



LITERACY UPDATE

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Literacy Assistance Center

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NYSED Takes the Initiative

State Proposals to Make Adult Literacy More Effective

> Tom Orsini *Team Leader, NYSED Adult Education and Workforce Development*

Strengthening cooperation with peers and partners was a major theme when the Adult Education and Workforce Development Team of the New York State Education Department (NYSED) unveiled its vision for the field at a meeting with New York City program managers on July 24th.

The team announced that as part of this effort it will create regional networks of service providers mandated to encourage high academic performance and sharing of best practices. These networks will also be expected to foster collaborative efforts that help parents, caregivers and other adult

education students support their children's success in school while they are achieving personal goals in employment, postsecondary transition, as well as enhancing their literacy skills and English language proficiency.

One method for achieving these goals will be to strengthen relationships between service providers and the One Stop Career Centers, according to Susan Lyons and Sandy Vazquez of the team. New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals (NYATEP) will provide the necessary regional technical assistance under a contract with a NYSED contract.

In another 2006–07 initiative, NYSED will create at least three additional Welcome Centers in New York City. The likely locations will be Long Island City, Chinatown and Bedford-Stuyvesant. These centers will assist immigrant families in meeting the challenges of assimilation to a new culture, learning a new language, adapting to the economic demands of their new environment and promoting their children's academic success. They will provide general information, referrals and support services.

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Winds of Change

> Elyse Barbell *Executive Director*

Last night I slept with the windows open and felt the first cool brush of fall blow away an amazingly hot and challenging summer. This change of season will also bring in changes to the structure and governance of literacy programs throughout the state. We asked Tom Orsini, Adult Education and Workforce Development Team Leader, to present the State Education Department vision for the next several years in this issue. In reading his article, you will see that state officials have a sincere commitment to using the public dollars available to get the most value for our learners within the parameters established by federal funders. That said, it's clear to all of us that current government funding does not begin to cover the demand for service in New York State—or in any other state. Programs that rely on public dollars for most or all of their revenue are overcome with anxiety – and these are the programs that survived this round of funding decisions. For those that did not get their grants renewed, it may already be too late. So what must we do?

Advocacy for more public funding is crucial, and earnest efforts are underway. The re-emergence of the Mayor's Office of Adult Literacy represents a giant step toward keeping adult literacy on the minds of decision makers at City Hall. Realistically, however, we have to increase our efforts to generate other support as well. We must engage the private sector in embracing literacy as a value worthy of their time, attention and dollars. We have to persuade corporations, public charities, private foundations and individual donors that literacy is part of the solution to so many other social concerns. Managing chronic disease requires adult literacy as part of its solution, as does raising our children's high school graduation rate, as does workforce development, as does addressing the concerns of both the elderly and the disconnected youth in our communities. Obtaining private dollars is a gigantic undertaking for any individual program or agency in our field. We need to figure out how we can pool our resources to enlarge the pie so each of us can have a bigger slice. An Ad Council campaign promoting literacy, community events that draw the press, and events that give the public an opportunity to see and understand the value of our work more closely are options worth looking at. We might also consider co-applying for more dollars from bigger funding sources. I'm sure many of you have other ideas for raising our profile and our funding. Perhaps our literacy community can meet together soon to discuss our options.... Please share your thoughts! elyser@lacnyc.org.

Have a wonderful fall.

> Marilyn J. Rymniak Project Leader
Statewide Professional Development, Literacy Assistance Center

When President George W. Bush made his first official visit to China in 2002, the news coverage droned well into the night to accommodate the 12-hour time difference. “So,” a young American CNN anchor asked his Chinese counterpart sometime after midnight, “How does this presidential trip compare with that of Nixon’s ground-breaking trip in 1972—thirty years ago? How has China changed since then?”

“Oh, I remember the 1972 trip very well,” responded the Chinese newsmen. “I was a student at Beijing University at the time and was one of those in that huge crowd of students who greeted Nixon by waving Mao’s ‘Little Red Book’ at him.” He paused for a moment before wryly adding, “The only book you will see Chinese university students waving these days is a TOEFL Prep book.”

“TOEFL?” the perplexed anchor in Atlanta replied. “What’s TOEFL?” “You don’t know TOEFL?” exclaimed the Chinese broadcaster. “But it’s the world’s best known English test! How could you not know TOEFL?”

Unfortunately, that CNN anchor is not alone, and Americans justifiably proud that their language is now spoken in the far corners of the earth have not yet become aware of the challenges they face as a result.

Roughly one person
out of every five in
the world now uses English.
But unlike Latin
in the days of the
Roman Empire, English
isn’t taking over...
people are learning
English as a
second language.

