments to foster familiarity with information and communication technologies (p. 250).

Conclusion 9: There is limited research and funding for new studies is insufficient -The study identifies priorities for research on adult learning based on current knowledge gaps, suggesting that funding for research in adult education has been insufficient and inconsistent. New studies are needed to identify promising approaches leading to substantial improvement; mechanisms must be provided to support those promising programs so that they can be taken to scale, and further research is needed to ensure the applicability of those findings to the broader adult literacy population (p. 251).

Recommendations

Improving Literacy Education makes the following recommendations (pp 251-254):

- 1- To expand the infrastructure of adult literacy education to support the use of instructional approaches, curricula, materials, tools, and assessments of learners consistent with (a) the available research on reading, writing, learning, language, and adult development; (b) the research on the effectiveness of instructional approaches; and (c) knowledge of sound assessment practices.
- 2- To ensure that professional development and technical assistance for instructors are widely accessible and consistent with the best research on reading, writing, learning, language, and adult development.
- 3- Policy makers, providers of literacy programs, and researchers should collaborate to systematically implement and evaluate options to achieve the persistence needed

for literacy learning. These options include, among others, instructional approaches, technologies, social service support, and incentives.

- 4- To inform decision making through strategic and sustained investments in a coordinated and systemic approach to program improvement, evaluation, and research about adult literacy learners.

The study concludes with a series of priorities for instructional approaches and materials, persistence, technology, and assessment to help translate the knowledge gained by the recommended research into large systemic implementation initiatives. In its concluding thoughts, the report acknowledges that significant improvement will be difficult because of the lack of investment and the substantial need for instructor training necessary as part of any change in practice. In order to accomplish the proposed changes, the study indicates that the work of *Improving Literacy Education in the USA* "will require partnerships among researchers, practitioners, curriculum developers, and administrators to systematically build the needed knowledge and tools and to identify and address barriers to implementation. Major employers, existing training and education organizations, faith-based groups, and other community groups will need to be enlisted to help in the effort." (p. 261).

All page numbers cited refer to National Research Council (2012). *Improving Adult Literacy Instruction: Options for Practice and Research*. A.M. Lesgold and M. Welch-Ross, (Eds.) Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. PDF available online from the National Academies Press at http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=13242

The New TSI Assessment Field Testing for Adult Education Students

The new TSI (Texas Success Initiative) Assessment will be a measure of college readiness aligned to the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards (TX CCRS). The assessment is under development for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and will be implemented throughout the state in August 2013. In addition to determining whether students are college ready, the assessment will identify students in need of developmental education or adult basic education support in Reading, Writing, and/or Mathematics.

The vendor for the TSI Assessment, The College Board, has written many test items aligned to the Adult Education National Reporting System Levels 1-6 and TX CCRS. For that reason, the College Board needs several thousand adult basic and adult secondary education students (and perhaps higher level English as a Second Language students) to take field tests that include these items.

If you are interested in details about adult learner participation in TSI Assessment field tests, contact Harriet Smith at TCALL (hsmith@tamu.edu), who can connect you with information sources from Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Success Stories

Tools to Better My Life

by Alice Snow

Alice started her family early and now has 9 children. For most of her life, she focused on her kids. Recently, Alice decided that it was time to focus on herself, and came to Literacy Council of Tyler for help.

Through tears, Alice shares her story. "Sitting in class that first day, I thought about what this opportunity meant to me, and what that seat in the classroom meant to me. And that seat meant that I was going to have a better future, even at my age."

For Alice, the day was also overwhelming. She recalls feeling very frightened, especially once she realized the class was studying Algebra. A daunting subject for many, but even more so for Alice who had not been in a classroom for 25 years.

But thanks to her teacher, Rick Swain, Alice was put at ease. She said that his love and passion for teaching shows.

"Mr. Swain broke down the lessons for me," said Alice. "And I do say "me" because I felt like he was only teaching me, even though there were others in the classroom."

Just 6 months have passed since that first day in class.

"I can say I don't have the fear. I cried the other day, because I was sitting at home, working on Algebra problems and it was like drinking water. It was easy. I found it refreshing. The passion I had applied, I now got something back from it.

I am not a stupid person. I am very smart. And it was that fear that made me inadequate. Mr. Swain took that fear from me, and now I feel adequate."



Alice has passed three tests needed to obtain her GED and has two more to go. She is also enrolled in the Dual Enrollment program, meaning she is taking classes concurrently to become a licensed Physical Therapy Aide.

Her motivation for pushing beyond the GED is her children, particularly her three-year-old son who has cerebral palsy.

To the volunteers, staff, board members and donors who make Literacy Council of Tyler's programs possible, Alice says this: "You have changed my son's path because you have changed my path. I will be 39 and I am going to be somebody, because you have given me this opportunity."

"You have given me the tools to better my life."

Hard Work Leads to Success

by Antonio Vega

I came from a little town in Mexico. The town was so small it had only an elementary school. Some people were interested in keeping their children in school so the poor kids had to walk five miles in the morning to go to school and another five miles back home. We didn't have services of transportation. In my case it was little bit harder, because I have five brothers and one sister. I tried to make it easy for my mom by making my own lunch for school. We couldn't afford to buy lunch at school. I used to get up about 5:00 o'clock in the morning just so I could cook my lunch and still be on time for class. When I was in the ninth grade, two of my brothers were with me in that journey every day. By the time I passed ninth grade, it was already too hard for my parents to keep everyone in school. Going to the high school was impossible for me because the high school was fifteen miles away from my hometown and my parents couldn't afford to keep me in school so they put me to work in our land for a year.

After that year, my dad decided to bring me to the U.S. to work. When I came here, it was too hard for me because the job was heavy and the biggest issue was the English. I used to make many mistakes, because I couldn't understand what they used to tell me to do, so I was guessing most of the time.

After a couple of years I got frustrated and decided to do the best for me and learn English. It was hard because I couldn't speak right. Some people used to make fun of me, but I learned that the only way to learn is to practice and not to pay attention to those people. Several years ago I heard about an ESL program, but back then I wasn't thinking of the benefit of learning English the right way, so I refused the offer. I learned a lot from my jobs, but the doubt always prevented me from learning more. Three years ago I moved to Weatherford, TX to work on a ranch. In that place I had the opportunity to have my little brother with me. When we went to register him, a Hispanic guy helped us with the registration process and my brother and I were asking questions, when suddenly I made a silly comment about coming to school too, just to learn English. That's when the guy told me more about

ESL. That day I took the challenge just to try. A month later I signed up to take ESL classes. At first it was too hard because I could only speak a little and I didn't have a clue how to read or write in English. I came to ESL for a whole two semesters without skipping a single class, doing all my homework, paying attention to the teacher, and asking for help. At the end of the second semester I passed the test, so the third semester the school put me in what they called TABE. That is the step before one can go to GED. I never heard of GED before, so when they told me more about GED I got interested and set my goal to get my GED. My third semester was mostly to prepare for GED classes.



