



TEXAS Adult & Family Literacy QUARTERLY

Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy & Learning

Not Just a Pretty Picture: Adult Education & Family Literacy Work In Texas

*by Harriet Vardiman Smith,
TCALL Director*

This photo of parents, children, staff, and volunteers at the Austin Learning Academy (ALA) Walnut Creek Elementary Family Literacy Program is more than a pretty picture. It's a reminder of the vital connection between Adult Education and children's learning.

TCALL Research Assistant Emily Moore and I visited the school for its fall "Intergenerational Loving Literacy" celebration and came away even more appreciative of TCALL's long partnership with The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, which has supported programs in Texas and across the country for nearly 25 years. The Barbara Bush Foundation recognizes that educated parents raise educated children and works to empower families by helping kids and parents learn together. Ms. Moore provides technical assistance and evaluation to the Foundation's grantees in Texas, and to several programs located in Maryland, Louisiana, Alabama, Nebraska, and Michigan as well.

Without experienced, effective Adult Education partners, Family Literacy programs could not help parents gain the knowledge and skills to be their children's first and most important teachers. Austin Learning Academy provides that Adult Education expertise to The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy's program at Walnut

Creek Elementary. Family Literacy programs in other cities also benefit from the work of strong Adult Education partners such as Tyler



Families "Loving Literacy" in Austin

On December 4, 2012, the Austin Learning Academy held their fall "Intergenerational Loving Literacy" event, made possible by The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy and UnitedHealth Group. Austin Learning Academy staff and 15 volunteers from the UnitedHealth Group joined 38 parents and 75 children at Walnut Creek Elementary School for interactive literacy activities designed around the children's book *The Mitten* – A Ukrainian Folktale adapted and illustrated by Jan Brett. Each family received a copy of *The Mitten*, donated by UnitedHealth Group.

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Volunteers from UnitedHealth Group enjoyed an afternoon of intergenerational literacy with parents and children at Walnut Creek Elementary, a partnership with Austin Learning Academy supported by The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy.

Junior College/Literacy Council of Tyler, Advocacy Outreach in Elgin, and Victoria Adult Literacy Council, to name a few.

The TCALL team is also proud to support quality Adult Education instruction and program leadership. TCALL's Clearinghouse Project fills that role in partnership with Texas LEARNS and Texas Education Agency by facilitating communication and resource dissemination for a wide range of Adult Education State Leadership Activities.

Articles in this issue highlight a number of those activities. From the Texas Adult Education Credential Project, Dr. Michelle Janysek summarizes a study of teacher perceptions of the value of obtaining a Texas Adult Education Teacher Credential. Another article describes recent updates to the Goal-driven Learning trainings, of which the regional GREAT Centers offer three options that meet the requirements of the State Assessment & Goal Setting/Attainment Policy for Adult Education. State Director Joanie Rethlake and I provide news about a Technical Work Group that is working toward making recommendations for

TCALL's Family Literacy Resources

Visit the Family Literacy page of TCALL's website to find information and resources especially geared toward family literacy programs in Texas. You'll find Family Literacy among the horizontal group of blue menu buttons across the top of the TCALL home page. <http://tcall.tamu.edu>

revisions to the Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks. Adult secondary education instructors will be interested in news from Mary Geiger on upcoming GREAT Center trainings to prepare teachers for big changes coming to the GED® Test in 2014. Ken Appelt reports on recent accomplishments of the Literacy Volunteer Training Initiative. Several articles written by Barbara Tondre-el Zorkani for Texas LEARNS' SHOP TALK series, feature promising practices related to meeting adult learners' needs for workforce development and successful transitions.

In addition to these articles, TCALL-hosted websites of other Adult Education State Leadership Activities have undergone recent updates and improvements as well.

- The Leadership Excellence Academy page now includes a list of 22 adult education program leaders who completed the Texas Academy of this national leadership development initiative in 2012, earning their Certified Manager of Program Improvement (CMPI) professional designation. This brings to 64 the number of Texas adult education leaders who have earned the CMPI designation while implementing research-based improvements to their local programs.
- The Texas LEARNS Distance Learning Page has been redesigned for improved navigation options and content updates, including two additional online curriculum software that are now approved for use in Texas Adult Education distance education classes. At the end of the 2012 program year, 50 out of 55 adult education cooperatives were providing a distance education alternative, serving more than 8,000 students.
- The web page for Texas Industry Specific English as a Second Language (TISESL) Curricula has been updated for easier navigation of the wealth of information about that rich instructional resource, developed as Adult Education's response to Texas legislation passed during the 79th legislative session of 2005.

For more information on these and other ongoing initiatives to better serve Texas adult learners, their families, and their communities, look under the State Leadership Activities menu link on either the Texas LEARNS or TCALL home page. At tcall.tamu.edu look for the link to Texas LEARNS.

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Professional Development

Teacher Perceptions: The Value of Earning a Credential

by Dr. D. Michelle Janysek

Purpose

This article is the first of a series that will focus on the outcomes associated with earning a Texas Adult Education Teacher Credential (the Credential). In this first installment we share preliminary findings from the first phase of a three part study designed to examine the value of earning the Credential. The purpose of the study is to examine the outcomes associated with earning a Credential; the primary focus is to identify any potential impact on teachers, students, programs and policy.

Background

Qualifications for Teachers of Adult Basic Education and GED®. Qualifications for hiring adult basic education and GED® teachers are not standardized nationally. When policy standards exist at the state level, there is great variation in the rigor and consistency among states (Stedman, 2010; Smith and Gomez, 2011). Most states require a bachelor's degree; some states require K-12 teacher certification, and only a few states offer or require certification in adult education (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009; Smith and Gomez, 2011). Texas requires a college degree in any discipline for teaching in a state-funded adult education program accompanied by 12 hours of professional development annually. More professional development hours are required for the first two years of teaching in adult education for those who do not hold a K-12 teaching certificate and for teachers new to adult education (Texas State Board Of Education Rule on Adult Education, 2010). Texas has offered an optional adult education credential since 2004.

A Brief Overview of the Texas Adult Education Teacher Credential. Each year, approximately 3 million adults enroll in adult education programs. These programs benefit adult learners by providing them with valuable labor market skills as well as two of the most basic prerequisites for postsecondary education, high school equivalency and English language literacy. As with K-12 and postsecondary education systems, improvements to adult education programs have focused on establishing standards for program activities and student preparedness for work and postsecondary education.

High quality, standards-driven programs require teachers who possess the knowledge and skills to facilitate adult learning. Formal training and credentialing establish high standards for adult education instructors and increase the status of adult education programs. To this end, the Texas Adult Education Credential was developed and implemented as a state-wide adult education initiative and is the means by which Texas adult education instructors demonstrate that they possess the knowledge and skills necessary to increase under-prepared adult student readiness for both college and career.

The Teacher Credential emphasizes the link between theory in adult education and professional practice. Credential teachers move beyond simply understanding adult education theory; they work toward mastering their practice by completing high quality professional development, implementing what they have learned in their classrooms, and engaging in critical self-evaluation in which they analyze both student and instructional outcomes.

Study Design

This study was designed to be conducted in three separate phases. Phase I, the focus of this article, consisted of data collected via focus groups representative of teachers who had earned the Credential. During Phase II a survey was developed and made available to all teachers who had completed the Credential. Phase III is currently in progress and will result in an analysis of data from the Texas Education Adults Management System (TEAMS).

Qualitative data sources and samples

Phase I. The intent of the first phase of the study was to begin a dialogue with teachers who had completed the Credential in order to ascertain their thoughts regarding the value of earning a Credential. Two purposeful samples of Credentialed teachers, recent completers and veteran completers, were selected to participate in a day-long focus group. The rationale for separating the two groups was to examine both immediate and long term outcomes associated with earning a Credential. The participants for each focus group were intentionally selected in order to

provide a representative sample of completers and contained participants in equal distribution to the current total population of completers. Criteria used for selection were: length of time since completion, type of program in which they taught, geographical region of the state and GREAT (Getting Results Educating Adults in Texas) Professional Development Center. When possible, gender, age and ethnicity were used as well.

The first focus group was composed of 6 recent completers who had recently earned their Credential less than one year prior to the study. The most recent completer had earned the Credential 1.5 months prior. The least recent had earned the Credential 10 months prior. The average time since completion was 4.5 months.

The second focus group consisted of 9 veteran completers who had earned their Credential more than one year prior to the study. The most recent completer had earned the Credential 13 months prior; the least recent was earned 46 months prior. The average time since completion was 25 months.

Methods

Members of each focus group met face-to-face for a day-long discussion of their experiences with the Credential. The two groups met in separate rooms with a facilitator and an observer/ note taker. Each group was audio recorded. The schedule of events, activities, and discussion prompts used in both rooms were identical.

Participants began with an individual brainstorming activity in which they were asked to respond to two prompts: What are your thoughts about the process of earning a Credential, and what are your thoughts about the impact of earning a Credential? Written responses were collected.

Next, participants were asked to discuss the impact that earning the Credential has had: 1) on your teaching, 2) on your interactions with other teachers and your administrators, and 3) on your students. Participants were allowed the freedom to expand upon these topics; facilitators redirected the discussion only in instances when conversations became unfocused.

Data obtained via observer notes, audio recordings and individual written contributions were later transcribed and analyzed to identify emerging themes regarding teacher perceived outcomes. These data informed the development of the survey administered later in Phase II of the study and will be discussed in a subsequent article.

Results

The data revealed several positive teacher-perceived outcomes associated with earning a Credential. Teachers stated that since earning the Credential they were more focused on student needs, set higher expectations for students and had learned to both

engage and empower their students in the learning process. Further, teachers said that as a result of participating in the Credential they had learned how to assess student learning using multiple measures and had learned to evaluate what was going on both while they were teaching as well as after teaching. They reported having an increased sense of confidence and believed that they were better perceived by their supervisors and had earned more autonomy; however, they also stated that they wished program directors and supervisors better understood and recognized the importance of the Credential. Finally, teachers said that they believe that they have experienced higher student retention in their classes and that their students are making higher gains in less time.

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

When considering the results from this first phase in the three part study, it is important to note that these are teachers' perceptions of the outcomes associated with earning a Credential and are based upon their individual experiences. Until further phases of the study are complete, it is not possible to confirm these preliminary findings.

Conclusion

Preliminary results appear to indicate that earning a Credential is associated with positive instructional and student outcomes. Additional research is needed to further our understanding of the impact of earning professional credentials on adult education instructors, student achievement and programs.

For more information about the Texas Adult Education Credential Project visit the project website: www.tei.education.txstate.edu/credential, call 866-798-8767, or email: aecredential@txstate.edu

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About the Author

D. Michelle Janysek earned her Ph.D. in Adult, Professional and Community Education. Her background includes educational assessment, educator training, teacher quality, novice educator induction and mentoring, adult education and post-secondary transitions.

Where Great Teaching Begins: Reflections on a Book Study

by Mary Lorenz and Dr. Glenda Rose

Effective professional development (PD), meaning professional development that changes practices and outcomes in the classroom, has certain characteristics. Research shows that teachers do not learn best in large-group, one-time workshops. Rather, changes in practice have been shown to result from personal interactions in small groups of instructors that mutually respect each other as professionals and who develop as a community of learners over time (see *Professional Development: What Works* by Sally Zepeda, © 2012).

In view of this, the GREAT centers of Texas have over the past few years offered several PD academies and extended workshops, such as Project-Based Learning, or more recently, Integrating Career Awareness, that involve teachers over the course of a semester in not only discussing theories of learning or new methods of engaging students, but also in the application of those theories and methods in the classroom. This approach has been shown to have a much greater impact on classroom instruction than short workshops, and, thus, has the greatest chance of producing improved outcomes for students.

This fall, the Central GREAT Center and the Credential Project cosponsored a group of nine instructors to discuss the book *Where Great Teaching Begins* by Anne Reeves (2011). The group met for a total of ten weeks. The initial meeting was held in a traditional setting, and all subsequent meetings were conducted through online webinars using WebEx conferencing software. In addition, participants were required to interact weekly in online discussion forums: responding to study-guide questions, sharing resources, reviewing archived meetings and turning in assignments through a specially-designed Google site.

What follows are some of the lessons we learned as facilitators of this online book study group.

First, the first face-to-face meeting for this kind of sustained PD is critical. The most challenging aspect of the book study, by far, was getting everyone accustomed to the virtual environment: how to log on, how to control the microphone, the camera, write on the board, record audio, etc. WebEx has multiple platform support and a user friendly interface, but there was still a significant learning curve. In addition, all participants had to be designated as “co-owners” of the Google site. This involved participants spending time learning how to navigate the site, post, and manage files. The lesson learned here was to spend more time up front acclimating participants to the technical aspects of

the virtual environment in order to decrease frustration later.

Second, the participants should have some input into the book being used. The book was chosen by Central GREAT staff who read it and found it very exciting; it is, indeed, an excellent, step-by-step explanation of instructional design, from planning through assessment. However, the book was geared toward the K12 classroom, and some discussion was spent in every meeting talking about what did, and what did not, apply to the adult education classroom. Some participants expressed that they would have preferred to study something more that directly addressed theories or practice of adult education. Nonetheless most reported gaining new insight over the course of the study.

Another lesson learned is that participants should be selected carefully. We started with nine in the face-to-face meeting. One withdrew immediately due to personal scheduling conflicts. Two more continued to read the book, but eventually faded from active participation. The six who remained have completed all readings, postings and assignments successfully. Educators considering participating in this type of PD need to carefully consider the time requirement. Online does not mean less time. In fact, it may require more. Potential participants also need to be honest with themselves about their willingness to adopt and adapt to online modalities of instruction. If they go into it believing they will have too many problems with technology, they probably will.

