

## In This Issue

2

Protecting the Interests of  
Adult Learners

3

Effective Staff  
Development for Volunteers

6

Professional Development  
Opportunities: English  
Language/Civics, GED, more

10

Making Sense of the World:  
Inquiry-Based Learning

11

Federal Policy News

12

Why We Do What We Do

Equipped for  
the FutureRETHINKING THE WHYS, WHATS, AND HOWS  
OF ADULT EDUCATION

by Paul Jurmo, Deputy Education Director, Consortium for Worker Education

In the past 20 years, adult literacy education has seemed constantly to take two steps forward and one step back. Individual practitioners and programs come up with new and improved ways to respond to learners' needs, but then those programs fade from the scene as people burn out, retire, or get defunded. We often lack mechanisms to capture and share good practices. When we do communicate, we have often lacked a common language to describe what we do and need.

As new people come into the field, they reinvent wheels that were already invented—or spin them. In this confusion, we get pushed into responding to policies that don't reflect the complexities of our students' learning needs, reasonable expectations of program achievements, good practice, or the supports we need.

In policy discussions at the LAC and throughout the country in the past few years, I've heard lots of complaints about the alphabet soup of policies and requirements adult education programs try to deal with: WIA, NRS, NYCALI, TABE, NYSPlace, and so on. What I don't hear enough of is anyone coming up with an alternative set of proposals for what an effective adult basic education system looks like.

I'm pleased to report that I have found an alternative. It's called Equipped for the Future (EFF), a system reform initiative of the National Institute for Literacy. I'd been hearing about EFF in conference presentations and on listservs since the mid-1990s. Though these descriptions were sometimes a bit confusing, with lots of layers, information, and charts, I was able to pick out some things I liked.

**The Strengths of EFF**

One of the things I like about EFF is that it acknowledges the complexities of learners as persons. The many EFF charts include three learner Role Maps that recognize that learners function not only as workers but also as parents and family members and as community members.

Another thing I like is that EFF broadens the definition of "basic skills" from the 3 Rs to include such skills as problem solving, teamwork, research, and using technology. EFF defines 16 Content Standards divided into four broad categories: communication, decision-making, interpersonal, and lifelong learning skills.

continued on page 9

by Elyse Barbell Rudolph  
Executive Director

# Sound the Battle Cry!

Recently I had the occasion to hear the words of our students in three unexpected and very public arenas. Each time, the voices caught me off guard and moved me to the core. They also reminded me that those of us who are passionate about adult literacy have to keep letting the public hear our learners' voices—especially, right now, in light of developments at the federal and state level.

Bernard Kerik, former police commissioner, spoke at a Bookbinder's Guild dinner on January 9. Bookbinder's Guild, always a big supporter of NYC literacy initiatives, devoted its first annual President's Dinner to literacy concerns. Kerik's speech reminded me of why we do what we do:

I have managed a great deal with little formal education, and yet I will forever be saddled by those three terrible words: high school dropout. On one of the happiest days of my life, I was devastated when the headlines read "High School Dropout Appointed NYC Police Commissioner." People sometimes use those words to marvel at all I have accomplished. I know they are complimenting me, but all I hear is the echo of a young man's failure, of decisions made before I knew what life was about, before I knew what I was capable of doing.

A few days later, I was driving home listening to Radio Rookies on WNYC. Sunnie Hwang, a student at the Flushing Y GED program, told a heartbreaking tale of a happy childhood spoiled by the deaths of both parents. (See page 12.) The hope and despair in her voice reminded me that our work has direct impact on thousands of Sunnies, one student at a time.

Finally, Ken English, Director of Literacy Programs at New York Public Library, forwent the opportunity to sing the praises of his programs to our new state education director, Tom Orsini, at a meeting at the LAC. Ken simply asked Tom to read the writings of students telling how much their education has meant to them.

In light of recent developments at the federal level, these three wonderful moments remind us of the importance of telling our stories to the world. In the past month, we have learned that Ron Pugsley will no longer direct the Division of Adult Education and Literacy of the U.S. Department of Education. The nominees for the board of directors of the National Institute for Literacy apparently include no adult educators and no one from the Northeast. The NY State Commissioner of Education does not include adult literacy as one of his six priorities for the coming year, lumping adult education in with family literacy.

If ever there was a time to make our voices heard, this is it! See the News section on page 11 for details on some of these issues, and then do something. Write a letter. Talk to your colleagues and friends. Share your students' stories. If you have ideas about making an impact with policymakers, email them to [publications@lacnyc.org](mailto:publications@lacnyc.org) for dissemination. If each of us takes action, we are sure to have an impact. ■▲◆



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Funding for the LAC is provided by the New York City Mayor's Office, the New York State Education Department, and a wide range of philanthropic foundations, corporations, and individuals.

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## NEW YORK CITY'S LIBRARIES COLLABORATE TO IMPROVE ADULT EDUCATION



by Ken English, Literacy Project Director, New York Public Library

Adult educators often promote collaboration—in the classroom or among staff—so that participants work together to solve problems. The process includes identifying needs and goals and then brainstorming ideas that lead to strategies and an action plan. This is exactly the model being used in a collaborative project among the adult learning programs of the Brooklyn Public Library (BPL), Queens Borough Public Library (QBPL), and New York Public Library (NYPL, serving the other three boroughs).

The problem we are addressing is finding cost- and time-effective ways to provide quality staff development for our volunteer tutors. One strategy has been led by the literacy staff at QBPL: an annual citywide conference for volunteer tutors and their students. QBPL staff and outside consultants have provided excellent workshops, on topics of interest to both ESOL and ABE volunteers. The workshops have engaged tutors and students in hands-on activities they can replicate and expand on in their own learning sessions. This year, the conference will be held at the Flushing Adult Learning Center on April 13.

