

NEVADA

Connections



Bringing Resources to Nevada's Adult Education Community

Volume 10 Number 1

July 2004

Editor's note: We kick off the new academic year with thanks to Ron Mason, CCSN's Art Director, and colleagues for an updated masthead and with continued gratitude for the unseen and unsung heroes in Printing Services and the Mail Center who have ensured a timely, quality product during the past ten years.

This issue focuses on information that we hope will help all adult educators in Nevada plan for 2004-2005. It includes a list of key providers of support services, updates on Nevada's literacy Web site, a framework for digesting research, and findings from a recent study of the immigrant population.

*Nevada Connections is worthwhile only if it connects(!) and is useful--please consider it **your** publication and let us know what's helpful, what's not, and what you'd like to see in the future! —Sharyn Yanoshak, saylv@cox.net*

Another dozen adult educators prove performance

Twelve instructors and tutors from four Nevada programs submitted evidence of student outcomes and were awarded their ABE Certificates of Performance this past spring. These educators met the student retention and performance criteria outlined in the state's unique outcome-based recognition program.

- * Elizabeth Gioia-Acres, Sharon K. Oshita, Kathleen E. Porter-Love, James B. Strauss, Noreen A. Tabb-Martin, Jeanne Terrell, Michael L. Young (Community College of Southern Nevada)
- * Tatyana Timerson (Great Basin College)
- * Joan I. Gordon, Brian K. Guyer (Northern Nevada Literacy Council)
- * Sheryl A. Tingle, Yaraseth Lugo Villalvazo (Western Nevada Community College)

For more information on the ABE Certificate of Performance, contact Sharyn Yanoshak (702/253-6280, saylv@cox.net) or visit <http://www.literacynet.org/nvabecp/>.



New on Nevada's literacy Web site: search feature, FAQs



Web site developers recently enhanced Nevada's literacy Web site (www.literacynet.org/nevada) with the addition of a search function that combs the entire Web site for specified terms. The search engine is modeled on Google's, and looks at PDF files as well as Web pages — a rare feature that makes searching for specific items or phrases more functional. The search window is at the top left of the page. There is a link to "search instructions" as well — helpful for novices or for advanced searching tips.

Val Lyons-Brady recently updated the GED FAQs (click on the teacher/tutor button, then scroll down to the GED section on the right). Changes to the last edition are highlighted in yellow and include new information on non-U.S. citizens (FAQ #18).

Nevada is part of the National Institute for Literacy's LINC system; our Web site, like those of many states, is organized similarly to the national site (with minor modifications that reflect Nevada's needs). Training on the national LINC site (www.nifl.gov/lincs) provides a helpful overview of navigating and using both the national and Nevada's site. Order the free audio-enhanced training CD, *LINC to Literacy*, from the U.S. Department of Education, 877/433-7827 (publication number EX 0183C).

How to get through the research

The U.S. Department of Education's emphasis on the use of research-based practices likely ensures a ramping up of new research and syntheses of existing studies for the adult education field. Some reports can be intimidating (and long!) — how do you digest them and determine their usefulness for your work?

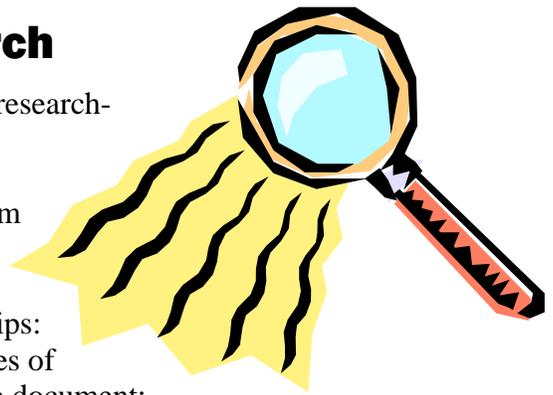
A recent article in *FLA (Family Literacy Alliance)*

Connecting by Research Specialist Kelly Bright provides some tips:

To evaluate the credibility of the multitudes of various sources of information, ask yourself these questions as you read through the document:

- √ Is the article from a peer-reviewed source (i.e., approved for publication by a panel of independent reviewers or experts in the field)?
- √ Is the article or presentation a reflection of an author's opinion or does it report primary research findings? *Note:* Opinion papers often are not published in peer-reviewed journals and, while stimulating and informative, they are not a substitute for empirical research.
- √ Does the article have a "Methods" section? If so, that is a good indication it is a research article, since this section outlines the procedures used in the research.
- √ Have the findings in the article been replicated by other researchers in the field? (E.g., look for other researchers who have done research on this particular strategy or method by perusing through the article's "Introduction" and "Discussion" sections to determine what has been found in this area to date.)
- √ Do the authors provide a significant number of original research citations from peer-reviewed journals? *Note:* This can be established by reading the reference list.

Below is a framework for translating research into practice (Warby et al., 1999):



Procedure	Instructions
Title	Examine the title to gauge the article's content.
Abstract	Read the abstract for a quick summary of the purpose and outcomes.
Research Design & Methods	Scan the article for evidence of data collection, focusing on some keywords (e.g., models, interventions, methods, strategies). Also look for how participants were selected, what instruments or tests were used, and the steps used in collecting data.
Identification of Subjects	Look for similarities and/or differences between these subjects and your own class. Identify the sample populations used, age of students, possible disabilities, and selection criteria used.
Conclusions	Look for proven effectiveness of strategies or practices, but identify any limitations found in the study (e.g., subjects or classroom setting). Write a brief summary of the findings.
Interpretation of Findings	Translate the research into a step-by-step classroom procedure by breaking it down exactly as the researcher applied it in the research setting and developing it into clear objectives for application in your classroom.
Modifications	Identify any modifications needed to adapt these finding to your classroom.
Reference	Record all citation information for future reference.



