

## In This Issue

2

Literacy "Oscars"

3

Dropouts Drop In  
to Adult Ed Programs

6

Professional Development Events

10

Inquiry-Based Learning

11

2002 Literacy Recognition  
Award Recipients

12

New Jersey Reads

Authentic Literacy  
in Class Yields Increase  
in Literacy Practices

by Victoria Purcell-Gates, Ph.D., Professor of Teacher Education, Michigan State University

Using more authentic literacy activities in classes for adult learners results in students who read and write more in their lives outside of school. My co-researchers—Sophie Degener, Erik Jacobson, and Marta Soler—and I recently documented this outcome in our national two-year study, *Literacy Practices of Adult Learners Study* (LPALS), sponsored by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL). The complete research report can be downloaded at [www.gse.harvard.edu/~ncsall](http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~ncsall).

The finding that authentic literacy instruction increases the practice of literacy outside of school is important for two reasons:

1. The most important outcome of any literacy instruction is undoubtedly helping adults to read and write more in their lives.
2. Adults who read and write more have children who start school knowing more about reading and writing.

**Authentic Literacy Activities**

What are "authentic" literacy activities? My co-researchers and I defined them as reading or writing events that are like those that occur in people's lives, as opposed to reading or writing in order to *learn* to read and write. Authentic literacy activities include reading a newspaper

to learn the news or check the weather, reading a memo from a teacher to get information about one's child, reading a novel for relaxation, or writing checks to pay for something.

The opposite of authentic literacy activities is "school-only" activities: reading and writing in order to learn to read and write. Examples include filling in skill worksheets, reading a story to answer comprehension questions, underlining examples of short vowel sounds in a story, writing essays to be graded by the teacher, or working with a computer program designed to teach skills.

The essential components of authentic literacy events are *purpose for the reading or writing* and *the text being read or written*. Authentic purposes are those for which people actually read and write texts in the world. Reading a newspaper to learn the news is an authentic purpose. Reading a newspaper to practice identifying main ideas is a school-only purpose. Authentic texts are those one finds in the world: newspapers, magazines, fliers, letters, mortgages, and so on. School-only texts are those specially written for schooling: worksheets, stories written for adult learners, flashcards, and the like.

continued on page 9

by Elyse Barbell Rudolph  
Executive Director

# Recognizing Our Accomplishments

“OSCARS” FOR THE LITERACY FIELD

I want to offer my personal congratulations, as well as those of the LAC, to the recipients of the 2002 Literacy Recognition Awards (see page 11). This year—as for the past 16 years—the recognition of a stellar crop of dedicated individuals also helps recognize and validate the hard work of our entire field. I hope to see everyone who reads this page at our own glamour-filled equivalent of the Academy or Grammy Awards to celebrate the accomplishments of these eight dedicated literacy professionals on May 23.

While the LAC has a long history of honoring individuals in our annual Literacy Recognition Ceremony, I also want to take this opportunity to recognize important achievements in the literacy field as a whole. Despite some disturbing trends that chip away at our influence on the federal level, our movement has made great strides this year. Here are a few of the really positive things we have encountered in recent months:

English Language/Civics grants received by programs across the city will assist immigrants in attaining English-language proficiency and U.S. citizenship.

Equipped for the Future is gaining national recognition as people try it out and expand its use across the country.

The NIFL-NLA listserv discussion, brilliantly moderated by David Rosen, not only provides a forum that unites us but also is an excellent example of the use of technology.

Policymakers are slowly starting to recognize that there can be no effective workforce development without literacy instruction.

Use of technology for instruction and job preparation is rising as the availability of web-based learning experiences grows and interest in distance learning increases.

A lot of dedicated people are doing a lot of hard work to prepare students to pass the new GED exam.

Private corporations and major foundations are beginning to recognize literacy as a valid and necessary focus for their philanthropy. (See the story about New Jersey Reads on page 12.)

The merger of Literacy Volunteers of America and Laubach Literacy promises to strengthen volunteer-based literacy instruction.

The increased focus on family literacy will prove over time that the only way to ensure that no child is left behind is to make sure the parents are along for the ride as well.

A combination of challenges and accomplishments is always the name of our game. For now, as the program year begins to wind down, take a minute to smell the spring flowers and to pat yourselves on the back for being a part of a field that deserves an award for lifelong achievement. 🍀🌸



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# NYC Professional Development Consortium

## DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL, DROPPING IN TO ADULT EDUCATION

by Peter Kondrat, *Director*



A colleague in Albany, cleaning out some ancient files last month, came across a document outlining a statewide dropout prevention initiative. The analysis of the problem, she said, is remarkably similar to what we hear today: Young people drop out of school because they lack the academic skills to succeed, because they have lost interest in school, or because they are overwhelmed with personal and social stressors. The report was dated 1964.

### Adult Educators' Role in Dropout Prevention

A new statewide dropout prevention initiative is underway. One significant difference today is that adult educators are being called on to play a more prominent role in tackling the problem. Adult educators have a great deal to bring to the table in the matter. We know as well as any other group of educators how to work successfully with those who have not been well served by the public education system. We understand the vital role that adults, as parents, play in the early school success of kids. Most of the twelve Local Action Teams that will craft and implement school-based strategies to keep kids in school include an adult education professional development expert as well as school staff.

