



# TEXAS Adult Education & Literacy QUARTERLY

**Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy & Learning**

## **Appreciative Inquiry**

*by Douglas C. Franklin,  
TRAIN Professional Development Specialist*

*Appreciative Inquiry is the discovery of the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them. It is an art and practice of asking the unconditional positive questions that strengthen a system's capacity to examine, anticipate and heighten positive potential. Instead of negation, criticism and spiraling diagnosis, there is discovery, dream, design and destiny. It works from accounts of the "positive core." Appreciative Inquiry links the energy of the positive core directly to any change agenda and changes never thought possible are suddenly and democratically mobilized. (Hammond, 2006)*



So, how does this definition of Appreciative Inquiry align with the Adult Education (AE) classroom? AE students present with a host of issues. Some have had doors slammed in their faces; others have been written off as incorrigibles. Still others have low self-esteem and may never fully realize their potential. Appreciative Inquiry encourages us to find the positives and the strength of our students and replicate the positives to address the current issues of self.

Appreciative Inquiry assumes that humans, e.g. adult education students, are not like machines that can be taken apart and fixed, but rather are social systems. As such, they are more like organisms - living, breathing entities that stay healthiest when they are focused on their positive life-giving characteristics rather than their problematic aspects.

We are very good about talking about what doesn't work. We have too little practice in what works and finding more ways of doing that. Humans bring their past to new situations. Ideally, they bring the best of their past. The majority of AE students most likely will have negative memories of their educational experiences. Through the process of Appreciative Inquiry we are challenged to consider which is the better question: What is the problem? Or, what are you doing well? The first question leads to a traditional problem-solving approach which focuses on the negative aspects of the past. The latter question leads to an Appreciative Inquiry approach which is hopeful and future orientated. In other words, we should consider examining not only what we say, but how we say it.

Everyone has something about their past to value. This element must be appreciated in order that change (returning to school) becomes a positive experience. The Appreciative Inquiry process helps one to honor the past (continuity) and search for newness (novelty) in order to embrace movement toward the new future (transition).

## A PARADIGM SHIFT IN TEACHING

### **Problem-based**

#### *Identify Problem*

What you did wrong....

#### *Conduct Cause Analysis*

Didn't study enough?

Didn't understand as well as you thought you did?

#### *Brainstorm Solutions*

Time Management

Overwhelmed students

#### *Develop Action Plans*

### **Strength-based**

Appreciate "What is" (**DISCOVERY**)

What you do understand...

Imagine "What Might Be" (**DREAM**)

What did you recognize

Determine "What Should Be" (**DESIGN**)

What worked?

How can you relate it to what you do every day?

Create "What Will Be" (**DESTINY**)

Teach how to be successful.

Metaphorically speaking, students are problems to be solved or students are challenges with unlimited potential. I choose the latter.

### **Why focus on strengths?**

Strengths build on the best aspects of the students, create new positive images of future possibility and fosters the quest for learning. Students begin to support each other and develop the "I CAN DO IT" attitude. A strengths focus creates energy and momentum for student success.

Think of what a difference it could make in the AE classroom if teachers saw what was working and approached each learning opportunity with optimism. Teachers could base future plans and strategies on what has worked best in the past and approach the future with confidence. Students could embrace change and transition periods with positive and constructive tactics that lead to attainment of educational goals. Teachers could help students develop better communication skills through reflection on their values and identifying things 'that work.' Finally, classrooms could be turned into positive, energized and future-orientated learning environments instead of those that bog in problems of the past.

### **About the Author**

Working with TRAIN PD from Austin Community College (ACC), Douglas has over fifteen years of experience as an educator, including ten years as an ABE/ASE (GED®) instructor. While teaching for ACC's Adult Education department, Douglas also had numerous opportunities to facilitate professional development trainings covering topics from Multicultural Teaching to Preparing for GED® 2014, both for his ACC colleagues and for instructors at partner organizations. In addition, Douglas has presented at the state level on Transformational Education in a Multicultural Classroom. As a contractor for the Central GREAT Center, Douglas delivered training of trainers with an emphasis on math and science.

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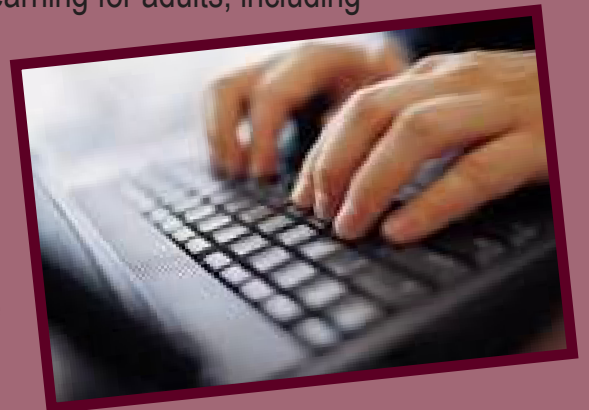
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## AEL DISTANCE LEARNING EMAIL DISCUSSION LIST

Join TCALL's listserv for Texas Adult Education and Literacy Distance Learning Professionals. This listserv is one of several hosted by TCALL for particular audiences in TWC-funded Adult Education and Literacy programs. Subscribers include state leadership and TRAIN PD staff and local Adult Education and Literacy program staff involved in Distance Learning for adults, including instruction, training, and data reporting.

To request subscriptions, the Adult Education and Literacy Grant Recipient Administrator should email Moderator Dr. Debra Hargrove at [dhargrove@cehd.tamu.edu](mailto:dhargrove@cehd.tamu.edu). Email should include the new subscriber's first and last name, e-mail address, and position, and should use the subject line "Subscribe TX AEL DISTANCE LEARNING."



# TRAIN-Tex

*by Anson Green*



To support ongoing innovation and related program support toward a first-class, integrated service delivery system the Texas Workforce Commission has developed a strategy and system of interconnected organizations to establish and enhance system capacity. The system is called the Training, Resources And Innovation Network for Texas, or TRAIN Tex.

The TRAIN Tex strategy represents the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) significant investment in professional development (PD), relevant research, and capacity-building projects that can sustain and advance a robust system of Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) providers and workforce partners to accelerate the advancement of education and training priorities across the state. These priorities are in support of successful education and workforce transitions for individuals, families and communities in Texas.