“English has become the world’s first truly global language,” says David Graddol, an applied linguist and author of two well-researched British Council studies on the state of English Literacy and English training. He estimates that roughly one person out of every five in the world now uses English. But unlike Latin in the days of the Roman Empire, English isn’t taking over, according to Graddol. “Precisely because people are learning English as a second language, they are not actually giving up their first languages,” he explains. “They are becoming bilingual or multilingual.”

At Jewish Community House of Bensonhurst, Pakistanis and Russians may have similar scores on the BEST Plus test, but teaching them in the same classroom presents special challenges. The Russians are generally highly educated. If they have work experience with the Internet, an airline or a number of other industries, they probably know English, even if they can’t speak it well and their writing needs polishing. The Pakistanis, all women, had little or no schooling in their native country. Some of them had never held a pen. At the same time, thanks to their oral orientation, these women can pick up another language the way a child does, by hearing it; adults who have spent a lot of time in school are used to learning something by seeing it written down.

Fortunately, English-language culture has a medium that leaps all borders and transcends all learning styles: movies. Bensonhurst, instructor Nathaniel Altman uses their accessibility in teaching his heterogeneous class. Before showing a film, he distributes dialog from the screenplay and gives students an opportunity to read parts of it out loud. That way, when they watch the movie, their familiarity with colloquial English is reinforced while they gain a deeper insight into American society (and have a great time). One perennial favorite is *Serial Mom*, a John Waters film in which Kathleen Turner plays an All-American parent with a quirk: She kills people.

The vast numbers of English speakers around the world can be divided into three categories: those who speak English as a first or native language (estimated at 425 million people), those for whom it is a second or additional language (approximately another 425 million people) and those who learn it as a foreign language (825 million people). Although native speakers assume that English “belongs” to them, Graddol and other experts believe that its future will be determined by the 1.2 billion people—soon, possibly two billion—who speak and use it as a second, additional or foreign language.

Whatever the potential audience for a Star Wars without subtitles may be 10 years from now, it’s bound to far larger than today, thanks to the role English plays as the dominant working language in advertising for global brands; audio-visual cultural products such as film, television, popular music; higher education; and international communication in everything from air and sea travel to banking, economic affairs, the Internet, law, conferences, peace-keeping, technology, and tourism.

This is a tide that no country can afford to resist, however nationalistic its government may be. Just as countries throughout the world have made information technology – how to use computers and applications such as word processors, spreadsheets and Internet browsers—a component of basic education, along with numeracy and literacy in the national language (and the mother tongue, where that differs), a growing number are adding Basic English Literacy to the list. When

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RESOURCES >> Adult Education Made Easier

> Jon Steinberg *Director of Communications*

Program Administrators' Sourcebook

A Resource on NCSALL's Research for Adult Education Program Administrators

By Jackie Taylor, Cristine Smith, and Beth Bingman with Margaret Bott, Kim Gass, Bethany Lay, Douglas Ann Taylor, and Kristin Tiedeman

Although the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy *Program Administrator's Sourcebook* is written for program administrators, instructors in adult basic, adult secondary and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programs will also find it extremely useful.

In 70 pages of clear, concise prose this practical guide does a remarkable job of distilling the most important NCSALL research and combining it with wisdom contributed by veteran administrators to produce strategies for applying what was learned in and outside the classroom. The authors stress that *The Sourcebook* is a resource describing current empirical research and how to apply it, rather than a handbook for running a program. It is certainly not meant to be comprehensive. The summarized research consists of 11 studies by 10 researchers—all of them recognized authorities in the field, including Hal Beder, Robert Kegan, Victoria Purcell-Gates and Stephen Reder.

That said, *The Sourcebook* covers all the major issues of adult education, dividing them into five sections: teaching and learning, persistence, professional development, outcomes, and advocacy for program improvement. With the exception of the advocacy chapter, each segment follows the same format, beginning with issues you face, then going on to findings from research (with a sidebar describing the study), implications, and strategies. For example, after describing the Adult Student Persistence Study led by John Comings and its findings, *The Sourcebook* suggests that programs establish “a program philosophy of persistence” and offers other strategies to help students set goals, review their progress toward these goals, and understand the forces that affect their participation.

Happily, as is often the case in adult literacy, value bears no relationship to cost. *The Sourcebook* can be downloaded free of charge at <http://www.ncsall.net/?id=1035> or for \$10 a copy, ordered from the NCSALL website.

Tenets of a Program-Persistence Philosophy

- > Students can stay connected to the program even with a lapse in attendance;
- > Success and participation are not contingent on attendance but rather on connection to the program and continued work towards goals;
- > If students need to stop participating, they are welcome to return;
- > Students have the responsibility to notify the program of plans to drop out, and the program has the responsibility to make clear to students the various ways in which they might notify the instructor of these plans;
- > Learning occurs at home as well as in the program;
- > Students should be helped to continue learning at home if life demands interrupt program participation;
- > Students have access to tutoring or materials they can work on outside of class, and teachers and tutors show students how to use these materials; and
- > Staff emphasizes life-long learning skills, such as encouraging the habit of reading and writing every day, so that students continue practicing their literacy skills when they are unable to attend.