Now our challenge is to increase the number of in-service workshops for our volunteer tutors. Professional staffing at most centers consists of a site manager and an assistant, who support more than a dozen tutors and over a hundred students.

Planning and scheduling workshops for groups that meet days, evenings, and weekends is a nightmare. So how can we provide in-service training to our tutors at library literacy sites throughout the city?

The NYPL Centers for Reading and Writing have had success with the strategy of using consultants to work onsite with students and tutors. Unfortunately, outside consultants provide only a temporary infusion of talent and tutor support. Tri-library leaders decided that it would be more effective to develop and tap into the talents of staff members—without detracting from what they are already doing.

Through an initiative supported by the NYCPDC, the three library systems are collaborating to encourage staff to develop workshops that showcase their talents and interests. At a recent tri-library meeting, Peter Kondrat, the new NYCPDC Director, held a staff development session on designing in-service workshops. Literacy staff members are now planning workshop abstracts that will be considered for presentation at the QBPL conference and later at BPL. We expect to select at least six presenters, two from each library program, to work as staff development consultants.

After the initial conference presentations, these trainers will deliver their workshops at selected library literacy sites throughout the city, working directly with tutors and their student groups. This repetition will not only help refine the workshops but also maximize the reach of each trainer's effort to build a quality staff development workshop.

Training literacy program staff as professional developers has many advantages. Since these "experts" work in the learning centers, tutors will have ongoing and sustainable access to professional development—in contrast to their experience when an outside consultant comes in for a day and then disappears. In addition, we will be building a pool of staff developers who can be called on to train volunteers across the city and at regional and national conferences. Through the tri-library collaboration and with NYCPDC support, we hope to continue to nurture the development of our volunteers by continuing to develop our own professionals. ■

### NYC's Library Literacy Programs

	BPL	NYPL	QBPL
Learning centers	6	9	6
Full-time staff	23	25	27
Volunteer tutors	120	100	130
NYCALI students	790	1500	1857
ESOL students	0	500	1408
ABE students	790	1000	449

The NYC Professional Development Consortium is one of eight regional staff development consortia established by the New York State Education Department to coordinate and support professional development in adult education and training.



# resources

## Web Impaired?

All of this issue's Resources are web-based. It's not that LAC program staff members don't like print; it's that the Internet puts such a wealth of information at their fingertips—far more than can be found in any library.

If you don't have access to the Internet at home or at work, or if you would like to learn to be a more effective web surfer, come use the Computer Learning Center (CLC) at the LAC. CLC open hours are listed on page 7.

## Health Literacy

Ira Yankwitt, Director of Adult Literacy Services, recommends the following websites for adult education practitioners interested in health literacy.

### Health Literacy Studies

[www.hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy) HLS, a research program of the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL), is based at the Harvard School of Public Health. The website includes multimedia health literacy resources, a literature review and annotated bibliography of published research in medicine and public health, and research reports.

**NOAH** [www.noah-health.org](http://www.noah-health.org) New York Online Access to Health (NOAH) offers full-text documents in both English and Spanish on a wide variety of health-related topics, from adrenal gland disorders to tuberculosis, or from *arthritis* to *violencia*. It also links to hospitals and other health-care organizations in the greater New York area.

### Health and Literacy Special Collection

[www.worlded.org/us/health/lincs](http://www.worlded.org/us/health/lincs) The National Institute for Literacy LINCS health and literacy area, maintained by World Education, offers links to a rich variety of health literacy resources. The best way to access materials is by clicking on the left navigation bar to choose resources for learners, teachers, or health professionals. An example of a good resource in this collection is the El Paso Collaborative Health Literacy Curriculum, with lesson plans on diabetes, breast health, menopause, household hazards, and other topics. Click Teacher/Tutor, then Teaching Activities, and then Complete Curricula.

## Data Management

This list is the first in a several-part series of technology and data management resources recommended by Megan Swiderski, Associate Director of ALIES and Data Management. These websites aim to help educational organizations use technology and data to manage their programs better in order to improve students' educational experiences.

**Horizon** <http://horizon.unc.edu> Horizon's mission is to provide a forum to explore the implications of a rapidly changing world on educational organizations and processes, examining ways to make educational organizations and programs more effective.

**EDUCAUSE** [www.educause.edu](http://www.educause.edu) EDUCAUSE aims to advance higher education by promoting the intelligent use of information technology. Its publications page contains links to many books and periodicals about information systems and education.

**ACM** [www.acm.org](http://www.acm.org) The Association for Computing Machinery is an international scientific and educational organization dedicated to advancing the arts and sciences as well as applications of information technology. ACM's publications page contains links to magazines, journals, and books on information technology.

**AACE** [www.aace.org](http://www.aace.org) The Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education encourages scholarly inquiry relating to information technology in education. AACE disseminates research results and their applications through publications, conferences, and interorganizational projects.

**IAMOT** <http://mot.cprost.sfu.ca/~iamot> The International Association for Management of Technology supports research and application projects worldwide. In cooperation with government or private organizations, IAMOT encourages education in the field of management of technology, as well as acting as an information resource center in the field.

## Instructional Technology Links

This month's recommendations from Marguerite Lukes, Director of Instructional Technology, are two websites with a sense of humor. One of them is even directly related to integrating technology into instruction. The other . . . well, even serious adult educators need to laugh now and then.

**Ozline.com** [www.ozline.com](http://www.ozline.com) This site offers lots of links, tutorials, and articles, as well as step-by-step instructions for creating student-driven projects and WebQuests. Everyone, from beginners to web designers, has a lot to learn from Ozline. The site is both easy to navigate and informative.