The value of Adult Education and Literacy in Texas has never been greater. Local AEL providers are already implementing innovative student service delivery options that include hallmark career pathways, workforce services and distance education models. Texas has an unprecedented opportunity to fully deploy an Adult Education and Literacy system that transforms the limited legacy options of the past into a high quality, fully integrated network of adult education and literacy providers, workforce training systems and the state's Workforce Solutions services. These enhancements are strategically designed to continue strengthening the state's workforce development system and put more Texans into living wage jobs and careers, to spur skills and credential attainment, employment retention and advancement resulting in a higher quality workforce, reduced welfare dependency, increased productivity and competition across Texas.

## **INNOVATION**

The transfer of the AEL program to TWC in 2013 ushered in a new era for Adult Education and Literacy. Following that shift, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2015 is driving an unprecedented alignment of program services and associated accountability measures which embrace new opportunities and drive increased success toward the career goals of students. The projects within TRAIN Tex provide essential tools to ensure the state can fully transform the education-for-education's sake models toward multifaceted, transition-focused models that further integrate workforce and postsecondary education and training system services and leverage community partnerships and resources.

AEL providers in Texas serve over 180,000 individuals annually in federally-funded, state-funded, and community-based non-profit instructional providers. Of these providers TWC AEL Grantees serve over 100,000 students and provide a range of services from basic literacy through preparation for the Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency. Services have expanded to include career pathways programs integrated with workforce training, programs at employer's worksites, family literacy and programs that prepare immigrants for work and civic life in America. Other state-funded programs, including libraries and correctional institutions like the Windham School District and the Texas Department of Juvenile Corrections provide basic literacy services and English language instruction. Community-based and faith-based organizations also provide tutoring and basic literacy services, largely delivered by volunteers.



TWC has established a milestone of enrolling 20,000 adult learners in career pathways programs by the year 2020, and has placed a priority on programs that enroll participants in career pathways and workforce and college transition programs. Local providers have eagerly embraced this bold career pathways milestone. Preliminary enrollments for Program Year 2015-2016 indicate a 277 percent increase in career pathways and transitions program enrollments when compared to the same period in the last program year. While enrollments are rapidly increasing, Texas has challenging work ahead to meet the milestone of 20,000 learners and to fully integrate Adult Education and Literacy into the workforce development system. Texas must continue to innovate, to develop and deliver professional development that will expand these quickly evolving models and support the integration of Workforce Solutions, developmental education and workforce training partners that are vital to successful career pathways.

## THE FUTURE

Texas AEL is moving quickly in new directions. The enhanced framework of professional development, research, and capacity-building projects that comprise TRAIN Tex will promote the implementation of a fully integrated system. Under TWC leadership, a shared responsibility among AEL Grantees, capacity-building projects and the PD Center promises to deliver responsive, best-in-class program support through curriculum and standards development, cutting edge professional development training, comprehensive resource development and program mentoring. Service delivery solutions are informed by analysis of performance data and an understanding of local community and employer needs, and the leveraging of shared resources. Related investments in the 28 Local Workforce Development Boards and local workforce planning requirements under WIOA are identifying additional areas where capacity building, training, and integration strategies are needed.

The TRAIN Tex strategy distributes responsibilities across three entities, each one directed and supported by TWC AEL staff:

- AEL Grantees have a contractual responsibility to employ a PD Coordinator to deliver local day-to-day professional development training, continuous improvement strategies and training based on a local analysis of performance and staffing needs that effectively support the Commission's strategic priorities.

In program year 2104-2015 a total of 3,577 AEL staff participated in professional development activities across Texas. Texas AEL educators were required to document a minimum of 12 hours of professional development during the program year, but most staff exceeded the minimum requirement. The average number of professional development hours was 33 and the median number was 24. Participating staff included full-time and part-time administrators, supervisors, teachers, counselors, paraprofessionals and unpaid volunteers. Of these, approximately 74% were teachers and 17% were administrators or supervisors. For more information on AEL Grantees: <http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/twcael/AELGrantees.htm>

- Capacity Building Projects are initiatives that advance the development and innovation and address TWC priorities. Projects are explicitly designed to grow the capacity of AEL providers and, especially, to develop research-based curriculum and resources, expand educational technology and enhance the integration of services with other education and workforce organizations, including Workforce Boards, colleges, libraries, and non-profit and faith-based providers. For more information on these projects: <http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/twcael/>



• The Professional Development Center is responsible for delivering training, including training-of-trainer events, informational resources and other support to local programs, students, and stakeholders. PD Center staff, including PD Specialists, are responsible for deploying statewide PD activities, identifying and recruiting additional contract trainers, developing and delivering training throughout the state, including online, and assisting AEL Grantees and other providers with professional development planning and services provision. Further information on the professional development roles and responsibilities of AEL Grantees and the PD Center can be found at <http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/TRAINPDConsortium.htm>

**SUMMARY:**

The strategic collaboration and interplay across the respective entities that contribute to the TRAIN-Tex strategy (Figure 1) are deliberate and intended to maximize Texas talent and strategic investments and reduce siloed efforts. The objective is to leverage the research, analysis and deployment of best-in-class practices with resource sharing and organizational leadership across the respective components (Table 2) to ensure that training services and support are:

- customized to address local needs;
- based on data-driven demands;
- timely;
- designed to balance costs with results;
- delivered by best-in-class trainers delivering evidence-based models and approaches; and
- responsive to state direction and varied expertise of local areas.

The resulting interconnected system is built on objectives derived from direction from the Agency, stakeholder feedback, and a continuous review of AEL system performance and research.

**Table 2: Activities of TRAIN-Tex Entities**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PD CENTER</b> Investment - \$4.6 million (2 yrs)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>AEL GRANTEES</b> Professional Development Investment - \$3.3 million (2 yrs)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECTS</b> Investment - \$2.9 million (2 yrs)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage PD Specialists</li> <li>• Manage Contract Trainer Database</li> <li>• Identify training needs</li> <li>• Develop PD content</li> <li>• House resources</li> <li>• Manage Learning Management System</li> <li>• Coordinate with AEL Grantees</li> <li>• Coordinate with Capacity Building Project Grantees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide Core Training</li> <li>• Manage PD Coordinators</li> <li>• Analyze local performance data</li> <li>• Address local PD Needs</li> <li>• Support travel to PD events</li> <li>• Compensate teachers for PD activities</li> <li>• Coordinate with PD Center</li> <li>• Coordinate with Capacity Building Project Grantees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot innovative models</li> <li>• Align closely with strategic plan</li> <li>• Integrate workforce system services</li> <li>• Mentor grantees</li> <li>• Utilize local talent and resources</li> <li>• Address specific needs for capacity building</li> <li>• Coordinate with PD Center</li> <li>• Coordinate with AEL Grantees</li> </ul>

Figure 1

# TRAIN-TEX

TRAINING, RESOURCE AND INNOVATION NETWORK FOR TEXAS





TCALL's Adult Education and Literacy website is currently undergoing a major reconstruction! The revisions will reduce finding information on TWC AEL department, statewide efforts, WIOA, and career pathways to one click, and placing a stronger emphasis on ensuring that Adult Education service providers and staff have access to the information and guidance necessary to succeed. Although this remains a work in progress, AEL offers many, many thanks to Jorge Goyco; Jorge has graciously suffered through "emergency postings", "please re-do this part", and "oh, I forgot, please add this" for the past few weeks. Sadly, this is likely to continue, as there is so much information out there, WIOA is constantly evolving and, as academic professionals, we want it all!