Family literacy and vocational training are two of the new components that the adult education community is bringing to the statewide dropout prevention initiative. Two strong indicators of school success are the economic status of the student's family and the educational attainment of a student's parents. The more money a kid's parents earn,

and the more schooling a kid's parents have had, the more likely the kid is to stay in school. Adult educators play a key role in intervening in and disrupting this cruel cycle, which condemns generations to an inferior education. Parents who resume formal learning in adult education programs acquire skills and credentials that can lead to better jobs, higher family income, and more opportunity. Additionally, these parents are better able to advocate for their children in school, and to reinforce at home what is learned in school. Besides, parents who are adult learners are "walking the walk," setting an example of achievement and perseverance for their children.

### Dealing with Young People in Adult Education Classes

But there are a few new wrinkles in the way that we view young people who leave school without a diploma today. For one thing, there is a greater recognition that some young people do not so much drop out as they are pushed out: pushed out either by schools that cannot meet the needs of, say, a struggling reader who is 17 years old, or by administrators who are increasingly obliged to pay attention to the bottom line of graduation rates. It's easier, more cost efficient, to "push out" an adolescent who requires extra time and extra resources in order to graduate, passing the young person off to an adult education program. And that is just what is happening, particularly in states such as New York that are holding the line on tough, uniform graduation standards. There are no hard data, but anecdotal evidence abounds about the proliferation of 16–24-year-olds in adult education classes across the state, sent there from overcrowded and understaffed high schools.

The logic is as cynical as it is elegant: Young people who have little hope of accumulating the credits and passing the Regents exams that are required for graduation are passed off to "get their GED." But many of these young people are ill-equipped academically and socially to work in an adult education setting—not to mention the fact that the GED test unveiled this year is more demanding and is scored more rigorously than before. For now, adult education programs are responding to the needs of these young people in a variety of ways, depending on their resources, funding sources, and expertise. But a more comprehensive response seems to be called for.

Imagine, in 2045, a State Education Department bureaucrat purging some ancient files and coming across a blueprint for a comprehensive dropout prevention strategy from the early part of the century. "How about that?" she muses, perusing the document. "That was when they figured out that 'the dropout problem' wasn't a kid problem. It was a grownup problem. And it required adults to fix the problem."

### Addressing the Issues

The New York Citywide School to Work Alliance, the LAC, and the NYCPDC are sponsoring a forum on May 7 about the increase of young people in GED programs. See the Calendar on page 6 for details. ■

### Correction

The table "NYC's Library Literacy Programs" on this page in the March/April *Literacy Update* gave a misleading impression of the Brooklyn Public Library's programs by listing 0 as its number of ESOL students. BPL in fact served 410 ESOL students last year in a non-NYCALI funded program.

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 ]

## Diversity in the Adult Education Classroom

Adult educators interested in working with concerns related to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (GLBT) communities in preparation for Gay Pride Month in June may want to consult the following resources. Please see the Calendar on page 7 for a related professional development event at the LAC.

### From SABES

SABES, the System for Adult Basic Education Support, is a comprehensive training and technical assistance initiative based in Massachusetts. The SABES quarterly newsletter, then called *Bright Ideas*, dedicated its Winter 2000 issue to GLBT issues in the classroom. In particular, check out the list of resources in this publication. You can view it in HTML or PDF formats at [www.sabes.org/resources/brightideas](http://www.sabes.org/resources/brightideas), or call 617.482.9485 to request a copy.

The Summer 2000 issue of the SABES newsletter—renamed *Field Notes*—includes a follow-up article. “What’s It Like to Be Different, Part II” shares the experience of one adult education teacher as she introduced GLBT issues in her classroom. Access the article at [www.sabes.org/resources/fieldnotes](http://www.sabes.org/resources/fieldnotes).

### From ERIC

“Adult Education and Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Communities,” an article by Sandy Kerka published in 2001, explores the problems that have kept GLBT issues from being addressed in adult education classroom and provides resources to support GLBT concerns in the curriculum. Access the article in HTML or PDF formats from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education at <http://ericacve.org/tia.asp>.

## Professional Development

The following resources provide valuable support for staff developers.

### Pro-Net 2000

Pro-Net 2000 is an adult education professional development project funded by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE). This three-year project, which began in 2000, is housed at the Pelavin Research Center of the American Institutes for Research (AIR). The goal of Pro-Net 2000 is to develop comprehensive professional development systems that provide continuous program improvement.

You’ll find a wide variety of professional development materials on the Pro-Net website at [www.pro-net2000.com](http://www.pro-net2000.com). Pro-Net has developed lists of competencies and sample indicators for managers, instructors, and professional development coordinators (the latter in draft form), with assessment instruments also being developed. Click on “Information Resources” and then on “Adult Education Publications from AIR” to view the competencies and indicators, as well as the *Professional Development Resource Guide for Adult Educators* and a host of other documents. You can also access the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) document *Professional Development for Adult Educators: A State Policy Update* either from the Pro-Net homepage or from [www.nifl.gov](http://www.nifl.gov).

### New National Professional Development Network

The Association of Adult Literacy Professional Developers (AALPD) is a newly formed national group whose members work to determine the needs of the field’s professional developers, as well as how to disseminate information to this audience and how to shape both practice and public policy initiatives. To subscribe to the mailing list, go to the website of the Center for Literacy Studies at <http://cls.coe.utk.edu> and click on “Access CLS public and private mailing lists.”

