



# LITERACY UPDATE

MAY 06 Vol. 15 No. 5

Literacy Assistance Center

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## Assessing Work Readiness

*The National Work-Readiness Credential (WRC) project is a multi-state collaborative formed to develop an assessment that will assure that job seekers have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be successful in entry-level work. The National WRC:*

- > Defines and sets a standard for the skills needed for entry-level work
- > Unites existing and disparate job-readiness programs from different workforce development providers around the standard
- > Strengthens the connection between business and the workforce development community (public and private) with a credential that streamlines the hiring process for entry-level workers

*The NYS Workforce Investment Board's devotion of time and money to this national project reflects our commitment to help meet an acknowledged need in the business community. We recognize that businesses cannot function without entry-level workers who can accomplish entry-level work.*

*This requires certain "core competencies" that the WRC certifies to a common standard. The standard will address the following skills: communication, interpersonal, problem-solving and learning, as well as applied reading and math. The workplace responsibilities will include the ability to acquire and use information to get the job done, use appropriate technology, work with others, solve problems, understand and use systems, demonstrate responsible behavior, and learn new job-related skills.*

*A limited rollout of the assessment is anticipated in NY starting in late summer, with full national implementation in the first quarter of 2007. The limited rollout will include a variety of sites that meet the standards for test delivery. We hope to include as broad a spectrum as possible, including literacy centers, community colleges, and One Stop Centers.*

*We welcome and solicit your active feedback. For more information, go to [www.workforcenewyork.com](http://www.workforcenewyork.com) or call the Workforce Development & Training Divisions of the NYS Department of Labor at 518.457.0380.*

> **Dr. Sherryl Weems** The Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center and NYS Workforce Investment Board

### The National Work Readiness Credential Project Update

> **Karen Elzey and Sondra Stein**

*Center for Workforce Preparation, U.S. Chamber of Commerce*

2006 is off to a great start for the National Work Readiness Credential Project. As we move closer to the June 2006 date when the National Work Readiness Credential (WRC) assessments will be ready to deliver, the founding partners (District of Columbia, Florida, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Washington, and JA Worldwide) continue to achieve important milestones in the project. The updates below provide more information about the accomplishments this year.

#### National Work Readiness Field Tests Have Been Completed

The field tests for the WRC have been completed. Over the past several months, field tests have been conducted in the six states and national partners that are developing the WRC. Due to nationwide interest, additional field tests were added in Los Angeles, CA; San Francisco, CA; Louisville, KY; Cleveland, OH; and Midland, TX.

The purpose of the field tests was to collect data to demonstrate the validity and reliability of the assessment as a measure of entry-level work readiness.

#### What Did the Field Test Participants Say about the Assessments?

According to one field test participant, "I think this test will be a success because this is an easier and more exciting way of taking an exam. It also puts you in real working experiences and helps you exercise the skills you need in a working environment." The individual's

*continued on page 9*

# Why We Marched

> Elyse Barbell *Executive Director*

This April 10, a group of us from the LAC had to walk nearly a mile uptown to Canal Street before reaching the rear of a demonstration filling Broadway all the way to City Hall. Looking around at the proud, earnest faces, I was reminded how so many immigrants today share the dreams for their children that my grandparents had for my parents and me. At the same time, I've heard enough stories from students in adult literacy classes to know that my grandparents had it easy by comparison.

I'm sure my family wouldn't see it that way. My father was the only child of an Austrian-born pushcart operator on the Lower East Side; eventually my grandfather found a trade as a knitter. Women on both sides of our family came to this country both before and after the horrors of World War II. All of them joined the thousands of other immigrants from Europe in the garment industry, working from dawn to dusk. Our entire extended family lived close together, sharing meager resources. The older children raised themselves and their younger siblings and cousins. Nevertheless, all of my relatives had an opportunity to learn a trade. They took pride in their work and their ability to provide for their families. Hard as it was, they knew that they were realizing the American Dream, and their children would be the full beneficiaries. We are, and honor their sacrifices.

Today, hard as they work, millions of immigrants in New York City do not have the same opportunity to craft a career, obtain gainful employment, and assimilate into the mainstream of American life. Many of them do not have legal status; even if they do, few have an opportunity to attend the English language classes they need to get a job with decent pay in today's economy. Surrounded by what a police officer told us were 125,000 people, most of them immigrants, all I could think of was that this city has only 41,000 spots for people to learn English, and they are all taken.

New York City has an extraordinary opportunity to take a leadership role on the immigration issue by developing a compassionate compromise that can become a model for the entire nation. Surely our community and political leaders are capable of providing enough English language instruction to accommodate everyone who wants to learn, if not jobs with dignity that enable these hard workers to give their children the same opportunities my parents and grandparents were able to give to me and my relatives. I know all of us in the literacy community are ready to do whatever we can to help ensure that all new Americans have the opportunity to participate fully in our society. ●



## LITERACY UPDATE

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

## Rikers Island Teachers Get a Furlough to the Queens Museum

> John Cates Curtis Ed.D., *Austin H. MacCormick Island Academy*;  
Kit Shapiro M.A., ATR., and Donnielle Rome M.A., *Queens Museum of Art*

Within the vast Rikers Island jail complex looming in the East River just north of LaGuardia Airport lie two New York City Department of Education (DoE) high schools. Austin H. MacCormick Island Academy is compulsory for jailed adolescents ages 16–17; Horizon Academy is a voluntary educational institution for inmates ages 18–21. Both have student bodies battered and bruised by failure and crime. Recently, a 17-year-old pregnant teenager wrote in her memoir assignment for class that she and her mother worked as prostitutes together, servicing the same Johns. After her mother died of AIDS, she wrote, “I had a lot of sex over the next three days just to pay for my mother’s funeral.” A male inmate-student remarked casually to his counselor that he “just likes to shoot people.” Another readily admits that he likes being in jail because it provides a bed at night and food every day.