By the end of that semester, I passed the TABE test, so they sent me to GED classes in January 2012. I admit that the challenge changed from hard to harder but I never gave up. Sometimes I was frustrated because the class was way above my knowledge. One day the teacher offered me the opportunity to try the test just to see how much I knew in other subjects and see where my weaker areas were. I passed those tests with difficulties, but the teacher pushed me to do better. One day, she said, "You are ready to take your GED test, you should register as soon as you can. If you don't pass the tests you can come back and work more in the areas you need to." So a week later I had the news that I passed the test. I was so excited and even right now I can't

believe it! Then I got an invitation by mail from the teacher to go to what is called NEXT STEP, in case I am interested in going to college.

Right now, having my GED diploma in my hands is a good feeling of satisfaction and makes me continue to study and keep going to school. I'm preparing for NEXT STEP classes because I want to go to college. I don't really have clear what I want to do the rest of my life, but at least I know in college I can get some orientation. I don't know who is responsible for making all this possible, but I appreciate all my teachers, because without them, I couldn't have made it!

How I Came to be Here, The Amazing Gifts it has Given to Me, and How I Intend to Use Them

by Kimberly Dickerson

My name is Kimberly, I am a young twenty-two year old mother who was homeschooled, but my education was placed on the backburner. At the age of sixteen, I was already working three different jobs, and continued with this busy schedule throughout the coming years. In January of 2011, I lost my job. This was it. I knew the time had finally come to pick up where I left off so many years ago. A close friend told me about The Austin Academy and the wonderful programs it offered. I soon after enrolled at the school.

The Austin Academy taught me so much more than just your general subjects (math, science, social studies, language arts, reading) and computer skills. It also taught me compassion, humility, and helped me to develop a love for empowering those around me. This school gave me the skills I needed to succeed not only in a career, but also as a person. I completed my GED in August 2011 and was selected by the staff as the Outstanding GED student for 2011. I am currently working part-time doing marketing, advertising, and data entry. My future goal is to enroll in college in the fall to study nursing and eventually to become an RN.

Because of this school and those who are here, I will finally be able to provide a good wholesome life for my family. I will have the knowledge and assets needed in order to give back to those who need it in my community, all because of each and

every one of you at this school. So I say to you, to ALL of you:

THANK YOU for your hard work and devotion to helping me succeed.

THANK YOU for restoring something I thought was forever lost: my confidence.

THANK YOU for empowering me, and showing me what true kindness is.

THANK YOU for showing me that there is always hope and that it is never too late to change yourself and the world around you.

And most of all:

THANK YOU FOR HELPING ME TO BECOME A BETTER PERSON!

"If we all did the things we are capable of, we would astound ourselves."

Thomas Edison

Teacher's Note: The Austin Academy changed its name to Ascend Center for Learning in February 2012.

TALAE 2013 Conference - Important Dates

November 16, 2012: Presentation Proposals Due

December 10, 2012 (or when per-day registration limit is reached): Early Registration Deadline - some discounts available

January 11, 2013: Late Registration Deadline (if space is available)

January 9, 2013: TALAE Award Nomination Deadline

February 7-9, 2013: TALAE Conference in Austin

TALAE is Texas Association for Literacy & Adult Education, a voluntary professional association open to any person involved or interested in any facet of adult education in Texas. For more information, visit the TALAE Website, found under Organizations on TCALL's home page (tcall.tamu.edu).

From 17 to 70 and from Mexico to China: Abilene ISD's Alta Vista ESL Program Serves Diverse Learners

At Alta Vista, the primary site of the Abilene Adult Education program, there are signs inviting visitors into the world of education. This campus, which combines GED® instruction and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, is an unusual study in diversity.

Greetings of "Namaste," "Bonjour," "Jambo," and "Buenos dias," mingle with the very American "Hey, how's it going?" and the slightly more formal "Good morning." Even the clothing is different. African prints and sari-like dresses are as common as jeans and T-shirts.

These students, who range in age from 17 to their 70s, come from an amazing variety of backgrounds. Some have just recently left public school; others have been out of school for many, many years. In ESL, some have graduate degrees from their countries, while many have never attended school at all.

In the certification classrooms, a 17-year-old who wants to join the Army or enroll in TSTC may be sitting in class beside a grand-mother who has always wanted to finish school just to prove to herself that she can. They may be joined by a military wife from the Philippine Islands or a recent immigrant from Nepal. All are working together toward a common goal which may be mastering composition of an essay or solving an algebra equation. Each student brings something unique to the class, and all benefit from the diversity.

The Alta Vista ESL classes are significantly more international than similar programs in the state. This year students have come from at least 28 countries, including Korea, Colombia, Thailand, Mexico, Tunisia, Ethiopia and China.

For many of these students, English may actually be their third or fourth language. For the past six years, the program has collaborated with the International Rescue Committee (IRC), a local refugee resettlement agency, to provide

English instruction for newly-arrived refugees. Alta Vista has had refugees from Iraq, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Ivory Coast, Russia, Cuba and Bhutan. As a result, refugees form an important part of the Alta Vista ESL student body.

The GED® instruction and ESL components of Abilene Adult Education work closely together to transition students through the program. Many ESL students are striving to learn survival English skills, which includes telling time in English, learning the U.S. money system and vocabulary-building.

Students who are not literate in their own language, or who have never held a pencil, pose a particular challenge to ESL teachers. The intermediate class expands those basic

skills by focusing on basic grammar in the context of such topics as health, job-search, and Texas history and culture. The advanced class is especially helpful for students whose ultimate goal is to earn a GED® certificate or go to college, preparing them for the more rigorous demands of academic English in higher education programs.

In addition to classes that prepare students for the various GED® tests, Alta Vista has an

adult basic education class for students' remediation in basic reading and math skills.