## Data Management

This list, the second in a series, features resources to help literacy practitioners use data for program improvement.

### Brint [www.brint.com](http://www.brint.com)

The Brint knowledge portal is a resource for content, community, and commerce related to e-business, information, technology, and knowledge management. The American Society for Training and Development selected the site for its usefulness for training and workplace-related issues. *Syllabus* magazine cites Brint for its “comprehensiveness, creativity, and relevance for educators interested in technology.”

### Association for Educational Communications and Technology

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

AECT provides leadership in educational communications and technology by linking professionals interested in the application of educational technology to the learning process. The Information and Technology Management Division shares information and provides leadership in the management of resources, people, facilities, processes, and services in educational media, technology, and information.

### International Society for Technology in Education [www.iste.org](http://www.iste.org)

ISTE is a nonprofit professional organization with a worldwide membership of leaders and potential leaders in educational technology. The organization is dedicated to promoting appropriate uses of information technology to support and improve learning, teaching, and administration.

### T.H.E. Journal [www.thejournal.com](http://www.thejournal.com)

This publication includes many interesting articles about information-based systems and educational technology, including such subjects as distance learning, web-based scheduling, online assessment, and information system product evaluations.

continued on page 11

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## Student Writings on 9/11

ESOL students as well as others have felt the emotional impact of September 11 and its aftermath. Teachers are requested to submit samples of student writing for a booklet to be published by the LAC as a tangible student contribution to the memory of that tragic event. Submit student writing samples by May 31 to Winston Lawrence, Ed.D., LAC, 32 Broadway, 10th floor, New York, NY 10004, fax 212.785.3685, email [winstonl@lacnyc.org](mailto:winstonl@lacnyc.org). For more information, call 212.803.3326.

## Master's in Adult Education from Fordham

Fordham University offers a master's degree in adult education. Classes available for Summer 2002 are Race and Multicultural Education, Emerging Issues in Technology, Research in the Teaching Process, and Literacy Summer Institute. Classes for Fall 2002 cover Program Development and Evaluation, Strategies for Teaching Adults, Computers and Technology for Educators, and many other topics. For more information, contact Kathleen P. King, Ed.D., Associate Professor, Fordham University, 113 W. 60th St., Rm. 1102, New York, NY 10023, phone 212.636.6472, email [Kpking@Fordham.edu](mailto:Kpking@Fordham.edu).

## Call for Manuscripts

*Family Literacy Forum*, a new journal published by the National Even Start Association, seeks manuscripts for upcoming issues. Manuscripts are due July 22, 2002. The journal promotes the exchange of ideas in the field of family literacy and invites conversations among practitioners, administrators, evaluators, social workers, funders, and anyone else involved in the educational lives of families. For submission guidelines, contact Claudia M. Ullman, *Family Literacy Forum*, at [aceullman@worldnet.att.net](mailto:aceullman@worldnet.att.net).

## 2000 Data Drive EL/Civics

The Immigration and Naturalization Service has posted its 2000 state-by-state analysis of immigration patterns, making that data available for calculating states' English Literacy/Civics (EL/Civics) allotments for July 1. The new data affect the states' allotments by updating current immigrant populations and recent increases in immigration. To see the report, go to [www.ins.usdoj.gov](http://www.ins.usdoj.gov). Click on About the INS, then on Statistics, then on Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and then on Immigrants.

## Money Smarts for Free

How much do your learners know about finances? The Money Smart Training Program can help. It includes lesson plans, overheads, and materials for students—and it's free from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). Material is written at the sixth-grade level. Ten units on bank services, consumer rights, saving, credit, home ownership, and more can be ordered from the FDIC. Go to [www.fdic.gov/news/publications/moneysmart](http://www.fdic.gov/news/publications/moneysmart) to download the order form, which you can then fax or mail to FDIC.

## NY State Staff Development Council Conference

The New York State Staff Development Council's Annual Conference, "Nurturing Professional Growth," will be held May 19–21, 2002, in Albany. Featured presenters are Dr. Pam Robbins, "Developing Collaborative Cultures," and Dr. Kay Burke, "Professional Growth Portfolios." Conference participants will have an opportunity to work with both nationally renowned consultants for a full day each. The conference fee is \$350. For additional information about the conference or to register online, go to the New York State Staff Development Council website at [www.formsite.com/nyssdc/2002conference](http://www.formsite.com/nyssdc/2002conference). For information about the New York State Staff Development Council, contact Karla Reiss, President, at 914.332.5560.