Here is the link to the AEL landing page: <http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/twcael/twcadulted.htm>. While still under construction, significant changes have already been made. Among the tabs at the top of the page you will find a section reserved for "[WIOA](#)"; this section houses the webinars that have been completed by AEL State Director Anson Green. This tab will also soon contain any updates, power points and additional webinars as they are released. <http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/twcael/wioa.htm>  
As we continue our work, keep checking back to see what's new!

## TRAIN PD Contract Trainer Database

# *Are You In?*

Are you an experienced trainer in adult education? Would you like to share your knowledge with colleagues in your local area or across the great state of Texas?

If so, consider applying to be a member of the TRAIN PD Contract Trainer Database. Quality professional development is the key to successful programs, effective teachers and positive outcomes for all of our students.

Do you meet the requirements? Do you want to join in?

For more information, go to the database at <https://pdtrain-tcall.tamu.edu/> and click on About. Or email Beth Ponder at [baponder@tamu.edu](mailto:baponder@tamu.edu)



# TRAIN PD @TCALL - Pausing to *Track* our Successes

by Harriet Smith, Managing Director

In June 2014, TCALL expanded beyond its role as the State Literacy Resource Center and began a new function as the statewide Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) Professional Development Center as well. When we gave our project the name of **Texas Research-based Adult Instruction Network (TRAIN) PD**, we expected that the first year would entail *laying a lot of track quickly* and *stoking the engine for rapid acceleration*. That expectation has certainly proven to be true.

Taking on the new role as the state's PD Center has been an exciting new chapter in TCALL's 26-year history. At this point, we want to pause for a quick station stop and highlight just a few of our accomplishments during the first 18 months of TRAIN PD @TCALL.

- 2405 - Number of AEL professionals who attended at least one TRAIN PD workshop or training in Year 1 (the 2014-2015 program year)
- 5328 - Number of "duplicated training participants" in Year 1 (participant/events for those attending more than one TRAIN PD event)
- 757 - Total HOURS of PD Content delivered by TRAIN PD in Year 1

The pace has accelerated dramatically since Year 2 of TRAIN PD began in summer 2015.

- 2184 - Number of AEL professionals who attended at least one TRAIN PD workshop or training in just the first 6 months of Year 2
- 4708 - Number of "duplicated training participants" in just the first 6 months of Year 2
- 1326 - Total HOURS of PD Content delivered by TRAIN PD in just the first 6 months of Year 2

But with TCALL's core values of Service, Leadership, Collaboration, Quality and Responsiveness, our success is about far more than the *quantity* of PD service delivered to the state. We are proud of our team's innovations in PD design and delivery models as well. Just a few examples follow.

**New Master Teacher Training Academy for ASE (Adult Secondary Education)** – This extensive, hands-on, hybrid training program has been developed specifically for Texas with the goal to strengthen and support quality Adult Basic and Secondary instruction in the state's adult education programs and increase High School Equivalency attainment through preparation of a cadre of ASE Master Teacher Trainers in two strands: Math and Reading/Language Arts. The intensive Training-of-Master-Trainers for this initiative began in November 2015.

**New Tech and Tell Webinar Series** – Led by Dr. Debra Hargrove and Dr. Glenda Rose with numerous guest content experts, this weekly, one-hour Webinar series demonstrates technology tools that will help AEL teachers keep their classroom organized, their students engaged, and their tech skills up to date. Past Tech and Tell topics are available as online courses through the Texas AEL PD Portal.

**New TEAMS Training Modules** – In collaboration with TWC Adult Education and Literacy staff and a working group of experienced trainers in the TEAMS (Texas Education Adult Management System) for AEL data, TRAIN PD released in August 2015 a six-module, stackable approach to training teachers, data entry staff, and program leaders.

1. TEAMS Overview (required pre-requisite; now available online in the Texas AEL PD Portal)
2. TEAMS - Building a Foundation
3. TEAMS - Data Entry
4. TEAMS - Reports & Tables Using the Reports
5. TEAMS - Data Mining for Program Improvement (Advanced Reports)
6. TEAMS - From the Teachers' Perspective

# Ideas for Teachers of Adults

## TCALL Bits & Bytes

Short, yet purposeful introductions to topics related to the integration of Technology in Adult Education, ESL and Literacy.

Contributed by Debra L. Hargrove, Ed. D., TCALL



### Tech and Tell Series a Big Hit!

Are you looking for new and engaging activities you can bring to your classroom? Don't have the time or the skills to find digital tools?

TRAIN PD began a weekly webinar series in September of 2015 to help fill that gap. We've highlighted a number of tech tools that teachers can use the very next day in their classrooms. So far our Tech and Tell participants have learned about using Social Media to keep students engaged, about adding questions to existing videos to make them interactive, about sharing bookmarked websites and what's available online regarding Labor Market Information. We share information about APPS that can make your life easier and about resources for your students with Learning Disabilities.

You can join TRAIN PD ONLINE each Thursday night and Friday around lunch for Tech and Tell! We'll be demonstrating technology tools that will help you keep your classroom organized, your students engaged and your tech skills up-to-date.

We are even recording each of our sessions, adding some interactive questions and then posting them in our PD Portal for teachers who missed joining in live each week. We've created a Facebook Group and would love for you to "Like" us! Join our Facebook Group - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/TRAINPDTech/>

Our Tech and Tells are even getting rave reviews from program leaders!

"Ladies, I just wanted to say 'thanks' for all you guys do to foster technology learning. I have one teacher who has done some of the Tech and Tell webinars and she has really gotten into using technology in her classes. You should check out her GED calculator video on Zaption. She also urges other teachers to learn about these tools. Tech and Tell is such a simple concept but it has had a big impact. Thank you."