**Satirewire** [www.satirewire.com](http://www.satirewire.com) Because you can read and you have a sense of humor, you should check out this "New Satire for the New Economy." Satirewire finds the absurd in every current event and global situation. Feeling stressed and blue about the state of the world? Why not laugh about it?

## New York Urban League

New York Urban League, through a grant from the NYC Board of Education and in collaboration with ASPIRA of New York, the United Federation of Teachers, and United Parents Associations of New York City, is working on a project to help parents become better informed and to learn how to be effective participants in School Leadership Teams. The NYC School Leadership Teams website has an excellent list of links for parents and teachers at [www.nycslt.org/resources.html](http://www.nycslt.org/resources.html). The NY Urban League is at [www.nyuul.org](http://www.nyuul.org). 🗽📖

# {announcing

## GED Lesson Planning Institute

Beginning April 18, the Adult Literacy Services Unit of the LAC will offer a five-day institute on GED lesson planning. Funded in part by a School to Work Opportunities Act Grant from the New York State Education Department and the New York City School to Work Alliance, the Institute will pay particular attention to the needs of teachers of 16- to 24-year-olds. Participants who successfully complete the institute and submit lesson plans will receive a \$300 stipend. Please see the Calendar on page 7 for dates and application information.

## Scholastic Book Donations for Youth and Family Literacy Programs

The LAC would like to thank Scholastic, Inc., for selecting us to receive a donation of 3,000 children's books for distribution to New York City youth and family literacy programs. We are proud to help support Scholastic's social mission of enriching the learning experiences of children and families.

Books will be distributed on Wednesday, March 27. To schedule an appointment, please contact Jaynell Walls at 212.803.3323 or [jaynellw@lacnyc.org](mailto:jaynellw@lacnyc.org). Due to the anticipated high demand, missed appointments will not be rescheduled. Please note that programs are responsible for transporting their own books.

## ABE 2002 Conference

The New York City Consortium for Adult Basic Education is holding its annual adult basic education conference, "Rising to New Challenges," on Saturday, May 4, 8 am–4:30 pm, at Fashion Industries High School, 225 West 24th Street, between 7th and 8th Avenues. The schedule includes breakfast, a plenary session, and three workshop sessions on various topics related to math, BENL, pre-GED and GED, and ESOL instruction. Publishers will display their adult literacy materials. Register before April 20 for \$10; same-day registration is \$15. Download the registration form from the LAC website at [www.lacnyc.org](http://www.lacnyc.org) or contact Carolyn Fernando at 212.242.4014.

## 2002 Tri-Library Adult Learning Conference

On Saturday, April 13, the Queens Borough Public Library will host the 2002 Tri-Library Adult Learning Conference. The Queens, Brooklyn, and New York Public Libraries are collaborating to organize this event for students, tutors, and staff members. The conference offers a series of workshops on adult teaching and learning for literacy and ESOL during the morning and afternoon. (See related story on page 3.) For more information, call 718.480.4300.

## Financial Services for Low-Income New Yorkers

Community Development Credit Unions (CDCUs) are nonprofit cooperatives, owned by their members, that offer convenient, affordable financial services for low-income New Yorkers. Like banks, they are federally insured up to \$100,000 in savings; they offer savings and checking accounts, loans, ATM cards, credit cards, and money orders. However, CDCUs offer lower services fees and more affordable interest rates than banks do; they also allow individuals to open an account with \$20 or less. More importantly, they are dedicated to enhancing economic opportunities in their communities. For more information, or to request a classroom presentation, call the CDCU closest to you:

Bronx: Sarah Starbuck at Bethex Federal Credit Union, 718.299.9100 x17

East Harlem: Lillian Bent at Union Settlement Federal Credit Union, 212.828.6063

West Harlem: Trina Heizman at Homesteaders Federal Credit Union, 212.479.3340

Southern Manhattan: Pablo DeFilippi at Lower East Side People's Federal Credit Union, 212.529.8197 x17.

Eastern Brooklyn: Jack Lawson at Bushwick Cooperative Federal Credit Union, 718.418.8232

## Explorations in Imaginative Thought

The Touchstone Center, in association with the Abrons Arts Center and Henry Street Settlement, is offering a two-year series of workshops exploring the various strands of imaginative thought that inform the center's interdisciplinary arts and education work with children and teachers. On Sunday, March 10, 10 am–4 pm, Melissa Heckler will present "Singing to the Sky: The Indigenous Imagination," at the Abrons Arts Center, 466 Grand Street. The fee is \$35. For information, contact the Touchstone Center, 141 E. 88th Street, New York, NY 10128, phone 212.831.7717.

## Conferences

### Exemplary Practice in Literacy Instruction, Rutgers 34th Annual Conference on Reading and Writing

March 15, Somerset, NJ  
Contact IRA Vice President Lesley Morrow, 732.932.7496, x8119, or Jana Curry, x8205

### Gateway to Global Understanding, 47th Annual Convention of the International Reading Association

April 28–May 2, San Francisco  
Registration deadline: March 22. Fee: \$175 member, \$225 nonmember.  
[www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org)  
or 800.336.READ

### COABE National Conference 2002, Commission on Adult Basic Education

May 8–11, Charleston, SC  
Early registration deadline: April 8. Fee: \$235 member, \$285 nonmember.  
[www.coabe2002.org](http://www.coabe2002.org) or contact Ms. Carol Shefrin, MCIDC Plaza Building 58, 6395 SR 103 North, Lewistown, PA 17044, [carcar@aejtc.org](mailto:carcar@aejtc.org) ■

# March

## Calendar of Events

free professional development events  
for literacy practitioners  
in and around New York City