## Other Conferences

### Adult Education Research Conference

May 24–26, Raleigh, NC  
Registration fee: \$140  
[www.ncsu.edu/cpe/aerc02](http://www.ncsu.edu/cpe/aerc02) or contact Barbara Copeland, 919.515.2261

### Laubach Literacy & Literacy Volunteers of America 2002 Joint National Conference

May 29–June 1, San Diego, CA  
Registration fee: \$260 member, \$320 nonmember  
[www.laubach.org](http://www.laubach.org) or contact Robyn Smith, 315.422.9121 x319

### Implementing a Family Literacy Program Staff Training

National Center for Family Literacy  
June 10–14, Louisville, KY  
Registration deadline: June 4. Fee: \$415  
[www.familit.org/training/training.html](http://www.familit.org/training/training.html) or contact Renee Harley, 502.584.1133 x167

### Community Technology Centers Network (CTCnet) 11th Annual Conference

June 14–17, Austin, TX  
Early registration deadline: May 15.  
Fee: \$150 affiliate, \$300 non-profit non-affiliate  
[www.ctcnet.org](http://www.ctcnet.org) or call 617.354.0825

### Math for Learning, Math for Life: Adult Numeracy and Basic Skills

Center for Literacy of Quebec and NIFL  
June 27–29, Montreal, Canada  
Fee: \$425 Canadian  
[www.nald.callitcent.htm](http://www.nald.callitcent.htm) or call 514.931.8731 x1415 ■

# May

## Calendar of Events

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

[3]

### ESOL Institute

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#### Culture in the Classroom, Part 2

Friday, May 3, 9 am–4 pm

Open to previously registered participants only.

Sponsor: LAC

[3]

### Technology Show 'n' Tell Series

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#### Using Email Projects in the Classroom

Friday, May 3, 9:30 am–12:30 pm

**Facilitator:** Mariann Fedele

In this hands-on-workshop, participants will be introduced to and explore web-based email projects. Participants will discuss the way they use e-mail both personally and in the classroom, as well as developing strategies and methods for conducting email projects with their students.

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

Sponsor: LAC

[7]

### About the Rapid Increase of Young Adults in GED & Adult Education Programs

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Tuesday, May 7, 8:30 am–noon

**Location:** CUNY Graduate Center, 365 Fifth Ave. at 34th St.

The rapid increase of young adults leaving high school and enrolling in adult literacy and GED programs poses serious policy and program questions about the suitability of the GED to equip these students with the foundation skills and workplace competencies required for meaningful employment. This half-day forum will address the issues facing policy level administrators, adult education program managers, and instructors. The forum's two panels will focus on program issues and on policy issues.

*continued from May 7*

RSVP: Athena Ballard at 212.803.3345 or [athenab@lacnyc.org](mailto:athenab@lacnyc.org)

Sponsors: New York Citywide School to Work Alliance, LAC & NYCPDC

[9]

### Technology & Innovation Study Group

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#### Engaged Learning

Thursday, May 9, 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

[11/14]

### Pre-Service Institute

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Saturdays, May 11 & 18, 9 am–1 pm OR

Tuesdays, May 14 & 21, 5:30 pm–9:30 pm

**Presenter:** Maura Donnelly, LaGuardia Community College

This two-day institute is an introduction to essential adult education practices for new adult educators. It is designed for classroom teachers, program staff, program managers, tutors, and others who are new to the field and have been hired since 2000. Topics include key concepts in adult learning, how to make the best use of NYCALI resources, NY State Education Department goals, lesson planning, and long-range plans for adult education. A follow-up session is anticipated.

RSVP: Athena Ballard at 212.803.3345 or [athenab@lacnyc.org](mailto:athenab@lacnyc.org)

**Registration is required; register for either two Saturdays or two Tuesdays.**

Sponsor: NYCPDC

[17/24]

### GED Lesson Planning Institute

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Fridays, May 17 & 24, 9 am–5 pm

Open to previously registered participants only.

Sponsor: LAC

[29]

### Introduction to Evaluating & Selecting Recently Published Children's Books

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Wednesdays, May 29 & June 5

9:30 am–3:30 pm

**Presenter:** Pamela Little

For more information on this two-part workshop, visit the LAC Events page at [www.lacnyc.org](http://www.lacnyc.org) or contact Pamela Little, [pamela@lacnyc.org](mailto:pamela@lacnyc.org) or 212.803.3351.

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

Sponsor: LAC

[31]

### Popular Education in the Classroom Study Group

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Friday, May 31, 1–4 pm

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

Participants who have attended previous LAC popular education workshops are invited to join this study group. Teachers will discuss readings on the theory and practice of popular education and develop ways of engaging in effective practice.

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

Sponsor: LAC

# June

[7]

## Culture & Diversity

### Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues

Friday, June 7, 9:30 am–12:30 pm

**Facilitator:** Terri Clark, NYC Technical College

Part of the LAC's ongoing exploration of issues of culture and diversity, this workshop will give participants an opportunity to discuss the benefits and challenges of integrating gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) issues into their classrooms. Participants will explore methods of instruction and resources for classroom use. The workshop will be of interest to instructors, program managers, counselors, and staff developers.

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

Sponsor: LAC

[11]

## GED 2002 Series

Tuesday, June 11, 1–5 pm

See the Summer *Literacy Update* for details.

[13]

## Technology & Innovation Study Group

Thursday, June 13, 9:30 am–3 pm

See the Summer *Literacy Update* for details.

[21]

## Technology Show 'n' Tell

### Web-Based GED and ESOL Resources

Friday, June 21, 9:30 am–12:30 pm

See the Summer *Literacy Update* for details.

[28]

## ALIES Trainings

### Final Report Training

Friday, June 28, 10 am–1 pm OR

Friday, July 19, 10 am–1 pm

Attend only one of the two dates.