Resa Wingfield, CMPI, Executive Supervisor, Literacy Council of Tyler

We meet most Thursday nights at 8 pm Central and repeat on Fridays at 11:30 am Central. Just point your browser to: <http://tcall.webex.com>, grab your headset and get ready to learn!

For more information about our Tech and Tells, please go to our Tech and Tell webpage at: <http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/techTell.html>

# Love-15: What My Tennis Coach Taught Me About Teaching Adults More Effectively

*by Susan Gusler, Austin Community College*

I couldn't believe the errors my students made on their post-test, just missing their level completion. Arrgh! I literally just taught those exact skills the previous week. My students were extremely bright and motivated, and two of them had missed the same concept. I needed to reexamine the effectiveness of my teaching. Where had I gone wrong?

A few nights later at team tennis practice, it struck me that my young tennis coach, Alejandro, was much more effective at teaching new skills to adults than I was. I decided to deconstruct his practices to glean some tips to improve my results in the classroom the way he had improved my skills on the court.

Like many good instructors, he first asks us a question to engage us, to see how much we know about a topic, and to help us understand why the skill is important. "When your opponents are up at the net, what is your best strategy?" If no one answers, he calls on one of the advanced students. "The lob," someone answers. "Why?" he asks to ensure we understand why we want to learn the skill before he starts to explain it.

Next he describes what to do, but only for one or two minutes. Then he demonstrates, first without the ball, then in slow motion, then at full speed.

After that, we practice the skill in a very controlled setting. Not once, not twice, but MANY times. We rotate so we can see the skill from many different perspectives. We get more chances after observing our teammates. When someone isn't getting it, he calls the small group into a huddle to explain the gap in our performance—i.e. what we are doing wrong. We practice again.

He gives continuous feedback, always calling our name and leading with what we did right, even when we didn't quite get it. "Susan, good job getting there, but turn your shoulders more."

He has us play a game. He reminds us to use the new skill and offers feedback throughout, always trying to identify something we did well, even if we miss. Using

the new skill during a live game is more difficult than during a practice game. During practice drills, I do well because I know exactly what to expect. A game feels more unpredictable and competitive. Students have told me they feel the same way about tests. They understand the concept, but the wording, structure, environment, and circumstances of the assessment make it more difficult to remember and apply the concept. The stakes are perceived to be higher, which can make them nervous.

I compared my recent teaching techniques with my tennis coach's. I had gotten a good start. I had asked them why we needed to learn the new skill. I had demonstrated the skill (writing a letter). We had worked together to practice the skill. I had even had them practice individually, once, very quickly, with a little feedback. Then we had moved on. No wonder they hadn't executed the new skill perfectly. Tennis pros say you have to practice your tennis serve 10,000 times to get it right. My students were a few practices short. Demonstrating a skill one time doesn't guarantee that the student can replicate that skill the following week, or even 30 minutes later. My tennis coach doesn't assume that just because I hit one lob perfectly that I have "learned" it. He provides many opportunities to practice in a variety of ways.

I tried applying this new insight a couple of weeks later in a Customer Service Career class, teaching the difference between closed-ended (yes/no) questions and open-ended questions, an important help-desk/call-center skill. I asked if anyone knew the difference. No one did. So I gave examples of both types and explained the definition. When I asked again for the definition, several were able to tell me "Closed-ended means you can answer with yes or no." That was great, but had they learned the skill? I used my tennis coach's technique and had them demonstrate the skill. No one could. They could recite the definition, but didn't really understand it. I hadn't given them enough practice in enough different ways. I next used an exercise based on the ice-breaker "Would You Rather." They moved to the right if the question I asked was "closed-ended" and to the left if they thought it was "open-ended." When all were doing that

confidently, I called on individuals to ask a classmate a closed-ended question. Several people still needed more coaching. I put them into groups to practice. Then we practiced on paper.

Eventually, I gave them real-life call center and help-desk scenarios and had them work in pairs to develop appropriate questions. Finally, we role-played the calls. I gave feedback throughout. They made errors, but I coached them through them. My coach doesn't expect me to be perfect and I didn't expect my students to be. Their skills were, however,

much improved after practicing a variety of different ways.

Turns out my tennis coach was previously an ESL teacher. Maybe that makes him a better tennis coach.

#### **About the Author**

Susan Gusler, MBA, SPHR, PMP has worked at Austin Community College for seven years and also develops and conducts sessions for TRAIN PD. Her tennis rating is 2.5 (beginner).

## *Translating Research into Literacy Practice*

### **We Know About the PIACC Study. Now What?**

*by Federico Salas-Isnardi, TRAIN PD Consortium at TCALL*

"...the skill level of the American labor force is not merely slipping in comparison to that of its peers around the world, it has fallen dangerously behind."

Eduardo Porter, *Stubborn Skills Gap in America's Workforce*, *New York Times* October 8, 2013

Two years ago, for the Spring 2014 issue of the Texas AEL Quarterly (18, 2), I wrote a brief article on the impact of the PIAAC study on adult education and literacy programs nationwide. Today, it is just as important to emphasize the urgency of becoming fully acquainted with the scope of the study, the results, the implications of our country's performance in the assessments, the immediate impact on the American workforce, and the long-term implications for adult education.

#### **What is PIAAC? <sup>(1)</sup>**

The 2013 *Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies* (PIAAC) is a study of the cognitive and workplace skills of adults ages 16 to 65 in 24 countries including the United States. The

study conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) assessed the literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving (in technology rich environments) skills of all participants as well as reading components for low-literacy adults.

#### **How did American adults perform? <sup>(2)</sup>**

The United States ranked lower than most of the 24 participating countries in all assessed domains, underperforming 12 participating countries in Literacy, 14 countries in problem solving, and 17 countries in numeracy. The study found that about 18 percent of adults in the United States have low literacy skills and 30 percent have low skills in numeracy, indicating that millions of adults need to improve their ability to read and work with numbers.

While many adults with low skills are unemployed, in the United States 23 million adults currently employed have low literacy and 36 million workers have low math skills. These findings have important implications for the competitiveness of our workforce since the numbers represent 16% and 25% of the employed population respectively.

Comparing our performance in 2013 with the performance of adults in previous international assessments, the US average performance in literacy today is significantly lower than it was in 1994<sup>(3)</sup>.

### **Background Information**

Using a rich Background Questionnaire, the PIAAC study collected extensive information on the demographic characteristics of study participants, including information on the workforce status, types of jobs in which participants in the study were employed, and how much they were paid for their work. The background questionnaire also included information on the skills needed and the levels of education required to be successful in those jobs, which allows a comparison of workplace requirements with the skills and level of education held by people currently holding those jobs.