Program Administrators Sourcebook

Let the LAC Literacy Referral Hotline Help You!

Call or email us to:

Refer students in need of programs Refer volunteers in search of rewarding experiences

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

National Even Start Association Conference

Alecia D'Angelo, LAC family literacy specialist, will offer a presentation at the 2006 NESAs Annual Conference, to be held October 15–17 at the Holiday Inn on the Bay in San Diego, CA. Pre-conference sessions will take place on Sunday, October 15. The main conference will begin at 8:30 am Monday, October 16 with the welcome session and keynote address and will conclude in the afternoon on Tuesday, October 17. The final afternoon session will end at 3:30 pm.

For more information, please visit the conference website at http://www.evenstart.org/p_development/conference.shtml.

Workforce Development for English Language Learners Conference

Bridges to Opportunity, a national conference October 27–28 sponsored by the Center for Immigrant Education and Training and the Center for Teaching and Learning of LaGuardia Community College, will offer professionals from around

the U.S. an opportunity to come together to:

- > Strategize how to develop effective systems to support workforce development for English Language Learners
- > Share lessons we have learned from our work, and build a knowledge base that can serve as a resource in this field
- > Identify what works in workforce development for English Language Learners and make recommendations for next steps.

For more information and registration, please visit the conference website at <http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu/ace/bridges/>

Third Annual Asian American Health Conference “Take Notice, Take Action!”

This year's conference will be held on September 29 and 30, 2006 at NYU School of Medicine, 550 First Avenue. Oral and poster presentations will include innovative programs, initiatives or research in the following fields of Asian American health:

- > Enhancing outreach and service delivery
- > Strategies for developing action-oriented research
- > Ensuring inclusion of Asian Americans in data collection and dissemination

The goal will be to take notice of and take action towards reducing health disparities in the Asian American community. For additional information, go to www.med.nyu.edu/csaaah or 212.263.3072.

CCNY MA in Language and Literacy

The City College of New York is offering an MA in Language and Literacy, which prepares teachers of adult literacy, ESOL, and basic writing in an English department Master of Arts program. Elective courses in language, literacy, and literature complement four required core courses for a 30-credit Master's degree. Core courses include Second Language Acquisition, Theories & Models of Literacy, Introduction to Language, and Teaching Adult Literacy. For more information, contact Professor Barbara Gleason, MA in Language and Literacy Director, at 212.650.6329 or 212.925.6625_265, or email bgleason@ccny.cuny.edu.

Work Readiness Credential Launch

The National Work Readiness Council (NWRC) is launching its National Work Readiness Credential (WRC) in September:

“Development of the WRC over the past three years has been an extraordinary, collaborative enterprise involving state and national business and policy leaders, frontline workers and their supervisors, education and workforce experts, and a team of committed assessment and certification experts, all brought together by our founding partners: the states of Florida, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Washington, the District of Columbia, and JA Worldwide. Many of you were important and valued participants in that process, and we are grateful for all of your support.

“In June the last critical step was taken: a contract for delivery of the WRC assessments was awarded to CASTLE Worldwide, one of the nation's leading certification and licensure testing companies. CASTLE has been working closely with us since then to load the four work readiness assessments into their secure delivery system and to develop all the necessary supporting systems we need to be ready for online delivery of the WRC.

“In September we will begin a targeted launch of the WRC in approximately 50 sites around the country. During this ‘soft’ launch, which will extend through December 2006, it is estimated that up to 10,000 individuals will take the assessment. We are now accepting applications from businesses and organizations that want to participate in the soft launch.

“The full launch of the WRC will begin in January 2007. We will begin to accept site applications for the full launch in December 2006.

For more information, go to www.uschamber.com/cwp/strategies/workreadinesscredential.htm

Sept. 8

BEST Plus

Friday, September 8th, 9:30 am–4 pm

Facilitators: Mariann Fedele and Alecia D'Angelo

Become a certified BEST Plus 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 CDs.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or rsvp@lacnyc.org

Sept. 11

TABE Test Administrator Training

Monday, September 11, 9:30 am–12:30 pm

Facilitator: Mariann Fedele

This workshop will introduce participants to the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), Forms 7 & 8 and 9 & 10—the main test used by adult literacy programs funded by the State Education Department to place students in adult basic education (ABE) classes and to measure educational gain. Participants will become familiar with the content and format of the test; learn about effective test administration and use of the scoring tables; and discuss the relationship between TABE test scores and National Reporting System (NRS) levels.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or rsvp@lacnyc.org

Sept. 12

BEST Plus

Tuesday, September 12, 6–9 pm

Wednesday, September 13, 6–9 pm

Facilitators: Mariann Fedele and Alecia D'Angelo

See September 8 for description. To be certified, participants must both sessions.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or rsvp@lacnyc.org