Dealing with these sentiments on a daily basis is particularly draining for correctional educators, who see their classes as students first and inmates second and yet work within the New York City Department of Correction, which sees these same young people only as inmates. Care, custody, and control trumps education every time, as well it should, but the difference in perceptions nevertheless frustrates and exasperates correctional educators.

Considerable research has documented that art therapy can help inmates persevere through long sentences, come to terms with their crimes, and develop more positive social attitudes. Although research documenting the benefits of art therapy programs for correctional educators is scant, we reasoned, that they would also be considerable. To test this hypothesis, the Queens Museum of Art (QMA) is conducting a year-long arts-based professional development initiative for ten teachers from the Austin H. MacCormick Island Academy, with funding from the DoE.

Every month, ten educators convene at the Museum for professional development activities. Away from cramped stairwells, prisoners in orange jumpsuits, and threats—real, imagined, or implied—the educators enjoy the freedom to create, to focus anew, and to develop better strategies for their classes behind bars.

At each session, the participants are encouraged to brainstorm ways they can use creativity, flexibility, and objectivity to counteract the negativity, depression, and jail-malaise that assault them daily in the prison. They also take an interactive tour of the Museum’s current exhibitions. The Museum’s art therapists invite them to consider the ideas of the exhibiting artists in the context of their own classroom experiences with the inmate-students, letting their subconscious responses emerge to become the basis for their art work that day.

By working on art in a room with their peers, the educators create a safe space for the ensuing group discussion. The teachers, who usually work alone in the classroom, begin to feel secure enough to express intense emotions, and invariably discover these feelings are common, if not universal, among their peers. An example of this process is reflected in a sculpture done by one participant who teaches a literacy

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and numeracy class at Island Academy. After viewing *Kitchen*, 2005, a photographic sculpture at the Museum created by artist Isidro Blasco, and participating in a group discussion about the piece, this literacy teacher created his own piece inspired by the educators’ feelings of identification with their students. His sculpture encases a group photograph of the teachers in a wooden structure resembling a jail, except for its open roof that allows sunlight to enter and shine on the people in the photograph: Hope, the teacher explained, encaged by the system in which he works.

Hope becomes the watchword for these correctional educators: I hope my students don’t come back to Rikers; I hope they pass the GED and go to college; I hope I see them on the outside on the subway, on the street, on their way to school; I hope I’m doing the right thing teaching here; I hope I am doing a good job.

Unfortunately, as idealistic as the correctional educators may be, their job demands are so onerous that even the most committed suffer from burnout and fatigue. By providing them with an opportunity to express their feelings and frustrations both verbally and through creative work, our art therapy program could combine the wisdom they have derived from experience with renewed enthusiasm, making these teachers more effective than ever at transforming hope into reality. ●

# RESOURCES >> Assistive Technology and Universal Design

> Mariann Fedele *Coordinator of Professional Development*

Assistive technology refers to hardware, software, and electronic devices designed for students with physical or learning disabilities. Many of these technologies have advantages for the general population and therefore fall under the principle of universal design. According to Wikipedia.org, “Universal design or inclusive design is an approach to the design of products, services and environments to be as usable as possible by as many people as possible regardless of age, ability or situation. It links directly to the political concept of an inclusive society and its importance has been recognized by governments, business and industry.” A great example of universal design is curb cuts, the recess in sidewalk curbs at intersections and on walkways. While designed specifically for wheelchair users to better navigate curbs, curb cuts improve curb navigation for everyone—those pushing a stroller or a grocery cart, or pulling a suitcase on wheels, or walking a bicycle. The principal of universal design was defined and enshrined in federal law through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997 reauthorization) and the Assistive Technology Act (1998).

When applied to teaching and learning, universal design is referred to as Universal Design for Learning (UDL). According to the Center for Applied Special Technologies (CAST), UDL calls for:

- > Multiple means of representation to give learners various ways of acquiring information and knowledge
- > Multiple means of expression to provide learners with alternatives for demonstrating what they know
- > Multiple means of engagement to tap into learners’ interests, offer appropriate challenges, and increase motivation

At the “Technology, Reading and Learning Difficulties” conference in January, a presentation by Dr. Dave Edyburn of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee offered insight into current assistive and instructional technologies that could be used to enhance learning opportunities for all adult language and literacy students. Following are brief descriptions of some of those resources.

## ReadPlease

[www.readplease.com](http://www.readplease.com)

Text-to-speech software translates text from an electronic format—for example, a Word document—into an audible form. The ReadPlease website offers free, downloadable text-to-speech software. This type of tool can be useful for adult beginning readers to become familiar with new vocabulary and for ESOL students interested in hearing pronunciation.

## Babel Fish

<http://babelfish.altavista.com>

The Babel Fish website translates text from one language to another. This is an excellent resource for those who want their ELL students to have access to written content in their native language.