Teachers are known to work well beyond the basic demands of the profession. Our teachers are no exception. Nelly Diaz, who teaches citizenship in our ESL program and offers free immigration consultations to the community at the Alta Vista campus, was honored in February by the Pope in a special ceremony in San Angelo through the Catholic Diocese of San Angelo for her work in immigration and adult education.

For most GED® students, including those who have transitioned from ESL, GED® certification is a stepping stone



to another goal. Some students use the GED® to gain immediate employment. Others plan to enroll in higher education, usually at Cisco College or TSTC. Still other students seek GED® certification to gain a state credential after being home schooled or as a substitute for a foreign credential. We encourage all of our academic students to work toward high GED® scores since there is a clear correlation between GED® scores and Accuplacer results and the military's ASVAB test. The free GED® classes offered in our program are infinitely preferable to expensive developmental classes.

Although the Alta Vista campus is the heart of Abilene Adult Education, the program offers instruction at 12 additional sites.

There are ESL classes at Grace Methodist Church and St. Vincent Palotti Catholic Church in Abilene and one at the De Leon community center, all with varying schedules.

Augmenting the Alta Vista GED® program are classes at the Workforce Center, Restitution Center and Taylor County Jail in Abilene, as well as in Breckenridge, De Leon, Eastland, Stamford, Hamlin, Haskell and Cross Plains.

In addition to English challenges, many Adult Education students frequently face serious personal problems and very real barriers. This year a young deaf man from Nepal is receiving additional attention and assistance in the computer lab, and a young blind woman was assisted in obtaining standard GED® testing accommodations from the state.

Learning disabilities, transportation problems and/or child care issues are common. Adult Education, with financial support from the Taylor County Adult Literacy Council (TCALC), helps as many students as possible with bus passes and childcare.

This childcare is not just babysitting. The children have structured educational activities, and have the opportunity to borrow kits that involve both the child and parent are available to be checked out for learning at home. In addition, the school-aged children receive help with homework.

The \$100 GED® testing fee can also be a burden. TCALC, Woodson Head Start, Crockett Early Childhood, Abilene

Transition Center and other agencies in the community assist qualified students with this testing fee. Working together, we attempt to ensure that those seeking a second chance at education are given a level playing field.

Celebrating success is a big part of the Adult Education experience. On the Alta Vista campus, the GED® staff hosts a Student Awards Breakfast at the end of each six weeks session to recognize student achievement and perfect attendance for the six weeks. Qualifying students are awarded a free test voucher provided by the TCALC. Each teacher also selects an outstanding student to be Student of the Session.



Twice a year, TCALC hosts a celebration at each site throughout the 10-county area. This includes a meal, door prizes, and awards recognizing outstanding students.

Alta Vista's annual International Day in April gives ESL students a chance to honor their respective countries and cultures by sharing their traditional foods, dress and dancing. And, of course, the celebration is the annual graduation ceremony complete with "Pomp

and Circumstance" provided by Abilene Community Band, caps and gowns, and a reception for graduates and guests hosted again by TCALC.

During the ceremony, we announce and recognize the Adult Education Student of the Year. This honoree is sometimes a GED® student and sometimes an ESL student, and twice it has been an ESL student who is a GED® graduate. His or her name is added to a permanent plaque which is on display at the Alta Vista campus.

Adult Education is all about improving lives. It is an inclusive, safe, affirming place for people to come for a second chance at education. Despite the differences in their backgrounds, languages, cultures or circumstances, Adult Education students have one significant thing in common: they all make sacrifices to study because they want to learn and succeed.

And our goal is to help them do just that.

This article is reprinted, with permission, from Abilene's ISD AISD News, May 2012, page 3. <http://www.abileneisd.org/page/291>

Literacy Texas Announces Volunteer and Adult Learner of the Year

At the 12th Annual Literacy Texas Conference held in Austin on August 6 & 7, 2012, Literacy Texas was pleased to announce the 2012 Volunteer and Adult Learner of the Year and introduce them to conference attendees. Each year, Literacy Texas encourages adult literacy programs to nominate outstanding individuals for these awards.

Lucia Street led the subcommittee reviewing the nominations. Helping in the review of the nominations were judges Denise Guckert of the Central Region GREAT Center, Florinda Rodriguez of South Texas Community College in McAllen, and Mandy Shooter, a previous Literacy Texas board member.

"The competition was stiff this year, so the judges had to work hard, but did a very thoughtful and careful study of all nominees. What an awesome group from which to select!" said Lucia Street.



Gloria Moritz, Board President of Literacy Texas;
Carolyn Jones, 2012 Volunteer of the Year;
Sarah Papert, Executive Director of VMLC

Barbara Johnson, Director of Vickery Meadow Learning Center, West Dallas, who nominated the Volunteer of the Year, Carolyn Jones, said, "Carolyn has been a tireless, effective volunteer who has gone the extra mile and then some to help her students here at VMLC."

She added, "Carolyn is a wonderful, effective teacher who is an expert in the TESOL field. She volunteered to write a new, advanced curriculum for VMLC to accommodate a group of advanced students who had completed our most advanced level, but wanted to stay on with VMLC for more. Her advanced (plus) curriculum was taught by her this past semester, and was challenging and rewarding for the students."

The Adult Learner of the Year was nominated by Kathryn Bauchelle of Literacy Advance of Houston. Paulina Sais is not only an adult learner studying to improve her English, she is also a committed volunteer.

Kathryn wrote, "Paulina has been very involved with Literacy Advance as a volunteer. She wanted to give back to the agency that she says 'opened the door for me to a new future.' Currently, Paulina is one of the presenters for Family Literacy Nights. As a volunteer for Family Literacy, she feels that it is her responsibility to help parents overcome the barrier of language and participate actively in their children's education."

When Paulina registered at Literacy Advance in November 2008, her initial goals were to improve her general English skills, be able communicate more effectively, and continue with her education, eventually getting a job as a teacher. After more than a year in literacy classes, Paulina, who has a college degree in Early Education from Mexico, applied to get her Texas Teacher Certification and passed the exam.

"I can speak, I understand... right now I'm looking for a job and I go to interviews, and I can interact with the interviewer. Right now I'm feeling very good," said Paulina.

Literacy Texas is proud of all volunteers who commit their time to help others succeed and all adult learners who have taken that first step to improve their literacy skills.

As Gloria Moritz said, "When our jobs get crazy and we feel overwhelmed, our learners keep most of us going. They inspire us to never give up and they humble us with their determination and accomplishments."

Literacy Texas is the statewide literacy coalition for Texas, connecting and equipping literacy programs through resources, training, networking and advocacy.