### **PIAAC can inform decision making** <sup>(4)</sup>

The rich information available for analysis from the PIAAC data can help decision makers, workforce development agencies, and educational leaders better understand questions such as how different demographic subgroups are represented among the low-literacy adults; whether there is a relationship between skills and earnings and in what sectors of the economy this relationship is stronger; whether there are areas of our industry where low-skill workers are overrepresented; and whether skill-proficiency is a better indicator of employment success than the level of formal education completed.

### **What does the PIAAC data mean to adult education programs?**

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) is tasked in this country with providing a gateway to information about the PIAAC study. The PIAAC Gateway is a source of invaluable information on the PIAAC study: its data, implications for policy, research, and practice, publicly available handouts, presentations, and brochures. In addition, AIR PIAAC commissions a number of ongoing research studies based on the PIAAC results. In December 2015, they conducted a second conference to discuss research papers on a variety of concerns including the social background and numeracy skills of college graduates; a comparative study of the literacy and numeracy skills of young adults in selected developed countries; an examination of gender differences in numeracy skills; and the basic reading skills of adults in the USA, among others. These papers are available at <http://piaacgateway.com/us-piaac-conference-2015>.

Another resource for educators and employers accessible through the PIAAC Gateway is the new Education and Skills Online Assessment (ES-Online), which is an online version of the PIAAC assessments used in the 2013 study. The online assessment can help employers and adult education programs to generate state and local-level information about the skills of adult learners and employees in literacy, numeracy, and use of technology to solve problems. Programs offering their students access to these online assessments could help individuals compare their own profiles to the occupational profiles of industry sectors hiring in their local areas. The online assessment is an instrument of the OECD and is available at <http://www.oecd.org/skills/ESonline-assessment/>.

Adult education programs would benefit from using the resources available in the PIAAC Gateway to assess their own curriculum against the PIAAC profiles of their learners and the demands of the local market place. It may also help in determining how well their curriculum prepares students to develop the competencies of the international assessment. Educators should start by visiting the gateway at [www.piaacgateway.com](http://www.piaacgateway.com) and becoming familiar with the PIAAC Outreach Kit available at <http://piaacgateway.com/toolkit/>.

In the global economy, American workers compete for jobs with adults in other developed nations. The disturbing fact that our adults underperform their counterparts in most developed economies and perform below average in all domains assessed by the PIAAC study should be a clarion call to action. If educators and policy makers are serious about addressing the skill gap of our adult population and preparing our learners to meet the literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving demands of today's workplace, we must pay attention to the implications of this study and take advantage of the wealth of resources made available to help us take action.

- 1- All information on this article is from resources available to the public on the website of the PIAAC Gateway of the American Institute for research ([www.piaacgateway.com](http://www.piaacgateway.com))
- 2- *Infographics*, PIAAC Gateway
- 3- Stein, S. (2015). *Why adult education matters: What PIAAC data tell us about the skills of US Adults*. Presentation at the conference of the Association of Adult Literacy Professional Developers (AALPD)
- 4- *Introduction to PIAAC*, PIAAC Gateway

# Adult Learner Engagement

## Thank You, M'am

by Carrie Colladay Stell, Grayson College

My college-aged son, Willy, was a guest reader in my adult education classroom. For a change of pace, he read aloud the first three sentences of a short story, and then my students had ten minutes to make up the rest of the story. They didn't have to worry about their spelling or grammar, but they did have to use their imaginations to write about what could have happened next.

Willy read, "She was a large woman with a large purse that had everything in it but a hammer and nails. It had a long strap, and she carried it slung across her shoulder. It was about eleven o'clock at night, and she was walking alone, when a boy ran up behind her and tried to snatch her purse."

With that introduction, my students began to write.

When they had finished, I read each of their stories aloud, with their permission and without identifying the authors. All but one of my students were women. Some had the "large woman" cast in the role of victim, start to finish. And some had the police or onlookers come to her rescue. But some empowered the woman; she chased the boy (although many referred to him as a man) and caught him. One student had the lady throw a hammer (it must have been in her pocket, since it wasn't in her pilfered purse) which hit the "man." This particular student once came to my class with visible signs of having been beaten before another student took her to the emergency room.

My one male student – a 57-year-old former convict who struggled to read – had a secretary for this assignment. He had not yet written a complete sentence for me, but he enjoyed dictating his story to a volunteer teaching assistant. His purse thief made a great escape.

The students were then told the title of the short story, *Thank You, M'am*, and its author, Langston Hughes,

a pillar in African-American literature. In his 1940 autobiography *The Big Sea*, Hughes wrote of his unhappy and lonesome childhood, "Then it was that books began to happen to me, and I began to believe in nothing but books and the wonderful world in books — where if people suffered, they suffered in beautiful language, not in monosyllables, as we did in Kansas."

During the discussion following Willy's reading of *Thank You, M'am*, my students shared some of their personal observations and experiences related to parenting, communities, racism, forgiveness, and trust. For a homework assignment, I encouraged them to write the rest of the story: what happened to the boy after his late night encounter with Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones?

Then Willy left us, and we focused on fractions for the remainder of the afternoon. At the end of class, more than an hour and a half later, one of my students – Yolanda (a pseudonym) – asked, "Why do you like African-Americans so much?"

Why do I? I have been a member of an African-American church in my community for 25 years. When I mentioned that fact to someone years ago, he responded, "That's funny. You don't look Black." I am not and neither is my husband nor our three grown children. But we have been loved long and well by the members of our church family, our brothers and sisters in our faith. That is why I "like African-Americans so much." And that is what I told Yolanda.

Yolanda said she wondered because I have read aloud so many books about and by African-Americans: *Gifted Hands* by Ben Carson, *Same Kind of Different as Me* by Ron Hall and Denver Moore, and *Sugar's Life in the Hood: The Story of a Former Welfare Mother* by Sugar Turner and Tracy Bachrach Ehlers. Concluding our conversation, Yolanda said, "You're like me."

I am in my fifties; Yolanda is in her thirties. I have a job; Yolanda is unemployed. I have a college degree; Yolanda only completed the 8th grade. I have a nice home in a nice neighborhood; Yolanda lives in government-subsidized housing. I am married with children; Yolanda is single with children and grandchildren. I am white; Yolanda is black. What did she mean by saying “you’re like me” when our life experiences have been so different?