## Inspiration

[www.inspiration.com](http://www.inspiration.com)

The Inspiration website offers software tools to help learners organize their ideas to support writing. For instance, the software can take a student’s ideas and reformat them into a visual structure such as a graph or an outline, or pull out main ideas from an introductory paragraph to help students structure an essay. This site is great for pre-writing activities such as brainstorming.

## SparkNotes

[www.sparknotes.com](http://www.sparknotes.com)

The SparkNotes website offers free online study guides that are also available as podcasts (for a fee) and as mobile text messages delivered to your cell phone (at what ever pricing your cell phone provider has associated with text messaging). SparkNotes highlight themes of a text, provide useful study questions, and summarize content. This is especially useful for students studying for the GED.

## Auto-Summary or Cognitive Rescaling

Auto-Summary is a feature of MS Word that summarizes high-level text to different reading levels. It works best with textbooks, newspapers, and non-fiction. This feature demonstrates the concept of cognitive rescaling, as coined by Dave Edyburn. Cognitive rescaling makes critical content in text form accessible to all students, regardless of reading level. Edyburn’s article “Cognitive Rescaling Strategies,” which is available at [www.uwm.edu/~edyburn/Cognitiverescaling.pdf](http://www.uwm.edu/~edyburn/Cognitiverescaling.pdf), provides definitions and examples. ●

## Distance Learning Resources

At the same “Technology, Reading and Learning Difficulties” conference, John Fleischman of the Sacramento County Office of Education made a presentation in which he highlighted several websites that can both extend the reach of the classroom and supplement what is being learned in the classroom.

### California Distance Learning Project

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

The California Distance Learning Project is a free website that can help students build reading and life skills.

### Awesome Stories

[www.awesomestories.com](http://www.awesomestories.com)

Both free to use and free of advertisements, this site offers well-known stories in text format and links to online primary source materials that are designed to assist in reading comprehension and the enjoyment of reading.

### The Learning Edge

<http://thewclc.ca/edge>

The Learning Edge is a web-based newsletter for adult learners with features that include text-to-speech (a software that turns written text into audible form), games and quizzes, and online writing contests.

### English for All

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

English for All is a free web-based multimedia system for adults learning English as a second language. It includes printable text materials that support video-based lessons. The site, which includes a translator function, is highly interactive.

# 21<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL LITERACY RECOGNITION CEREMONY

The Board of Directors of the Literacy Assistance Center invites you to join us for the 21st Annual Literacy Recognition Award Ceremony. City Council Member and Chairperson of the Education Committee Robert Jackson is scheduled to be the keynote speaker. The Literacy Recognition Ceremony is sponsored by the Bookbinders' Guild of New York and by Scholastic Inc.

THURSDAY, JUNE 1  
9:30 AM—12:30 PM

SCHOLASTIC, INC., AUDITORIUM  
557 Broadway, 2nd floor  
(between Prince and Spring Sts.)

Registration and breakfast reception at 9:30 am  
Award ceremony at 10 am  
RSVP is essential! Please call 212.803.3323 to  
reserve your space.

## Recognition Award Recipients

**Joy de la Paz** *ESOL Supervisor/ESOL Teacher*  
Church Avenue Merchants Block Association, Inc.

**Solange Farina** *Lead Instructor*  
BMCC Adult Basic Education Program/CUNY

**Lawrence Fish** *Director of Educational  
& Vocational Services*  
Shorefront YM-YWHA of Brighton  
and Manhattan Beach

**Begonietta Jensen** *Director*  
International YMCA ELESAIR Program

**Jay Klokker** *Instructor*  
New York City College of Technology/CUNY

**Boykin A. Martin** *Director of the NYCDOE  
Office of Adult & Continuing Education*  
NYC Department of Education

**Christina Morales** *Staff Developer*  
HRA/BEGIN Managed Programs

**Silvana Vasconcelos** *Family Literacy  
Program Coordinator*  
Queens Borough Public Library Family  
Literacy Program

## Fundraising Basics Workshop

The LAC is sponsoring a free “Fundraising Basics” workshop on Wednesday, May 10, from 1–3 pm. Linda Ray, a representative from the Raising More Money organization, will outline a highly successful approach for building an individual donor base that can sustain an organization of any size and budget. Topics will include how to identify ideal donors, introduce them to your organization, and personally cultivate them to become lifelong donors. Guests are encouraged to bring other staff and board members to facilitate developing a team-based strategy. To RSVP, go to <http://sforce.raisingmoremoney.com/intros/midatlantic.htm>, scroll down to the session, and click “register.”

## LAC Presents at 40th Annual TESOL Convention

The LAC recently presented a workshop at the 40th Annual TESOL Convention in Tampa, Florida. The workshop presenters included Dr. Winston Lawrence, the LAC’s senior professional development associate; Tilla Alexander (formerly Elahi), from the Mid Manhattan Adult Learning Center, Department of Education; and Dr. Lisa Soricone and Dr. Maricel Santos, two of the Health Literacy Study Circles Plus Series contributing writers. The presentation outlined how health literacy education can be used to build skills in the ESOL classroom and what the LAC has been doing to support this curriculum.

<< **ANNOUNCING**

## Donate Books to the New Orleans Public Library

In an effort to restock their shelves after hurricane Katrina, the New Orleans Public Library is asking for any and all hardcover and paperback books for people of all ages. The staff will assess which titles will be designated for its collections. The rest will be distributed to destitute families or sold for library fundraising. Please send your books to:  
Rica A. Trigs, Public Relations  
New Orleans Public Library  
219 Loyola Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70112  
If you tell the post office that they are for the library in New Orleans, they will give you the library rate, which is slightly less than the book rate.