Melanie Fisk, Executive Director of Literacy Advance of Houston; Paulina Sais, 2012 Adult Learner of the Year;
Gloria Moritz, Board President of Literacy Texas

Welcome to Our Library. . .

Librarian Susan Morris and her staff of student library workers stand ready to assist you! Call them at 800-441-READ (7323) or email tcall@tamu.edu to request materials by mail or information on the Library's services.



In this issue, we are highlighting the Library's loan resources on **Contextual Learning**, one of the six Core Content Areas of the Texas Adult Education Credential.

"Adult education teachers work in diverse settings and locations or "contexts." This content area provides a mechanism for teachers to specialize in one of several different contexts including **workforce, family literacy, corrections, and/or transitions.**" (*The Six Core Content Areas of the Credential*, retrieved from the Credential Project's website - <http://www.tei.education.txstate.edu/credential/>).

LEARNING IN THE WORKFORCE CONTEXT

Reading the World of Work: A Learner-Centered Approach to Workplace Literacy and ESL. Gallo, Melina L. (2004). Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Co. Editorial Description: "The author describes the ways in which workplace literacy programs can use a creative learner-centered approach to facilitate language learning through problem posing and critical thinking. By using learners' own experiences as the basis for the curriculum in a critical approach to literacy, educators can provide a common ground for adults of differing language backgrounds and learning styles to better use their literacy skills in a workplace culture. Additionally, the book details the ways in which educators can help workers learn to negotiate the environment of their workplace and to use their communicative skills outside of work."

Understanding Curriculum Development in the Workplace: A Resource for Educators. Belfiore, Mary Ellen (1996). Don Mills, Ontario, Canada: ABC Canada. This guide to developing curriculum for workplace basic skills programs is written for facilitators, instructors, coordinators, and teacher trainers responsible for designing programs, teaching, facilitating learning in individualized programs, and creating workplace materials. Guidance is offered to: interpret the results of needs assessments; foster a learning environment; design a program that marries workplace demands with participants' learning goals, interests, and abilities; set overall goals and specific objectives with the group or individual participants; develop learning materials by incorporating authentic situations, experiences, and materials from the workplace; integrate basic skills & technical training; and manage a multi-level group.

Voices from the Workforce (DVD). Martinez, Sara and Savino, Ann, Producers (2001). El Paso, TX: Adult Bilingual Curriculum Institute. This video was produced by the Adult Bilingual Curriculum Institute of John Hopkins University in partnership with El Paso Community College and the Workplace Literacy Training and Technical Assistance Project. The purpose of the video

was to introduce a group of policymakers, educators, and politicians to the experience of workers who had lost jobs and were moving through the job training system. Ten workers were interviewed on topics ranging from what kind of learning and instruction they find relevant; the emotional aspects of being displaced from jobs they had held for many years; the experience of learning English and the need for being able to communicate in English; advice to fellow students, politicians, teachers; and more. Loan video may be duplicated before returning to the Clearinghouse, as long as users credit the originators and do not re-edit or compile the content. DVD video is available for loan to Texas educators ONLY.

Working Hands, Working Minds. Meisenzahl, Anne and Greene, David (2001). Somerville, MA: YouthBuild USA. YouthBuild USA is a national nonprofit organization in which unemployed and undereducated young people ages 16-24 work toward their GED or high school diploma while learning job skills by building affordable housing for homeless and low-income people. This construction training curriculum was developed for collaborative use by classroom and vocational teachers. Designed to facilitate academic learning in an applied context, the curriculum teaches essential reading, writing, and math skills in an introduction to the construction trades. Through activities, community research projects, workplace exploration, group projects, role-plays and games, students are introduced to key construction-related skills and concepts. Curriculum is a loan item available to Preferred Borrowers ONLY due to cost. Ask us how to become a Preferred Borrower. Set of five books is available for loan to Preferred Borrowers ONLY. (Ask us how you can become a Preferred Borrower.) Ask our library staff about the ***The YouthBuild Program Manual***, a separate loan title.

Workplace Learning: Principles and Practice. Rowden, Robert. Wayne (2007). Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company. This book intends to expand the perception of learning in the workplace and refocus the efforts of HRD practitioners and adult educators to cover all types of learning—beyond formal training to include informal and incidental learning. While integrating theory and practice about the process of how adults acquire knowledge and skills that help them perform their jobs better, the book also examines the context within which adults form communities or practice, presenting such concepts as knowledge management and the learning organization. It is designed to help the novice as well as more experienced trainers, adult educators, and others develop workplaces conducive to learning.

HOW DOES THIS MAIL ORDER LENDING LIBRARY WORK?

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

LEARNING IN THE FAMILY LITERACY CONTEXT

Be a Better Dad Today! Slayton, Gregory W. (2012). Ventura, California, U.S.A: Regal. In this guide book the author uses humor, empathy, common sense, tough talk and engaging stories from his personal experience, to reveal techniques for dads everywhere to use.

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

¡Leamos! Let's Read! 101 Ideas to Help Your Child Learn to Read and Write, Bilingual Edition, Revised. Behm, Richard and Behm, Mary (2000). Bloomington, IN: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English and Communication. With text in both English and Spanish, the suggestions in this book enable parents to help their child develop a lifelong love for reading and writing. Tips show how to make learning fun, help children succeed in school, and at the same time, build the parent-child relationship. This revision of the book originally published in 1993 includes a new preface by Josefina V. Tinajero, Associate Professor and Director of the Mother-Daughter Program at the University of Texas at El Paso.

Money on the Bookshelf: A Family Financial Literacy Program: Curriculum Guide. UNCE (2009). Reno, NV: University of Nevada Cooperative Extension. This curriculum targets limited resource parents with young children (ages 4 through 10). The purpose of this family financial literacy education program is to provide the parent and child with opportunities to have positive interactions about money and its use, provide access to financial literacy materials, and encourage family money management. Secondary goals include improving family literacy, helping parents teach life skills such as communication, problem solving and cooperation, and to provide support, encouragement, and a sense of empowerment to parents. Money on the Bookshelf is designed to help parents teach their children money management through reading children's books and completing accompanying activities. The children's books used are commonly available, and are referenced but not included in the cur-

riculum guide.

The Parent's Guide to Storytelling: How to Make Up New Stories and Retell Old Favorites. MacDonald, Margaret Read (2001). Little Rock, AR: August House Publishers, Inc. While it is directed to parents, others will find this book's many hints, resources, and stories for storytelling useful. Topics include: why tell stories, how to tell stories, fingerplay stories, expandable stories, participation folktales, family stories, stories you create, and books to take you further.