On the other hand, as facilitators, we need to examine our expectations. In hind sight we determined that meeting weekly was too often, and three assignments were too many for busy teachers to handle. We definitely should consider ending several weeks before the end of the semester. Toward the end of the study, participants experienced time management issues as job demands increased, reducing momentum.

The most important lesson, however, is that extended PD in a hybrid (face-to-face, synchronous and asynchronous online environments) works, and works well! Participants indicated that they became more reflective during their lesson planning process and more critical of assumptions about what they were teaching and why, shifting their focus from activities in the classroom to learners’ engagement and outcomes. Changes in the lesson plans they submitted were noticeable over time: wording of objectives, activities, relationship to standards, and types of assessment. Teachers were able to share ideas, problems, and

solutions they were experiencing in their classrooms. When they had to miss a meeting, some sent their thoughts ahead to the facilitators to be presented to the group during the weekly WebEx sessions and later reviewed the archives to get the feedback from their colleagues.

Finally, many of the participants are using this PD opportunity to begin or continue working on their Adult Education Teacher Credential. Participation in the online book study provided opportunities for reflective practice, which is a critical aspect of earning the Teacher Credential. Providing high-quality, evidence-based and relevant professional development opportunities encourages educators to be recognized for the professionals they are, and that benefits the field as a whole.

About the Authors

Dr. Glenda Rose (dr.glenda.rose@gmail.com) is an ESL instructor, D/L Coordinator, GREAT Center Trainer, and a private and corporate education consultant.

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GED® 2014: Ready, Set, Go!

GED® 2014: Ready, Set, Go! is a statewide professional development initiative led by the North and East GREAT Centers. A six-hour Training of Trainers (TOT) session is scheduled for January 12, 2013. Participants in the TOT must be sponsored by a GREAT Center, Texas LEARNS, or a statewide adult education leadership project. The cohort of trainers prepared on January 12 will then be able to train teachers and other adult education staff throughout the state.

Theresa Sands will design and deliver the training. Ms. Sands is a certified Reading Specialist and holds Administrator certification and a Master's degree from University of Texas-San Antonio in Adult and Higher Education with a minor in Curriculum and Instruction. Ms. Sands has worked for Region 20 Education Service Center as an instructor and supervisor in Adult Education and is a state trainer for a number of literacy initiatives.

This new training will stress effective instruction and the intensity and rigor of the proposed new GED® 2014. A major emphasis will be to examine the concept Depth of Knowledge that will be utilized in the revised test. Participants will discover how to elevate questioning and thinking strategies for students so that they can be successful learners.

For more information, contact your regional GREAT Center or Mary Geiger, mgeiger@esc6.net.

Resources for Outreach on 2002 GED® Test Series Closeout

GED® Unit, Texas Education Agency

The 2002 GED® Test Series closeout is around the corner. Individuals who have taken the 2002 Series GED® Test, but not passed all five parts, have until the end of 2013 to pass or they forfeit their progress and will need to start over again to receive their high school credential.

GED® Testing Service has provided professionally arranged material to facilitate communicating with the ABE students. On their site, you can download a customizable flyer in both English and Spanish. More options are available by logging in to Brand Central. Or, for a free poster, one can join the 2002 Series Closeout Campaign. You will find all these resources on the Educators' page of the GED® Testing Service website.

www.gedtestingservice.com/educators/home

Thank you in advance for helping our examinees move toward a more positive future. 2013 will be an exciting and busy year!

Book Studies Offer New Ways to Learn and Collaborate

by Michelle Yzaguirre and Kimberly B. Vinton

New to South Central Project GREAT's repertoire of staff development offerings are book studies. Book studies provide another avenue for teachers to receive sustained and meaningful professional development. Book studies are conducted online, typically for a period of 8 weeks or more, and focus on hot topics in adult education. South Central Project GREAT and ESC-20 Adult Education developed the book study to offer teachers an option that provides practical and significant learning as well as assist teachers in earning points toward their Texas Adult Education Teacher Credential. This 12-hour book study helps teachers reach their state required Professional Development hours and earns them 15 points toward their credential. The book studies have been a success due to three major factors: collaborative online format, expanded time to practice and share new strategies, and innovative book topics.

The book studies are facilitated through online learning communities specifically Project Share or Wiggio®. Project Share and Wiggio® allow trainers to facilitate through posting discussion questions, displaying PowerPoint presentations and images, and allowing the capability to show videos to enhance the discussion amongst participants. Also included in both platforms is a Footprint feature, which is a tool that facilitators can use to follow participants' activity. Another feature of both is that a survey can be built to measure outcomes of the book study. Both online formats allow participants the flexibility to comment any time of day or night. Teachers have an avenue to connect with their colleagues regardless of distance or time. These relationships do not end with the book study; staff members keep in touch on their own after the end of the book study and continue to share and learn from each other. We started off using Project Share and quickly realized that Wiggio® had many more options. Some of the most popular features of Wiggio® are the capability for participants to chat live, attend a virtual meeting, and create a conference call.

The book study begins with a mini-workshop. It can be face-to-face where participants pick up their books, become familiar with the online learning platform, and review the course syllabus. The workshop can also take place via webinar; in this instance, books are delivered to participants ahead of time. Each week participants are assigned one to three chapters of their book. Every Monday the facilitator posts discussion topics or questions related to the assigned reading. The weekly discussion forums allow participants to read and reflect. Participants are able to post thoughts on others' postings and practice what they've learned by sharing with their colleagues and the trainer by the

end of the week. They also have opportunities to revisit topics in the following weeks because each chapter builds upon previous ones. While some of the readings provide specific strategies and techniques that participants experiment with in their classrooms, other topics are broader in nature and focus on changing teachers' mindsets. In these cases, teachers' reflections are not on the success of a specific practice, but the process of successfully changing habits and attitudes of both adult education staff and students. Along with the facilitator, the participants can share and attach meaningful resources that relate to the book being studied. There is an end-of-course book study meeting where roundtable discussions take place about the book via the web or face-to-face.

The innovative book topics alone draw participants into this new style of staff development. Two of the books used to which we can attribute to our success are "Jumpstart the Adult Learner," which highlights brain-based strategies to engage students and improve their learning and memory. The other is Conley's "College and Career Readiness" which introduces research on the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards. Given the climate of adult education across the state, teachers are looking for the latest research and best practices to prepare students for college, career, and 21st century skills. Book study participants are armed with this research and guidance through strategies that will help them and their students through the transition process.

We look forward to providing more book studies and new possibilities for professional development via online formats. We will seek innovative topics and ideas that will lead teacher discussion in preparation for the fast-approaching new GED® test series and our teachers' own leadership skills. The success of the book study is due to a highly meaningful collaboration among teachers to expand on and practice new skills. Book studies are just one way to offer our teachers practical and significant learning as well as assist them in earning points toward their Texas Adult Education Teacher Credential. The book studies will continue to be available to other regions.

About the Authors

Michelle Yzaguirre is a South Central Project GREAT trainer and an ESC-20 Adult Education Program Manager and has been in Adult Education since 2006.

Kimberly Bredvad Vinton is the Educational Specialist, Supervisor for the ESC-20 Adult Education Program and has been in Adult Education since 2006.

ELL-U - National Online Professional Development for ESOL Instructors

by Ken Appelt, TCALL Program Manager

The online resources for Adult Education teachers have been expanding. One recently developed Web portal for ESOL teachers is the English Language Learner University (ELL-U). The homepage is www.ell-u.org

English Language Learner University (ELL-U) is an online professional development network funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE). ELL-U provides professionals working with adult English Language Learners (ELLs) the opportunity to engage in evidence-based learning activities designed to expand knowledge, understanding, and practical application in the classroom.

The ELL-U website mirrors traditional university features; however, ELL-U is not an accredited university. Practitioners can enhance their professional development by registering to participate in ELL-U community activities. A certificate is awarded to users who have completed an ELL-U Learning Activity and for those who have earned at least ten ELL-U participation hours.

ELL-U provides registered users with 24-hour access to learning opportunities and resources. The online courses, study circles, and training events all use evidence-based instructional strategies and allow for individual exploration, individual or small group reflection, and/or large group discussions.

The Library and Resources

The “campus” Library contains vetted resources and course materials including training plans for study circles and most training event activities. The downloadable training plans could be used to develop local training events. The resources and courses have been divided into **five content areas**:

- *Principles of Second Language Acquisition (SLA)*
- *Teaching Adult ELLs who are Emergent Readers*
- *Assessment in Adult ELL Programs*
- *Principles of Second Language Teaching: Planning, Implementing, and Managing Instruction*
- *The Role of Culture in Teaching Adult ELLs*

You can search for resources or courses using these five content areas. *All resources are available for download in PDF format.*

Social Networking and Discussion Features

ELL-U also has a collaborative social networking feature. Clubs and Forums are online discussion spaces for interacting with peers nationwide. The *Community bulletin board* allows users to

pose questions to the entire community and exchange ideas and resources. *Forums* are often faculty led and related to online course topics. *Clubs* are created on specific topics, for example, vocabulary instruction, and give you multiple ways to interact and share ideas and resources with others. When you join a club, you can create a Learner Web profile which is then used to suggest resource selections based on your experience and needs.

When you register for an **Online Course** or **Study Circle** you will have the opportunity to interact with the faculty member leading the course through the forum group with the other participants and also during faculty “office hours.”

Getting Started at ELL-U

To help new participants in ELL-U get started, they launched a brief *ELL-U Orientation Tutorial* online course. The orientation course walks you through the features of the ELL-U online university and how the various features are accessed. A *Course Catalogue* and *User Manual* for the website are also available for download on the ELL-U homepage.

The creation of content for this professional development resource is ongoing. If you are an ESOL teacher, I hope you will investigate ELL-U online to see how the offerings can help you extend your instructional knowledge.

Much of the descriptive content the English Language Learner University (ELL-U) is taken from the www.ell-u.org website with permission.

TALAE 2013 Conference Keynote Speaker Toby Dewayne Daughtery

On February 8, 2013, Texas Association for Literacy & Adult Education (TALAE) will welcome Toby Dewayne Daughtery as Keynote Speaker for the mid-conference luncheon. Born in a small Arkansas town, Daughtery lived for the first ten years of his life with his grandmother, then during his teenage years, with his mother, four brothers and two sisters in Little Rock's Windemere Housing Complex. With a lifelong love for writing and art, Toby became a motivational speaker, writer, poet, visual artist, and promoter of positive change, who is frequently invited to speak at schools, colleges, and organizations across America. His mission in life is to decrease the level of incarceration and increase the number of young people entering college.

For more information about the TALAE 2013 Conference, find TALAE's website under the Organizations menu link on TCALL's home page (tcall.tamu.edu).

Adult Education Partnerships in Pursuit of Collective Impact

by *Federico Salas-Isnardi, TCALL Program Coordinator*

Over the past year-and-a-half, the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) of the U.S. Education Department, under the leadership of Assistant Secretary Brenda Dan-Messier, has convened a group of partners and adult education stakeholders to help envision what adult education should look like in the future. Representatives from over 20 national organizations that work with different aspects of adult education have met three times to agree on a new vision and mission for the national adult education system and to define four goals for a common effort to have a concerted and collective impact on adult education.

The partners include among others:

- Adult Numeracy Network
- American Association of Adult and Continuing Education
- Commission on Adult Basic Education
- Correctional Education Association
- Council for the Advancement of Adult Literacy
- GED[®] Testing Service
- National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs
- National Center for Family Literacy
- National Coalition for Literacy
- National Council of Adult Education State Directors
- ProLiteracy
- Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, TESOL International
- Value USA (representing adult education learners)
- World Education

The Texas Adult Education programs have been very well represented at the table with Joanie Rethlake of Texas LEARNS representing the adult education state directors and Federico Salas-Isnardi of TCALL representing TESOL International.

The new Vision Statement for adult education is:

“To enhance the ability of all learners to achieve their full potential as self-sufficient individuals”

The new Mission Statement for the system is:

“To work together to provide a quality, comprehensive system of adult education that addresses literacy, numeracy and language acquisition”

The partners worked on identifying areas of concern for each

agency or organization and then, through a carefully facilitated process, those concerns were clustered in four areas of attention. The four foci are:

- **Improving the alignment of adult education with postsecondary education and work** – the attention of this area is to ensure that the maximum number of students can benefit from transition opportunities;
- **Improving the quality and effectiveness of the adult education workforce** – the concern is the professional development opportunities for adult educators working toward a professionalized field where adult education is a career of choice;
- **Improving the use of technology to provide educational opportunities to low skilled individuals** – work in this area by the different organizations will be on identifying the proper educational technologies in adult education, understanding that in many instances it may be mobile technology rather than computers that need to receive our attention;
- **Changing the manner in which the public views adult education services** through marketing and/or branding campaigns – the agreement is that the partners will help OVAE identify four or five adult education “talking points” so that stakeholders nationwide hear the same message about adult education. We all want a future where we don’t have to explain what we do to people who look at us quizzically.

Each partner organization has committed to determine the degree to which it contributes to these areas of focus and can help articulate a vision, serve as a thought leader, provide resources or, in any other way, contribute to move adult education forward into the future.

The challenge these organizations will work on over the next few years includes answering questions that adult education programs all over the country should be asking systemically:

- How do we (as an organization, program, or agency) focus on facilitating the transition of adult learners to postsecondary opportunities and to employment?
- How do we work to improve teacher/instructor quality and effectiveness in a particular content area or on a particular aspect of quality and effectiveness?
- What are we doing to expand technology’s role in adult education?