I did not ask Yolanda, but I think I understand. My students and I begin to bond with each other as we do life together in our adult ed classroom. This is especially discernible when I am reading aloud since it is an equal opportunity humanizer. Reading aloud tickles imaginations, exposes realities, and expands perspectives while it takes our hearts and minds places they may never have gone before.

When we return to our own lives, we find that our fellow classmates have gone on an intellectual and emotional journey with us. Wandering and wondering

together in this communal experience, we realize that we are indeed like each other.

Thank you, Langston Hughes, for writing a gem of a story that helped to make this magical journey possible.

### Reference

Comprehensive Guide to Short Stories, Critical Edition. Ed. Charles E. May. eNotes.com, Inc. 2004. 14 Feb, 2016 <http://www.enotes.com/topics/thank-you-mam/in-depth#in-depth-bibliography>

### About the Author



Carrie Colladay Stell reads aloud daily in her Grayson College AEL classrooms in Sherman and Gainesville. “Yolanda” earned her GED and is enrolling at Grayson College in Denison.

## AnneMarie Molinari Joins TRAIN PD Team

TCALL welcomes AnneMarie Molinari to the TRAIN Professional Development team as our newest PD Center Specialist. Ms. Molinari brings fourteen years of experience in the field of Adult Education and Literacy encompassing three capacities: as a classroom and distance learning teacher; as a professional development trainer and consultant; and as a state-level adult education leader in both California and Texas.

As a successful adult basic education and adult secondary education instructor, she has provided evidence-based and standards-based instruction for adult learners, both in the classroom and through distance learning models. As a professional development trainer and consultant for the California Adult Literacy Professional Development Project (CALPRO) and the Outreach Technical Assistance Network (OTAN), Ms. Molinari brings extensive experience writing curriculum and facilitating Train-the-Trainer model workshops for teachers, administrators, and state-level staff.

AnneMarie earned a M.Ed. in Special Education from California State University, Sacramento and a B.A. in Communication from the University of Arizona in Tucson. While completing her Master’s degree, Ms. Molinari became passionate about technology integration and the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to help increase the academic gains of students with learning disabilities and severely low literacy skills.

After moving to Texas in 2010, some of Ms. Molinari’s accomplishments included: providing statewide program management of the Adult Education and Literacy Distance Learning (DL) and Goal Setting Initiatives; co-authoring, implementing, and managing the Distance Learning Academy and providing policy oversight and performance evaluations of professional development trainers for two statewide adult education initiatives.

Please join us in welcoming AnneMarie Molinari to Texas A&M, TCALL and the TRAIN PD team!



# Adult Learner Success Stories

## Road to Realization

*by Zachary Ryan Lindsey, GED Graduate*

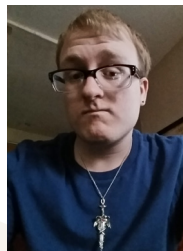
You can say I was in... a pickle to say the least. I was moving from house to house, sleeping on couches, and living with friends who would take me. It was rough. I had no job, and what I could get for work wasn't worth the seven or eight dollars they were paying me. I was babysitting for a place to stay; it was just awful, but I was with my best friend at the time and had food and a couch. What more could I ask for? Granted I had always thought that I was worth more or I deserved better. I was just a kid who fell on some hard times; who hasn't? I was miserable and depressed. I thought about it day and night, left in my own thoughts while I babysat nearly all the time.

It finally hit me while I was hanging out with my friend and her boyfriend. I was working at Wendy's at the time and made around five to six hundred dollars every two weeks, while my friend made that in a day, and her boyfriend made maybe three times that sitting on his couch. It irritated me; it really did. And I knew at that time that I was tired of babysitting and tired of doing all of the things I was doing; it was no way to live. I knew there would be no way I could do what I needed to, to get where I needed to be without a GED, or any education for that matter. With no GED, I couldn't do anything but work in grocery stores, fast food or restaurants, making nothing really. Some people make it work, but I knew that I was wanting more than that.

So I came back to Abilene to stay with my family, who thankfully took me in, and focused on my education. I went to Alta Vista (Adult Ed Program; Abilene ISD), and met with some of the most amazing, supportive teachers and staff who told me what I needed to do and how to get it done.

Mrs. Lawson and Mrs. Best guided me and gave me encouragement to do what I needed to do. They helped me with study materials, practice tests, everything I could possibly need, and they cared. That's what I really liked: they seemed to care about my future, to the point where they were even helping me apply for college, and just really setting me up for success. Honestly, I felt like there was no way I could fail with them behind me; I had support from friends, family, and teachers. It was and is amazing. I took the tests, one-by-one, and I beat every one of them. It gave me such a feeling of accomplishment, and I could feel the doors opening before me.

I would strongly encourage anyone and everyone to try and get your GED. I know it might be hard, whether you have kids, a job, really anything. There are so many obstacles. But I'm telling you it will make you feel so much better, and so many more doors will open in a new job or even your current job. Some people may say it's not needed, but I was one of those people; now I'm telling you nothing can help you more in life than a GED. Education is the pathway to the future, and it may not be easy, but hardly anything in life worth having is. There will be people who support and help you, and all you need to do is ask. This is the gist of my story, and I hope it encourages you to pursue your dreams because everyone deserves a better life.



### About the Author

Zachary Ryan Lindsey received his GED in late 2015 and is currently enrolled full time at Texas State Technical College in Abilene studying to get his associate's degree in applied culinary science.



# A Lot Can Happen in Three Years

*Reprinted with permission from Literacy Council of Tyler*

It's hard to believe three short years ago Jesus Nazario was unemployed, divorced, and living out of his car. Today he has a job he loves, a wife he loves, and a roof over his head. What made the difference? He earned his GED.

Jesus came to the Literacy Council three years ago determined to get his GED. He had run into a string of bad luck after having a fairly good job driving trucks. With the downturn in the economy and lack of having a high school diploma, he found himself unable to get a job and eventually lost everything ...except his pride. He knew the only way to get back on his feet was to get his education.

Through his class, he met connections that steered him to a job doing what he loves best which is taking care of others. He is living evidence that GED students can successfully complete career training while earning their high school credential.

While at the Literacy Council, Jesus participated in the Dual Enrollment program where he earned his Clinical Medical Assistant license while taking GED classes.



## TRAIN PD @TCALL to Co-Host Digital Literacy/Technology Strand

Join us in Dallas as we co-host the Digital Literacy and Technology strand of presentations with California's Outreach and Technical Assistance Network (OTAN).