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

Sharing Books Together: Promoting Emergent Literacy Through Reading Aloud and Home-School Partnerships. Martin, Kathleen A. and Emfinger, L. Kay (2008). Little Rock, AR: Southern Early Childhood Association. This book emphasizes why it's so important to read aloud with children. How to form community-home-school reading partnerships. How to choose and use high-quality children's books to develop children's early literacy skills. Hands-on activities that promote a variety of essential early literacy concepts are included.

LEARNING IN THE CORRECTIONS CONTEXT

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

Choose to Change. Brandon Correctional Institution (2002). Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada: National Adult Literacy Database, Inc. Inmates in the literacy program at Brandon (Manitoba, Canada) Correctional Institution produced this booklet to help other young people who have problems with alcohol and/or drugs. After many discussions, they decided to illustrate the “Twelve Steps to Sobriety” (based on Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps”) in a manner they believed would be appropriate for Native youth.

Omar and Pete. Lending, Tod (2005). New York, NY: New Video. In and out of prison for more than 30 years Omar and Pete are determined to change their lives. This intimate and penetrating film by Tod Lending follows the two long-time friends after what they hope will be their final prison release. Their story boldly exposes critical issues concerning reentry and the complex challenges men face when reentering society.

Teaching on the Inside: A Survival Handbook for the New Correctional Teacher. Geraci, Pauline (2002). Scandia, MN: Greystone Educational Materials. The author describes this book as “not about how to teach offenders, but rather an overview of what it can be like to teach in a correctional setting.” She also states that teaching inmates can be an “extremely rewarding,” yet “daunting task.” The author introduces new teachers to inmate culture and its significance to correctional education, with chapters filled with advice and vignettes drawn from the author’s experience. A teacher’s self-assessment and bibliography are included.

LEARNING IN THE TRANSITIONS CONTEXT

College and Career Ready: Helping All Students Succeed Beyond High School. Conley, David T. (2010). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Conley offers educators and policymakers an understanding of the rationale and methods necessary to redesign high schools so they focus on both college and career readiness. In addition, it contains a variety of practical methods by which high school faculty can adapt their programs of instruction in the direction of enhanced college/career readiness and thereby meet the needs of all their students. This includes helping students develop the cognitive strategies and content knowledge they will need to succeed. The book also considers the impact of key behaviors necessary for academic success—such as time management and study habits. Numerous case examples highlight practices in schools that are doing these things well.

College Knowledge: What It Really Takes for Students to Succeed and What we Can Do To Get Them Ready. Conley, David T. (2005). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Although more and more students have the test scores and transcripts to get into college, far too many are struggling once they get there. These students are surprised to find that college coursework demands so much more of them than high school. For the first time, they are asked to think deeply, write extensively, document assertions, solve non-routine problems, apply concepts, and accept unvarnished critiques of their work. Conley confronts this problem by looking at the disconnect between what high schools

do and what colleges expect and proposes a solution by identifying what students need to know and be able to do in order to succeed. The book is based on an extensive three-year project which identified what it takes to succeed in entry-level university courses. Based on the project’s findings this book delineates the cognitive skills and subject area knowledge that college-bound students need to master in order to succeed in today’s colleges and universities.

First in the Family: Advice About College from First-Generation Students. Cushman, Kathleen (2005). Providence, RI: Next Generation Press. Written for high school-age students who will be the first in their family to go to college, this book emphasizes the “three Cs” of the college journey: conversation, connections, and confidence. Most of the students who share their stories in this book have completed their second year of college, and are going on for more.

Starting Out! in Community College. Congos, Dennis H., Editor (2011). New York, NY: McGraw Hill Education. Book contains 80 articles on life management skills, covering education and training; employment and careers; money, banking, and credit; housing and taxes; diet and nutrition; and many other practical topics for the recent graduate. Chapters cover transitioning to college, time management and organization, note-taking, study skills, test preparation, stress management, and socialization adjustment in college.

Starting Out! Navigating Life After Graduation. Foster, William H. and Van Horn, Carl E., Editors (2009). Damariscotta, ME: Starting Out, Inc. This book is designed to be a practical life manual - a straightforward guide to help you navigate life as you enter many uncharted areas. It is a source of information to transition from student to wage earner and citizen. This book is first organized around broad topics, such as education, employment, insurance, money, nutrition, citizenship, and health, and then focuses on very specific issues and questions in each of the 83 chapters.

Student Success Handbook: Strategies for Studying, Note-taking, Reading, and Test-Taking. DesMarais, Ron (2008). Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press. Reading Level: 10-12. This concise, easy-to-use reference book offers practical strategies for developing effective study habits. Ideal for students in GED preparation and college transition programs.

Supporting the Literacy Development of English Learners: Increasing Success in All Classrooms. Young, Terrell A. and Hadaway, Nancy L., Editors (2006). Newark, DE: International Reading Association. Although written with K-12 teachers in mind, this collection of writings could be useful for helping teachers of adults support English language learners as they are integrated into adult basic or secondary education. Section I offers background for understanding the special needs and strengths of English language learners. Section II provides strategies to help teachers differentiate instruction for diverse proficiency levels, to move students from initial social language to academic language, and to address content topics through thematic instruction. Sec-

tion III addresses specific instructional concerns such as comprehension strategies, vocabulary development, and guided reading. Section IV offers strategies to enhance student speaking and writing.

Transition Resources for Adult Educators. Thislethwaite, Linda L. (June 2009). Macomb, IL: Curriculum Publications Clearinghouse. The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Transitions Study and Literature Review provide an overview of adult education student transitions. Transitioning, defined here as moving students through adult education toward post-secondary education, training, and employment, prepares adult students to compete in an increasingly complex high-tech workplace. In this study, the Illinois Service Center Network researched the literature and compiled best practices and programs that created successful transitions for adult education students. The report features program models, best practices, guidance for decision making, and recommendations at the state and program levels. Accompanying CD includes literature reviews in the transition areas of ABE to ASE, ASE to Postsecondary, ASE to the Workforce, and ESL. Users are able to access the articles reviewed via direct link and need not be connected to the Internet to view the PDF documents.