- How can we affect the public view of adult education and help the field through marketing and/or branding campaigns?

As we work together, each within our own sphere, the four questions need to be kept at the center of our commitment to adult education in an effort to determine how we can help adults complete our programs and transition to work or further training; promote professional development and instructor effectiveness;

help adults access and use educational technology, and help build a recognizable “brand-name” for our field by using the same talking points with different audiences every time we talk about adult education. Working together we can have a collective impact on adult education as we take the field forward toward a vision where we help *all learners to achieve their full potential as self-sufficient individuals.*

What is Special Learning Needs All About?

Special Learning Needs Training is a sustained professional development opportunity which takes 38 hours of instruction along with time to complete the practice work with students in the classroom. One of the many benefits of this sustained PD opportunity is that follow up is given to each participant in order to ensure that each participant is using the newfound skills and the Payne Learning Needs Inventory correctly.

Contact your regional GREAT Center through Contact pages of their websites, found from either Texas LEARNS or TCALL home page (<http://tcall.tamu.edu>).



Appetizer:

Online Course, Introduction to Special Needs

Learn the definitions of Learning Disabilities and Special Learning Needs along with the laws that govern them. This will be an introduction to *Effective Instruction for All Adult Education Students Including Those with Special Learning Needs* training course.

Course 1:

Effective Tools

Learn about the Learning Disabilities Accommodations Model, the Learning Circle, how to use the Payne Learning Needs Inventory (PLNI), and the English Language Learner Questionnaire.

Course 2:

Interviewing Processes

Learn about Accommodations, Educational Adjustments, Accommodated Learning and how to use the Accommodations Manual and Effective Teaching Strategies through the use of a lesson organizer.

Course 3:

Assessment Standards and Methods

Learn how to conduct Brief Interviews, implement Instructional Practices/Approaches based on the needs of the students and review of goal setting activities.

Course 4:

Effective Instructional Techniques

Learn how to implement Effective Instruction Strategies for Reading, Writing and Math.

Course 5:

ADAAA/GEDTS Accommodations and Celebration!!

Learn about the specific GEDTS Accommodations and how to help a student successfully navigate that process.

Dessert:

Special Learning Needs Resource Specialist Certificate!!

What do I get when I complete the training:

Special Learning Needs Resource Specialist Certificate • Teacher Credential points=35 points • Improved Performance Measures!!

Literacy Texas Hosts 11th Annual Conference

by *The Literacy Texas Conference Planning Team*

On August 6 & 7, Literacy Texas hosted its 11th Annual Conference which included 55 workshops for 232 attendees, representing 121 literacy programs. Along with the ESL/ABE/ GED[®] curriculum sessions, workshops included a strand for new directors, advocacy discussions, as well as financial and health literacy sessions. Literacy Texas is a statewide organization of regional literacy coalitions, nonprofit and volunteer literacy providers.

It is always a pleasure to welcome first time attendees to the conference and to hear some of their comments about what they've learned. Angelina Martinez of the Adult Reading Center in Pearland said, "Being my first time attending, this is so awesome! It feels so great knowing that I am, actually, assisting the community with what purpose they're seeking in life at their present level. Such a learning experience!" This is what makes all the hard work that goes into putting on the conference worthwhile.

The opening session keynote speaker, John Corcoran, kept everyone entertained as he talked about his life as a nonreader. He did not learn to read until he was 48 years old. Even without that skill, he graduated from high school and college and taught school! His memoir, *The Teacher Who Couldn't Read*,

2013 Regional Literacy Conferences For Religiously-Affiliated and Other Community-Based Programs

On **February 2, 2013**, the **Gulf Coast Literacy Conference** will be co-hosted by Literacy ConneXus and Houston Baptist University. On **March 2, 2013**, the **Metroplex Literacy Conference** will be co-hosted by HOPE Literacy, Literacy ConneXus, Tarrant Literacy Coalition, and Dallas Baptist Association. For details on registration, times, and locations, see the Calendars page of the TCALL Website.

is an amazing story that illustrates the lengths that many of our students go to in order to survive.

Luncheon speaker Dr. Guadalupe Quintanilla brought the room to tears as she spoke about her early struggles as an ESL adult learner. Her primary goal in wanting to learn the language was to help her children and her persistence paid off as she continued her education through a bachelor's, a master's, and a PhD degree!

The conference hosted a meeting of the Interagency Literacy Council which gave many attendees a first chance to hear

Volunteer Training Initiative – Partner for the Literacy Texas Conference

The Literacy Volunteer Training Initiative (VTI) at TCALL provided support for 101 individuals to attend the Literacy Texas 2012 Conference. Those attendees represented 51 programs or literacy coalitions, including library-based, religiously-affiliated, and community-based volunteer literacy programs. See Ken Appelt's article on the VTI on page 13.

from the council about the work they have been doing over the past two years for "the study, promotion and enhancement of literacy in the state." It also gave these attendees an opportunity to comment about the work they are doing, and the challenges in their community to serve adult learners and their families.

The Literacy Texas Board of Directors was also pleased to present two Champions of Literacy Awards. Dr. Lester Meriwether, director of Literacy ConneXus, was recognized for his many years of work in the field of literacy. Of special note was his creation of Books for the Border and Beyond, a program that encourages and equips parents to read to their infants and small children. H-E-B was recognized as a corporate Champion of Literacy. Their Excellence in Education contributes generously to teachers and school districts and their Read 3 program has a goal of collecting 1 million books for children in need. The commitment of H-E-B to literacy is an exceptional example of corporate responsibility.

Our attendees' comments are our best indication of whether we are meeting professional development needs for our nonprofits. Stacy Milberger, Executive Director of Victoria Adult Literacy Council, said, "Over the years I have seen this conference grow into the state's best opportunity for professional development ideas and classroom strategies that support both the student and the teacher. You couldn't ask for a better place to learn."



Literacy Texas and TCALL Leadership met to discuss the successful 2012 Literacy Texas Conference and brainstorm for 2013. Left to right are Literacy Texas Past President Gloria Moritz; TCALL's Dr. Debbie Chang, Harriet Vardiman Smith, and Federico Salas-Isnardi; Literacy Texas Board Member Dale Pillow, and Executive Director Lori Donley.

Building Collaboration & Program Involvement

Improving Instruction in Volunteer Literacy Programs

by Ken Appelt, TCALL Program Manager

The Literacy Volunteer Training Initiative (VTI) provides professional development support for volunteers, instructors and instructional leaders in community-based and volunteer adult and family literacy programs that do not have access to federal or state funds for training. The VTI is an effort to include all adult literacy instructors from community, library, and religiously affiliated literacy programs in quality training intended to maximize the progress of their adult students.

Since its inception in 2004, the VTI has been a statewide professional development leadership activity, one component of the Clearinghouse Project at TCALL, funded by Texas Education Agency (TEA) under the guidance of Texas LEARNS. This is one of several ways in which TCALL works with Texas LEARNS to further important statewide initiatives, including the professional development priorities of Texas LEARNS and the GREAT Centers. This partnership is guided by a VTI Statewide Advisory Committee representing community-based literacy providers throughout the state.

FALL 2012 VTI ACTIVITIES

Literacy Texas 2012 Conference

The VTI project year begins in July, so the August 2012 Literacy Texas conference in Austin on was the first major event of the year. Literacy Texas is the statewide coalition for community-based organizations that provide literacy services. This year saw an increase in participation with the conference attendees supported by the VTI including 101 practitioners representing 51 different literacy programs.

Facilitated Online Courses

2012-2013 will mark the second year that the VTI has offered the reimbursement of registration fees for nationally managed online professional development courses. ProLiteracy and World Education, Inc., working in partnership, offer online professional development opportunities that include self-paced tutorials (many of which are free) and courses facilitated by prominent specialists in the field of Adult Education. Past participants in these online courses have mentioned the high quality and usefulness of the online courses.

Find out more about the ProfessionalStudiesAE course offerings on their Website. You'll discover quality training on a wide range of evidence-based practices that you can use in your instruction of adult learners. Visit www.ProfessionalStudiesAE.org for the full course list as well as the start and end dates for facilitated courses.

TextESOL Regional Conferences

For the first time, the Literacy Volunteer Training Initiative offered reimbursement of registration fees for regional TextESOL Conferences. The Texas Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages normally holds fall conferences in the five state regions. You can find information about the regional groups at <http://www.textesol.org>. This year the VTI supported 11 practitioners attending one of the regional TextESOL conferences held in Houston, Dallas, Austin, or San Antonio.

Assessment Training

The VTI worked with Central GREAT Center and the Literacy Coalition of Central Texas to provide trainings on the proper administration of the Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Plus and Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) standardized assessments. The trainings conducted in Austin trained 19 BEST Plus test administrators and 7 TABE test administrators. These tests are important for placing students into classes of the appropriate level and measuring their academic progress. The August assessment training for family literacy programs was also partially supported by the VTI, in partnership with the Central GREAT Center.

Learning to Achieve Learning Disabilities Training

Learning to Achieve (L2A) is a national initiative designed to build teacher effectiveness in providing researched-based instruction for adults with learning disabilities. L2A training was held on November 3rd and November 10th at the Victoria College Adult Education Center in Victoria, Texas. The VTI paid a portion of the trainer expenses for the Victoria training event. The VTI worked with the national LINCS (Literacy Information aNd Communication System) project in 2011 to have five Texas trainers certified to present the L2A training, which was developed under the direction of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) and disseminated by LINCS.

Spring planning is already under way with support planned for several major conferences and additional online facilitated training. If you work in a community-based, literacy volunteer program, follow the news on VTI-supported opportunities by subscribing to TCALL's "LiteracyTexasLink" listserv for volunteer/community-based literacy. A description and instructions for joining the listserv are found under "Email Discussion Lists" on TCALL's home page (<http://tcall.tamu.edu>).

Read more about background and accomplishments of the Volunteer Training Initiative on the VTI web page, found under State Leadership Activities from either TCALL's or Texas LEARNS' home page.

Texas Adult Education Content Standards Update Process Underway

by Joanie Rethlake, Texas LEARNS and Harriet Vardiman Smith, TCALL

Texas LEARNS, under contract with the Texas Education Agency to administer the adult education program in Texas, has initiated a Technical Work Group to make recommendations for revisions to the Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks. The objective of the Group is to make recommendations for revision of the Standards and an associated plan for training of teachers and administrators in the revised content standards.

The group will be led by Dr. Peggy McGuire, Senior Research Associate and Training Specialist, Center for Literacy, Education and Employment, University of Tennessee. Dr. McGuire has worked extensively with the Equipped for the Future (EFF) Performance Continuum and Curriculum Framework which provided a foundation for the current standards and benchmarks.

Originally developed and piloted by a highly inclusive, grassroots-based and research-based project at TCALL between 2004-2007, the Texas Adult Education Content Standards & Benchmarks were first introduced to Texas adult educators at a major statewide conference in June 2007. Since that time, the GREAT Centers have provided professional development for standards implementation. For more information and resources on the current iteration, visit the Standards page of TCALL's website or see Content Standards Implementation under State Leadership Activities on the Texas LEARNS website, which is also accessed through TCALL's home page menu (<http://tcall.tamu.edu>).

The revision process will elevate current content standards to the level of college readiness as defined in the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards. The end result of the Technical Work Group's deliberations will be a recommendation on whether the revision should entail a complete revision of existing

standards or if higher level learning objectives could be added in layers to the existing standards in a separate document. The recommendation will include a proposed timeline for the development and implementation of revised content standards, assessing the feasibility of using existing content standards trainers and training plans with adaptations, and proposing a plan for a conference or conferences to kick off implementation.

The Technical Work Group includes representatives from the original writing teams that worked on the development process in 2004-2007; program leaders, instructors and trainers experienced with implementing the standards; TCALL and Texas LEARNS staff; and representatives of the Tri-Agency Partnership – Texas Education Agency, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and Texas Workforce Commission. Dr. Emily Miller Payne of The Education Institute at Texas State University-San Marcos brings her expertise to the Group, based on the Institute's gap analysis between the current Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks and the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards. The Technical Work Group will convene three times throughout the 2012-2013 year. The first meeting was held in Houston on November 26 and 27. Other meetings will be held in Austin in February and May 2013.

The work of this group represents Phase I of the Texas Content Standards revision process. Phase II of the project will call upon the expertise of adult educators throughout the state to write the revised standards based on the recommendations from the technical work group. Phase III will be the implementation phase.

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For more information and resources on the current iteration of the Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks, visit the Standards page of TCALL's website. Or see Content Standards Implementation under State Leadership Activities on the Texas LEARNS website, which is also accessed through TCALL's home page menu (<http://tcall.tamu.edu>)

Lori Donley Joins Literacy Texas as Executive Director



Literacy Texas has a new Executive Director. Lori Donley joined the organization in October and is now overseeing the day-to-day operations.

Donley has extensive experience with non-profit management and leadership development, and holds a master's degree in Public Administration. She formerly served as Leadership Development Coordinator for the Texas Classroom Teachers Association, and has also worked with the Texas Attorney General's Family Initiatives division and the Texas Governor's Commission for Women. Donley lives in Austin and serves on the Greenlights for Nonprofits 501 Council. She is past president of the Young Women's Alliance and Club Red (American Red Cross) of Central Texas.

"We are excited about the direction of Literacy Texas with Lori on board. She has experience in the education field and collaborative skills that will expand our organization's services to literacy providers and strengthen our relationships with coalition and state partners" said Sue

Matkin, Literacy Texas Board President.