## Bronx Health Literacy Conference

The Bronx Health Literacy Collaborative is holding a conference, “Health Literacy Comes to the Bronx: Building Partnerships to Improve Health,” on Friday, May 5, at Lehman College, CUNY, 259 Bedford Park Blvd. For more information, call 718.960.7453 or email [healthliteracy@lehman.cuny.edu](mailto:healthliteracy@lehman.cuny.edu).

## The NYC ABE Conference

The New York City Consortium for Adult Basic Education will hold its 27th annual conference on Saturday, May 6, at Fashion Industries High School in Manhattan. For more information, contact Carolyn Fernando at 212.243.5458 or email [sonoffhendrick@yahoo.com](mailto:sonoffhendrick@yahoo.com). ●

## May 5

### Career Development Institute

This is the third part of a three-part series introducing adult literacy practitioners to instructional strategies that support career exploration and development, and workplace readiness. Attendance at all three sessions is not required.

**Integrating the SCANS Skills into Instruction**  
Friday, May 5, 9:30 am–12:30 pm

**Facilitator:** Vicki Gray, New York State Department of Labor

In this workshop, participants will review instructional resources to develop lessons consistent with the SCANS skills and become acquainted with the New York State Department of Labor Career Zone website. Participants will have a chance to use the featured resources in a hands-on setting and discuss strategies for integrating the Career Zone website into instruction.

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

## May 9

### Family Educators Roundtable Discussion

**Research and Theory in Parent Education**  
Tuesday, May 9, 9:30 am–12:30 pm

**Facilitator:** Blaire Willson Toso, Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy, Pennsylvania State University

In this workshop, participants will learn about the Goodling Institute's ongoing research in parent education. Participants will examine relevant research on family literacy, learner-centered programming, and evaluation of parent components of family literacy programs. Using this information, participants will reflect on their own programs, examining their program's design, the goals of their program, learner goals, and evaluations.

The session is intended for program managers or educators working with families.

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

## May 11

### ALIES Data Entry

Thursday, May 11, 9:30 am–4:30 pm

**Facilitator:** Kate Tornese, Literacy Volunteers of Westchester County, Inc.

This training provides a comprehensive introduction to the ALIES data entry process. Topics include navigating ALIES data entry screens; upgrading ALIES; backing up data; inputting student, class, and instructor information; and updating outcomes, tests, and contact hours.

**RSVP:** ALIES Support at 212.803.3357 or [aliesupport@lacnyc.org](mailto:aliesupport@lacnyc.org).

## May 12

### Instructional Methods for the Adult Literacy Classroom

Are you interested in using student-centered practices in the classroom? Are you looking for new ways to encourage student participation? Designed for ESOL, GED, and ABE instructors, this hands-on, activity-oriented series introduces five instructional methods and techniques for the adult literacy classroom: cooperative learning, project-based learning, ways of using authentic materials in the classroom, ways of using new technologies in the classroom, and ways of applying multiple intelligence theory and individual learning styles inventories in the classroom.

**Multiple Intelligences in Adult Education**  
Friday, May 12, 10 am–4 pm

**Facilitator:** Silja Kallenbach, New England Literacy Resource Center and World Education

This workshop introduces participants to Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory and the Adult Multiple Intelligence (AMI) study, the first systematic, MI-based research and development project in adult literacy education. Participants will learn about and participate in practical applications of MI theory for the ESOL, ABE, and GED classroom. Participants will also begin to develop their own MI-based lessons. Each participant will receive a packet of handouts, including sample lessons from the AMI study.

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

## May 19

### Improving Math Instruction Data and Graphing

Friday, May 19, 9:30 am–12:30 pm

**Facilitator:** Steve Hinds, CUNY Adult Literacy/GED Program

This session will explore effective ways of challenging students at all math levels to interpret data and create graphs. Graphs will be used as a basis for strengthening students' reasoning, number sense, and estimation skills. The session will also connect thoughtful data activities to the types of problems that are most likely to occur on the GED.

Participants must register for each "Improving Math Instruction" workshops individually, even those taking place on the same day.

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

## May 19

### Improving Math Instruction Algebra and Patterns

Friday, May 19, 1:30–4:30 pm

**Facilitator:** Steve Hinds, CUNY Adult Literacy/GED Program

This session will explore effective ways of challenging students at all math levels to identify, describe, and represent patterns using written descriptions as well as algebraic notation. Patterns will be used as a basis for strengthening students' number sense. The session will also connect thoughtful algebra activities to the types of problems that are most likely to occur on the GED.

Participants must register for each "Improving Math Instruction" workshops individually, even those taking place on the same day.

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

## May 19

### Popular Education Study Group

Friday, May 19, 2–4:30 pm

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

This series explores practical approaches for teaching adults to develop an awareness of social justice issues, both in and out of the classroom. Participants will read materials on popular education and discuss how to apply these theories in the classroom

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

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

## May 24

### **BEST Plus Test Administrator Training**

Wednesday, May 24, 9:30 am–4 pm

Facilitators: Alecia D'Angelo & Mariann Fedele

Become a BEST Plus test administrator. Practice administering the print and computer-based versions of the test, and familiarize yourself with the scoring rubric. Participants will receive a test administrator guide and practice CD's.

This session will be repeated on May 25.

Please register for only one day.