[ 1 ]

### Using Community Newspapers in the ABE/ESOL Classroom

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Friday, March 1, 1–4 pm

**Presenter:** Winston Lawrence, Ed.D.

Community newspapers communicate local and other relevant news to the neighborhood, highlighting issues that confront the communities in which they publish. This workshop will show teachers how they can use community newspapers to enhance instruction and to promote civic and community awareness.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or [jaynellw@lacnyc.org](mailto:jaynellw@lacnyc.org)

Sponsor: LAC

[ 7 ]

### Technology & Innovation Study Group

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#### Language, Culture & Power in the Classroom

Thursday, March 7, 9:30 am–3 pm

**Presenter:** Marguerite Lukes

Participants will explore the use of culturally relevant materials and the role of the teacher in relationship to adult learners. In addition, participants will explore how technology can support principles of shared classroom power, with digital photography as one in-depth example.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or [jaynellw@lacnyc.org](mailto:jaynellw@lacnyc.org)

Sponsor: LAC

[ 8 ]

### Popular Education in the Classroom Follow-Up

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Friday, March 8, 1–4 pm

**Facilitator:** Winston Lawrence, Ed.D.

In this follow-up to the January 28 session, teachers will engage in practical activities to show how popular education is conducted in the classroom. Teachers will work collaboratively to design lessons that incorporate popular education methods. **For participants in the January 28 session only.**

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or [jaynellw@lacnyc.org](mailto:jaynellw@lacnyc.org)

Sponsor: LAC

[ 12 ]

### GED 2002 Series

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#### Social Studies Curriculum Design

Tuesday, March 12, 1–5 pm

**Presenters:** Anita Caref & Frannie Rosenson,  
Brooklyn College Adult Literacy Program

This workshop will introduce participants to lesson ideas and resources developed by staff at the Brooklyn College adult literacy program for use throughout CUNY GED programs. Participants will sample model lessons, reflect on key elements and instructional methods, and work collaboratively to develop social studies lesson ideas of their own.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or [jaynellw@lacnyc.org](mailto:jaynellw@lacnyc.org)

Sponsor: LAC

[ 22 ]

### Technology Show ‘n’ Tell Series

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#### Putting Your Lesson Plans Online (Follow-Up)

Friday, March 22, 9:30 am–12:30 pm

**Facilitator:** Mariann Fedele

In this follow-up to the February 15 session, participants will return with lesson plans created for their classrooms to be posted and linked to the LAC website.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or [jaynellw@lacnyc.org](mailto:jaynellw@lacnyc.org)

Sponsor: LAC

[ 26 ]

### Program Managers’ Series

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#### New Assessment Tools for Adult Learners

Tuesday, March 26, 9:30 am–1 pm

**Facilitators:** Ira Yankwitt, LAC,  
and Peter Kondrat, NYCPDC

The yearlong Program Managers’ Series continues with a conversation with three national leaders in assessment and evaluation: John Strucker of the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy at Harvard, Larry Condelli of the Pelavin Research Institute, and Henry Braun of the Educational Testing Service. Participants will get a close look at three new assessment instruments designed for adult learners, especially those in ESOL and low-level literacy programs.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or [jaynellw@lacnyc.org](mailto:jaynellw@lacnyc.org)

Sponsors: LAC & NYCPDC

# April

[ 4 ]

### Technology & Innovation Study Group

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#### Engaged Learning

Thursday, April 4, 9:30 am–3 pm

**Presenter:** Marguerite Lukes

Engaged learning meshes perfectly with principles of adult learning, in which students are problem-solvers working collaboratively on authentic tasks. In this session, participants will explore principles of engaged learning, examining examples in the context of adult education. They will investigate how technology can support engaged learning, using digital video as an example.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or [jaynellw@lacnyc.org](mailto:jaynellw@lacnyc.org)

Sponsor: LAC

[ 9 ]

### GED 2002 Series

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#### Language Arts Curriculum Design

Tuesday, April 9, 1–5 pm

**Presenters:** Gayle Cooper and Lisa Simon,  
City University of New York

This workshop will introduce participants to lesson ideas and resources created by CUNY staff developers for use in CUNY GED programs. Participants will sample model lessons, reflect on key elements and instructional methods, and work collaboratively to develop language arts lesson ideas of their own.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or [jaynellw@lacnyc.org](mailto:jaynellw@lacnyc.org)

Sponsor: LAC

# [ 11 ]

## ESOL Institute

### Culture in the Classroom

Thursday & Friday, April 11 & 12, 9 am–4 pm  
Friday, May 10, 9 am–4 pm

**Facilitator:** Winston Lawrence, Ed.D.

Since September 11, many teachers, students, and communities have been dealing with issues of cultural conflict, stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. This institute will explore the meaning and relevance of students' cultural background to their learning. What is the relevance of students' culture in an American classroom? What is culture's role in engendering conflict? How important is language in cultural development? Participants will develop classroom curricular material and lesson plans that promote cultural sensitivity and understanding.

**Apply by March 8, 2002.** All applicants must commit to attending all three full-day sessions.

Download an application form from the LAC website, [www.lacnyc.org/events](http://www.lacnyc.org/events), or call Dr. Winston Lawrence at 212.803.3326.

**Sponsor:** LAC

# [ 18 ]

## GED Lesson Planning Institute

Thursday & Friday, April 18 & 19, 9 am–5 pm  
Friday, April 26, 9 am–5 pm  
Fridays, May 17 & 24, 9 am–5 pm

**Facilitator:** Ira Yankwitt

In this five-day institute, participants will be guided through the process of creating model lesson plans for GED instruction. The institute will pay particular attention to the needs of teachers of 16- to 24-year-olds. Topics include the differences between adult and youth education, active learning strategies for the GED classroom, higher-order thinking skills, GED 2002 and the 21st-century workplace, and characteristics of model lessons. Each participant will develop a GED lesson plan to be reviewed by fellow participants. Final copies of the lesson plans will be collected and published by the LAC. Participants who complete the institute and submit a finished lesson plan will receive a \$300 stipend.