The Literacy Texas Board has a focused and strategic list of priorities for the upcoming year, including hosting over 65 workshops and trainings for community-based literacy providers, and upgrading the website to include high-caliber resources that are accessible to administrators and volunteer instructor/tutors in literacy programs and regional coalitions across the state.

Donley is eager to work within the literacy community to make a significant impact in Texas. She said, "I'm looking forward to the tasks ahead and I'm excited to make substantial progress for literacy initiatives with this organization."

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



Translating Research into Literacy Practice

Addressing Culture in the ESL Classroom

by Michelle A. Johnson and Dr. Debbie Chang, TCALL

Adult students in the ESL (English as a Second Language) classroom learn much more than just the English language. They learn about U.S. culture and quite possibly other cultures. But what are the ways teachers currently address issues of culture in the adult ESL classroom?

Our study

We decided to investigate how teachers are delivering, modifying, implementing and providing instruction to a diverse group of adult learners. We decided to focus on the aspects of cultural diversity. To do this, we interviewed and observed 14 teachers teaching ESL to adults. We spoke with teachers in adult education programs as well as teachers in religiously-affiliated and community-based programs. What we found was quite interesting.

The teachers spoke of several teaching strategies they use and the challenges they encounter to using culture as a teaching tool in the classroom. They also spoke about their own experiences of living abroad and having to learn a new language as well as a new culture. The opportunities presented by living abroad provided them with valuable experience. They also expressed the importance of teaching about the American culture because it helps their students' function in their new culture.

What we learned

Strategies. One teacher's strategy to incorporate culture into her teaching was centered on ethnic holidays and dress. Another teacher stated that she simply relied on her previous experience of working with international students. For example, in order to incorporate the American culture in her teaching, one teacher advised that she used the cultural icons, for example Superman or Batman, found in the curriculum.

Challenges. When the teachers spoke about the challenges, they talked about the tensions or conflicts that arise from

classroom discussions. One teacher, in particular, told the story of a student who shared her religious beliefs with the class. The teacher explained the other students looked concerned when the student spoke. This teacher also explained that as the tension rose in the room surrounding this discussion, she became very uncomfortable. Another teacher spoke about the discomfort of her students; she explained that some students are just not comfortable sharing their own culture.

It is important for ESL instructors to recognize the awkwardness of learning a new language and use their own and their students' lived experiences as part of their teaching tools. ESL instructors should use multiple activities that will appeal to the learners' diverse background and indirectly integrate culture into the classroom.

Suggested Activities

Activities such as the creation of student biographies and autobiographies give students the opportunity to introduce their culture to the class. Other activities could include taking students on field trips to local historic sites, museums or library. One of the teachers told us that she invites people from the community to come to her classroom and speak on a variety of topics.

Students will naturally exhibit levels of discomfort just from learning a new language. However, teachers should take an active role in creating new activities and curriculum that extend beyond using ethnic and American holidays as a cultural teaching tool. Thus, by using culture as a teaching tool, teachers create a learning environment benefitting students inside and outside the classroom. It is important to connect the adult learner's lived experiences to the classroom learning so the learning is continually developed long after the student has left the ESL classroom.

Teaching Vocabulary to Adult English Language Learners

by Dr. Nancy Montgomery

Adult English language learners who are both proficient and literate in English are more apt to be self-sufficient and enjoy longer term employment than immigrants who are only literate in a language other than English (Greenberg, Macias, Rhodes, & Chan, 2001). According to Kruidenier (2002), the components of reading are vocabulary, alphabets and word analysis, fluency, and comprehension. They must be included in any good adult literacy program but caution must be used when assuming that the English language learner and the native English student will acquire the components of reading through the use of the same strategies.

Because of the need for vocabulary in all aspects of the adult English language learner's life, we have to consider some important issues that are involved in teaching vocabulary to them. Is the instruction of vocabulary to the Adult English language learner and the native English learner different than the suggestions given by Kruidenier (2002)? If so, what are some of the differences?

Kruidenier (2002) made the following suggestions for teaching vocabulary to the native English learners:

- Conduct oral assessment, where learners either choose the correct meaning of a word from multiple choices or define terms in their own words.
- Teach vocabulary in semantic sets.
- Encourage students to get the meaning of a new vocabulary through context.

The above suggestions are excellent but one has to consider the linguistic abilities of the Adult English language learner as well as the appropriateness of the suggestions above.

Folse (2004) reviewed the research on teaching vocabulary in semantic sets and found that grouping words can actually impede the learning of vocabulary because if similar new words are presented together, such as the days of the week, or antonyms, learners can actually become confused. Folse recommends grouping new vocabulary around familiar themes such as going out to eat, going to the store, or planning a special party at home. Nation (2000, 2005) recommends teaching high frequency vocabulary first. For instance, introduce the words Tuesday and Thursday at different times to avoid confusion.

Asking an Adult English language learner to acquire meaning from context clues, a strategy often used by teachers of native

English learners, could be meaningless as they do not possess the vocabulary of native speakers (Eskey, 2005). According to Nation (2005), using context to understand new vocabulary requires an understanding of more than 98% of words in a passage. To truly know and understand a word, a student must know the pronunciation, spelling, morphological and syntactical properties, multiple meanings, and the contexts in which it can be used. Therefore, vocabulary teaching for the Adult English language learner must be planned and deliberate.

Adult English language learners must continue to learn vocabulary for all aspects of their lives and for the rest of their lives. Researchers such as Birch (2002), Eskey (2005), Folse (2004), and Nation (2000, 2005) suggest teachers use the following strategies to teach vocabulary to the Adult English language learner:

- Pre-teach vocabulary.
- Limit the number of vocabulary words according to the language level of the student.
- Select reading passages that are only slightly above what the learner can read independently.
- Teach high-frequency words first.
- Learners should have multiple exposures to specific words in multiple contexts.
- Avoid presenting antonyms, synonyms, and words in the same semantic set together at first. This prevents confusion when learners are first learning the words.
- Dictionary skills are to be taught to the student using both a monolingual dictionary and, if possible, a bilingual dictionary. Adult English language learners must learn how to read the definitions, the parts of speech, and the differences in spellings.
- Note cards for the Adult English language learner are vital. Learners can write the word on one side of the card and the meaning with an illustration on the other side of the card. Have activities for the learners to use the cards in class such as vocabulary matching, Cloze strategy, or sentence stems to motivate the learner to study the cards.
- Give regular tests where the learner can prove their knowledge and use of words. Offer choices to show learning through matching exercises, multiple choice, and Cloze strategies with a word bank for support.
- Have students write sentences in which they must use the studied words or grammar forms through the use of illustrated Cloze strategy, student generated illustrations with sentence stem, or simple to complex sentences with

support of word banks.

The strategies above are easy and simple to integrate into a regular lesson plan. When teaching the Adult English language learner, teaching vocabulary must be well-planned and deliberate in order for them to achieve literacy in English which in turn will affect them economically and personally.

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About the Author

Dr. Nancy Montgomery is an Assistant Clinical Professor of Education at Southern Methodist University and 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.

TALAE 2013 Conference Keynote Speaker *Toby Dewayne Daughtery & Dr. Guadalupe Quintanilla*

Texas Association for Literacy & Adult Education (TALAE) has announced two exciting speakers for general sessions of its TALAE Annual Conference, to be held February 7-9, 2013 in Austin.

The mid-conference luncheon speaker on February 8 will be Toby Dewayne Daughtery. Toby was raised in his early years by his grandmother in a small Arkansas town, then in his teen years by his single mother in Little Rock's Windemere Housing Complex. Building on a lifelong love for writing and art, Mr. Daughtery became a motivational



speaker, writer, poet, visual artist, and promoter of positive change. His mission in life is to decrease incarceration and expand access to college.

The February 9 luncheon speaker will be Dr. Guadalupe Quintanilla, President of the Cross-Cultural Communication Center of Houston and Associate Professor of Modern and Classical Languages at the University of Houston. Named the first Hispanic U.S. Representative to the United Nations in 1984, Dr. Quintanilla went on to become co-chair of the National Institute of Justice and co-chair to the National Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.

For more information about the TALAE 2013 Conference, find TALAE's website under the Organizations menu link on TCALL's home page (tcall.tamu.edu).



Adult Learner Transitions to Work and Postsecondary Education

New Communication Scenarios for TISESL

by Barbara Tondre-El Zorkani

Two new Communication Scenarios for **Texas Industry Specific ESL (TISESL)** are now available as part of the **TISESL** materials on Box.com. Although they are currently being pilot tested by a few programs, you may access them for program use. The scenarios were developed for Texas LEARNS by El Paso Community College and are work-based lessons dealing with issues in the work place. They are designed for use with low intermediate to advanced level English language learners. Four additional scenarios are expected to be complete by early spring.

The Cell Phone addresses appropriate use of the cell phone in the workplace. It consists of lesson materials, a Power Point presentation, a pronunciation supplement, and notes with website resources. Based on a workplace setting in which an employee and her supervisor discuss use of the cell phone, learners are introduced to related vocabulary and language usage. True and false, matching, dialogue, role play, and cloze exercises are included to reinforce language development and expand learners' exposure to the language in a real life setting.

The Set Up depicts an office situation in which communication between supervisor and employees becomes critical. Misunderstanding leads to two employees experiencing considerable difficulty completing their work tasks. The scenario provides multiple opportunities for discussion of the problem and possible solutions. Materials include the lesson, notes to the teacher, and two vocabulary supplements. Learners are introduced to basic computer terminology in the course of instruction, and again multiple activities are included to reinforce language development.

How do adult education providers access these new communication scenarios? All state and federally funded adult education programs in Texas have access to the copyrighted **Texas Industry Specific English as a Second Language (TISESL)** materials. Partners working with local adult education programs need not apply for separate copyright licenses. The Texas Education Agency has also extended licenses to community colleges and local workforce development networks at no cost. Licenses can also be requested by non-profit organizations.

Programs that have already completed the required **TISESL** professional development may access the materials via their

assigned password to Box.com, the cloud content management system being used to store state initiative training materials. Most recent versions of **TISESL** curriculum materials are stored on Box.com and replace all previous versions in hard copy and on flash drives. To request the required professional development for **TISESL**, including the Communication Scenarios, contact your regional GREAT Center by visiting the TCALL home page (tcall.tamu.edu), then clicking on GREAT Centers.

This article was first published in November 2012 as #65 in the SHOP TALK series sponsored by Texas LEARNS to highlight promising practices and address issues, concerns, and questions related to meeting adult learners' needs for workforce development and successful transitions. For additional information or to request that a particular topic be addressed, contact Barbara Tondre-El Zorkani at btondre@earthlink.net.

Join the WorkforceLitTex Email Discussion List

If you are interested in education for Workforce Development in our state, join TCALL's WorkforceLitTex email discussion list. WorkforceLitTex was developed in 2005 by TCALL and Texas Education Agency/Texas LEARNS in collaboration with Texas Workforce Commission and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Its purposes are: to facilitate local collaborative planning between adult education directors and the workforce development community; and to exchange best practices and to foster and encourage collaborative efforts within the Tri-Agency Collaboration.

Target audience of this moderated discussion list includes adult education fiscal agent directors and other interested parties in the adult education, workforce development, and higher education communities. On TCALL's home page (tcall.tamu.edu) look under the Email Discussion Lists menu link for this and other list descriptions and how to subscribe.

TISESL: A Pathway to Collaboration and the World of Work

by Barbara Tondre-El Zorkani

The *Texas Industry-Specific English as a Second Language (TISESL)* curricula are alive and well in the Fort Worth ISD's Adult Education Program. Sofia Zamarripa, Director of Adult Education, and Aida Morossini Martinez, Program Coordinator, make a habit of partnering with a variety of industries to deliver *TISESL* instruction.

In 2009, Fort Worth implemented the *TISESL* manufacturing curriculum with Traulsen, a manufacturer of commercial grade refrigerators and freezers. Thereafter, the company saw a 25% increase in safety among its employees. In 2010, the program served the school district's cafeteria employees, and in 2012 the district's custodial staff requested an ESL class. The district's maintenance manual was used to integrate instruction with the vocabulary skills from the *TISESL* manufacturing curriculum. In addition, adult education is currently implementing the stand alone Employability curriculum in 50% of its ESL classes and some ABE classes as well.

One of Fort Worth's most recent *TISESL* successes has been a joint venture with Stone Academy, which grooms students for the real world of healthcare occupations. It provides simulated and hands-on training, routine testing, evaluation and virtual-aided training necessary to increase students' participation, thus ensuring that each student comprehends and retains the information necessary to succeed in becoming a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). Graduates are then eligible to take the Texas Skills Examination and National Nurse Aide Assessment Program

(NNAAP) Exam.

Stone Academy's Director Nikki Pollard approached adult education to partner in the instruction for students wanting CNA training. The *TISESL* healthcare curriculum was used to introduce a group of seven ESL students, two ESL transition students, and one student with a GED® certificate to the applications of healthcare, industry-related terminology, and basic body systems. Pollard herself started out as a certified nursing assistant (CNA) and is now a licensed vocational nurse (LVN) and owner of Stone Academy. Knowing that adult learners would face multiple obstacles to successful participation and completion, Pollard and her adult education partner set about finding solutions. Through a 21st Century Grant, Clayton "Yes" Center was able to provide childcare. Christ Church Assembly of God provided space for the classes, and the Women's Center of Tarrant County covered tuition costs through a United Way grant. Workforce Solutions paid for eight weeks of on-the-job training/employment with Trail Lake Nursing and Rehab. Klarus Home Care provided job placement. Ten students enrolled in the pilot; nine completed CNA training; eight received their CNA certification, and four were employed at the beginning of the summer.