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

## May 25

### **BEST Plus Test Administrator Training**

Thursday, May 25, 9:30 am–4 pm

Facilitators: Alecia D'Angelo & Mariann Fedele

See May 24 for a description.

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

## June 2

### **Improving Math Instruction Geometry and Measurement**

Friday, June 2, 9:30 am–12:30 pm

Facilitator: Steve Hinds, CUNY Adult Literacy/GED Program

This session will demonstrate ways in which teachers can challenge students at all math levels to explore, conjecture, and reason about shape and measurement. Geometry activities will be used as a basis for strengthening students' number sense. The session will also connect thoughtful geometry and measurement activities to the types of problems that are most likely to occur on the GED.

Participants must register for each "Improving Math Instruction" workshops individually, even those taking place on the same day.

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

## June 2

### **Improving Math Instruction We Can Do It! Algebra, Data, and Geometry in the Low-Level BE Classroom**

Friday, June 2, 1:30–4:30 pm

Facilitator: Steve Hinds, CUNY Adult Literacy/GED Program

Adult literacy programs traditionally limit students in low-level classes to computation practice out of workbooks. Algebra, data, and geometry topics are considered too difficult for these students until they have "mastered the basics." In this workshop, we show how students in low-level basic education classes can do thoughtful mathematics in all content areas. Students react well to this challenge, and can increase their mathematical reasoning, number sense, and enjoyment of math.

Participants must register for each "Improving Math Instruction" workshops individually, even those taking place on the same day.

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

## June 9

### **Community and Family Economics**

Friday, June 9, 9:30 am–noon

Facilitators: Irrit Dweck, Alecia D'Angelo & Lisa Gale Van Brackle

Community and family economics refers to the teaching of financial and consumer literacy as it relates to individual or family goals of establishing self-sufficiency and stability. Participants will share information and resources relating to implementing community and family economics.

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

## June 9

### **Distance Learning Research and Resources**

Friday, June 9, 9:30 am–12:30 pm

Facilitator: Mariann Fedele

In this workshop, participants will be introduced to distance learning research drawn from Project IDEAL (a nationwide distance learning research initiative) and free and low-cost web-based distance learning resources that can be used to extend the reach of the adult language and literacy classroom.

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

## June 21

### **ALIES Data Entry**

Wednesday, June 21, 9:30 am–4:30 pm

Facilitator: Kate Tornese, Literacy Volunteers of Westchester County, Inc.

See May 11 for a description.

RSVP: ALIES Support at 212.803.3357 or [aliessupport@lacnyc.org](mailto:aliessupport@lacnyc.org).

## July 6

### **ALIES Data Entry**

Thursday, July 6, 9:30 am–4:30 pm

See May 11 for a description.

RSVP: ALIES Support at 212.803.3357 or [aliessupport@lacnyc.org](mailto:aliessupport@lacnyc.org).

## July 18

### **Troubleshooting NRS Reports**

Tuesday, July 18, 9:30 am–1:30 pm

Beginning with a general overview of the tables, fields, and calculations, this training will help prepare programs for troubleshooting NRS Reports. Participants will learn how to apply the ALIES data check reports. A step-by-step process for determining "Why this student does not show up on my report" will be highlighted.

RSVP: ALIES Support at 212.803.3357 or [aliessupport@lacnyc.org](mailto:aliessupport@lacnyc.org).

## Aug. 2

### **Troubleshooting NRS Reports**

Wednesday, August 2, 9:30 am–1:30 pm

See July 18 for a description.

RSVP: ALIES Support at 212.803.3357 or [aliessupport@lacnyc.org](mailto:aliessupport@lacnyc.org).

## Aug. 16

### **Troubleshooting NRS Reports**

Wednesday, August 16, 9:30 am–1:30 pm

See July 18 for a description.

RSVP: ALIES Support at 212.803.3357 or [aliessupport@lacnyc.org](mailto:aliessupport@lacnyc.org).

# RAEN Update

> **Ira Yankwitt** *Director of Professional Development/ NYC Regional Adult Education Network*

This June, the LAC will complete its second year serving as the Regional Adult Education Network for New York City (NYCRAEN). Funded by the State Education Department's Adult Education and Workforce Development (AEWD) team, the NYCRAEN is one of seven regional adult education networks (RAENs) that provide professional development, technical assistance, and networking opportunities to AEWD-funded adult and family literacy programs.

## Professional Development

The NYCRAEN workplan for 2005–2006 was guided by input from the 20 member NYCRAEN advisory board, feedback from LAC participants, priorities identified by the AEWD team, and our own survey of trends and literature in the field. Our offerings include a two-day Preservice Institute for new practitioners, workshops on state-mandated assessment instruments, and trainings on data collection and NRS policy. Highlights include:

- > A five-session *Instructional Methods Series* that introduces participants to several evidence-based instructional practices, including cooperative learning, project-based learning, using authentic materials and new technologies in the classroom, and integrating multiple intelligence theory into instruction
- > A three-session study circle on *Research-Based Reading Instruction* that examines current research on reading development and reading instruction, and explores the implications of this research for the ABE classroom
- > A three-session series on *Integrating the Arts into Family Literacy* that presents a variety of approaches for utilizing cultural institutions and arts organizations to enhance family literacy programs and support language and literacy development
- > Three three-session *Health Literacy Study Circles* that explore strategies for contextualizing language and literacy instruction around the themes of health care navigation, chronic disease management, and prevention and wellness
- > A three-session *Career Development Institute* that introduces participants to “universal foundation skills” and workplace standards, and examines instructional strategies and resources that teachers can use to build their students’ career skills and competencies