LEARNING IN THE CONTEXT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A Community-Based Approach to Literacy Programs: Taking Learners' Lives Into Account. Sissel, Peggy A., Editor (1996). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers. Number 70 in the New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education series. An adult learner's gender, ethnicity, and cultural and educational background, in conjunction with the learning setting, all affect the Adult Basic Education (ABE) experience. Understanding these aspects of learners' lives is critical to meeting their learning needs. This volume offers suggestions for a community-based approach to ABE that incorporates knowledge about a learner's particular context, culture, and community into adult literacy programming.

Writing America: Classroom Literacy and Public Engagement. Robbins, Sarah and Dyer, Mimi, Edotors (2005). New York, NY: Teachers College Press. This book addresses teachers' goal to engage students in meaningful learning. Essays by eleven teachers describe their classroom experiences as they implement programs based on Keeping and Creating American Communities (KCAC), a multiyear curriculum development project funded by the National Endowment for Humanities and the National Writing Project. The teacher essays present examples of classroom-based community studies projects that showcase teachers' reflective practice in action, models for professional growth, collaborative staff development programs, and much more. The essays provide replicable projects, curricular models for building connections between the classroom and the larger community.

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

CONTEXTUAL TEACHING AND LEARNING

Contextual Teaching Works! Increasing Students' Achievement. Parnell, Dale (2001). Waco, TX: CCI Publishing. The author combines anecdotal and quantitative evidence to prove that contextual teaching increases student achievement. Inspiring stories (from a variety of ages and levels) are combined with information on brain-based learning, contextual teaching/learning, and exemplary practices, including project-based learning. One chapter offers "What the Research Says About Contextual Teaching and Higher Levels of Student Achievement".

Creating Learning Scenarios: A Planning Guide for Adult Educators. Errington, Ed (2005). New Zealand: CoolBooks. Editorial Description: "This guide is intended for educators from all subject, discipline, and workplace/vocational areas of adult education. It has been written to help educators plan, deliver, evaluate and reflect on the uses of scenarios for learning and teaching purposes. The guide begins with a rationale for using 'scenario-based learning' -- why educators employ it, some motivational qualities of scenarios (through their closeness to film and television), and a note on what constitutes 'successful scenarios.' This is followed by an in-depth look at four main scenario options, and how these can be used to achieve particular learning intentions. The guide then focuses on a systematic approach to the planning of learning scenarios including the conditions necessary to optimize success. From here attention is given to the actual delivery of scenarios and selected moments for evaluation, and reflection."

Learning for Life: Building Lessons on Students' Needs and Interests. Gillern, Kristin Floyd (1991). Philadelphia, PA: Center for Literacy. This book offers approaches and activities for real-life reading and writing instruction, determined by the students' literacy needs, interests, and aspirations. The emphasis throughout the book is on doing as much reading and writing as possible, focusing on meaning-making in both processes. Recognizing the patterns and principles of written English, building a broad reading and writing vocabulary, developing ways to figure out unknown words, and learning some sight words are useful tools for engaging in meaningful reading and writing. Chapter headings include: Learning Philosophy; Building Lessons; and Teaching Strategies; with suggested readings and a listing of other publications from the Center for Literacy.



Email TCALL's Library Staff (tcall@tamu.edu) to request the current web address of these online resources - or to request a free hard copy by mail.

Read it Online or Free by Mail

Email TCALL's Library Staff (tcall@tamu.edu) to request the current web address of these online resources - or to request a free hard copy by mail.

In this issue, we are highlighting the most popular free online resources cataloged in TCALL's Library in the category of Contextual Learning, one of the six Core Content Areas of the Texas Adult Education Credential.

"Adult education teachers work in diverse settings and locations or "contexts." This content area provides a mechanism for teachers to specialize in one of several different contexts including **workforce, family literacy, corrections, and/or transitions.**" (*The Six Core Content Areas of the Credential*, retrieved from the Credential Project's website - <http://www.tei.education.txstate.edu/credential/>).

LEARNING IN THE WORKFORCE CONTEXT

Partnering with Employers to Promote Job Advancement for Low-Skill Individuals. Martinson, Karin (September 2010). Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy. Partnering with Employers to Promote Job Advancement for Low-Skill Individuals is a guide with useful ideas for establishing employer partnerships that improve economic outcomes for both low-skilled workers and businesses. It includes examples of successful incumbent worker training efforts, pre-employment and bridge programs, "sectoral" training designed to provide industry-specific expertise, career pathways and industry-based certification programs. Also helpful is its review of policy considerations for creating and sustaining employer partnerships that provide skill development opportunities.

Survival Literacy Training for Non-Native-English-Speaking Workers. Bruno, Lee and Jin, Ying and Norris, Dwayne (October 2010). Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. The purpose of this paper is to explore options for addressing the specific challenges to remediating the literacy and limited English skills of non-native-English-speaking workers, options that will address both the OSHA safety training requirements and ETA's future occupational training of non-native-English speakers.

Workplace Health and Safety ESOL Curriculum. Utech, Jenny Lee (2005). Boston, MA: Massachusetts Worker Education

Roundtable. This curriculum is designed to help ESOL students learn about and exercise their workplace health and safety rights, using learner-centered activities that engage students in discussion, elicit and build on their experiences, and encourage critical analysis and strategies. Eleven lessons are designed for low-intermediate to intermediate level ESOL students who speak, read and write some English but still need to learn many basic English skills. Teachers of beginning or advanced ESOL students and teachers of ABE can adapt lessons to meet their students' levels and needs.

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

LEARNING IN THE FAMILY LITERACY CONTEXT

Big Dreams: A Family Book about Reading. Goldman, Elizabeth and Adler, C. Ralph (2006). Jessup, MD: National Institute for Literacy. This family booklet about reading is aimed at parents of children in Preschool through 3rd Grade. The simple text provides ideas for parents of all literacy skill levels to read with their children and find lessons for reading in everyday activities.

Literacy Begins at Home: Teach Them to Read. National Institute for Literacy (2006). Jessup, MD: National Institute for Literacy. This brochure encourages parents to teach their children to read and provides checklists of helpful practices and benchmarks by age group (toddlers, preschoolers, kindergarteners, first graders, second graders, and third graders). It can be used with the

Shining Stars booklet series (available from TCALL as a separate title). Free copies are available from edpubs@inet.ed.gov or can be downloaded from the website.