**Presenter:** Megan Swiderski

This training provides a page-by-page tour of the NYCALI Final Report for FY02. Highlights include changes in the Final Report in FY02, definitions of the Final Report fields, Final Report calculations, and ALIES reports that can be used to verify and troubleshoot the Final Report.

RSVP: Don Campbell, 212.803.3319 or [donc@lacnyc.org](mailto:donc@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 May

Date	Time
Tuesday, May 7	1–5 pm
Wednesday, May 22	1–5 pm
Thursday, May 30	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.



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 Summer 2002 *Literacy Update* is May 2.

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.

## The LAC has three positions available.

Please send letter and résumé for LAC positions only to Elizabeth Rivera, LAC, 32 Broadway, 10th floor, New York, NY 10004, [lizr@lacnyc.org](mailto:lizr@lacnyc.org), fax 212.785.3685.

### Program Assistant

Assist staff of the LAC's adult, youth & instructional technology units by performing a range of clerical support duties: oversee all aspects of workshop & event planning, reproduce materials, organize & maintain unit files. Update mailing lists, keep resource center database current, assist in organizing and maintaining the resource center & technology lab. Must be detail-oriented & well organized. Ability to work collegially, good computer skills, strong customer service ethic a must. Salary to low 30s.

### Data Analysis Specialist

Become a part of the ALIES/Data Analysis team at the LAC: plan & conduct analyses of adult literacy data on a city- & statewide basis, support & train users of the ALIES software system, update & write technical documentation, maintain data archives. Position requires mastery of MS Word & Excel plus strong analytical & writing skills. Knowledge of MS Access highly desired. Attention to detail & excellent interpersonal skills a must. Experience with the adult literacy field & knowledge of related policies a plus. Salary from high 30s, commensurate with experience.

### User Support Coordinator

As part of the ALIES/Data Analysis team at the LAC, coordinate the user support effort for the ALIES statewide rollout by managing technical assistance calls; maintaining a support tracking database; assisting users of the ALIES software system; communicating with staff development consortium directors throughout New York State to plan & coordinate ALIES training including schedules, logistics, materials, and attendance; and working directly with programs to improve the ALIES support structure. Position requires strong skills in MS Word & PowerPoint, as well as superior verbal & written communication skills. Knowledge of fundamental database concepts & MS Access highly desired. Attention to detail & excellent interpersonal skills a must. Some travel in New York State. Experience in the adult literacy field a plus. Salary to high 30s, commensurate with experience. ■

### Pre-GED/GED Instructor (FT)

Curriculum development, instruction, assessment & record-keeping. Min. bachelor's & 2 yrs pre-GED/GED teaching exp. Exp. w/ 16–21-year-olds a plus. Strong background in learner-centered philosophy, goal-setting, authentic assessment & writing process. Fax letter & résumé to Beatriz Caldada at 718.439.3963, or mail to Discipleship Outreach Ministries, 5220 4th Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11220. ■

### Director

Work collaboratively with leadership team to set education center's vision, oversee daily operations, maintain communication with funding sources (including proposal writing & reporting). Master's in education, significant exp. in staff supervision & program management, at least 5 yrs exp. teaching adult education, commitment to learner-centered collaborative education.

### Teacher-Coordinator

Teach ESOL; work with other teachers & leadership team to coordinate contextualized adult learning program integrating ESOL & BE/GED with civic participation, health education & other student interests. Master's in education, some exp. in program coordination, at least 5 yrs exp. teaching English to adults, commitment to learner-centered collaborative education.

Résumé & letter to Search Committee, Sunset Park Adult & Family Education Center, 414 80th St., Brooklyn, NY 11209, fax 718.491.5060. ■

### Bilingual Case Manager, FT (M–F) & PT (Eve & Sat.)

Case management, job placement, job retention & follow-up services to 100 program participants (50 for PT). Conduct student intake, assist participants to identify & overcome barriers to employment, provide work readiness training. BA in human service field plus 2 yrs exp. working with diverse populations. Spanish fluency req.; proficiency in additional language a plus.

### ESOL Teacher, FT (M–F) & PT (Eve & Sat.)

Provide ESOL instruction daily, or two eves per week & Sats. Assist in all program start-up activities including intake, recruitment, ordering supplies & program planning. Work with other program staff to monitor & develop individual learning plans & class projects. Plan one class trip per month with each class. Provide computer-assisted learning. MA or BA plus extensive ESOL teaching exp. with adults; MA in TESOL preferred. Contact Sara Jorgensen, Brooklyn Bureau of Community Service, phone 718.310.5658, fax 718.310.5879, [sjorgensen@bbcs.org](mailto:sjorgensen@bbcs.org). ■

### Center Director

Assume responsibility for program operations at Mill Brook Community Center: direct educational & recreational after-school, evening youth & adult programs; supervise staff; prepare proposals for program expansion & development; facilitate communication to provide integration of services and staff. Bachelor's w/ 2 yrs managerial exp., working toward master's pref.; demonstrated leadership skills; strong presentation skills, verbal & written communication skills; demonstrated knowledge of community service & development.

### Group Leader, Summer Day Camp

Implement & monitor educational & recreational programs: organize & provide leadership for groups designed to encourage learning, develop leadership skills, enhance social development. Work with tutors, assist participants with classroom assignments & projects, organize trips; supervise junior counselors & aides. June 26–Aug. 16, M–F, 8:30–4:30. College student w/ 1 yr exp. in youth work or HS diploma w/ 2 yrs exp. in community-based organization, some supervisory exp., demonstrated knowl. of community service/development.