Sept. 14

ALIES Data Entry

Thursday, September 14, 9:30 am–4:30 pm

Facilitator: To be announced

This training session 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 aliessupport@lacnyc.org

Sept. 14

TABE Test Administrator Training

Thursday, September 14, 6–9 pm

Facilitator: Mariann Fedele

See September 11 for a description.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or rsvp@lacnyc.org

Sept. 26

NYC Regional Adult Education Network Pre-service Institute

Tuesday, September 26, 6–9:30 pm;

Wednesday September 27, 6–9:30 pm;

Tuesday, October 3, 6–9:30 pm;

Wednesday, October 4, 6–9:30 pm

Participants must attend all four evening sessions.

Facilitator: Ira Yankwitt

The NYC Regional Adult Education Network pre-service is a 14-hour institute that offers teachers, tutors, program managers and counselors new to New York State-funded adult education programs an introduction to key concepts, policies, and practices in the field. Among the issues the Pre-service Institute explores are:

- Characteristics of adult learners
- Federal and state policy, including the National Reporting System (NRS)
- The connection between intake, goal setting, and instruction
- Principles of effective adult literacy instruction
- NYS adult education learning standards
- Instructional planning
- Resources for adult literacy practitioners

Participants are required to attend all 14 hours of the Pre-service Institute.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or rsvp@lacnyc.org

Sept. 29

NYC Regional Adult Education Network Pre-service Institute

Friday, September 29, 9 am–5 pm;

Friday, October 6, 9 am–5 pm

Participants must attend both daytime sessions.

Facilitator: Ira Yankwitt

See September 26 for a description.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or rsvp@lacnyc.org

Oct. 5

Family Educator Network

Thursday, October 5, 9:30 am–12:30 pm

Facilitator: Alecia D'Angelo

This is the first in a series of meetings that will offer adult and family literacy educators, parent coordinators, and K-12 educators an opportunity to pool their expertise and experience working with parents and caregivers. The goals of the network are to share resources and examine effective instructional strategies for supporting parental involvement in schools, and identify and discuss research on best practices in parent education. These meetings will include hands-on and participatory group-learning activities. Space is limited. Registration is essential.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or rsvp@lacnyc.org

Oct. 6

Popular Education Study Group Series

Friday, October 6, 2–4:30 pm;

Friday, December 8, 2–4:30 pm

Facilitator: Winston Lawrence

In this series, teachers will explore practical approaches to developing awareness of social justice issues within and outside the adult classroom. Teachers will read selected materials and discuss ways to implement theoretical perspectives. Participants will also engage in reflective writing about the process and their reactions to what is read and discussed.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or rsvp@lacnyc.org

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

Oct. 13

ESOL Teacher Share Series

Friday, October 13, 2–4 pm;
Friday, December 15, 2–4 pm

Facilitator: Winston Lawrence

In these sessions, teachers will have an opportunity to hear and discuss promising and innovative practices that colleagues are pursuing. They will explore various aspects of English language instruction, particularly teaching the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Participants are encouraged to bring materials to share with their peers.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or rsvp@lacnyc.org

Oct. 17

ALIES Data Entry

Tuesday, September 14, 9:30 am–4:30 pm

Facilitator: To be announced

This training session 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 aliessupport@lacnyc.org

Oct. 19, 26 & Nov. 2

Research Based Adult Reading Instruction Study Circle

Thursday, October 19, 1–5 pm
Thursday, October 26, 1–5 pm
Thursday, November 2, 1–5 pm

Facilitator: Mariann Fedele

Developed by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) at Harvard, this three-session study circle will provide an overview of current research on adult reading development and reading instruction. Learn about different theories of the reading process, and explore their implications for the classroom. Research is drawn from the National Institute for Literacy/Partnership for Reading, the Equipped for the Future project, and the Adult Reading Components Study at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Participants must attend all three sessions. This study circle is limited to 20 participants. Early registration is encouraged.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or rsvp@lacnyc.org

Oct. 20

Teaching Very Basic Literacy to Beginning ESOL Learners

Friday, October 20, 9 am–4 pm

Presenter: Susan Dalmas, Queens Borough Public Library/Adult Learner Program

This workshop will introduce techniques, strategies and activities that have proven to be successful in teaching very basic literacy to beginning ESOL learners with little or no literacy in their first language, as well as in English. The presenter will share insights from the Basic Literacy for ESOL class model that has been developed by the Queens Borough Public Library. The workshop will include discussions of screening of students, exit criteria, and the development of curricula and appropriate materials.