Parenting for Literacy Development and Educational Success: An Examination of the Parent Education Profile. Prins, Esther and Toso, Blaire Willson (May 2008). University Park, PA: Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy, Pennsylvania State University. "The Parent Education Profile (PEP) is an instrument that rates parents' support for children's literacy development. This study examined how the PEP portrays the ideal parent, its assumptions about parenting and education, and the values and ideals it promotes. In sum, many aspects of the PEP evaluate parents by the mainstream (White, middle-class) parenting style. Although the PEP uses the language of scientific research to support this model, it presents no information about reliability or validity. The PEP tends to assume that a universal set of parenting practices best supports children's literacy development, without fully considering cultural and economic differences. It also implies that parents, particularly mothers, are mainly responsible for their children's academic success. In order to follow some of the PEP practices, parents need access to resources often unavailable to poor families; yet, the PEP does not seem to encourage recognition of mitigating circumstances (e.g., poverty) that might lower parents' ratings. Finally, while the PEP encourages staff to ask for parents' perspectives, it gives parents little say in assessing themselves. In conclusion, caution and cultural sensitivity are needed when using instruments that prescribe, monitor, and rate parental support for education and literacy." -- Key Findings section of the Research Brief.

Shining Stars: First Graders Learn to Read. Goldman, Elizabeth and Adler, C. Ralph (2006). Jessup, MD: National Institute for Literacy. Based on A Child Becomes A Reader – Birth to Preschool (a separate Clearinghouse free item), this brochure is one in a series that includes activities to help build a child's reading skills and tells a parent's story of how a mom or dad helps a child learn to read. The Shining Stars series includes a booklet for Toddlers, Preschoolers, Kindergartners, First Graders, and Second & Third Graders. Each booklet includes a checklist of ways to encourage your child which can be detached and hung on the refrigerator for easy reference.

Shining Stars: Kindergartners Learn to Read. Adler, C. Ralph and Goldman, Elizabeth (2006). Jessup, MD: National Institute for Literacy. Based on A Child Becomes A Reader – Birth to Preschool (a separate Clearinghouse free item), this brochure is one in a series that includes activities to help build a child's reading skills and tells a parent's story of how a mom or dad helps a child learn to read. The Shining Stars series includes a booklet for Toddlers, Preschoolers, Kindergartners, First Graders, and Second & Third Graders. Each booklet includes a checklist of ways to encourage your child which can be detached and hung on the

refrigerator for easy reference.

Shining Stars: Preschoolers Get Ready to Read. Goldman, Elizabeth and Adler, C. Ralph (2006). Jessup, MD: National Institute for Literacy. Based on A Child Becomes A Reader – Birth to Preschool (a separate Clearinghouse free item), this brochure is one in a series that includes activities to help build a child's reading skills and tells a parent's story of how a mom or dad helps a child learn to read. The Shining Stars series includes a booklet for Toddlers, Preschoolers, Kindergartners, First Graders, and Second & Third Graders. Each booklet includes a checklist of ways to encourage your child which can be detached and hung on the refrigerator for easy reference.

Shining Stars: Second and Third Graders Learn to Read. Goldman, Elizabeth and Adler, C. Ralph (2006). Jessup, MD: National Institute for Literacy. Based on A Child Becomes A Reader – Birth to Preschool (a separate Clearinghouse free item), this brochure is one in a series that includes activities to help build a child's reading skills and tells a parent's story of how a mom or dad helps a child learn to read. The Shining Stars series includes a booklet for Toddlers, Preschoolers, Kindergartners, First Graders, and Second & Third Graders. Each booklet includes a checklist of ways to encourage your child which can be detached and hung on the refrigerator for easy reference.

Shining Stars: Toddlers Get Ready to Read. Adler, C. Ralph and Goldman, Elizabeth (2006). Jessup, MD: National Institute for Literacy. Based on A Child Becomes A Reader – Birth to Preschool (a separate Clearinghouse free item), this brochure is one in a series that includes activities to help build a child's reading skills and tells a parent's story of how a mom or dad helps a child learn to read. The Shining Stars series includes a booklet for Toddlers, Preschoolers, Kindergartners, First Graders, and Second & Third Graders. Each booklet includes a checklist of ways to encourage your child which can be detached and hung on the refrigerator for easy reference.

Sustain & Gain: Blueprint for a Long-term, Thriving Family Literacy/Parent Engagement Program. National Center for Family Literacy (2012). Louisville, KY: National Center for Family Literacy. The publication can help programs develop strong, long-lasting partnerships that will sustain their efforts. It encourages parental engagement, focuses on the use of technology to engage families, and outlines planning and execution steps for funding.

LEARNING IN THE CORRECTIONS CONTEXT

Educating Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students in Correctional Settings. Collier, V. P. and Thomas, W. P. (2001). Moscow, ID: Northwest LINC Project. Originally published in the Journal of Correctional Education {52(2), 68-73}, this article pro-

vides an overview of the unique academic and sociocultural challenges of serving linguistically and culturally diverse populations in a correctional setting, particularly immigrants or those from a bilingual/bicultural community with ancient ethnolinguistic roots. Teaching strategies are suggested, such as the use of learners' life stories and building new knowledge on the learners' their existing linguistic and cultural knowledge.

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

English Language Instruction for Incarcerated Youth. DelliCarpini, Margo (May 2003). Washington, DC: National Center for ESL Literacy Education. The prison population is disproportionately younger, less educated, and more linguistically and culturally diverse than the rest of U.S. population. Many are parents. Most will return to the correctional system after release. Against the backdrop of this grim reality, what can an ESL teacher working with youth (ages 16-24) in correctional settings do to help them learn English and be less likely to return to the system? This ERIC Digest discusses the issues and challenges in providing English language instruction to Latino and other linguistically and culturally diverse (LCD) incarcerated youth ages 16-24 and suggests best practices and models to provide this intervention in correctional settings. Some recommendations include incorporating family literacy, life skills, and pre-employment skills into instruction. Online availability: <http://www.cal.org/caela/esl%5Fresources/alphadigests.html>

Preparing for Life Beyond Prison Walls: The Literacy of Incarcerated Adults Near Release. Amodeo, Andrea and Jin, Ying and Kling, Joanna (June 2009). Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. During the past 20 years, the United States' population of incarcerated adults has dramatically increased. Since 1980, this population has increased by approximately 334 percent; more than 2.1 million individuals were in jails or prisons

in 2006 (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2006). In 2007, there were an estimated 509 sentenced prisoners per 100,000 U.S. residents (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2007). This population clearly represents a large number of U.S. adults, many of whom will be released and re-entering the job market and life in general. Inmates released from prison who lack literacy skills may find it difficult to adjust to life beyond a correctional institution. To help incarcerated adults succeed after their release, it is important that they have the literacy required to find and retain employment and to manage everyday tasks.