### Activity Specialist, Summer Day Camp

Organize & lead groups; work with classroom teachers to implement lessons in thematic approach; schedule trips; recommend, develop & facilitate activities. June 26–Aug. 16, M–F, 8:30–4:30. College student w/ 1 yr exp. in youth work or HS diploma w/ 2 yrs exp. in community-based organization, some supervisory exp., demonstrated knowl. of community service/development.

Letter & résumé to Elsie Jimenez, East Side House Settlement, 337 Alexander Ave., Bronx, NY 10454, fax 718.585.1433, email [elsie@eastsidehouse.org](mailto:elsie@eastsidehouse.org). ■

### Basic Education Teachers

Teach basic education and pre-GED classes to low-income & homeless program participants at Jersey City facility. Candidates must be experienced & have training in adult education at the literacy & pre-GED levels. Letter & résumé to Bronwen Charters, The Doe Fund, [bcharters@doe.org](mailto:bcharters@doe.org) or fax 212.690.9839. ■

### Youth Specialist (PT)

Staff & design educational & recreational after-school program for children ages 6–10, M–F, 2–6 pm. Assist in developing & scheduling lesson plans & activities; tutor children in reading & math; supervise daily activities; work with parents. exp. tutoring reading & math. Bilingual Spanish a plus, 1 yr college pref.

### Reading Specialist (PT)

Assist in designing & scheduling lesson plans & activities, M–F, 3–6 pm. Assess & tutor children in developmental reading skills; develop & execute daily literacy & reading comprehension lesson plans; supervise daily activities. 2 yrs exp. planning & executing developmental reading skills activities for school-age children in after-school setting. Bilingual Spanish a plus, bachelor's pref.

### Pre-GED/GED Instructor

Develop pre-GED/GED curricula, conduct classes, perform evaluation tests for Project R.E.A.D.Y. (Resources for Employment and Academic Development for Youth), a Bronx-based educational enrichment & vocational training initiative. FT/PT, flexible hrs. Min. BA + 2 yrs exp. Bilingual, exp. teaching out-of-school youth ages 17–21 a plus. Letter & résumé to Estel Fonseca, Vice President of Youth Services, The Mount Hope Housing Company, 2003-05 Walton Ave., Bronx, NY 10453, fax 718.466.4788. ■

## Authentic Literacy in Class Yields Increase in Literacy Practices *cont'd*

### Details of the LPALS Study

The LPALS study included adult literacy classes across the mainland U.S., in programs focusing on family literacy, adult basic education, Evenstart, and English for Speakers of Other Languages. Teachers and students from their classes volunteered to be part of the study; 83 different classes/teachers and 173 adult learners were represented.

The literacy activities of the classes were typed along a continuum from Highly Authentic to Highly School Only. We tracked the literacy practices of the students by interviewing them in their homes every three months for up to a year or for as long as they remained in the class. We asked if students had increased their practice of a number of literacy activities or begun new activities after they started attending class.

When we analyzed the data about the authenticity of class literacy activities and the degree of change in literacy practices by students, we found that the more the students engaged in authentic reading and writing in class, the more they increased their practice of literacy outside of class. These results were statistically significant and held true even after taking into account the reading level of the students, the type of program they were in, whether or not they were speakers of other languages, their class attendance, the number of times per week the class was held, and the length of time students had attended the class.

Using authentic literacy activities does not preclude explicitly teaching skills. Most teachers in the study who used authentic literacy activities also included explicit skill teaching, often with school-only materials. The key was that they embedded this teaching within authentic literacy activities. Teachers in classes whose literacy activities were rated more school-only tended to teach skills as activities in and of themselves.

### Portrait of an Authentic Literacy Class

Ms. Wilson's ESOL classroom is filled with many different types of texts. A bookcase along the far wall is filled with novels; books of history, science, and poetry; and children's books. Another bookcase contains textbooks, workbooks, and reference materials such as bilingual and monolingual dictionaries.

The local newspaper and various magazines are piled on a table by the wall. In one corner is a computer and, next to it, a panel displaying basic instructions for email and Internet use in three languages: English, Spanish, and Creole. Next to the door, a bulletin board displays fliers of school and community news.

Ms. Wilson often designs class activities around issues that arise in the students' neighborhood. One day some students came to class disturbed by news that a young girl in the neighborhood had been assaulted. Realizing that this issue really mattered to the students, Ms. Wilson devoted much of the next week's instruction to this case. She brought in newspapers that covered the case for the students to read and discuss. Feeling that the police and the community were not taking enough action, the class decided to write a letter to the editor. Ms. Wilson took the opportunity to teach a short lesson on writing such a letter, using models from current newspapers. The class also reviewed spelling patterns they would need for their letter.

Ms. Wilson proposed that the class do research on issues of women's rights and safety. As students read about and discussed these issues, using the Internet and other resources, Ms. Wilson pulled out unfamiliar vocabulary words. She assigned groups to look up the words in the classroom dictionaries, write out the definitions and sample sentences using the words, and post their work for students to use in their reading and writing activities.