Lessons learned during the pilot:

- Further tweak the *TISESL* curriculum for low level ESL learners
- Extend the CNA training for English language learners
- Make sure expectations of all partners are clear

New *TISESL* initiatives for 2012-2013 include partnerships with Meadow Burke, a concrete construction firm, and the Ismaili Center. For more information, contact Sofia Zamarripa (sofia.zamarripa@fwisd.org) or Aida Martinez (aida.martinez@fwisd.org).

This article was first published in September 2012 as #64 in the SHOP TALK series sponsored by Texas LEARNS to highlight promising practices and address issues, concerns, and questions related to meeting adult learners' needs for workforce development and successful transitions. For additional information or to request that a particular topic be addressed, contact Barbara Tondre-El Zorkani at btondre@earthlink.net.

TCALL's Workforce Literacy Resources

Visit the Workforce page of TCALL's website to find information and resources especially geared toward Workforce Literacy and Workforce Development partners in Texas. You'll find Workforce among the horizontal group of blue menu buttons across the top of the TCALL home page. <http://tcall.tamu.edu>

Tex-BEST: A Workforce Literacy Summit

by Barbara Tondre-El Zorkani

The third annual Tex-BEST Workforce Literacy Summit was held at Alamo Colleges in San Antonio August 8-10, 2012. Hosted by Alamo Colleges, the Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education, and the Texas Education Agency / Texas LEARNS, the summit focused on addressing the training and employment needs of Texas' limited English and under-skilled workforce. Highlights of the summit are described below, with contact information provided to request additional information.

So You Want to Start an I-BEST Program? The Whats, Whys, and Hows of Implementing an I-BEST Instructional Program. This full day pre-conference facilitated by Anson Green and Carrie Tupa addressed assessment and instructional design issues. For more information, contact agreen27@alamo.edu or ctupa@alamo.edu.

Better Together: Goodwill's Good Career Academy – A Win-Win Partnership. By partnering with Alamo Colleges, Goodwill is able to offer career path training using the I-BEST model for medical assisting and warehouse logistics specialists. Goodwill provides case management support and employment assistance. agreen27@alamo.edu or mmilton@goodwillsa.org

Plotting a Career Course: Career Awareness for Every Adult Education Student. Texas LEARNS and San Antonio ISD discussed the implementation of *Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE / ESOL Classrooms (ICA)* across the state. ICA assists adult learners in exploring local career options and planning career paths. ethompson@hcde-texas.org

Practical Transitions: A Student-Centered Program for Transitions into College and Career Pathways. Adult educators Melissa Sadler-Nitu and Rene Coronado shared a portfolio approach for transitioning students into college and/or career pathways. The course of study was designed to help adult learners explore career goals while developing their writing and research skills. mnitu@seguin.k12.tx.us or rene.coronado@esc20.net

Project SWEET: A JET Launchpad Grant. Jennifer Hawkins of Tarrant County College discussed the process of bringing together multiple partners and collaborators in the development of a Computer Numeric Control (CNC) machinist program funded through the State Comptroller's Office with a JET grant (Jobs and Education for Texans). The presentation addressed obstacles as well as successes in providing eligibility services, case management, assessment and a hybrid I-BEST model for training. jennifer.hawkins@tccd.edu

Comprehensive Assessment: Using Qualitative Assessment with Testing to Adequately Place, Address Learning Needs, and Speed Completion. Anson Green and Carrie Tupa discussed the

development of a comprehensive assessment protocol that results in a quantitative and qualitative profile of knowledge, abilities, career goals, and support needs of students entering Alamo Colleges' Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) initiative. agreen27@alamo.edu or ctupa@alamo.edu

Transitional Advising: Building an On-Campus Alliance for Student Success. Andrea DeLeon of Amarillo College and Dolores Zapata of Alamo Colleges discussed the impact effective advising strategies can have on at-risk students transitioning from Adult Basic Education Innovation Grants (ABE-IG) into traditional academic programs. amdeleon@actx.edu or dzapata@alamo.edu

Leveraged Partnerships and Braided Funding to Support Under Skilled Students in Career and Technical Programs. Kristi Hayman and Anson Green discussed ways to blend funding from multiple sources to meet the myriad needs of students. Participants were introduced to a tool to help identify and align funding to implement and sustain programs. khayman@esc6.net or agreen27@alamo.edu

Proven Bridge Program Models That Transition Adult Learners to College Credit Training and Education. Anita Springer (ESC 20 and Seguin ISD), Marilyn Smith and Tina Washco (Lone Star College System), and Carrie Tupa (Alamo Colleges) showcased three college transition to postsecondary enrollment models. a-t_springer@juno.com, marilyn.k.smith@lonestar.edu, tina.washco@lonestar.edu or ctupa@alamo.edu

What Works: Case Management and Advising Models that Deliver Completion Results. Gloria Mwase (Jobs for the Future), Stephanie Coats (Alamo Colleges), Kim Arispe (Family Services Association), and Elizabeth Gutierrez (Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement) discussed the critical roles of case management and intrusive advising in effective student success models in community colleges. The session also highlighted ways to leverage expertise and resources from community-based project partners. gmwase@jff.org, scoats2@alamo.edu or karispe@family-service.org

Immigrant Access to Postsecondary Education: State and Federal Policy Issues. Randy Capps with the Migration Institute Policy discussed key higher education and career training access issues affecting first and second generation immigrant students. rcapps@migrationpolicy.org

Workforce Board and ABE Partnerships. Kristi Hayman (ESC Region 6), Bonnie Gonzales (Workforce Solutions of the Lower Rio Grande Valley), and Juan Carlos Aguirre (South Texas College) discussed the critical nature of adult education and workforce partners' relationships and their impact on under-skilled adults with

employment goals. khayman@esc6.net, bonnie@wfsolutions.org or jcaguirr@southtexascollege.edu

Beyond Reading, Writing, and 'Rithmetic: Developing Critical Skills for the Successful College Student. Anita Springer (ESC Region 20 and Seguin ISD) explored the additional skills needed to be successful in today's college environment and how a San Antonio area adult education college prep program develops these proficiencies while simultaneously raising college entrance exam scores.

a-t_springer@juno.com

The Community Action College Prep Academy: A Community-Based Approach to Career Pathways Development. Jon Engel (Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas), Mary Helen Martinez (Central Texas GREAT Center), and Francesca Ramirez (Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas) described a grass roots approach to creating a postsecondary transition and career pathways program that can be used as a blueprint for establishing similar programs. The session addressed the tools needed to perform environmental scans, identify needs, and assess resources. Key topics included the role of a career counselor and helping teachers address the "knowledge gap". jengel@communityaction.com, mm42@txstate.edu or framirez@communityaction.com

The Workforce Education Readiness Continuum (WERC).

Meg Poag (Literacy Coalition of Central Texas) and Jasmine Folan (Workforce Solutions Capital Area) described the challenges, inner workings, and lessons learned in forming WERC, administered by Workforce Solutions with 13 participating agencies that offer an array of education and workforce development initiatives. mpoag@willread.org or jasmine.folan@wfscapitalarea.com

Stepping Up to Employment: Lessons and Challenges from Year #1 of the C-4 Pilot. Terry Shearer and Linda Burke (ESC Region 4), Jon Engel (Community Action, Inc.), and Joshua Hayes (College of the Mainland) shared background information and first year experiences of the C-4 pilot project, an initiative funded by the Texas Education Agency / Texas LEARNS to integrate accelerated, fast-track GED® preparation with career awareness. Topics included student selection, content planning, course duration, local resources, and needs assessment. tshearer@esc4.net, lindaburke52@yahoo.com, jengel@communityaction.com or jhayes1@com.edu

Step-by-Step Intensive Job Placement Strategies for Hard-to-Place Adult Education Students.

Rick Yanez, Gloria Rodriguez, and Anson Green – all of Alamo Colleges – described efforts and procedures for ensuring adult learners receive high quality and intensive job placement and retention through partnerships with community-based employment organizations and job developers. agreen27@alamo.edu, ryanez9@alamo.edu or grrodriguez122@alamo.edu

Leveraging Critical Support from State and Local Agencies.

Anson Green and Rick Yanez of Alamo Colleges along with Naomi Gunderson (Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services) discussed Alamo Colleges' win-win partnerships for services to

students with mental, cognitive, and physical disabilities. agreen27@alamo.edu, ryanez9@alamo.edu or naomi.gunderson@dars.state.tx.us

I-BEST and TISESL: Making Sense of the Acronyms and Selecting the Appropriate Model for Your Students. Carrie Tupa (Alamo Colleges) and Sofia Zamarripa and Aida Morossini Martinez (both with Fort Worth ISD Adult Education) described two prominent instructional models being used in Texas to assist lower-skilled learners in preparing for, entering, and completing college level technical training. Both I-BEST and TISESL (*Texas Industry-Specific English as a Second Language*) integrate basic education and English with technical content. ctupa@alamo.edu, sofia.zamarripa@fwisd.org or aida.martinez@fwisd.org

Finding the Missing Pieces: Career Information for the Internationally Trained ESL Student. Sonia Aguirre (Welcome Back Center for Internationally Trained Healthcare Professionals, Alamo Colleges) examined the growing trend of internationally trained and educated individuals who are enrolling in ESL classes and seeking reentry into healthcare career pathways. saguirre10@alamo.edu

TISESL: A Pathway to Collaboration and the World of Work. In this session, Sofia Zamarripa and Aida Martinez (Fort Worth ISD Adult Education) and their community partner Nikki Pollard (Stone Academy), focused on accessing, marketing and implementing the *Texas Industry-Specific ESL (TISESL)* curricular components, getting students prepared for work, gathering data, and collaborating with partners.

The curricula focus on adults with limited English proficiency and on industry sectors in which many seek entry level employment. sofia.zamarripa@fwisd.org, aida.martinez@fwisd.org or stoneacademy1@gmail.com

Building College Ready Skills and Computer Literacy for Lower Skilled Adults: A Curriculum for Building Rigor in One Week.

Alamo Colleges shared the challenges of preparing adult students for the rigor and harsh realities of the college classroom with a special one week program. Carrie Tupa at ctupa@alamo.edu or esthersfuntravel@yahoo.com

Employer-Based Programs and Services to Support the Career Growth of Underskilled Workers. Jacque Burandt (University Health System), John Dewey (Instruments, Technology, Machinery - ITM), and Kara Hill (Hill Bros. Construction) spoke on both the pressures and responses to hiring, training, and retaining underskilled workers in healthcare, construction, and manufacturing.

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This article was first published in September 2012 as #63 in the SHOP TALK series sponsored by Texas LEARNS to highlight promising practices and address issues, concerns, and questions related to meeting adult learners' needs for workforce development and successful transitions. For additional information or to request that a particular topic be addressed, contact Barbara Tondre-El Zorkani at btondre@earthlink.net.

C-4 Pilot Initiative Enhancing Employment Outcomes for Adult Learners

by Barbara Tondre-El Zorkani

C-4 refers to a specific performance measure in the *Advancing Texas Action Plan for the Texas Workforce System*. The strategic action plan calls for the design and development of adult education initiatives by 2013 to enhance employment outcomes for adult learners requiring workplace literacy skills.

The C-4 pilots being conducted in three regions of Texas (Houston/Coastal, Austin/Central, and San Antonio) target adult learners functioning at NRS levels 4, 5, and 6 who, while their intent is to earn a GED® credential, are functioning at a level where they are at risk of dropping out of the educational continuum before reaching this objective. The pilots are designed to provide these individuals with intensive GED® preparation and career readiness skills that will enable them to earn a GED® and better qualify for postsecondary education, occupational training, and/or employment.

Pilots recruit cohorts of adult learners who have begun their GED® testing and/or could be available for and benefit from an intensive fast track GED® course combined with career readiness. During the first year of the pilots, 483 adult learners were served in mostly short courses of 6 to 8 weeks offered by 7 providers at 21 sites. Two programs ran semester-long courses. To date, 123 participants have earned the GED®, and completions continue to come in.

C-4's measurable objectives include:

- completing the GED®
- obtaining employment
- experiencing an increase in wages
- entering occupational training

Challenges

Partnerships with local workforce partners, from workforce boards to one-stop vendors, are critical components of the initiative. Adult education providers in each of the three regions have formed Workforce Literacy Resource Teams (WLRT) to facilitate dialogue and referrals to and from their workforce partners. The introduction of a cross-agency referral process has met with partial but growing success. In some instances, workforce partners have stepped up to assist learners with tuition, uniforms, and trade tools needed for postsecondary education and training.

Learners with an exclusive focus on obtaining the GED® present another challenge. Contextualizing instruction so that it also

addresses career readiness requires a strong and positive commitment from both instructors and career counselors involved with the pilots. Constantly reminding learners to look beyond the GED® to career pathways and postsecondary opportunities has become a mantra of sorts. Programs are also making the effort to introduce more work-related word problems and math reading strategies into the math component. Sites with regular access to computers, relevant software, and the internet are able to extend student learning beyond traditional face-to-face instruction.

Much of the success of the program has to do with the important roles of instructors and career or transition counselors. Their collaboration is the critical link to introducing learners to career readiness skills. The majority of instructors and counselors have been trained in the use of the *Integrating Career Readiness into the ABE/ESOL Classroom (ICA)* curriculum. Several C-4 staff will serve as *Master ICA Trainers (MICATS)* in 2012-2013. Together, instructors and counselors work to introduce learners to ICA activities such as SMART goals, career exploration, labor market information, job requirements and applications, resume' writing and interview skills, as well as financial aid and advising for individuals wishing to pursue postsecondary education and training.