One of this year’s most significant offerings was designed for adult literacy students. Driven by the advisory board’s conviction that student involvement is critical at every stage of programmatic decision-making and adult literacy policy-making, the NYCRAEN invited the national adult literacy student organization Voice of Adult Literacy United for Education (VALUE) to deliver its two-day student leadership training to teams of students and practitioners from seven different programs. On the first day, participants were presented with an overview of how local programs and the state and national adult literacy

systems work. They discussed the history and concept of learner leadership and different types of leadership styles, and examined supports and barriers to learner leadership and strategies for overcoming them. On the second day, program teams developed comprehensive learner leadership project plans focusing on one of four themes: recruitment, retention, resource development, and program reform. Feedback from all participants was overwhelmingly positive, and teams returned to their programs eager to implement the projects they had designed.

## Technical Assistance

This year, the AEWD team mandated that each of the seven RAENs devote 55 days to onsite technical assistance, providing an opportunity for the kind of in-depth, program-based work we welcome. According to the mandate, at least 80 percent of the technical assistance must be dedicated to working closely with three AEWD-selected programs in each region. The goal of working with these programs is to enhance their NRS outcomes, identify systemic issues, share best practices, and improve the performance of the system as a whole.

## Building Networks

The network-building activities of the NYCRAEN include periodic program manager sessions and practitioner roundtables, as well as efforts to cultivate links between adult literacy providers and One Stop Centers. Our Family Educators’ Network and our initiative to better connect the adult literacy and K–12 systems are of particular note.

The Family Educators Network brings together family literacy practitioners, parent coordinators, and K–12 educators to share expertise in working with parents and caregivers. In addition, LAC professional development associate Alecia D’Angelo has worked independently with K–12 parent coordinators, introducing them to the adult and family programs in their communities, and providing them with workshops on topics such as Working with Parents from Diverse Cultural Backgrounds, Understanding Adult Speakers of Other Languages, and Encouraging Parent Involvement in Schools. Through these projects and other targeted technical assistance, Alecia has cultivated partnerships between adult literacy programs and K–12 schools, as well as enhanced the capacity of the K–12 system to better understand and support parents with limited language and literacy skills.

As the new funding cycle for state-funded adult education programs begins on July 1, the NYCRAEN will place even greater emphasis on network-building activities. Beginning this fall, we will hold monthly program managers meetings to discuss federal and state policy, examine critical issues, and share best practices. We will also devote considerable time to initiatives to better align the adult literacy system to the workforce development system and to postsecondary education. The more we can connect adult literacy education to other educational and human services, the more effectively we will help our students fulfill their hopes and dreams. ●

## Assessing Work Readiness *continued*

comments were captured in an online survey asking test takers to evaluate the assessment content and their testing experience upon completion of the assessment.

Many of the positive responses focused on the ease of taking the test on the computer over a paper and pencil test, the relevance of the test content to work situations, finding the test to be interesting and challenging, and feeling that taking the test was an educational experience. Taking the test on the computer did not make taking the test more difficult for 86 percent of the participants.

### JA Worldwide Joins the National WRC Partnership

JA Worldwide (JA) is a 501(X)3 not for profit organization that reaches more than seven million students worldwide through programs that prepare middle and high school students for future economic and workforce issues they will face, as well as programs that teach elementary school level children how they can impact the world around them as individuals, workers, and consumers. JA has joined the WRC project in order to work with other state and national partners in building and disseminating a work readiness credential that will enable more young people and adults across the country to demonstrate they have the knowledge and skills to contribute to the 21st Century workplace. JA plans to integrate preparation for the WRC into its programs for secondary school students. JA programs in Cleveland and San Francisco participated in the field test process as a first step of this goal.

### What Does the WRC Assess and How Will It Be Delivered?

When the WRC is available in June 2006, employers, training providers, and educators will have an assessment tool to assist them in evaluating an individual's readiness for entry-level work. The WRC assessments measure nine skills that employers agreed were critical to successful performance of entry-level work.

These nine skills are organized into four online assessment modules, which include Reading, Math, Situational Judgment, and Oral Language. The first three are multiple choice assessments based on short work-based scenarios that the test taker responds to. These scenarios reflect work activities that employers from across industry sectors agree are an essential part of entry-level work responsibilities—regardless of occupation. The Oral Language Test is a state-of-the-art listening and speaking performance test, which assesses essential workplace uses of speaking and listening in English. The four assessments take approximately two and a half hours to complete, and each module can be completed separately within a four week period.

### A Guide for Trainers and Instructors of Job Seekers

*Getting Ready for the Work Readiness Credential* is a new guide that provides workforce preparation trainers and instructors with information on how to help entry-level job seekers develop the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the standard for work readiness

defined by the WRC. The WRC builds on the solid research foundation of the Equipped for the Future (EFF) Standards Framework, which defines the overall goal of adult learning as helping all adults develop and enhance their skills and knowledge so that they can better carry out their responsibilities as citizens, family members, and workers.