Once the class had composed their letter, several students wrote it on the computer, using the spell-checker to ensure accurate spelling. After a whole-class lesson on addressing envelopes, which included finding the necessary mailing information in the newspaper, the letter was sent.

### Teacher Handbook

A handbook for teachers interested in incorporating authentic literacy activities into their adult classes will soon be available through NCSALL. This handbook takes the teacher through the process of identifying and locating authentic texts, getting to know their students and what purposes texts might serve for them, developing thematic units using authentic reading and writing along with explicit teaching of skills, and assessing literacy progress in an authentic context. ■▲●

# teachers' corner ]

by Pamela Little  
Director of Youth Literacy Services

## Inquiry-Based Learning

### LEARNING TO MAKE SENSE OF THE WORLD

Part Two of a two-part article

Inquiry-based learning encourages students to ask questions and then find answers to them. Focusing as it does on teaching students *how* to learn rather than on imparting specific skills, inquiry-based learning encourages the development of higher-order thinking skills.

#### *How does inquiry-based learning foster higher-order thinking skills?*

As Scriven and Paul point out in *Defining Critical Thinking* (Draft Statement for the National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking, 1996), critical thinking is the process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information gathered from or generated by observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication.

Teachers can set up a classroom environment that is conducive to high-level thinking by:

Providing problem-solving activities that require more than routine calculations.

Sharing open-ended activities with more than one right answer.

Constructing questions that encourage higher-order thinking. Bloom's taxonomy may offer suggestions.

Use a variety of assessment methods that match teaching strategies, such as a project rather than an end-of-unit test.

In addition to teaching higher-order thinking skills, the teacher should provide students with opportunities to practice these skills so that they will start to form their own strategies for using and combining these skills.

Finally, students should not only develop and use higher-order thinking skills but also master and internalize them. While skills and strategies can be taught, internalization—habits of the mind, if you will—cannot. However, teachers can support the process of internalization by asking questions and encouraging reflection: How do you know? Can we ever know that? What is the evidence? How did you arrive at that decision?

#### *What does inquiry-based learning look like in practice?*

Here are some of the characteristics of students who are engaged in inquiry-based learning.

**1. Students view themselves as being in the process of learning.** They:

Look forward to learning.

Demonstrate a desire to learn more.

Seek to collaborate and work cooperatively with teachers and peers.

Are confident in learning, demonstrating a willingness to modify ideas and take calculated risks.

**2. Students raise questions, propose explanations, and use observations.** They:

Ask questions that lead them to activities generating further questions or ideas.

Observe critically, as opposed to casually looking or listening.

Make connections to previous ideas.

See detail, detect sequences of events, notice change, and detect differences and similarities.

**3. Students plan and carry out learning activities.** They:

Design ways to try out their ideas, rather than expecting to be told what to do.

Plan ways to verify, extend, confirm, or discard ideas.

Sort out information and decide what is important.

#### *Do you have to give up traditional methods to use inquiry-based learning?*

No. Rather than setting up an either/or choice, traditional vs. inquiry-based learning, we should take the best from both. If you teach only by inquiry, students may not acquire important information they need to know.

If you teach only by traditional methods, student miss the opportunity to learn to solve problems. Students must learn facts, dates, and theories, but they should also learn strategies for solving problems whose answers are not apparent.

#### *What is the teacher's role in inquiry-based learning?*

The teacher is the mediator of students' learning. Initially, the teacher serves as problem presenter—though ultimately we hope students will develop their own problems. The teacher gives students projects to work on and problems to solve, intervening between the student and the problem by asking questions: How are you going to approach this problem? What resources are you going to need? What are steps are you going to take? How will you know when you are finished?

As the project progresses, the teacher helps the students develop internal monitoring strategies by asking, What will you do when you get frustrated? What strategies can you employ to make sure that you are accurate?

When the project is finished, the teacher intervenes to help the students reflect on their learning to derive meaning from it, to construct new meaning, and to apply that meaning to future situations.

This is a different, more complex role than the one teachers assume in a traditional transmission-oriented class. The teacher becomes a provider of problems to solve, a knowledge resource, and a questioner, rather than a giver of knowledge.

#### *How can I learn more about inquiry-based learning?*

As part of this year's work in our project Creative Literacy in After-School Programs (CLASP), the LAC's Youth Literacy Unit has compiled a bibliography of books, journal articles, and web-based resources on inquiry-based learning. Contact me at [pamela@lacnyc.org](mailto:pamela@lacnyc.org) if you would like a copy.



## 2002 Literacy Recognition Awards Ceremony

### The Board of Directors of the Literacy Assistance Center

*invites you to join us for the*

**17th Annual Literacy Recognition Awards Ceremony.**

**Date** Thursday, May 23

**Time** 9:30 am–12:30 pm

**Place** Swayduck Auditorium, New School University  
65 Fifth Avenue, between 13th and 14th Streets

RSVP required! Call 212.803.3315.

### 2002 Award Recipients

Join us in honoring these eight outstanding New York City literacy practitioners.