Check out the sessions in the Computer Lab, sponsored by TRAIN PD @TCALL

### Sample Technology Sessions

Digital Literacy Acquisition: Findings from a National Research Project

Cyber ESL: Technology and Blended Learning

REBOOT YOUR DIGITAL STRATEGY!

BYOD: Laptops, Tablets

Operation OER! Resources for Learner Success!

Flipping Your Classroom with Interactive Video

Taking Tech by the Horns: A DIY Approach to Bringing Better Technology to Learners Who Need It Most Lead



**"Bring your own device (BYOD)!"**  
**Free WiFi Access at the conference sponsored by TCALL**

# Welcome to Our Library. . .

## *Paula Bauer Joins TRAIN PD Team*

TCALL welcomes Paula Bauer to TRAIN PD @ TCALL as our Program Coordinator for Library and Information Sciences. Paula brings a wealth of experience: as Coordinator of the Project LEARN Family Literacy program at Lamar Consolidated ISD for twelve years; as an English as a Second Language teacher for five years; and in her earlier twelve-year career implementing management information systems for Texaco, Inc. in Houston.

After leaving Texaco, Paula taught Adult Education at Wharton County Junior College (WCJC) in 1999; then taught for Project LEARN at Lamar Consolidated ISD in Rosenberg from 2000 to 2004. In her final year of teaching, Paula was honored as Part-Time Adult Education Instructor of the Year by TALAE (Texas Association for Literacy and Adult Education). In 2004, Paula became program coordinator for Project LEARN, administering Adult Education in that context through English Literacy-Civics funding. She also coordinated Adult Education with WCJC and Literacy Council of Fort Bend County, and has seven years of experience in Distance Learning for adult students.

Project LEARN serves the entire family with Adult Education for the parents, Early Childhood Education, Parent Education, Home Visits and Parent and Child

Together (PACT) Time. Her ability to continue offering that full range of Family Literacy services far beyond the end of federal Even Start Family Literacy funding is a testament to Ms. Bauer's leadership skills. While Coordinator of Project, Paula developed an extensive Family Literacy library; created a cataloging system to enable searching by multiple criteria; and developed a system to track lending, returns, and books given to families to build their home libraries.

Paula earned a Masters of Business Administration from University of Houston, specializing in Management Information Systems. Her Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from University of North Texas focused on Planning, Administration and Institutional Research for Human Resource Management.

Please join us in welcoming Paula Bauer to Texas A&M, TCALL, and the TRAIN PD team!

Paula stands ready to assist you! Call her at 800-441-READ (7323) or email [tcall@tamu.edu](mailto:tcall@tamu.edu) to request materials by mail or information on the Library's services.



**Citizenship: Ready for the Interview.** Weintraub, Lynne (2014). Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press Book and audio program enables students to learn and practice ways to: understand and use vocabulary on the N-400 application; answer different types of questions the USCIS examiner may ask in the interview; respond to questions they are not sure about; ask the examiner to repeat or explain a question; and communicate effectively with the UCIS examiner. The audio includes exercises to check understanding of interview questions and many sample interview segments. It also includes questions that students can practice answering with information about themselves.

**Control Your Money, Second Edition.** New Readers Press (2015). Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press. This book will give you ideas on how to manage your money well. Getting control

of your money can help you reach your goals even if you don't have a lot of money. The book can be used as a supplement to any adult education class, as part of a financial literacy program, or for parents involved in family literacy.

**Job Success.** New Readers Press (2013). Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press. To be successful at work, adults need to know how to work with supervisors and co-workers. They need to know how to communicate and behave professionally. This book equips adult learners with the skills and knowledge to help them effectively transition from school to work.

**Math Sense.** Hoyt, Cathy Fillmore (2015). Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press. This 3 book set provides instruction and practice for the range of math skills that adults need to succeed in life, at work, and on high school equivalency tests. Each

## 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](mailto:tcall@tamu.edu) to check out materials described here or to request hard copy listings of even more resources.

unit is organized around 4 key lesson strands that cover a variety of instructional approaches. Each book also provides a skills preview, glossary of math terms, toolkits, and practice questions in a variety of question types.

**North Star Listening & Speaking, Fourth Edition.** Boyd, Frances and Numrich, Carol, Editors (2015). White Plains, NY: Pearson. This set of workbooks allows students and teachers to better assess progress. Group projects inspire students to inquire further and prepare students to engage in real-world activities. Language skills are reinforced and practiced using models from the unit listening selections.

**North Star Reading & Writing, Fourth Edition.** Boyd, Frances and Numrich, Carol, Editors (2015). White Plains, NY: Pearson. This set has 3 of the 5 books in this series. The series helps students move through the integration of print to online content and helps them to achieve their academic and personal goals to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The writing sections use vocabulary and grammar to teach revising techniques that help the student learn coherence and unity in their writing.

**Project Success.** Gaer, Susan and Lynn, Sarah, Consultants (2014). White Plains, NY: Pearson. This set of workbooks has six-levels and four-skills. It teaches English by involving students in real-life professional situations. It focuses on workplace skills and 21st century challenges to foster creative and critical thinking skills, promote self-directed learning, and improve students' ability to communicate in social, educational, and professional situations.

**Reimagining Doctoral Education as Adult Education.** Heaney, Tom and Ramdeholl, Dianne, Editor (Fall 2015). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Number 147 in the New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education series. From the

Editor: This volume looks at graduate education, specifically the doctorate, through the lens of adult education practice. This volume will be of interest to doctoral faculty in a wide range of disciplines, informing their work with practices that will engage learners and promote scholarship.

**Science for the GED Test.** New Readers Press (2015). Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press. This book covers the topics and practices that appear on the GED Science Test. Targeted lessons review content areas and critical thinking skills through passages, graphics, and questions like those on the GED test including short answer items.

**Scrambled.** Sturomski, Neil (2015). St. Petersburg, FL: Neil Sturomski. The novel, *Scrambled*, exemplifies the struggles faced by many individuals with learning disabilities. Its main character – Matt Walsh – is a twenty-something adult whose learning disability is the root cause of persistent angst, frustration and turmoil as he tries desperately to achieve, to succeed both in his career – and in his personal life.

**Social Studies for the GED Test.** New Readers Press (2015). Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press. This book covers the topics and practices that appear on the GED Social Studies Test. Targeted lessons review content areas and critical thinking skills through passages, graphics, and questions like those on the GED test including extended response items.