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or rsvp@lacnyc.org

Oct. 27

Using the Arts and Technology in the ESOL classroom

Friday, October 27, 1–4:30 pm

Presenter: Regina Ress

Many funding streams mandate fusing ESL/literacy instruction with broader content, including technology. This workshop focuses on teaching language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing, functions, vocabulary, grammar, etc.) and computer skills (Internet browsing for research, website navigation) through an exploration of the arts. It will show how the arts can enhance foundational skills practice while encouraging cross-cultural awareness and personal expression; engage the “whole learner” and the “multiple intelligences”—and make teaching and learning fun!

RSVP: LAC Reservation Line at 212.803.3323 or rsvp@lacnyc.org

LAC Professional Development Center Open Hours

Every Monday, 1–5 pm

Computer Learning Center

Visit our 16-station Internet-connected computer lab to explore ways to use computers to enhance instruction. Browse the web for sites that lend themselves to your lessons, or build a project that uses common office software to enhance communication skills. For information, contact Mariann Fedele, 212.803.3325 or mariannf@lacnyc.org.

Dan Rabideau Clearinghouse

Explore the city’s largest collection of materials for adult literacy education. The collection of books, journals, and audiovisual materials encompasses professional development materials as well as curriculum and reading materials for ESOL, ABE, and GED learners. For information, contact Dr. Winston Lawrence, 212.803.3326 or winstonl@lacnyc.org.

21st ANNUAL LITERACY RECOGNITION CEREMONY

On June 1, the Literacy Assistance Center held its 21st Annual Literacy Award Ceremony at Scholastic Auditorium before a large crowd of students, educators, and other members of the New York City adult literacy community. Robert Jackson, Chair of the New York City Council gave the keynote address. The literacy program of each awardee received a library grant from the Bookbinders' Guild of New York, which co-sponsored the ceremony with Scholastic, Inc.

Award winners (from left to right): **Lawrence Fish**, Director of Educational & Vocational Services, Shorefront YM-YWHA of Brighton and Manhattan Beach; **Boykin A. Martin**, Director of the NYCDOE Office of Adult & Continuing Education, NYC Department of Education; **Silvana Vasconcelos**, Family Literacy Program Coordinator Queens Borough Public Library Family Literacy Program; **Solange Farina**, Lead Instructor, BMCC Adult Basic Education Program/CUNY; **Karen Proctor**, Scholastic Inc. and Chair, Literacy Assistance Center Board of Directors; **Elyse Barbell Rudolph**, Executive Director, Literacy Assistance Center; **Begonietta Jensen**, Director, International YMCA ELES AIR Program; **Jay Klokker**, Instructor, New York City College of Technology/CUNY; **Christina Morales**, Staff Developer, HRA/BEGIN Managed Programs; **Jovy de la Paz**, ESOL Supervisor/ESOL Teacher, Church Avenue Merchants Block Association, Inc.



NYSED Takes the Initiative *continued*

Ira Yankwitt of the LAC discussed a third initiative, which he will be leading under a contract with NYSED: creation of a statewide professional development system. Deliverables include:

- > Creating a comprehensive professional development curriculum that addresses the needs of teachers and administrators;
- > Developing and offering a new-teacher orientation workshop;

- > Producing a professional development policy manual; and
- > Identifying indicators of program quality.

Program managers at the session welcomed the open dialogue on BEST Plus, TABE and program report cards, which Mark Haskins of NYSED joined via videoconferencing. Much of the discussion concerned the U.S. Department of Education's decision to reduce the BEST Plus exits score from 599 to 540 as of July 1st. The dialog revealed a great deal of

confusion about standards for exiting an ESL student under ALIES and exiting an ESL student from a program. The NYSED team explained that when a student scores above 540 on BEST Plus, he or she does not have to be exited from an ESL class, but does have to be assessed in reading and writing. The team suggested that programs could use the BEST Literacy Assessment for this purpose, noting that it has been approved by the U.S. Department of Education.

Challenges in an Era of Global English *continued*

they do, English is no longer simply a “foreign language.” It becomes an integral part of the curriculum; the changes in who is learning it, their motives for learning it and their needs as learners are profound.

From Chile to Mongolia, governments have mandated programs to make their country bilingual, with English as the second language. A host of other nations, including Turkey, Poland, Ukraine, Russia and most of the newly independent states of the former

Soviet Union are now requiring fluency in English as a basic skill. Mexico and most of the countries of Central America now have laws setting a high priority on ensuring students achieve fluency and literacy in English by the time they complete high school.

The rub is that most children in Mexico and other countries that provide a majority of our new immigrants do not finish high school, and the young people without a diploma are more likely to immigrate to the United States in search of a better income and more

opportunities for their family. In the coming years, we have a choice between giving our newcomers a chance to learn English, and standing passively by while bilingualism with fluency in English becomes increasingly more prevalent abroad than here. Passing up this chance to strengthen American competitiveness in the global economy would be a mistake. Wasting this opportunity to ensure immigrants can realize their full potential would be tragic.