During year # 2 of the C-4 pilot, Texas LEARNS and program providers will be engaged in analyzing the first year's data, determining if adult education data can be matched with more comprehensive workforce data, reviewing UI data match per federal schedule, and identifying best practices as well as policy-to-performance implications. Two providers are also hoping to expand their C-4 like initiatives, and all are tasked with increasing their use of the ICA curriculum.

For additional information about the C-4 initiative, or to request a copy of the *Framework for the TX C-4 Pilot*, contact Barbara Tondre at btondre@earthlink.net.

This article was first published in September 2012 as #62 in the SHOP TALK series sponsored by Texas LEARNS to highlight promising practices and address issues, concerns, and questions related to meeting adult learners' needs for workforce development and successful transitions. For additional information or to request that a particular topic be addressed, contact Barbara Tondre-El Zorkani at btondre@earthlink.net.

ICA Goes Statewide: Plotting a Career Course for Every Adult Ed Student

by Barbara Tondre-El Zorkani

The path to career awareness in all adult education classrooms is beginning to take shape with the statewide introduction of Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE/ESOL Classroom (ICA). The ICA curriculum was developed by the Massachusetts System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES) and the National College Transition Network (NCTN), with funding from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Nellie Mae Education Foundation.

Thirty-four adult education instructors have already participated in the online ICA training facilitated by World Education and have begun integrating ICA into their adult education programs. Instructors with the C-4 pilot are working to integrate ICA with accelerated GED instruction in seven programs in San Antonio, the Houston area, and Central Texas. These three regions were chosen for the pilot because of their active partnerships with their workforce partners. The use of ICA will be further expanded in year # 2 of the C-4 pilot, which is a performance measure in the Advancing Texas Action Plan for the Texas Workforce System. It calls for intensive, fast track GED® preparation coupled with career awareness/career readiness.

Policy to Performance Toolkit is Now Available

The Policy to Performance: Transitioning Adults to Opportunity project has released the Policy to Performance Toolkit, a new federally funded resource from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, designed to provide state adult education stakeholders with guidance and high quality resources and tools for developing, implementing, and evaluating policies and practices that support comprehensive and coordinated systems for ABE transition services for low-skilled adults.

Find this free resource on the National LINCS (Literacy Information and Communication System) website: lincs.ed.gov

Statewide implementation of the ICA is being funded through a WIA Incentive Grant awarded to the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Workforce Commission. The goal is to intentionally bring career awareness and activities into every adult education program in Texas so that every student has a clear plan for transition to college or training that leads to jobs earning sustainable wages. Adult learners with no intention to work themselves will also be attracted to the activities that can help them better prepare their children for further education and the world of work.

The ICA curriculum consists of four modules:

1. The Cultural Context for Career Awareness
2. The Self-Exploration Process
3. Occupational Exploration
4. Career Planning Skills

The multi-step process of preparing for statewide implementation of ICA has already begun. A cadre of master ICA trainers (MICATS) is being developed to train key teachers in every local program. Key teachers and MICATS will then train remaining local staff over a two year period. Face-to-face training will be provided through the eight GREAT Centers responsible for professional development efforts across the state. Face-to-face training will be followed up by two distance learning activities (conference calls or webinars) for each group of trainees.

Implementation of the ICA will be coordinated by an Integrated Career Awareness consultant/contractor to be appointed in the fall of 2012, and local program efforts will be observed by grant managers during technical assistance visits. Curriculum guide and all handouts are available on CD and can also be downloaded from www.collegetransition.org.

This article was first published in September 2012 as #61 in the SHOP TALK series sponsored by Texas LEARNS to highlight promising practices and address issues, concerns, and questions related to meeting adult learners' needs for workforce development and successful transitions. For additional information or to request that a particular topic be addressed, contact Barbara Tondre-El Zorkani at btondre@earthlink.net.

Putting the WIA Incentive Grant to Use

by Barbara Tondre-El Zorkani

Texas was awarded a WIA Incentive Grant for exceeding its federal performance measures in 2009-2010. The award of \$3,000,000 was split between the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) for its Title I programs and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for its Title II allowable activities. The TWC portion went to fund a veteran education program enacted by the Heroes bill passed during the last Texas legislative session. TEA directed its \$1.5 million grant to fund a statewide College and Career Readiness and Pathways initiative.

The goal of TEA's initiative is to build student pathways to college and career readiness by creating and implementing tools, support, and professional development for adult education programs across the state. There are four primary objectives:

1. Provide Counseling to Careers Training through contractor Jobs for the Future (JFF) and create a cadre of trainers to facilitate teacher training to all adult education programs.
2. Work with JFF to introduce contextualization tools at eight pilot sites, with training occurring at the local teacher level in both specific occupations and academics.
3. Provide train-the-trainer opportunities to assist local programs in developing, planning, and implementing college and career readiness and transition activities in each program.
4. Create resources and professional development for teachers in the use of effective General Educational Development (GED®)-to-college models, and initiate the process of revising the Texas Adult Education Content Standards.

Local programs will receive technical assistance and professional development over the two years following the end of the grant period to develop their local plans for reaching these objectives. A WIA Incentive Grant Team will be formed in the fall of 2012 to facilitate these processes and will consist of the following positions:

- Integrated Career Awareness consultant/contractor
- Contextualization consultant/contractor
- Transition/Career consultant/contractor
- Content Standards consultant/contractor
- JFF point person for GED® 2014-to-College Models

The WIA Incentive Team will work with the eight GREAT Centers to ensure that professional development is available to all local adult education programs across the state. Additional details will follow as they become available.

This article was first published in September 2012 as #60 in the SHOP TALK series sponsored by Texas LEARNS to highlight promising practices and address issues, concerns, and questions related to meeting adult learners' needs for workforce development and successful transitions. For additional information or to request that a particular topic be addressed, contact Barbara Tondre-El Zorkani at btondre@earthlink.net.

Resources for Building Adult Learners' and Teachers' Technology Skills

With the GED® 2014 Test expected to be 100% computer administered, technology skills and resources will be even more important in adult education.

Tech Tips for Teachers is a blog developed by Steve Quann and Leah Peterson of World Education for the LINCS Region 1 Professional Development Center. The goal for the blog is to provide a resource to adult education teachers and tutors who are interested in integrating technology into their instruction, but are not sure where to start. techtipsforteachers.weebly.com

Connect2Compete is a national nonprofit organization that connects leaders from communities, the private sector, and leading foundations. The website includes information on low-cost, high speed internet, low-cost computers, and free training. www.Connect2Compete.org

To stay in the loop for more information about the GED® 2014 Test as it becomes available, subscribe to TCALL's email lists for Adult Education Teachers or Administrators. On TCALL's home page (tcall.tamu.edu) look under the Email Discussion Lists menu link for list descriptions and how to subscribe.

Ideas for Teachers of Adults

Writing Literacy Autobiographies

by Dr. Clarena Larrotta

As a child I did not have access to books; I was not read to at bed time either. Instead, I used to borrow gossip magazines from my youngest aunt and hide with them in my room. I would curl up in my bed to read the love stories in the romance section and those were like fairy tales to me. I grew up with encyclopedias not the Ethernet, which may sound weird to the new generation, but that was the way we did homework back then.

A literacy autobiography is a reflective account of one's own development as a writing being (Steinman, 2007) and includes the many aspects of literacy development (i.e., reading, writing and culture), not just writing. The vignette above illustrates memories related to my literacy development process growing up. As a language teacher I know that reading the love stories in the gossip magazines was helpful in exposing me to character development and the structure of stories with a plot, problem resolution, beginning, middle and end. However, growing up I was not aware of this fact. I became aware through the exercise of writing my own memories (Guerra & Larrotta, 2010).

Using the learners' previous experiences in writing their literacy autobiographies results in unintentional or unplanned learning; what Kerka (2000) calls incidental learning. This is one of the reasons why I encourage English literacy instructors to incorporate them as a class assignment in their courses, and I have used them with ESL (English as second language) learners as well. For example, the following are excerpts from the literacy autobiography of two ESL adult students from an intermediate ESL class I taught:

I began elementary school when I was seven years old. In my town, preschool did not exist. I did not have instruction in my family about my first numbers and letters. My father and mother lived busy lives and my older siblings did not like to teach me. At home, they thought that it was not necessary because at school I would learn (ESL student 1)

I learned to read at school and at home...I was between 3 and 4 years old when my older sister took me to school for the first

time. She was in first grade, and I sat next to her. I remember I listened to the teacher and all my sister's classmates sat around me. They were happy with my presence, and that was my first experience at school. My sister gave me a piece of paper and taught me how to write. When I came back home, I showed my parents what I had done. I wrote everything my sister told me (ESL student 2)

What do adults learn when they reflect, narrate, record, type, and make sense of their literacy development memories? In order to find answers to these questions, I invite instructors to write their literacy autobiography and reflect on what happens throughout this process. The following are some of the answers that instructors have volunteered after writing their own literacy autobiography in the university classes I teach:

- Remembering how I learned to love books gives me ideas on how to encourage students to read.
- Though I find it difficult to relate to struggling readers at times, writing stirs up more pertinent emotions; writing for me is an arduous task.
- Literacy is not just about grammar and vocabulary...it is about communication, information, self-sufficiency, and enjoyment.
- I enjoyed this type of writing and learned a lot about myself

Writing the Literacy Autobiography

Explore how you learned to value reading and writing, how you learned about your culture, as well as the roles different family members played in developing literacy habits. Use the steps below as a guide to write your literacy autobiography. You do not have to follow all the steps; use your good judgment to decide which ones work for you.

Draw a timeline illustrating salient events related to your literacy development as a child up until adulthood; include this in the appendix.

Gather pictures of you and your family; place the pictures chronologically and audio-record the literacy related memories

that were triggered by those pictures. Use a few of your pictures/ images when writing up (typing) the final version of your autobiography either in the appendix or within text. This will give flavor to the narratives and will enhance the message transmitted.

Select a few events and reflect on what literacy looked like at those points in your life. Write these down and use them as data for your paper. Transcribe your recordings and use them as data for your composition.

Compose your literacy autobiography and keep in mind important sections such as title, introduction, content, conclusion, and appendix.

Follow the steps in the writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, etc.) to come up with a final typed version.

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About the Author

Clarena Larrotta is associate professor of adult education at Texas State University-San Marcos.

NCTN Aspirations Toolkit Now Available *Information from the National College Transitions Network*

Now available on the website of the National College Transitions Network (NCTN), the **Aspirations Toolkit** is a set of counseling and instructional practices and tools contributed by adult educators around the country. Contributors implement these lessons and activities with adult learners in various class types (e.g. ESOL or GED®) and at a range of skill levels to foster aspirations, goal setting habits and to inspire them to begin planning for next steps along their education and career pathway. The development of the Aspirations Toolkit is partially funded through a grant from the Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family Foundation with matching funds provided by World Education, Inc. We continue to add tools to this collection.

Many adult students think that postsecondary education is out of reach for them. They perceive barriers that are both real and surmountable, ranging from low self-efficacy (sense of competence to accomplish a task or goal) to lack of awareness of supports, such as financial aid. Many of these barriers can be addressed, but in order for adult learners to consider such steps adult education programs must also shift their paradigm and practice and develop specific strategies to heighten learners' aspirations and goals and raise awareness of opportunities, throughout all program phases, from enrollment and orientation to instruction, counseling, and planning for next steps.

The Aspirations Toolkit is a resource for practitioners to make this important paradigm shift in promoting learner aspirations early and often in their instruction and counseling interactions. Each tool is listed under one of the [four areas of college and career readiness](#): Personal Readiness; Career Readiness; Academic Readiness; and College Knowledge Readiness. Resources that span multiple areas are cross-listed.

Find the Aspirations Toolkit in the Resource section of the NCTN Website. www.collegetransitions.org

Recruitment, Retention, Motivation & Goal Setting

Goal-Driven Learning Training Options Updated Texas LEARNS Staff

The *State Assessment & Goal Setting/Attainment Policy for Adult Education* requires that all program staff members who participate in student goal setting processes must successfully complete training on the Texas goal setting policy. To help meet program needs, the GREAT Centers offer three different state certified training options which are outlined below:

- 1. *Setting the Stage for Achievement: Goal-Driven Learning (face-to-face option)*.** This three-hour face-to-face workshop introduces, explains, and demonstrates the goal-setting process as it relates to instruction for adult learners.
- 2. *Setting the Stage for Achievement: Goal-Driven Learning (online option)*.** This non-facilitated, online distance learning course takes a maximum of three hours to complete. Students can access the course anytime, anywhere and complete it at their own pace. The course content is equivalent to the three-hour face-to-face option.
- 3. *Goal-Setting: Developing a Culture for Transitions (intensive face-to-face option)*.** This six-hour face-to-face six hour workshop introduces, defines, and demonstrates the goal-setting process as it relates to instruction for adult learners. The workshop also defines and applies the goal setting process as it relates to transitions.

Each of the certified training options for goal-setting utilizes a resource called the ***Goal-Driven Learning Toolkit*** which was updated in July 2012.

Program directors can contact their regional GREAT Center to request these training options for staff members who engage in goal setting for adult learners. Look for a link to GREAT Center sites on either Texas LEARNS or TCALL home pages. At tcall.tamu.edu, look for the link to Texas LEARNS.