**Linda Avitabile**, Program Director  
Highbridge Community Life Center

**Sari Barocas**, Worksite Teacher  
HRA BEGIN Language Work Study Program

**Lee Jay Favors**, ESOL Coordinator  
Brooklyn College Adult Literacy Program

**Eleanor Hill**, Volunteer Tutor  
Brooklyn Public Library Bedford Learning Center

**Bonnie Martinez**, Teacher  
NYC Board of Education, Office of Adult & Continuing Education, BEGIN 82

**Nicol Miraflores**, ESOL Coordinator  
Department of Youth and Community Development

**John Staton**, Coordinator in Adult Programs  
NYC Board of Education, Office of Adult & Continuing Education, Region 4

**Mustafa Tanovic**, ESOL Instructor  
Marymount Manhattan College Institute for Immigrant Concerns

*The LAC gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Bookbinders' Guild of New York.*

### Adult Education Statistics

According to statistics recently released by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Adult and Vocational Education, in 1997–8, of the 4,020,500 adults enrolled in state-administered adult education programs:

- 55% were women
- 35% were young adults aged 16–24
- 24% were working poor
- 23% were unemployed
- 9% were welfare recipients
- 8% were incarcerated
- 1% were homeless ■

### Resources *cont'd*

#### Family Literacy

Two (for-fee) family literacy programs or resources have recently been recommended on the NIFL-Family listserv.

#### The Family Literacy Answer Book

Newcomers to family literacy programming, and even some old hands, often find themselves faced with questions they cannot answer. *The Family Literacy Answer Book* provides answers to many of the questions the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) is asked most often. Besides answering your questions, *The Family Literacy Answer Book* also provides additional sources of information. Chapters end with sample forms and lesson plans that can be used in family literacy programs. Sources for Further Study offers an extensive bibliography. The book costs \$49. Go to the NCFL website at

[www.familit.org](http://www.familit.org) or contact the NCFL Publications Department, 325 W. Main St., Suite 200, Louisville, KY 40202-4251, phone 502.584.1133, fax 502.584.0172.

#### Active Parenting

Active Parenting is a series of video-based parenting resources for parents, children, and teachers designed for use in schools, hospitals, social service organizations, churches, and corporations. Kim Gillis of the Family Resource Center of Prince Edward Island, Canada, writes in her post on the NIFL-Family listserv, "We find the program is extremely accessible, strength-based, and clear to understand and follow." For more information, go to the Active Parenting website at [www.activeparenting.com](http://www.activeparenting.com), write Active Parenting Publishers, 810 Franklin Court, Suite B, Marietta, GA 30067, or call 800.825.0060. ■

## Successful Launch for New Jersey Reads

On February 25, New Jersey Governor James McGreevey and Verizon New Jersey President Dennis Bone joined to launch New Jersey Reads at a luncheon at the Community Hills Early Learning Center in Newark. Like NYC Reads, set to launch this fall, New Jersey Reads is one of many local "Reads" organizations Verizon is sponsoring in order to help improve the nation's literacy levels. The goals of the Verizon Reads campaign are to raise public awareness of literacy needs, enlist volunteers to serve as literacy tutors, and promote new funding opportunities to support literacy programs.

New Jersey Reads is a brand-new organization, spearheaded by many of the state's leading literacy providers and educators, including the NJ State Library, the NJ Library Association, Literacy Volunteers of America of NJ, and the NJ Education Association. Also involved are professionals from the NJ Department of Education, Rutgers Graduate School of Education, New Jersey City University, the NJ Association for Lifelong Learning, and other organizations. State Education Commissioner William Librera was among the officials attending the luncheon.

In solidarity with our sister literacy community across the Hudson and in preparation for the upcoming launch of NYC Reads, Elyse Barbell Rudolph, Executive Director, and Jan Gallagher, Director of Publications, represented the LAC at the New Jersey Reads launch. The LAC will be the home of the NYC Reads partnership with Verizon Reads, whose national team was also represented at the event.

At the launch event, Gov. McGreevey signed an executive order outlining steps to ensure that all NJ third-graders can read at grade level, providing a solid background for later learning. Two adult learners from the Jersey City Public Library's literacy program, Elsie Martinez and Ganace Sookdeo, spoke about their accomplishments and the importance of their literacy classes in their lives.

Part of the Verizon Reads public awareness model involves selecting local Literacy Champions to act as spokespersons. One of New Jersey's Literacy Champions, Nets forward Keith Van Horn, spoke at the launch event: "I often visit New Jersey schools and libraries to share the joys of reading with children and adults. It's important for those of us who can read to help low-level readers reach their full potential." The other New Jersey Literacy Champion is Tab Ramos of the MetroStars, a native of Uruguay, who will help reach out to New Jersey's Hispanic population. May 4 is New Jersey Reads Night at the MetroStars game at Giant Stadium; the goal is to recruit bilingual volunteers who can tutor in Spanish.

The launch event also included airing of television public service announcements recorded by New Jersey's Literacy Champions. In them, Tab Ramos said, "Recuerda, todos necesitamos leer," and Van Horn echoed, "Remember, we all need to read."

For more information about New Jersey Reads, visit [www.newjerseyreads.org](http://www.newjerseyreads.org). 📺📖



Literacy Assistance Center

32 Broadway, 10th Floor ▲ New York, NY 10004

[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

General:

212.803.3300

Literacy Referral Hotline:

212.803.3333

TTY:

800.662.1220

To subscribe to *Literacy Update* email [publications@lacnyc.org](mailto:publications@lacnyc.org) or call 212.803.3332

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