CONFERENCES

October

ProLiteracy Worldwide Annual Conference

October 4–7, Atlanta, GA
www.proliteracy.org/conference/

28th International Conference on Learning Disabilities

Council for Learning Disabilities
October 20–22, Mclean, VA—
Hilton McLean Tysons Corner
www.cldinternational.org/Conference/conference.asp

Bridges to Opportunity: Workforce Development for English Language Learners

October 27–28, Queens, New York—
LaGuardia Community College
www.lagcc.cuny.edu/ace/bridges/

November

American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE) Annual Conference

November 7–10, Milwaukee, WI
www.aaace.org/conferences/index.html

Council for Adult and Experiential Learning International Conference

November 9–11, Boston, MA
www.cael.org/cael_conference.htm

Dealing with Disabilities

When Tests Don't Measure Up

> Patti White, M.Ed. AALRC Disabilities Manager

Many times when a student came to enroll in my program in my early days as an adult literacy educator, we would have an intelligent, engaging conversation and I would say to myself, "Piece of cake. This student will be in and out of here in no time." Sometimes, that was an accurate prediction. Other times, I would give him or her a TABE test and find that this smart person scored below the fifth grade level on one or more sections. I was continually astonished by this; it made no sense.

After a while, I learned the explanation: Between 50 and 80 percent of ABE and literacy students may have learning disabilities, according to the National Institute for Literacy; many of them have never been diagnosed.

The first step in dealing with learning disabilities is often changing perceptions. Adults with learning disabilities are often misperceived by others—and, all too frequently, by themselves—as individuals with limited intelligence, limited perseverance, and limited potential. In reality, adults with learning disabilities typically have average to above-average intelligence, high levels of perseverance, and the potential to accomplish the same kinds of personal, educational, and career goals as adults without learning disabilities.

Smart as they may be, people with a learning disability can't demonstrate their knowledge if they are tested in a modality in direct conflict with it. As a result, the large number of adult education students who have a neurological impairment that affects their ability to process information, communicate, comprehend, and remember can't demonstrate their true level of knowledge and skills if they are tested without access to accommodations.

After I figured this out, when I had students whose TABE test score clearly did not reflect their intelligence, I initiated a follow-up conversation. "So," I might ask, "What do you think would have helped you do better on this test? 'More time? Should I read it to you?'" (The TABE 9 & 10 is available on audiocassette.) More often than not, the student would ask me to read it aloud, and more often than not, his or her score would increase by 4-6 grade levels. After that, I no longer used 4th grade materials to teach someone whose knowledge and skills were at the 10th grade level.

I also began to learn that making appropriate tools available to adults with learning disabilities allowed them to meet their goals, perhaps for the first time in their life. Typical tools include books and tests on audiocassette or CD, use of a private study or testing room, use of a talking calculator, access to a scribe and/or speech-to-text software, and/or extra time to complete tasks. The appropriate ones must be determined based on the needs of the individual.

How do you spot a student who may have a learning disability? One of the best ways to begin is to educate yourself about what learning disabilities are and the behaviors associated with adults who have one. The diagnosis of learning disabilities is based on score discrepancies between what students can do right now in reading, writing, and math (abilities) and their I.Q. (potential). In the classroom, I began to look for

those discrepancies in action as clues that some of my students might meet their goals more readily if they had accommodations. See if any of these reminds you of a student:

- > Efforts in reading are so focused on word recognition that it detracts from reading comprehension;
- > Has difficulty communicating through writing;
- > Finds abstract words or concepts difficult to understand;
- > Has difficulty organizing what to say;
- > Has difficulties in language processing that affect the ability to do math problem-solving;
- > Has problems with attention, which may be accompanied by hyperactivity, distractibility, or passivity; or
- > Demonstrates poor fine motor control, usually accompanied by poor handwriting.

A comprehensive list of characteristics can be found in the Bridges to Practice training materials, available at http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/ld/reports/bridges_pt1.pdf, pages 20–27.

Once you identify adult students who have learning disabilities, you face the challenge of teaching them effectively. Learning how takes time and practice, but the effort is well worth it, particularly if you consider that 50 percent of your ABE students may benefit significantly, and the rest would learn at least as well as they would using more traditional approaches. Multisensory instruction is critical. When students with learning disabilities have opportunities to hear it, read it, write it, use manipulatives to demonstrate concepts, and/or discuss it, the probability that they will absorb information increases dramatically. Direct, sequential instruction is imperative. Students must also have ample time for repetition of skills. If they only come to class two or three times a week, this means homework—not a lot, but at least a ten or 15 minute review of what they learned a couple of times each day. Some students do this by recording on a cassette tape or making flash cards with graphic memory prompts. Other methods include incorporating movement in the learning process; using concrete manipulatives, crazy/silly rhymes, or graphic organizers; repetition; demonstrating the same thing in different ways; and, of course, getting lots of feedback from the student about what works the best. Approaches that usually do NOT work well include lectures and expecting students to learn on their own with a workbook.