Making it easy ...

A consortium of agencies in Nevada is collaborating to produce user-friendly, non-partisan voter information tools for adult educators to use to help students learn how to vote. The Secretary of State's Office, the Nevada State Library, the Department of Education's Adult Education Office, the League of Women Voters, and several private businesses are working with Common Knowledge, the organization that has directed the "Easy Voter Guide Project" for California and other states. The Easy Voter Web site (www.easyvoter.org/nevada) is hosted by Literacyworks, whose personnel also designed and maintain Nevada's literacy

Web site. During the coming months, developers will be adding many more materials specific to Nevada, including guides to the upcoming Primary and General Elections.

Services offered through Nevada's Adult Basic Education leadership funds

Each year, a portion of the federal funding for ABE/ESL programs is targeted for "leadership activities." The support services provided through these funds are geared to the needs of the federally funded programs, however they are available to all adult educators in Nevada wherever possible. Below is a list of key activities planned for 2004-2005.

Key contacts			
CBD	Claudia Bianca-DeBay	(775) 824-8604	cdebay@tmcc.edu
RD	Rachael Dilling	(702) 363-2728	rdilling@cox.net
SG	Susan Graf	(800) 445-9673 or (775) 684-3340	sfgraf@clan.lib.nv.us
PM	Paul Marsala	(775) 829-9026	pmarsala@tmcc.edu
VN	Vicki Newell	(775) 356-1007	director@nnlc.org
SY	Sharyn Yanoshak	(702) 253-6280	saylv@cox.net
KZ	Ken Zutter	(775) 246-4444	jrdata@kenzutter.com

Staff development and training

- Professional development workshops for instructors and tutors, on-site at each federally funded program. (RD)
- Workshops and training geared to rural, and volunteer programs. (SG)
- Management training for funded program directors. (SY)
- Pre-service training for educators new to teaching adults. (SY)
- Personalized technical assistance for using computers to administrative staff, teachers, and tutors. (SY)

Communications

- *Nevada Connections* newsletter. (SY)
- *ABE Administrator's Handbook*. (SY)
- Representative to LINCS, Nevada listserv moderator, and gateway to ABE Web site for Nevada. (SY)

Recognition

- ABE Certificate of Performance for ABE instructors and tutors. (SY)
- Annual Literacy Awards to honor students, instructors, tutors, trainers, and community initiatives. (SG)

Resources

- Development of standards for NV adult education ABE and ESL programs. (CBD)
- Program assistance with aligning NV Standards to established instructional resources. (CBD)
- State Literacy Resource Center (SLRC): Current research and curricula available through World Wide Web and via inter-library loan; student and tutor training materials available at public libraries. (SG)

Special projects

- Nevada Statewide 18-24 Year Old Credential Initiative. (VN)
- Special funding for special projects and training. (SY)
- Special funding for online professional development courses for instructors and tutors. (SY)
- Volunteer tutor training. (SG)
- Certified Nevada Literate Communities. (VN)
- Teacher mentoring project. (SY)

Support and technical assistance

- Data collection and reporting with CASAS and TOPSpro. (KZ)
- CASAS/TOPSpro Implementation training. (CBD)
- Community collaboratives. (VN)

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This professional development project is a leadership activity funded by a grant from the Nevada State Department of Education, Workforce Investment Act, Title II (Adult Education and Family Literacy). There is no discrimination or denial of participation on the basis of gender, race, national origin, color, disability, age, or sexual orientation.

Study details effects of lagging skills

According to a March 2004 Educational Testing Service report, immigrants accounted for more than 40% of the nation's resident population growth during the 1990s, and the lack of English-language and literacy proficiency skills hampers their success in becoming U.S. citizens, getting skilled jobs, and living independently of social services. Specific findings with implications for those with citizenship and GED goals include:

- Only slightly more than one-half of all immigrants 20 and older with at least five years of tenure in the U.S. in 2000 were naturalized citizens. The citizenship rates of these immigrants were found to vary systematically with their years of formal schooling and their English-speaking proficiencies. Better-educated and more English-proficient immigrants were substantially more likely to be citizens than their less educated and less literate counterparts.
- Very similar citizenship patterns held true for Mexican immigrants, who had a sharply lower overall citizenship rate in 2000 (30%).
- Weak academic achievement among limited English-speaking students is likely to prove to be a key factor in their dropping out of high school before graduation. Analysis of the school enrollment/educational attainment of 16-19 year old immigrants in the U.S. in 2000 revealed that those youth with limited English-speaking proficiencies (i.e., those who do not speak English or do not speak it well) were considerably more likely than were their English-proficient counterparts to have dropped out of high school before receiving a diploma. Fifty-seven percent of the limited English speaking (versus only 11% of those teens who reported speaking English well or English only) had dropped out of high school by the time of the 2000 Census.

View the 64-page report, *A Human Capital Concern: the Literacy Proficiency of U.S. Immigrants*, at www.ets.org/research/pic/humancapital.pdf. Hard copy is \$15 from Policy Information Center, ETS, MS 19-R, Rosedale Rd., Princeton, NJ 08541-0001, 609/734-5964.