**Apply by March 8, 2002.** All applicants must commit to attending all five full-day sessions.

Download an application form from the LAC website, [www.lacnyc.org/events](http://www.lacnyc.org/events), or call Ira Yankwitt at 212.803.3356.

**Sponsor:** LAC

# [ 19/26 ]

## ALIES Trainings

### NRS Outcomes Workshop

Friday, April 19, 10 am–1 pm  
OR Friday, April 26, 10 am–1 pm  
**Attend only one of the two dates.**

**Presenter:** Megan Swiderski

This workshop addresses changes and updates to the NRS goals and outcomes for FY02. It will guide participants in collecting outcomes according to NRS guidelines using ALIES Turnaround Documents and other reports. The ALIES logic for outcomes such as educational gain, employment outcomes, and other outcomes will be analyzed. Key issues such as testing, employment, and surveying will also be discussed.

RSVP: Zurn Porter at 212.803.3348 or

[zurnp@lacnyc.org](mailto:zurnp@lacnyc.org)

**Sponsor:** LAC

## Clearinghouse Open Hours

The LAC Clearinghouse is open for browsing on Mondays, 1–5 pm. Browsers can peruse our collection of professional development and curriculum materials, including books, journals, audio- and videotapes, and software. Most materials are available for loan for 28 days. If you have questions about using the LAC Clearinghouse, please contact Ira Yankwitt at [iray@lacnyc.org](mailto:iray@lacnyc.org) or 212.803.3356.

## Discover Online Resources at the Computer Learning Center!

The LAC's Computer Learning Center and Instructional Technology staff are available to help you discover great online learning resources and plan how to use them.

Please contact Mariann Fedele, Coordinator of Instructional Technology, at [mariannf@lacnyc.org](mailto:mariannf@lacnyc.org) or 212.803.3325 to reserve a computer workstation.

### Computer Learning Center Open Hours for March & April

Date	Time
Wednesday, March 6	1–5 pm
Friday, March 22	1–5 pm
Wednesday, March 27	1–5 pm
Friday, April 5	1–5 pm
Wednesday, April 10	1–5 pm
Thursday, April 25	1–5 pm

**All LAC and NYCPDC events take place at 32 Broadway, 10th floor.**

### ALIES User Groups

ALIES users meet on the second and third Tuesdays of each month at 1 pm in the Computer Learning Center. Attend either one of the two monthly sessions, but not both. No RSVP is necessary.

Register online for LAC professional development events! Go to [www.lacnyc.org](http://www.lacnyc.org) and click on the Events tab at the top. Find the workshop you want using the convenient monthly listings, and click Register Now. Follow the instructions for quick and easy online registration. (Sorry, online registration is not available for ALIES events.)



Literacy Assistance Center



NYC Professional Development Consortium

# jobs in literacy]

To place a free employment ad, email [publications@lacnyc.org](mailto:publications@lacnyc.org) or fax 212.785.3685. The deadline for job ads for the May *Literacy Update* is April 1.

Ads are posted on the LAC website at [www.lacnyc.org](http://www.lacnyc.org) on a rolling basis. Please specify in your email or fax whether you want your ad in print or on the web only.

## Deputy Executive Director

Join the leadership team of the Literacy Assistance Center and help execute a newly developed strategic plan. Develop and manage foundation, corporate, and individual fundraising. Provide oversight of staff and internal operations, administration, and programs. Successful candidate can foster effective relationships and has both outstanding communications skills and demonstrated achievement in building and managing a motivated team. Minimum 7 years' experience in nonprofit, government, or educational agencies; strong development & management skills. Graduate degree in education, business, public administration, or a related field preferred. Résumé, letter & salary history to Elizabeth Rivera, LAC, 32 Broadway, 10th floor, New York, NY 10004, fax 212.785.3685, [lizr@lacnyc.org](mailto:lizr@lacnyc.org). ■

## Literacy Instructor (FT)

Teach basic literacy to adults and young adults who have low literacy skills (3rd–5th grade level) in Spanish and/or English. Bilingual, degree in TESOL or related studies, passionate interest in teaching literacy.

## Computer Lab Instructor

Teach workshops in computer literacy, word processing & office productivity software, and Internet usage to GED students & community members.

Experience teaching basic skills, strong knowledge of computer applications, ability assist in maintaining lab and local network.

Both positions are in vibrant Bronx community center that includes GED program, computer technology center, active college advisory program. Résumé to Phipps CDC, [afalco@hippsny.org](mailto:afalco@hippsny.org). ■

## Director, New York City Writing Project

Oversee all aspects of \$700,000 grant-driven program in literacy education, including program development for school-year & summer programs, supervision of staff, negotiation of annual contracts, development of funding prospects, communication with national program leaders. Min. 8 yrs exp. in writing/literacy education in K–12 schools, proven track record in program development for literacy education, min. 8 yrs administrative exp., familiarity with issues in literacy education, advanced degree.