The response to learning disabilities must extend beyond the classroom. Implementing a screening process and subsequent diagnosis, ensuring accessibility of appropriate teaching and testing, and providing accommodations on the GED are all challenging and time-consuming tasks. None of these tasks, however, comes close to the challenges that our students face all day, every day, when they are living with a learning disability.

Who Attends NYC Literacy Programs

Ethnicity	TOTAL	PERCENT
Native American or Alaskan	211	0.38
Asian	7691	13.69
Black or African American	15652	27.86
Latino	27150	48.33
White	5325	9.48
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	144	0.26
TOTAL	56173	

Immigrants	TOTAL	PERCENT
Non-Immigrants	15165	27.00
Immigrants	41008	73.00
TOTAL	56173	

Refugees	TOTAL	PERCENT
Non-Refugee	55378	98.58
Refugee	795	1.42
TOTAL	56173	

Number of Students Receiving Public Assistance	TOTAL	PERCENT
Not on public assistance	51710	92.05
On public assistance	4463	7.95
TOTAL	56173	

Students by Country of Origin	TOTAL	PERCENT
US United States	7501	13.35
DR Dominican Republic	6126	10.91
No country given	6038	10.75
EC Ecuador	3732	6.64
CH China	3534	6.29
ME Mexico	3281	5.84
CO Colombia	3131	5.57
JA Jamaica	2130	3.79
HA Haiti	2117	3.77
PE Peru	1242	2.21
GY Guyana	1040	1.85
PR Puerto Rico	1002	1.78
TR Trinidad and Tobago	976	1.74
RU Russia	777	1.38
UK Ukraine	763	1.36
HO Honduras	751	1.34
BN Bangladesh	726	1.29
PO Poland	714	1.27
ES El Salvador	581	1.03
KO Korea, South	448	0.80
GU Guatemala	411	0.73
PA Pakistan	348	0.62
BR Brazil	339	0.60
IN India	313	0.56
VE Venezuela	308	0.55
AR Argentina	252	0.45
GR Grenada	248	0.44
GH Ghana	233	0.41
SV St. Vincent & Grenadines	222	0.40
TA Taiwan	210	0.37
AC Africa	209	0.37
BA Barbados	206	0.37
HK Hong Kong	200	0.36
MO Morocco	197	0.35
AB Albania	194	0.35
GI Guinea	176	0.31
EG Egypt	170	0.30
SL St. Lucia	161	0.29
TU Turkey	161	0.29
UZ Uzbekistan	158	0.28
SE Senegal	153	0.27
NI Nicaragua	145	0.26
PN Panama	135	0.24
VI Vietnam	129	0.23
NG Nigeria	127	0.23
YE Yemen	127	0.23
BS Belarus	125	0.22
IC Ivory Coast	122	0.22
AF Afghanistan	120	0.21
MI Mali	118	0.21
BO Bolivia	110	0.20
CU Cuba	104	0.19
CI Chile	94	0.17
JP Japan	93	0.17
TO Togo	90	0.16
AN Antigua & Barbuda	89	0.16
GB Gambia	89	0.16
BU Burma—see Myanmar	84	0.15
LB Liberia	84	0.15
MA Malaysia	81	0.14
IR Iran	77	0.14
SR Sri Lanka	76	0.14
AZ Azerbaijan	75	0.13

BL Bulgaria	74	0.13
YU Yugoslavia	74	0.13
SQ Sierra Leone	71	0.13
DO Dominican	70	0.12
ET Ethiopia	68	0.12
IS Israel	64	0.11
FR France	63	0.11
UR Uruguay	63	0.11
RO Romania	62	0.11
TH Thailand	60	0.11
BE Belize/British Honduras	58	0.10
PY Paraguay	58	0.10
IT Italy	57	0.10
SP Spain	56	0.10
U Unknown	53	0.09
CR Costa Rica	51	0.09
CA Cambodia	50	0.09
AL Algeria	49	0.09
HU Hungary	48	0.09
MV Moldova aka Moldavia	45	0.08
NP Nepal	45	0.08
GE Greece	43	0.08
MF Mauritania	43	0.08
ID Indonesia	42	0.07
TI Tibet	40	0.07
KZ Kazakhstan	38	0.07
CM Cameroon	36	0.06
GG Georgia	36	0.06
PH Philippines	34	0.06
SK St. Kitts and Nevis	34	0.06
SY Syria	33	0.06
BF Burkina Faso	31	0.06
EN England	29	0.05
SU Sudan	29	0.05
AM Armenia	27	0.05
LI Lithuania	27	0.05
MM Myanmar	27	0.05
CG Congo	26	0.05
LE Lebanon	26	0.05
GN Guinea-Bissau	25	0.04
ST St. Thomas	24	0.04
NR Niger	21	0.04
SN Suriname	20	0.04
LV Latvia	19	0.03
JO Jordan	18	0.03
EA Estonia	17	0.03
GM Germany	16	0.03
KY Kyrgyzstan	16	0.03
TZ Tajikistan	16	0.03
VL U.S. Virgin Islands	14	0.02
MN Macedonia	13	0.02
KT Korea, North	12	0.02
CZ Czech Republic	11	0.02
AA Aruba	10	0.02
PG Portugal	10	0.02
SS Slovenia	10	0.02
BI Benin	9	0.02
BV Bosnia and Herzegovina	9	0.02
CN Canada	9	0.02
SA Saudi Arabia	9	0.02
SX St. Croix	9	0.02
AG Angola	8	0.01
BM Bahamas	8	0.01
PL Palestine	8	0.01
SO Somalia	8	0.01
ZI Zaire	8	0.01
IE Ireland	7	0.01
SI Singapore	7	0.01
CT Croatia	6	0.01
LY Libya	6	0.01