Adult College Completion Toolkit

Information from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education

The *Adult College Completion Toolkit* is a collection of resources designed by Michelle Tolbert of MPR Associates to connect state administrators and local practitioners to the strategies, resources, and technical assistance tools resulting from the Department's work in the area of adult education. The tool kit focuses on three key areas: access, quality, and completion. Four target student populations include veterans, adult basic education students, incarcerated individuals, and skilled immigrants.

The *Adult College Completion Tool Kit* was developed by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education to help policymakers at the state and local level implement practical evidence-based solutions that increase the number of graduates who earn high-quality degrees and certificates required to compete for good jobs in the 21st century global economy. College completion is a shared responsibility; this tool kit also provides resources for adult education administrators, teachers, and students. It provides a wealth of resources and tools to help state administrators and local practitioners in this work. The tool kit also outlines strategies to achieve the president's goal and offers examples of how state and local programs are implementing those strategies.

Find the *Adult College Completion Toolkit* online ed.gov or request a free hard copy by mail from TCALL's Clearinghouse Library (tcall@tamu.edu; 800-441-7323).

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 some of the Library's loan resources on **Accountability and Assessment**, one of the six Core Content Areas of the Texas Adult Education Credential.

"Currently there is a greater focus on accountability in adult education in Texas. The challenge lies in the successful implementation and documentation of adult education. Documentation may be formal or informal. It includes mandated assessments, authentic assessments as well as measures of teacher proficiencies, learner recruitment and persistence." (Retrieved from the Credential Project's website - www.tei.education.txstate.edu).

BUILDING TEST-TAKING SKILLS

Conquering Math Anxiety: A Self-Help Workbook. Arem, Cynthia (1993). Pacific Grove, California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company. This workbook offers a variety of exercises, worksheets, and visualizations that will help adults prepare for success in math. Detailed explanations of methods and examples from actual case histories help make concepts understandable. Adults will learn practical, self-help strategies to: gain mastery over math fears and anxieties, change self-defeating attitudes about math, reduce internal psychological stumbling blocks, improve math-study and test-taking skills, conquer math test anxiety, and open the door to career options.

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

Fire Up Your Learning: An Accelerated Learning Action Guide for Ages 12 Years and Up. Madden, Thomas L. (2001). Las Vegas, NV: Stratigent Press. Students are shown how to use all their learning styles; mentally organize information for easy recall; develop a personal learning plan; become more confident; excel on exams; use music to enhance retention; and get "fired up" about learning.

Student Success Handbook: Strategies for Studying, Note-taking, Reading, and Test-Taking. DesMarais, Ron (2008). Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press. This concise reference book offers practical strategies for developing effective study habits. Written at a reading level for grade equivalent 10-12, this book could be used with students in GED® preparation and college transition programs.

LOOKING AHEAD TO GED® 2014 Ahead to GED 2014

Assessment Guide for Educators: A Guide to the 2014 Assessment

Content from GED® Testing Service®. GED® Testing Service (November 2012) Washington, DC: GED® Testing Service®.

The Assessment Guide for Educators is a resource for adult educators and administrators to better understand the new GED® assessment. The guide dissects the new assessment and explains the decisions behind new item types, assessment targets, and other issues. The new assessment—being launched in 2014—will continue to measure high school equivalency, but GED Testing Service® also measures skills associated with success in a variety of pathways, including college coursework and job training programs. The Assessment Guide for Educators will guide you through the new assessment and highlight item types, assessment targets, guidelines for how items will be scored, and more. TCALL's Clearinghouse Library loans this guide to Texas educators ONLY. It is also available online. www.gedtestingservice.com (Free sign-in is required.)

NON-FORMAL AND ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT OF ADULT LEARNERS

Adult Diagnostic Reading Inventory. Campbell, Pat and Brokop, Flo (2001). Edmonton, Alberta, Canada: Grass Roots Press. The ADRI is an informal reading inventory for adults that is individually administered and is constructed so that a student can read graded passages at successively higher levels until reaching his/her maximum level of functioning. Based on the social constructivist theory in which reading is viewed as active construction of meaning from context clues and the reader's background knowledge, passages were selected by students and reflect the diversity of adult learners. Section One describes the ADRI and ways to use it. Section Two gives information on administration and scoring. Section Three focuses on interpretation of results. Section Four contains the graded word list and reading passages. Section Six gives information on the technical development of the instrument. Due to cost, TCALL's Clearinghouse Library loans this book to Texas educators ONLY.

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

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.

Authentic Reading Assessment: Practices and Possibilities

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

Instruction and Assessment for Limited-English Proficient Adult Learners.

Solorzano, Ronald W. (1994). Philadelphia, PA. National Center on Adult Literacy. This report discusses instructional and assessment practices associated with limited English-proficient (LEP) adults, and recommends that literacy providers use alternative forms of instruction and assessment for LEP adults based on writing, the use of the learner's experience, and the use of their cognitive skills based on real life context.

Learner-Directed Assessment in ESL.

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

Native Language Literacy Screening Device.

NYSDE (1999). Albany, NY: New York State Department of Education. The NLLSD is a tool to give practitioners a sense of the native language literacy levels of adult learners who are non-native Speakers of English in twenty-seven different native languages (English, Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Croatian, Farsi, French, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Lao, Pashto, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Tigrinya, Ukrainian, Urdu, and Vietnamese). An administrative protocol offers suggestions both for using the device and interpreting its results.

New Ways of Classroom Assessment.

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

Portfolios and Beyond: Collaborative Assessment in Reading and Writing.

Glazer, Susan Mandel and Brown, Carol Smullen (1993).

Norwood, MA: Christopher Gordon Publishers, Inc. Although this book is directed towards elementary education, it has many good ideas that can apply to adult education. Chapter titles are: 1) An Alternative Approach to Classroom Assessment: Why Change?; 2) Assessing Classroom Environments; 3) Frameworks for Getting Started; 4) Assessing Writing; 5) Assessing Comprehension Processes; 6) Assessing Comprehension Products; 7) Reporting Progress: Students, Teachers, and Parents Collaborate; and 8) Questions Teacher Ask.

Student-Involved Classroom Assessment, Third Edition.

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

When Less is More: A Comparative Analysis for Placing Students in Adult Literacy Classes.

Venezky, Richard L. et al. (1993). Philadelphia, PA: National Center on Adult Literacy. This research article discusses the use of different placement instruments for students entering adult basic education classes. The study covers three major areas: Methods, Results and Conclusions. This information can inform placement procedures to use in an adult education program.

THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF ASSESSMENT

Knowing What Students Know: The Science and Design of Educational Assessment.

Pellegrino, James W., et al, Editors, (2001). Washington, DC: National Academy Press. From the Executive Summary: Educational assessment "provides feedback to students, educators, parents, policy makers, and the public about the effectiveness of educational services. ... Advances in cognitive and measurement sciences make this an opportune time to rethink the fundamental scientific principles and philosophical assumptions serving as the foundations for current approaches to assessment. ... The Committee on the Foundations of Assessment, supported by the National Science Foundation, was established to review and synthesize advances in the cognitive sciences and measurement and to explore their implications for improving educational assessment. ... This report addresses assessments used in both classroom and large-scale contexts for three broad purposes: to assist learning, to measure individual achievement, and to evaluate programs."

The Role of Classroom Assessment in Teaching and Learning.

Shepard, Lorrie A. (2000). Santa Cruz, CA: Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence. The purpose of CREDE's

research on assessment is to investigate alternative methods for evaluating the academic achievement of language minority students. This report develops a framework for understanding a reformed view of assessment, in which assessment plays an integral role in teaching and learning. The author explains how classroom assessment practices must be transformed in two ways to help students learn. First, the content and character of assessments must be improved by representing important thinking and problem-solving skills in each of the disciplines. Second, the gathering, use, and view of assessment information by teachers and students must become a part of the ongoing learning process.

LEARNER RECRUITMENT AND PERSISTENCE

ABE/GED Student Success Guide. Adult Basic Education Dallas/Rockwall Cooperative (2005). Dallas TX: Dallas Independent School District. Produced in partnership with the North Region GREAT Center, this guide was developed to help adult students realize the program's motto, "Never Too Late to Learn!" Sections include Getting Acquainted, Events, Student Support Services, About Me, About Us, Let's Begin (forms and procedures), and Information for GED Test Takers. The "About Me" section includes information on goal-setting, time management, learning styles, career exploration, decision-making, setting priorities, and what comes after the GED.

Enhancing Adult Motivation to Learn: A Comprehensive Guide to Teaching All Adults, Third Edition. Wlodkowski, Raymond J. (2008). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers. The third edition of the original 1985 book offers advice and strategies in a jargon-free style for teachers and trainers who want learning to be a motivating experience for adults. Drawing from recent research in the fields of cultural and ethnic studies, communications, cognitive psychology, systems theory, and multiple intelligences, Wlodkowski gives examples of how to use this information in practical ways, taking into account cultural and gender differences in learner motivation. He examines characteristics needed to become a motivating instructor, as well as four major motivating factors: inclusion, attitude, meaning, and competence.

One Day I Will Make It: A Study of Adult Student Persistence in Library Literacy Programs. Porter, Kristin E. and Cuban, Sondra and Comings, John P. (January 2005). New York, NY: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation. Library-based literacy programs are an important part of the network of organizations that provide adult literacy instruction, but research has shown that individuals who enroll in such programs generally do not participate long enough or intensely enough to achieve significant gains. Over the course of four years, nine adult literacy programs in The Wallace Foundation's Literacy in Libraries Across America initiative participated in a study on increasing student persistence. The programs improved the training of tutors, incorporated goal-setting activities, strengthened computer-assisted instruction, and tracked participation better; a few also attempted to provide on-site child care or transportation vouchers, but implementation was difficult. Overall, student participation did not increase over time -- mostly because of the adult learners' difficult personal situations. Some important lessons emerged: Library literacy programs should be prepared to accommodate intermittent participation by adult students and should push to connect students to social services and other supports that might help them overcome barriers to participation.

Persistence Among Adult Education Students Panel Discussion National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (August 2006). Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy. This 30 minute video focuses on persistence in ABE, ESOL, and GED programs, and features a NCSALL study entitled, "Supporting the Persistence of Adult Basic Education Students." Dr. John Comings' presentation examines student persistence in adult education programs. He presents a working definition of persistence, examines existing research, and describes NCSALL's three-phase study of the factors that support and inhibit persistence. Other panelists include adult literacy advocate Dr. David Rosen and two adult literacy practitioners, Kathy Endaya and Ernest Best. TCALL's Clearinghouse Library makes this DVD available on loan to Texas educators ONLY.

Persistence, Privilege, and Parenting: The Comparative Study of Intergenerational Mobility. Smeeding, Timothy M. Erikson, Robert and Jantti, Markus, Editors (2011). New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation. Making comparisons across ten countries, Persistence, Privilege, and Parenting brings together a team of international scholars to examine why advantage and disadvantage persist across generations. The book sheds light on how the social and economic mobility of children differs within and across countries and the impact private family resources, public policies, and social institutions may have on mobility. A significant step forward in the study of intergenerational mobility, the book demonstrates that the transmission of advantage or disadvantage from one generation to the next varies widely from country to country. TCALL's Clearinghouse Library makes this book available on loan to Texas educators ONLY.

Recruitment and Retention for Literacy Programs. National Center for Family Literacy (2005). Louisville, KY: NCFL. Strategies gathered from practitioners working in the field are highlighted throughout this guide. Sections include: Understanding Adult Motivation; Creating a Recruitment and Retention Plan; Challenges and Strategies; and Who's Involved in Recruitment and Retention. Guide also examines goal setting and tips for planning recruitment events. Many appendices are included, such as a self-check survey and planning calendar for program recruitment and retention, a student exit questionnaire, sample public service announcements, and more. Also available from NCFL is a "Recruitment and Retention for Literacy Programs Resource Kit," which includes this guide book, a CD-ROM with templates and forms, 30 Posters (15 in English + 15 in Spanish) for raising awareness about your program, 200 Postcards (100 in English + 100 in Spanish) to remind potential and returning students about your program, and 100 Bookmarks with reading tips for parents (1 side printed in English, the other in Spanish) to hand out at special events.

Recruitment and Retention in Adult Education Programs: Some Suggestions to Light the Way. Thistlethwaite, Linda L. (2001). Macomb, IL: Central Illinois Adult Education Service Center. Teachers and administrators from several Illinois adult education programs contributed to this manual. The book covers typical reasons that adult learners drop out or fail to complete programs, and suggests intake procedures to identify those most at risk of dropping out, including goal setting. The contributors then offer 200 ideas for recruitment and retention, including user-friendly strategies, responsive strategies, empowering strategies, and more.



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

In this issue, we are highlighting free online resources cataloged in TCALL's Library in the category of **Accountability and Assessment**, one of the six Core Content Areas of the Texas Adult Education Credential.

"Currently there is a greater focus on accountability in adult education in Texas. The challenge lies in the successful implementation and documentation of adult education. Documentation may be formal or informal. It includes mandated assessments, authentic assessments as well as measures of teacher proficiencies, learner recruitment and persistence." (Retrieved from the Credential Project's website -www.tei.education.txstate.edu).

ASSESSMENT AND THE NATIONAL REPORTING SYSTEM

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

Effects of Instructional Hours and Intensity of Instruction on NRS Level Gain in Listening and Speaking. Young, Sarah (December 2007). Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics. This digest reports on a descriptive study examining two questions related to adult English language learners' educational level gains in the National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS), as measured by the standardized oral proficiency assessment BEST Plus: (1) What is the relationship between instructional hours and educational level gain on BEST Plus? and (2) What is the relationship between intensity of instruction and educational level gain on BEST Plus? To provide guidance to users on the number of instructional hours needed for students to show a level gain on BEST Plus, the Center for Applied Linguistics collected pretest and posttest data on more than 6,500 students from two states.