Résumé, letter, names of 3 refs to New York City Writing Project Search, Institute for Literacy Studies, Lehman College, 250 Bedford Park Blvd., Speech & Theatre Bldg. Rm 116, Bronx, NY 10468-1589. ■

## Director

NYC-based Worker Education Program providing literacy & skills classes to union members. Manage 45+ staff. Direct/expand program. Travel in NYC region. Master's, 3+ yrs supervisory exp. Bilingual Spanish or Chinese pref. Driver's license. Résumé & letter (include reference code LAC) by fax to 212.332.9368 or 9541, Attn: UNITE! Adult Education Director Search, or by email to [HR@uniteunion.org](mailto:HR@uniteunion.org). ■

## Career Center Assistant

Permanent, part-time: 30 hrs/wk + benefits, some eves and alternate Sat. mornings. Help program director run computer center, tutor GED, facilitate job search seminars; work with people from emerging backgrounds. Knowl. of MS Office, good business writing skills, passion for ministry. Contact Stella Yee, Christian Herald Association, 212.684.1991 or [syee@chaonline.org](mailto:syee@chaonline.org). ■

## Education Director

Develop agency policies & objectives, supervise teaching staff, organize staff development opportunities, develop & implement monitoring & evaluation systems, prepare program reports. Master's & 2–3 yrs exp. teaching adults or administration, broad exp. & perspectives on adult literacy field req., bilingual Spanish or Arabic a plus. Carroll Gardens Neighborhood Women, 294 Smith St., Brooklyn, NY 11231, phone 718.624.3475. ■

## Home Visitor

Conduct weekly home visits, assist caseload of 12 families, conduct intake, maintain case records. HS diploma or equiv. & some college req. Knowl. & exp. in child development & early childhood education; principles of child health, safety, nutrition; adult learning principles; family dynamics. Complete CDA in home visiting or equiv. within one year of hire. Contact Sonia Gonzalez Cruz, Early Head Start, Grand Street Settlement, 80 Pitt St., NY, NY 10002, fax 212.358.8784. ■

## NY Psychologist, LD Assessment (FT)

Provide assessment and testing for adults to determine scope of LD & academic proficiencies/weaknesses for use in requesting academic accommodations & placement in literacy & GED classes. Team approach, work with LD educators & speech/language therapists. NY licensed psychologist with exp. testing adults. Résumé & letter to ICD-Human Resources, 340 E. 24th St., NY, NY 10010, fax 212.585.6262. ■

## Volunteer Tutors

Work with adult students in math, writing, and reading for the GED & college entrance exams in a nonprofit adult education program that offers training, materials, and ongoing support for tutors. Day & evening sessions available M & Th.

Contact Jean Prioleau, Manager, CWE/1199 Adult Learning Center, 718.694.9750 x287 or [Montiero@aol.com](mailto:Montiero@aol.com). ■

## Coordinator of Vocational Skills Training

Organize vocational training in computer software & carpentry/construction for out-of-school youth ages 17–21: develop curricula, hire instructors, manage site, develop internship sites. BA or equiv. trade exp., vocational training exp., exp. with educating adolescents a plus.

## Job Developer

Assist program participants, ages 17–21, in securing employment; conduct career readiness workshops, develop a job bank & internship sites. BA & 2 yrs job development exp. or equiv., experience with adolescents a plus.

## Education Specialist

Assess math & reading levels for grade- and high-school-age youth, develop individual academic plans & lesson plans, conduct tutorials, recruit & supervise tutors, monitor student progress, work with parents & school personnel, assist with curriculum development. BA min., master's pref.; strong background in youth ed, exp. in implementing innovative teaching techniques; exp. in administering standard reading & math tests a plus.

## Pre-GED/GED Instructor (PT)

Develop curricula, conduct classes, perform evaluation tests. Flexible hours. BA & 2 yrs exp. Exp. teaching out-of-school youth ages 17–21, bilingual a plus.

## Senior Case Manager

Daily supervision & direct oversight of core services team, including grad students. Proficient clinical skills for individual & group modalities, team coordination & decision-making, program management. CSW w/ 2 yrs post-master's exp., bilingual Spanish a plus.

Résumé & letter to Estel Fonseca, Vice President of Youth Services, The Mount Hope Housing Company, 2003-05 Walton Ave., Bronx, NY 10453, fax 718.466.4788. ■

## Equipped for the Future

### RETHINKING THE WHYS, WHATS, AND HOWS OF ADULT EDUCATION *cont'd*

One of the most important things to like is that EFF lays out guidelines for good practice, such as:

- Taking the time to get to know learners and why they come to our programs

- Making instruction meaningful and relevant to those purposes

- Helping learners apply skills in the real-world tasks and contexts they face as workers, family members, and citizens

- Helping learners actively build on their previous knowledge

- Integrating assessment into instruction

- Emphasizing ongoing program improvement

These guidelines are all consistent with what I believe to be good adult education. They provide a language adult educators can use when communicating with other practitioners and learners about what we are trying to do at the program level and with policymakers about the support we need to provide high-quality services. Furthermore, these guidelines are backed up by research and input from many stakeholders in the field, including adult learners.

#### Integrating EFF into Instruction

In order to connect EFF to my own work, I needed to go through two three-day EFF training sessions and then figure out how to integrate EFF into the adult education services at the Consortium for Worker Education (CWE), where I work. CWE is a large citywide network of basic literacy, ESOL, GED preparation, work-readiness, and computer training programs.

In a series of meetings, some with Lisa Levinson, director of the EFF National Center, our CWE program and professional development staff studied the EFF model and decided to weave EFF into a new introductory computer curriculum we will be developing this year. Moving away



from a traditional computer training model, we want instead to help our computer teachers use the kinds of good adult education practices outlined above to teach both basic computer skills and the four broad categories of skills defined by EFF. We want to integrate EFF skills because we know that many of the learners who come to our computer skills programs can benefit from upgrading their communication, interpersonal, decision-making, and lifelong learning skills. Furthermore, people typically use computers in order to accomplish specific tasks—in EFF language, to “convey ideas in writing,” “use information and communications technology,” “solve problems and make decisions,” “take responsibility for learning,” “learn through research,” and so on. In other words, people learn computer skills—like any other skill—for a purpose. Weaving the EFF skills into computer instruction helps learners to see how computers can help them communicate, make decisions, build relationships with others, and be effective lifelong learners.