LEARNING IN THE TRANSITIONS CONTEXT

Aligning Secondary and Postsecondary Education: Experiences from Career and Technical Education. Office of Vocational and Adult Education (January 2012). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. This report follows the evolution of efforts to align secondary and postsecondary CTE, and outlines several promising CTE practices that may be effective in achieving better alignment for all students.

Breaking Through Contextualization Toolkit: A Tool for Helping Low-Skilled Adults Gain Postsecondary Certificates and Degrees. Arnold, Rebecca (Spring 2010). Washington, DC: Jobs for the Future. Developed as part of the Breaking Through initiative, this toolkit is designed to help community colleges and other educators serve low-skilled adults through the use of contextualized instruction. The toolkit describes how to integrate career subject matter with precollege skills development, allowing adult learners to get started more quickly on their chosen career path. The kit features examples of contextualized instruction, strategies for student engagement, and suggestions for sustaining a contextualized course or program. Online availability: http://www.jff.org/sites/default/files/BT_toolkit_June7.pdf.

Bridge Programs in Illinois: Summaries, Outcomes, and Cross-site Findings. Bragg, D. and Harmon, T. and Kirby, C. and Kim, S. (August 2010). Champaign, IL: Office of Community College Research and Leadership. A report of the Shifting Gears-Illinois project that evaluates the programs of 10 community colleges selected to develop and implement bridge program instruction in their developmental education or adult education divisions. Profiles of each program include bridge program description and goals, students served, promising practices, barriers and policy change, and student outcomes. The Illinois' Shifting Gears initiative is aimed at implementing policy changes that support bridge programs that help adult learners transition to postsecondary educational opportunities and provide training and credentials to enter the workforce in high-demand middle skill jobs.

Building Career Ladders for the Working Poor Through Literacy Training. Bruno, Lee and Jin, Ying and Norris, Dwayne (October 2010). Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.

Using data collected from the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL), this report compares workers who reported an average weekly wage that, if they were employed full time, was less than 125 percent of official poverty levels for a family of three with workers whose hourly wages translate into incomes greater than 125 percent of official poverty levels for a family of three. All workers represented in the NAAL study are thus divided into the working poor and the working nonpoor—or “other workers,” for the purposes of this report.

Contextual Teaching and Learning: Preparing Students for the New Economy. Berns, Robert G. and Erickson, Patricia M. (2001). Columbus, OH: National Dissemination Center for Career and Technical Education. The authors first give an overview of the development of the field of career and technical education from behaviorism to contextual teaching and learning (CTL), and the influence of constructivism. CTL is defined and described, and approaches for implementing CTL are discussed. Such approaches include problem-based learning, cooperative learning, project-based learning, service learning, and work-based learning.

Courses to Employment: Partnering to Create Paths to Education and Careers. Conway, Maureen and Blair, Amy and Helmer, Matt (2012). Washington, DC: Workforce Strategies Initiative. This publication summarizes research from AspenWSI's Courses to Employment project, which studied how six community college-nonprofit partnerships work together to help low-income adults succeed in the classroom and the labor market. Online availability: <http://www.aspenwsi.org/resource/c2e/>

Gaining the Skills for Employment - The Literacy of Female Public Assistance Recipients. Amodeo, Andrea and Jin, Ying and Kling, Joanna (June 2009). Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. The report, *Gaining the Skills for Employment: The Literacy of Female Public Assistance Recipients*, uses the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) data to examine the characteristics of women who were current recipients of public assistance as well as the relationship between various characteristics and the English literacy proficiency of this population group and discusses several key findings.

Helping Adult Learners Make the Transition to Postsecondary Education. Alamprese, Judy (2005). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. Adults moving from ABE programs into higher education often face considerable challenges. Many need help strengthening their academic skills, as well as developing their study and time management skills. Many need assistance navigating enrollment and financial aid systems and other aspects of college life. In response to these challenges, ABE programs within and outside community colleges have begun more actively to assist adult learners in their transition to postsecondary education. This Adult Education Background Paper discusses the challenges ABE programs must address in developing and implementing transition

services, provides examples of emerging efforts, and discusses the implications of this transformation for policy and practice.

The Life Skills, College, and Career Readiness Guide for ESOL Learners. CAELA Project Team (October 2011). Boston, MA: SABES. The Guide provides teachers with sample activities to use in their classrooms to help ESOL students develop the skills and knowledge they need to achieve their “next steps” employment, academic, or life skills goals. This resource is NOT a list of skills, of which there are many examples, but a resource that translates those skills into interesting classroom activities. The Guide is actually three guides, one each for Basic (SPLs 0-3), Intermediate (SPLs 4-5), and Advanced (SPLs 6) ESOL learners. While this resource was especially designed for ESOL learners, the activities can be easily adapted for ABE and Transitions students as well.

One Degree of Separation: How Young Americans Who Don't Finish College See Their Chances for Success. Johnson, Jean and Rochkind, Jon and Ott, Amber (2011). San Francisco, CA: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. “One Degree of Separation” is the third of a series of Public Agenda surveys designed to examine the problems of higher education and college completion from the perspective of those who know best: young people who've completed a postsecondary degree, and those who haven't. With fewer than half of those who enter a four-year college finishing in six years, and with a debate raging over the value of a college education, the perspective of these young Americans is more important than ever.

Returning to Learning: Adults' Success in College is Key to America's Future. Pusser, Brian, et al (March 2007). Indianapolis, IN: Lumina Foundation for Education. Report includes findings of the Lumina Foundation's Emerging Pathways project and discusses the need to develop the untapped potential of the 54 million working adults who have not completed a four-year degree. The report calls for colleges to, among other things, provide more convenient and affordable access for adult learners and to work to get older students out of non-credit programs and into courses that lead to degrees and certificates.

Supporting Adult English Language Learners' Transitions to Postsecondary Education. Mathews-Aydinli, Julie (September 2006). Washington, DC: Center for Adult English Language Acquisition. This brief focuses on one type of adult learner transition — from adult ESL programs to postsecondary education. The majority of jobs that pay enough to support a family require skills that cannot be obtained with just a high school education. This brief discusses research-based strategies for the ESL classroom to support students' transitions. It concludes with a description of program features that administrators might consider when supporting English language learners' transitions to post-secondary education.

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