To prepare job seekers to pass the WRC assessment, trainers and instructors need to help them develop proficiency in the EFF skills to a level that will allow them to successfully carry out the critical entry-level tasks and behaviors. This guide facilitates the learning process by:

- > Explaining the WRC profile
- > Describing the EFF skills in detail, with a focus on how the skills are linked to the tasks and to a specific level of performance associated with those tasks
- > Providing specific steps describing how instructors and trainers can help job seekers improve their proficiency in relevant EFF skills linked to entry-level tasks
- > Providing links to curriculum and teaching materials

### NYEC and DC Project

In an effort to connect more young people in the District of Columbia to a path leading to a high school credential, GED, employment, and post-secondary education, the State Education Agency, Adult Education (SEA) of the District of Columbia, a partner in the development of the National WRC has joined with the National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC) to conduct a pilot of the credential at two D.C. youth-serving organizations, Covenant House Washington and the Latin American Youth Center. The aim of the pilot project is to prepare young people, ages 16 to 24, who are participating in job readiness training programs at both organizations to pass the National WRC assessments and earn the WRC. NYEC will use the pilots to develop a guide for youth programs and practitioners on how to prepare participants for the National WRC in youth program settings nationwide. ●

*This article has been adapted from an Update originally published by the Center for Workforce Preparation (CWP). To see the original Update and other articles on the WRC visit [www.uschamber.com/cwp/strategies/workreadinesscredential.htm](http://www.uschamber.com/cwp/strategies/workreadinesscredential.htm). To receive future Updates on the WRC, send an email with your full contact information to [kelzey@uschamber.com](mailto:kelzey@uschamber.com) stating that you would like to be added to the project mailing list.*

# Teaching Health Literacy

## Disease Prevention and Screening

> Winston Lawrence, Ed.D., Senior Professional Development Associate

The New York City Health Literacy Initiative (NYCHLI) was launched in the fall of 2003 to enhance the health literacy of low-income and immigrant New Yorkers enrolled in literacy programs. As part of the initiative, the LAC has held “Study Circles Plus,” a series of staff development sessions designed to train educators to create and integrate health literacy into their curriculum. The study circles focused on three major themes: helping students navigate the health care system, managing chronic disease, and participating in preventative activities to improve one’s health. Between January and February 2006, 15 teachers and counselors from 11 programs across the city attended the third and final module in the series, disease prevention and screening.

This third three-session study circle focused on identifying the general tasks needed to engage in disease prevention and screening activities. Such tasks include being attentive to public health recommendations, such as noticing health posters in public places; engaging in disease prevention behaviors, such as quitting smoking; determining the need for specific screening tests and participating in screening programs, such as getting an HIV test; and taking follow-up action, such as changing one’s behavior. Along with reading and writing, the skills associated with these tasks include the ability to understand charts and graphs, locate support services and resources, fill out forms, ask questions, decipher informed consent documents, and understand vocabulary used in test results.

In the first session, teachers examined the notion of disease prevention and screening and the concept of risk. They read several articles on the topic, explored the various types of tests that constitute screening, and discussed how best to teach the skills needed to engage in preventative activities. Participants also studied several sample lessons and discussed how they could adapt the lessons for their own classrooms.

Between the first and second sessions, teachers conducted a needs assessment with their students to gauge student awareness of the issue and interest in what was being offered. Many students indicated that they were unfamiliar with a variety of preventative tests, such as bone density and spine tests, prostate and rectal exams, and EKGs. Students gave a number of reasons for not engaging in screenings, including “fear of doctors,” “long waits,” “lack of insurance,” “fear of tests,” and “language problems.” Students also participated in an online risk assessment activity: After entering personal data, they received computer-generated indications of their degree of risk for certain diseases.

In the second session, participants discussed issues around the assessment, shared lessons with each other, and received feedback from the rest of the group. Lessons developed included “Tuberculosis Is Still a Threat” (see sidebar), “Choosing the Right Doctor,” and “Introduction to Self Care.” In the lesson “Choosing the Right Doctor,” students learned new vocabulary and analyzed charts and tables as they explored a *Consumer Reports on Health*. In other activities, teachers had student

*continued on page 11*

### Disease Prevention and Screening Lesson Plan

#### Tuberculosis Is Still a Threat

> Ida Sandler *Shorefront YM-YWHA of Brighton-Manhattan Beach*

**Purpose:** This lesson is designed to introduce the idea of preventive care against the spread of Tuberculosis (TB). This lesson begins with reading and understanding the chart on TB in minority populations. Then students will read and discuss the story of a man infected with TB. They will also work in pairs and small groups doing research on the internet.

**Disease Prevention and Screening Tasks Addressed:** Identifying causes, symptoms, and treatments of TB; and understanding the names and purposes of screenings and examinations to prevent TB.

**Skills Focus:** Students will learn the names of causes and symptoms of TB, and will discuss strategies to prevent the spread of TB.

**ESOL Level:** High beginning

**Duration:** 2.5 hours

**Materials:** Student handouts

**Key Vocabulary and Expressions:** TB, blood test, chest X-ray, Mantoux skin test, test of the sputum smears and cultures, fever, night sweats, weakness, weight loss, persistent cough, annual check up, Dr. Robert Koch

#### Steps

1. Distribute the K-W-L-S chart. Ask students to fill out the chart. Discuss the problem.
2. Working in pairs, have students use the internet to find the answers to given questions:
  - > What is TB?
  - > What is the Mantoux skin test?
  - > What are sputum smears and cultures?
3. Have students read the story, “Tuberculosis Is a Threat,” and answer the following questions:
  - > What does John do for a living?
  - > How long does he live in New York City?
  - > When did he become sick?
  - > Did he visit a doctor? Why?
  - > Why did he have a cough?
  - > What problems did he have?
  - > For how long was he sick?
  - > Did he lose weight?
  - > What kind of tests did the doctor do?
  - > What were the results of the tests?
  - > What was John’s wish?