Guide to Diving Deep into the NRS Local Pool: Attendance, Educational Gain and Transition Outcomes. Condelli, Larry and Shaewitz, Dahlia and Pane, Natalia and Colombi, Greta and

Movit, Marcela (May 2010). Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. This guide and its accompanying training materials focus on ways to analyze the core NRS outcome measure of educational gain, the four follow-up transition measures, and student attendance, and suggest areas to examine to plan program improvement efforts. Chapter 4 offers two case studies of local programs that have successfully used data for program improvement.

Learning to be an NRS Data Detective: The Five Sides of the NRS. Condelli, Larry and Pane, Natalia and Coleman, Steve and Shaewitz, Dahlia and Hollender, David (June 2006). Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. This guide focuses on five sides to making NRS work: two foundational elements that must be in place to collect and use data (data collection policies and procedures and a state data system) and policies and procedures in three areas (assessment, goal setting, and follow-up measures) for collecting NRS core outcomes.

NON-FORMAL AND ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT OF ADULT LEARNERS

Assessment and Montessori for Adults. Hamilton, Patti J. (2000). Schererville, IN: (In Press) The author states, "Research in andragogy -- adult learning and development -- is showing us not only that the content goals are going to be different in adult education from those in children's education, but that the principles upon which this development is accomplished are actually different." Hamilton then goes on to discuss the Montessori method-related process principles that influence the choice of assessment tools for adult education. She uses an example of assessing an adult learner writing project using authentic assessment, or "assessment that empowers learners to actively develop their knowledge in usable ways."

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

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

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

THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF ASSESSMENT

Documenting Outcomes for Learners and Their Communities: A Report on a NCSALL Action Research Project. Bingman, Mary Beth and Ebert, Olga and Bell, Brenda (March 2002). Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. From the Executive Summary: "The action research described in this report focused on developing approaches that local programs can use to document the outcomes of student participation in adult basic education programs. Documentation efforts in the study focused on particular aspects of students' lives that the program or the students identified as areas in which they hoped to make a change. The ... team established a process that helped students identify the changes they hoped to make (i.e., their goals for education) and to document achievement of these goals and outcomes ... documented outputs and outcomes as part of their focus on the Equipped for the Future framework standard Take Responsibility for Learning ... [and had students use] calendars to document their activities that supported their children's education."

The Local Connection: Building a Data Use Learning Community. Condelli, Larry, et al (July 2009). Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. This guide uses a "community of learners" model as an organizing framework to promote data use, foster communication on data, and sustain a culture of data use at the local level. Provided in the guide are specific strategies for increasing motivation among program staff to use data.

Tool Kit on Teaching and Assessing Students with Disabilities. U. S. Department of Education (August 2007). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Tool Kit offers a compilation of current information that will move states forward in improving results for all students with disabilities. It was developed for students age birth through 21, though it likely has application for older adults as well. The Tool Kit will be added to over time to include more information designed to support states' efforts and to communicate the results of research on teaching, learning, and assessments. The Tool Kit includes information about the Department's investments, papers on large-scale assessment, technical assistance (TA) products, and resources. The section on large-scale assessment includes a collection of seven papers and a glossary that address key issues related to the participation of students with disabilities in these standards-based assessments. The TA products are divided into four substantive areas: Assessment, Instructional Practices, Behavior, and Accommodations. Primary access to the Tool Kit is through the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Ideas That Work Web site. The Web site contains a table of contents that lists all Tool Kit resources. Users will find a description of each resource, including its citation and target audience. The Web site contains the master list of Tool Kit documents and will be updated as new products become available. There is a set of parent materials on the website as well.

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

LEARNER RECRUITMENT AND PERSISTENCE

Access to Literacy for Language Minority Adults. Cumming, Alister (June 1992). Washington, DC: National Center for ESL Literacy Education. A significant problem for adult literacy education is that of language minorities not participating or sustaining their involvement in instructional programs. Many literacy programs designed for or by majority populations may

be perceived as inaccessible, irrelevant, or inappropriate by minority populations, even those groups most in need of literacy education. This ERIC Digest describes factors that may restrict access to adult literacy education in North America and discusses several potential solutions. Particular attention is given to two populations often considered “at risk” -- immigrant women and involuntary minorities such as refugees.

Adult Student Persistence: Study Circle Guide. Smith, Cristine, et al (May 2006). Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. Revised from a 2003 study circle guide to include the second phase of the NCSALL research on adult student persistence, this guide provides comprehensive instructions for facilitating a 10½-hour study circle. It explores what the research says about adult student persistence and ideas for how to apply what is learned in classrooms and programs. The guide is based on a review of the NCSALL research on adult student persistence conducted by John Comings and others, summarized in an article entitled “Supporting the Persistence of Adult Basic Education Students” and other studies on student motivation and retention. It includes articles, resources, and action research reports to help practitioners consider strategies for increasing adult student persistence. This guide provides all the necessary materials and clear instructions to plan and facilitate a three-session study circle with an option for a fourth. Each session lasts three-and-a-half hours.

Adult Students: Recruitment and Retention. Wonacott, Michael E. (2001). Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. How to attract and retain adult students is an enduring question for providers of adult education. Adult students must juggle competing demands on their time from study, family, work, and other commitments; their learning goals are often different from those of educational institutions and providers; and their needs and aspirations may change during the education process, sometimes as a result of it. This ERIC Practice Application Brief reviews recent research related to adult student recruitment and retention and provides guidelines for recruiting and retaining adult learners.

Classroom Dynamics in Adult Literacy Education. Beder, Hal and Medina, Patsy (December 2001). Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. Study investigated classroom behavior in adult literacy education examining questions critical to understanding the field:

- * How is instruction delivered, and what is its content?
- * What processes underlie teaching and learning?
- * What external forces outside the classroom shape classroom behavior (in ways such as tardiness and tuning out)?

A better understanding of these issues can influence policymakers’ decisions, teachers’ classroom strategies, and researchers’ agendas. In Chapter 6, several factors shaping classroom composition are discussed, including gender, age, ethnicity, and race.

Constructing Achievement Orientations Toward Literacy: An Analysis of Sociocultural Activity in Latino Home and

Community Contexts. Monzó, Lilia and Rueda, Robert (May 2001). Ann Arbor, MI: Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement. Minority children are often thought to lack an achievement orientation. In this report, CIERA researchers discuss the home and community contexts of Latina/o immigrant children in a low-income community in Southern California, to demonstrate how sociocultural factors interact to produce motivation. Findings reveal that even among demographically similar families, a diverse set of constraints and affordances are at play which significantly impact students achievement orientations toward literacy and schooling. Further, the report asserts that the families’ daily struggles to negotiate within a linguistically and culturally unfamiliar environment make the importance of literacy - particularly English literacy - quite transparent to children.

Employers, Low-Income Young Adults, and Postsecondary Credentials: A Practical Typology for Business, Education, and Community Leaders. Bozell, Maureen R. and Goldberg, Melissa (October 2009). New York, NY: Workforce Strategy Center. This report investigates a number of education and training programs involving employers in efforts to help disadvantaged young adults attain post-secondary credentials leading to career track employment. The report explores the aspects of the programs investigated that they believe to be of greatest interest to business, education, and community leaders, as well as funders interested in replicating such endeavors. The common characteristics across model programs, the key challenges and how they were addressed, and the lessons learned about each program are captured in the report resulting in a document that is part typology report and part practical guide.

The Financial Psychology of Worry and Women. Ricciardi, Victor (February 2008). Lexington, KY: Kentucky State University/ Social Science Research Network. This paper provides a review of significant academic studies and non-academic research endeavors in the realm of negative emotions (with an emphasis on worry), gender, and decision making. The author encourages behavioral finance researchers to place greater attention into the development of new research studies and academic papers in the area of negative affect (feelings, emotions, moods). The financial psychology literature on gender and worry documents the emerging hypothesis that researchers should explore is women reveal greater degrees of worry than their male counterparts for different categories of financial services and investment products. The paper has implications not only for financial literacy and women, but also for health literacy and other barriers to women’s persistence in adult literacy programs.

Focus on Basics, March 2000 (Persistence Theme Issue). NCSALL/World Education (March 2000). Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. This issue’s cover article is “Helping Adults Persist: Four Supports”. Other featured articles are “The Effects of Continuing Goal-Setting on Persistence in a Math Classroom”; “Look Before You Leap: Helping Prospective Learners Make Informed Educational Choices”; and “Do Cognitive Skills of Dropouts Matter in the Labor Market?”

The Importance of Social Interaction and Support for Women Learners: Evidence from Family Literacy Programs. Prins, Esther and Toso, Blaire Willson and Schafft, Kai (May 2008). University Park, PA: Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy, Pennsylvania State University. "Although many women value and benefit from social interaction in adult education and family literacy, these social dimensions are often treated as tangential or inconsequential. Utilizing data from two studies of family literacy programs in Pennsylvania, this study examined how family literacy programs provide a supportive social space for women in poverty. We found that many learners had limited social support and social ties with people outside their program and few opportunities for recreation. As such, family literacy programs fulfilled important social functions by enabling women to leave the house, enjoy social contact and support, engage in informal counseling, pursue self-discovery and development, and establish supportive relationships with teachers. In sum, adult education and family literacy programs play an important role in helping women in poverty receive social support and, in turn, enhance their psychosocial well-being." -- Key Findings section of the Research Brief.

Learners' Engagement in Adult Literacy Education. Beder, Hal and Tomkins, Jessica and Medina, Patsy and Riccioni, Regina and Deng, Weiling (March 2006). Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. Engagement is mental effort focused on learning and is a precondition to learning progress. It is important to understand how and why adult learners engage in literacy instruction because engagement is a precondition to learning progress. This study focused on how learning context shapes engagement. The practical reason for doing so is that to a great extent adult educators control the educational context. Thus if they understand how the educational context shapes engagement, they can influence engagement in positive ways.

Making Good on a Promise: What Policymakers Can Do to Support the Educational Persistence of Dropouts. Almeida, Cheryl and Johnson, Cassius and Steinberg, Adria (April 2006). Boston, MA: Jobs for the Future. This report focuses on the question, "Are pathways available to help dropouts pursue an education and move toward an economically productive adulthood?" By analyzing data from the first national study to follow a representative group of young people over time (the National Educational Longitudinal Study), this report assesses how far our society is from "making good" on the promise of a second chance, and offers a starting point for improving the record. Findings counter the prevailing views about the dropout population. For example, one finding is that most dropouts are remarkably persistent in their drive to complete a secondary education. Another finding concludes that although many dropouts go on to pursue postsecondary education, few earn degrees.

Motivation and the Adult New Reader: Becoming Literate at the Bob Steele Reading Center. Demetrio, George (2002).

Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada: National Adult Literacy Database. The author recounts a study of an adult literacy program he administered in Hartford, CT from 1987 to 1994. The study included teacher action research, tutor perspectives, and case presentations on student learning and motivation, as well as learning histories of 19 students. A follow-up to an earlier version of the report, this document integrates more systematically educational philosopher John Dewey's concept of "growth" and his broader pragmatic theory of knowledge.

Persistence Among Adult Basic Education Students in Pre-GED Classes. Comings, John P. and Parrella, Andrea and Soricone, Lisa (December 1999). Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. A goal of every adult literacy, ESOL, and adult secondary education program is to help its students persist in learning until they reach their educational goals. The research described in this report was undertaken to help programs meet this goal. This paper summarizes previous research on the topic; presents findings from new research exploring the forces that support and inhibit persistence; describes programmatic and instructional attempts to address these forces; and draws conclusions for policy, practice, and further research. The section on "Lessons from Program Practice" includes ideas for intake and orientation.

Practitioner Toolkit: Working with Adult English Language Learners. National Center for Family Literacy and National Center for ESL Literacy Education (2004). Washington, DC: Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education. As the adult English language learner (ELL) population continues to grow, many adult and family literacy programs are experiencing new or rapidly expanding ELL populations and are not fully equipped with resources to serve them. Particularly many faith-based and community-based providers in rural areas and other small, locally funded projects lack resources, infrastructures, and experienced staff trained to work with adult English language learners. This Practitioner Toolkit was thus developed as a resource to support adult education and family literacy instructors who are new to serving ELL adults and families. Components of the Toolkit include responses to Frequently Asked Questions; a first-day orientation guide; lesson plans; and research-to-practice papers on critical topics. Part IV includes ideas on helping ELL adults transition into other educational programs.

Texas Adult & Family Literacy Quarterly is the publication of the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy & Learning (TCALL), made available free to adult educators, literacy providers, and others interested in adult and family literacy. **The Quarterly** is dedicated to advancing knowledge in the field by addressing topics of concern to adult and family literacy practitioners, adult learners, and scholars. The audience includes teachers, students, administrators, program coordinators, researchers, literacy volunteers, and in general individuals interested in the fields of adult and family literacy.

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The Quarterly is published by TCALL as an activity of The Texas Adult & Family Literacy Clearinghouse Project, a state leadership project in adult education funded through Texas Education Agency and supported by Texas LEARNS. TCALL is a University Center at Texas A&M University, College of Education and Human Development, Department of Educational Administration and Human Resource Development.

The contents of **The Quarterly** do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy & Learning, Texas A&M University, Texas Education Agency, nor Harris County Department of Education.

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