#### Broader Implications of EFF

On top of all this, I also like EFF for some larger reasons:

- A growing national network of committed, creative adult educators is trying out EFF and sharing what they learn.

- EFF provides room for learner-centered, participatory-minded adult educators to carry out their principles.

- EFF is working toward alignment with the National Reporting System (NRS).

- EFF has the potential of providing a framework for more appropriate state and national adult education policy.

For these reasons, I urge adult educators in New York City and State—and beyond—to learn more about EFF ([www.nifl.gov](http://www.nifl.gov)) to see how it might be adapted to strengthen our programs; create the policy and funding supports we need; and serve the workers, family members, and citizens who come to our programs. ■▲◆

# teachers' corner ]

## Inquiry-Based Learning

### LEARNING TO MAKE SENSE OF THE WORLD

Part One of a two-part article

by Pamela Little

Director of Youth Literacy Services

In today's world, the ability to memorize facts and information doesn't go far. Facts change, and information is readily available. What people need to know is how to get and make sense of a mass of data. Thus, in addition to transmitting facts, dates, and theories, educators must help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Inquiry-based learning is one method to support the development of such skills.

#### *What is inquiry-based learning? On what educational or cognitive theory is it based?*

Although it has been around since the early 20th century, inquiry-based learning—rooted in the writings of educator and philosopher John Dewey—is still considered an “alternative” educational approach. Dewey advocated for child-centered learning, based on real-world experiences. Inquiry-based learning:

- Encourages students to ask questions and then find answers, rather than passively absorbing facts imparted by an instructor.

- Is based on questions individual learners inherently care about rather than on a set curriculum. The instructor's role is to help learners arrive at and express their questions so they can find answers to questions they truly care about.

- Focuses on teaching students how to learn rather than on transferring specific content or skills.

Dewey held that there is simply too much knowledge in the world for any individual to master. Inquiry-based learning seeks to transform students into competent and enthusiastic learners who can find the information they need and then critically evaluate that information.

#### *That sounds a lot like constructivism. How is inquiry-based learning different from constructivism?*

Inquiry-based learning falls under the broader category of constructivist theory. Constructivism, a theory based on scientific study about how people learn, states that people construct their

own understanding and knowledge of the world through experience and reflection. When we experience something new, we have to reconcile it with our previous ideas and experiences, either changing our “map” of the world or discarding the new information as irrelevant. We are active creators of our own knowledge. Inquiry-based learning builds on that constructivist foundation, with a special emphasis on encouraging learners to ask questions that matter to them.

#### *Is inquiry-based learning appropriate for everyone?*

Inquiry-based learning is appropriate for both children and adults. Look at babies to see inquiry-based learning at work. Babies crawl around putting stuff in their mouths, learning through all their senses, always manipulating things. They are fascinated by surprises. People never outgrow their ability and need to inquire, to manipulate new things and to be surprised. As educators, we need to maintain that kind of learning in the classroom. Inquiry-based learning is about maintaining learners' inborn ability to manipulate and be surprised by the world around them.

#### *Is inquiry-based learning applicable to all subjects?*

Inquiry-based learning is applicable in many different subject areas. However, not all learning should be approached with an inquiry model. Sometimes students need to acquire basic knowledge such as the times tables or algorithms in mathematics; such knowledge can be taught directly. We want students to know basic mathematical facts, but those facts are not an end in themselves; they are tools learners use to solve problems. In the means-end relationship, content is a means, not an end; it is a vehicle for further inquiry.

For instance, in social studies, social scientists—geographers, economists, anthropologists—are continually inquiring into the relationships among landforms, culture, environment, economics, and so on, in order to find out why people are behaving as they do or why a region's economy is thriving or declining.

As a way of reproducing that kind of real-world inquiry in the classroom, my son's teacher used an inquiry-based approach to a unit on the history of New York City. My son's class started by studying the first inhabitants of Manhattan. Students divided into small groups that focused on different aspects of Native American life: currency, natural resources, tools, and so on. The teacher posed questions to each group of students based on what they were studying and the conclusions they were drawing. After the groups shared their findings with the class, the teacher rearranged the groups to include an “expert” from each of the former groups in each new group. These groups hypothesized about the relationships between change in the environment and change in the inhabitants. The teacher provoked the students to search for meaning in the relationships and challenged them to support their conclusions with evidence from their research. In this inquiry-based model, the teacher served as a facilitator rather than as a purveyor of knowledge. (See Part Two for more on the teacher's role in inquiry-based learning.)

#### *Does inquiry-based learning require expensive resources or materials?*

Inquiry-based learning requires different types of resources from those used in a traditional classroom, but the materials don't cost more; resources are simply allocated differently. Instead of basic textbooks, educators buy trade books, computers, software, multimedia resources, and raw materials that students can manipulate and use to construct models. ■❗◆

*In the May issue: using inquiry-based learning to promote higher-order thinking skills, the teacher's role, resources for educators.*

## Bush's Adult Education Funding Proposal for FY03

On February 4, President Bush released his FY 2003 budget proposal for adult education and family literacy. Though overall funding for the Department of Education is increased, adult education is level-funded at \$591 million. Of that amount, approximately \$575 million is allocated to state grants, \$10 million to national leadership activities, and \$7 million to the National Institute for Literacy. For the complete budget, go to [www.omb.gov](http://www.omb.gov). Congress will debate the President's budget proposal throughout the spring, with the House and the Senate each releasing their own budget proposals. A compromise budget is expected by fall 2002. Spring 2002 is thus an excellent time to write legislators to inform them of the importance of adult literacy and to request, at a minimum, no decrease in funding at a time of domestic budget cuts.