*continued*

## Teaching Health Literacy *continued*

4. Working in groups, have students conduct research on the Internet about TB. Pose the following questions to guide the research:

- > What are the symptoms of TB?
- > How soon do symptoms appear?
- > How is TB treated?
- > How are people tested for TB?
- > What are preventative steps to avoid TB?

### ESOL Tips

Simple present tense: I have a general check-up annually.  
Modal verb “should”: You should take care of your health.

### Technology Tips

[www.cdc.gov/nchstp/tb/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/tb/default.htm)  
[www.lungusa.org/site/pp.asp?c=dvLUK9OoE&b=35778](http://www.lungusa.org/site/pp.asp?c=dvLUK9OoE&b=35778)

explore the risks of certain behaviors, research various diseases, and practice filling out family medical history forms. One class visited the Lower East Side Tenement Museum to learn about health issues immigrants faced at the turn of the last century.

In the third session, participants continued to discuss their experiences teaching literacy skills within the context of disease prevention and screening. Participants also discussed how they could measure the success of their work through formal evaluations such as BEST Plus and TABE tests, as well as anecdotal evidence recorded in journals or demonstrated through oral reports. Finally, participants made recommendations for how the study circle could be made more effective. They noted that more emphasis should be placed on issues such as environmental pollution, nutrition, homemade remedies, home safety, and diet. The fact that teachers perceived many other areas that could fit into the disease prevention and screening module shows the potential for curricular development in this aspect of health literacy.

If you are interested in participating in our health literacy professional development series, contact the LAC at 212.803.3326 or visit our website at [www.lacnyc.org](http://www.lacnyc.org). ●

## CONFERENCES

### May

#### 55th Annual NYACCE Conference

New York Association for Continuing/Community Education  
May 7–9, Albany, NY  
[www.nyacce.org/](http://www.nyacce.org/)

#### 2006 Adult Education Research Conference

May 18–21, Minneapolis, MN  
<http://education.umn.edu/WHRE/aerc/>

### June

#### Literacy 2006: Bridging the Divide

DC Public Schools & The International Reading Association's Urban Diversity Commission  
June 16–17, Washington, DC  
[www.reading.org/downloads/meetings/urban06\\_06\\_rfp.pdf](http://www.reading.org/downloads/meetings/urban06_06_rfp.pdf)

#### TESOL Academy 2006

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)  
June 23–24, Chicago, IL  
[www.tesol.org](http://www.tesol.org)

#### American Library Association Annual Conference

American Library Association  
June 22–28, New Orleans, LA  
[www.ala.org/ala/events/eventsconferences.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/events/eventsconferences.htm)

#### The Centre for Literacy Summer

**Institute 2006: Accountability and Public Trust—Restoring the Balance**  
Centre for Literacy of Quebec  
June 28–30, Montreal, Quebec, Canada  
[www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/whatsnew/sli2006/1.htm](http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/whatsnew/sli2006/1.htm)

### July

#### Workforce Innovations 2006

The U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, and the American Society for Training and Development  
July 11–13, Anaheim, CA  
[www.workforceinnovations.org/](http://www.workforceinnovations.org/)

#### Literacies for All Summer Institute

**Redefining Literacies: Expanding Our Vision of What Is Possible**  
National Council of Teachers of English  
July 13–16, Charlotte, NC  
[www.ncte.org/profdev/conv/wlu](http://www.ncte.org/profdev/conv/wlu)

#### National Institutes in Reading Apprenticeship

WestEd Services  
July 23–28, Boston, MA  
[www.wested.org/cs/sli/view/serv/1](http://www.wested.org/cs/sli/view/serv/1)

#### 15th Annual Community Technology Conference

Community Technology Centers' Network (CTCNet)  
July 27–29, Washington, DC  
[www.ctcnet.org/conf/2006/](http://www.ctcnet.org/conf/2006/)

### August

#### 22nd Annual Conference On Distance

**Teaching And Learning**  
August 2–4, Madison, WI  
[www.uwex.edu/disted/conference/](http://www.uwex.edu/disted/conference/)

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Let us know if you have unfilled classes or openings

Update your program information in the Hotline referral database

In New York City: 212.803.3333

Upstate and Long Island: 888.683.7323

Or email Jaynell Walls, literacy referral specialist, at [jaynellw@lacnyc.org](mailto:jaynellw@lacnyc.org)

# Don't give up!

> Marie Severin *Literacy Referral Specialist*

Seven years ago, in 1999, a woman called the hotline. She was 18 at that time. We usually ask them questions such as, "How far did you get in school?" She said that she had completed the eleventh grade but had to leave. She was working as a home health aide.

I said to her, "You are too young to be working as a home health aide. Are you planning to college after you obtain your GED?"

She said, "When I was in high school I was good in science, but I don't have the money to go to medical school."

I said, "You should try nursing. Don't give up. You can do it."

Last year she called the hotline again and said, "Do you remember me?"

I said, "No." I had forgotten about her because I speak with so many people.

She said, "I called you for GED classes, and we were talking and you said I should try nursing, I could do better. Now I am going to graduate from Lehman College nursing school, and I'd like to invite you to my graduation."

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