MC Macao	6	0.01
MG Madagascar	6	0.01
SM St. Maarten	6	0.01
TK Turkmenistan	6	0.01
CY Cyprus	5	0.01
DJ Djibouti	5	0.01
ER Eritrea	5	0.01
GD Guadeloupe	5	0.01
GO Gabon	5	0.01
KN Kenya	5	0.01
MQ Mozambique	5	0.01
MR Martinique	5	0.01
TN Tunisia	5	0.01
CD Chad	4	0.01
FG French Guiana	4	0.01
IA Iraq	4	0.01
MJ Mongolia	4	0.01
USA United States of America	4	0.01
AU Austria	3	0.01
BD Bermuda	3	0.01
BY Burundi	3	0.01
CL Cayman Islands	3	0.01
CV Cape Verde	3	0.01
JM JAMAICA	3	0.01
KI Kiribati	3	0.01
MS Montserrat	3	0.01
NA Netherlands Antilles	3	0.01
NE New Guinea	3	0.01
RW Rwanda	3	0.01
SC St. Christopher	3	0.01
SZ Switzerland	3	0.01
UA United Arab Emirates	3	0.01
ZM Zambia	3	0.01
BG Belgium	2	0.00
BT Bhutan	2	0.00
CE Central African Republic	2	0.00
CUR Curacao	2	0.00
FJ Fiji	2	0.00
GA Guam	2	0.00
KU Kuwait	2	0.00
LA Laos	2	0.00
NB Namibia	2	0.00
SF South Africa	2	0.00
ZW Zimbabwe	2	0.00
AI Anguilla	1	0.00
BW Botswana	1	0.00
BZ Bahrain	1	0.00
CC Comoros	1	0.00
CENTRAL	1	0.00
DN Denmark	1	0.00
LN Liechtenstein	1	0.00
MD Maldives	1	0.00
ML Malagasy	1	0.00
MT Malta	1	0.00
MY Malaya	1	0.00
MZ Monaco	1	0.00
NU Nauru	1	0.00
OM Oman	1	0.00
PE PERU	1	0.00
RI Reunion Island	1	0.00
SAM Samr	1	0.00
SW Sweden	1	0.00
VB British West Indies	1	0.00
WI Data entry error	1	0.00
Y Data entry error	1	0.00
TOTAL	56173	100

Madjiguene Dieng

> *Student of the EDP Program of the 1199 SEIU Training and Upgrading Fund*

Try taking the responsibility of cooking and tending for a house of twenty people and handling school work at the same time. This is the scenario for an "average" sixteen-year-old Senegalese girl and, in most cases, girls will have to drop out of school and stick to domestic training in order to be socially accepted...until a husband is ready to take them away from their parents. I was one of the lucky ones, having the drive to acquire secretarial training, attaining something for myself that allowed me to help my parents and siblings and become an independent woman.

I feel so lucky to be in the United States where everybody in the world dreams of coming; I joined my husband, along with my kids in 1991. In 1999, I started the Certified Nurse's Aide job at Bruckner Nursing Home in the Bronx and got on staff in

2001, where I became an 1199 union member. I came to the 1199 Training Fund in September 2004 and it gave me the opportunity to make my dream come true of receiving my High School Diploma through EDP, the External Diploma Program.

My problem has been English or should I say, still is. I am a better student today because of the great advisors I've been lucky enough to encounter. If all goes well, I plan to begin college and someday obtain a nursing degree. Honestly, if I had the opportunity to change my past, I would not change a thing because this has made me who I am today. It has made me strong, independent and appreciative. I always tell my children don't take any moment of your life for granted, cherish it because there are those who are less fortunate. To my 1199 brothers and sisters and to other adult students, I say life is just too precious, don't waste your time, take advantage of the training and education opportunities that our great union or the city has to offer. Most of all take what you learn to make our union, the health care industry and our communities stronger.

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