## NIFL Board Nominees Stir Furor

In January, President Bush announced the nomination of ten new members of the board of the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL). If approved by the Senate, these nominees will replace the entire current board, whose terms have expired, and will decide on a new NIFL director.

Though the White House released no information about the proposed board members other than their names and home states, adult educators, pooling their personal knowledge of the nominees, have come to the conclusion that the list includes no one whose primary area of expertise is adult literacy. Most nominees are involved in K-12 education.

Andy Hartman, former director of NIFL, wrote to the NIFL-National Literacy Advocacy (NLA) listserv that, while the nominees he knew personally would be assets to the NIFL board, "what the nominees appear . . . to lack as a group is 'balance.' That is, they don't fully match the mission of the NIFL," which "was created to focus on adult and family literacy issues."

While various organizations, including the National Coalition for Literacy, are spearheading efforts to organize the field, NLA members also suggest that concerned individuals write letters to policymakers urging them to protect the interests of adult learners. During the Senate confirmation process, some nominees may withdraw or be eliminated, at which point replacements will be nominated. Policymakers who will influence the composition of the NIFL board include:

President Bush

Your senators (in New York, Schumer and Clinton)

Senator Edward Kennedy of MA, chair of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee (Go to [www.senate.gov/committees](http://www.senate.gov/committees) to see the complete list of committee members, which includes Sen. Clinton.)

Ron Paige, Secretary of the Department of Education

Several sample letters, along with names of other potential recipients, have been posted to the NLA listserv ([www.nifl.gov/lincs](http://www.nifl.gov/lincs), click on Discussions). Some of these letters not only urge balance on the NIFL board but also request additional funding for adult literacy. Key points from these letters—which recognize that President Bush's concern for education focuses on children rather than on adults—include the following:

NIFL's legal mandate is to focus on adult and family literacy.

Many immigrants and Americans born into poverty do not have the skills they need either to make a living in the modern workplace or to support their children's learning.

Parent literacy and educational level is the strongest single predictor of children's success in school.

Not all adults are parents, but all adults do need literacy skills in order to be effective workers and citizens.

David Rosen, NLA moderator, asks letter-writers to e-mail copies of their letters to Jon Randall of the National Coalition for Literacy at [fedstrategics@home.com](mailto:fedstrategics@home.com).

## Pugsley Leaves Adult Education

Ron Pugsley, longtime Director of the Division of Adult Education and Literacy, has been selected as the Senior Advisor on International Education in the federal Department of Education. Before he began his new job on January 15, Ron included the following letter to the field in his electronic newsletter, Thursday Notes:

*As you know, next week I will begin my new position as the Senior Advisor to Assistant Secretary D'Amico on International Education. Before I leave, I want to let you know how much I appreciate your support and cooperation over the last 12 years while I served as Director of the Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL).*

*As director, I have been privileged to work with an energetic, committed, and insightful group of education professionals. The field of adult education, and certainly our decisions here in DAEL, have benefited greatly from your sharing of your time, talents, and expertise.*

*Your support has been invaluable to me in performing my duties in this office. Although I go on to a new assignment that holds exciting possibilities, I will remember my work with you as among my most productive days of federal service.*

*Sincerely,  
Ron*

## Portrait of a Student

On January 23, WNYC broadcast "Alone," an autobiographical story by Sun Nang (Sunnie) Hwang, as part of its Radio Rookies series. Sunnie, 18, is a Korean immigrant taking a GED program at the Flushing YWCA. Many of us here at the LAC were moved by Sunnie's piece, which reminded us that every learner has her own story. Here are some excerpts from "Alone"; you can listen to the complete piece at [www.wnyc.org](http://www.wnyc.org).

Sometimes I wish my life were just a dream, and when I woke up, I would find myself in a small town in Maryland. I was born there, and I lived there as a child. I was so happy; I had everything: mom, dad, brother, our house, dog, playground. . . .

My dad died before I was six. A few months later, my mom died of cancer, too. Now I live by myself in the attic apartment of someone else's house. Some people think living alone is comfortable, but it's not. There's no one to tell, "I'm home!" There's no one to talk to. [After their parents' deaths, Sunnie and her brother moved back to Korea to live with an uncle.]

When my aunt came to Korea to see us, she found some pictures of my family in my grandmother's closet. . . . In those pictures, I saw the happiest moments of my life. . . . I told my aunt that I wanted to come live here. I thought it would be like living in those pictures. . . .

I just want to pass my GED and go to college. I want to go to Maryland and live in my own house with my family. I want to wake up from this dream of my life and be happy like in those pictures, but I don't know how to get there.

We talked to Sunnie Hwang at the Flushing Y with the help of Eun Joo Kim, director of the youth center there. When we asked if she was famous because of her radio broadcast, Sunnie just laughed. We asked if her situation had changed since her story aired. She said, "I have the feeling I should work harder. More people are watching me and rooting for me, so there's a greater responsibility to achieve my goals."

When she completes her GED, Sunnie wants to go to the University of Maryland, where her father studied. She wants to have a family: one girl and one boy, as in her birth family.



Literacy Assistance Center

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[www.lacnyc.org](http://www.lacnyc.org)

Download 2002 GED testing schedules in NYC.

Access agenda and activities from selected LAC professional development events.

Use the Adult Education Locator to help adult learners find appropriate education and training programs.

## Contact the LAC

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Literacy Referral Hotline:

212.803.3333

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800.662.1220

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