**The Educator's Guide to Creating Connections.** Whitby, Tom, Editor (2016). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin. Educators today must prepare students for a world that doesn't exist yet. Creating connections enables educators to adapt in order to stay relevant. This book is the educator's guide to becoming connected through social media, blogging, personal learning networks, and even new policy.



Email TCALL's Library Staff ([tcall@tamu.edu](mailto: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

### ***How Adult Education Can Help Close the Skills Gap.***

Trask, Randy (2013). New York City, NY: The Huffington Post. A skills gap exists in today's labor market; job openings go unfilled because too many individuals lack the skills to perform these jobs. It is important to equip adults with the skills sought by employers and provide pathways to training programs. With this in mind, the author describes ways that adult education can help and looks at ways for adult education to help convince its students that a GED is not an endpoint but a stepping stone.

### ***The Importance of Home Language for Young Dual Language Learners.***

Firgens, Emily (2013). Washington, DC: National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness. School readiness and school success for children who are dual language learners are tied directly to mastery of their home language. This series of handouts is designed to provide staff and families with basic information on topics related to children learning two or more languages. They emphasize the benefits of being bilingual, the importance of maintaining home language, and the value of becoming fully bilingual. Available in English and Spanish.

### ***An Instructors' Toolkit for Building Bridges Across Communities.***

Nash, Andy and Ritchie, Heather (August 2015). Boston, MA: World Education. The toolkit is designed for adult educators who are interested in building more welcoming classrooms and communities by finding commonalities and celebrating values that unite us. The toolkit consists of mid-level, adaptable

ESOL and ABE classroom activities that aim to foster dialogue across cultures and build lasting connections, especially among immigrants and US-born residents. It draws on resources developed by Welcoming America and The Change Agent magazine from World Education. 2015. Included is a Word version of the materials section which teachers can edit for their classes.

### ***Labor Market Experiences, Earnings, Income Inadequacy Problems, and Civic Behavior of U.S. Adults by Educational Attainment: Consequences for Adult Education Programs.***

Khatiwada, Ishwar and Sum, Andrew (February 2014). New York, NY: Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy. This report provides current data and analyses in the areas indicated in the title. This is a companion piece to Net Annual Fiscal Contributions of U.S. Adults Aged 18-64 by Education Attainment, 2009-2012 (cataloged as a separate title in TCALL Library).

### ***Literacy, Numeracy, and Problem Solving in Technology-Rich Environments Among U.S. Adults: Results from the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies 2012.***

Goodman, Madeline and Finnegan, Robert, et.al. (October 2013). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Results are reported for a representative sample of adults in the United States age 16 to 65 and are compared to an international average of adults in countries/regions that participated in the PIAAC 2012 assessment. The report presents average score results for three separate scales: literacy, numeracy, and problem solving in technology-rich environments and percentages of adults performing at different proficiency levels for each scale.

### ***New Pathways to Careers and College: Examples, Evidence, and Prospects.***

Visher,

Mary G. and Stern, David (April 2015). New York, NY: MDRC. The paper highlights several different career pathway models and analyzes the organizational principles of these programs. The paper also includes a set of recommendations for future investment to help develop pathways programs to scale.

**Parent Interventions and Interactive Literacy Activities.** Grindler, Elisabeth L. and Toso, Blaire Willson (August 2012). University Park, PA: Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy. The purpose of this guide is to inform family literacy practitioners and other educators who work with families about the benefits of targeted skill training for parents that move beyond encouraging parents to be involved with their child and to provide examples of such initiatives. This guide outlines the research literature on parent intervention studies, offers cultural and literacy considerations for working with diverse populations, and concludes with suggestions for types of trainings and activities that have proven successful.

**Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success.** Office of Disability Employment Policy, Concepts, Inc. (2015). Washington, DC: Department of Labor. This paper is a curriculum developed by ODEP focused on teaching “soft” or workforce readiness skills to youth, including youth with disabilities. Created for youth development professionals as an introduction to workplace interpersonal and professional skills, the curriculum is targeted for youth ages 14 to 21 in both in-school and out-of-school environments. The basic structure of the program is comprised of modular, hands-on, engaging activities that focus on six key skill areas: communication, enthusiasm and attitude, teamwork, networking, problem solving and critical thinking, and professionalism

**Steps To Success: Integrating Immigrant Professionals in the U.S.** Bergson-Shilcock, Amanda and Witte, James (2015). New York, NY: World Education Services. This survey collected data from skilled immigrants in six urban localities across the United States: Boston, Philadelphia, Miami, Detroit, San Jose, and

Seattle. The survey showed that there is a strong correlation between the size of an immigrant’s social network and his or her likelihood of success. Across the board, stronger English language skills were correlated with virtually every possible measure of immigrant success. Numerous self-improvement strategies were reported, including academic credential evaluation, English language classes, and additional education in the United States.

**Tapping the Potential: Profile of Adult Education Target Population.** U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (2013). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. OVAE recently released infographics with the title, Tapping the Potential: Profile of Adult Education Target Population. These profiles are available for each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, as well as for the country as a whole. Using Census data, the profiles display the percentages of adults without a high school credential or English proficiency by age, gender, race, and ethnicity, and their participation rates in the labor market and in adult education. The graphics also cover both the federal and state investment in adult education by year for 2009 and 2010.

**Working Better Together: Building Nonprofit Collaborative Capacity.** Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (2013). Washington, DC: Grantmakers for Effective Organizations. A new report from Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (GEO) highlights how funders can support nonprofits engaged in collaborations. This report lays out insights on the core capacities nonprofits need to effectively collaborate — including strong leadership and an open mindset, the ability to share power and responsibility, adaptability and flexibility, and strong connectivity and relationship building — and how grantmakers can play a vital role in building these capacities. As described in the report, key roles grantmakers can play include: helping nonprofits make connections with collaborative partners, offering core support (i.e., unrestricted) long-term funding, and providing other resources, such as technology, that may be needed to support and enable collaborative work.

**Texas Adult Education & Literacy Quarterly** is a publication of the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy & Learning (TCALL) at Texas A&M University. **The Quarterly** is dedicated to advancing the knowledge in the field by addressing topics of concern to adult education and literacy practitioners, policymakers, and scholars. Topics include but are not limited to methods and innovations in teaching and learning reading, writing, and numeracy; second language learning; family literacy; workforce literacy; transitions to post-secondary education and job training; learning technologies; health, financial, and civic literacy; and the professional development of practitioners.

Email subscriptions are free to teachers, students, administrators, program coordinators, researchers, literacy volunteers, adult education's partners in the Workforce Development System, and others interested in the fields of adult and family literacy.

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