



## Guiding Principles

By Mary Katherine Moen, State Director of Adult Education, [mkmoen@doe.nv.gov](mailto:mkmoen@doe.nv.gov), 775/687-9167

Synergy—We believe that by working together, both internally and externally as part of an integrated system, we can achieve more than as separate entities. —*Nevada Adult Basic Education Directors, 2004*

Adult Basic Education programs collaborate proactively with community resources and develop strong linkages among partners who serve their student population. These include such resources as One-Stop Centers, job training programs, other educational institutions, state and social service agencies, and private businesses.

Programs leverage resources, avoid duplication of efforts, and maximize the impact of their work by regularly collaborating with other educational and community agencies. Activities are made available throughout as much of the state as possible, via the most efficient and effective means. Collaboration usually includes:

- determining and serving the needs of potential participants;
- planning so that activities are scheduled to maximize effective participation and impact; and
- making activities accessible to the widest audience possible, with consideration for rural, hard-to-reach areas.

Partnerships with business and industry are also critical to the success of the ABE programs. For example, many programs deliver workplace literacy classes at workplace sites. They provide instruction specifically geared to union and apprenticeship needs. Business and industry representatives sit on advisory boards.

An indicator of program quality for Nevada ABE/ESL programs states that each program is an integral component in the community's human service and adult learning system. This can be accomplished through synergistic interactions and collaborations that lead to greater outcomes than could be produced by a single agency alone. An Ethiopian proverb sums up this process: When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion.

Synergy: Cooperative interaction among groups so that their combined effect is greater than the sum of their individual efforts.

## Newell named Nevada's SPOC

Vicki Newell, executive director of the Northern Nevada Literacy Council, has agreed to serve as the state's "Single Point of Contact" for legislative advocacy regarding adult education.

During 2005, the contact network effectively mobilized support for retaining adult education funding. "Vicki's legislative knowledge, experience, and contacts are deep and extensive. They will ensure Nevada's voice will continue to be heard at the state and federal levels." said Mary Katherine Moen.



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## Survey showcases public's views on adult literacy

As Robert Wedgeworth, president of ProLiteracy Worldwide, eloquently wrote in his *State of Adult Literacy 2005*, “There can be no doubt that the issue of adult literacy is a significant problem in the eyes of literacy advocates — thousands are engaged in working with adult learners on both professional and volunteer bases. Individuals, corporations, and foundations support that work with donations of hundreds of thousands of philanthropic dollars. In communities across the country, businesses and chambers of commerce create task forces to address the ‘workforce skills gap,’ medical communities discuss health care literacy, and educators do their best to engage parents and caregivers in the education of children.”

Wedgeworth wondered whether the American public in general was concerned with adult literacy as either an education or human service issue. He contracted with Zogby International, Inc. to research the public's understanding of the issue, opinions about the causes of functional illiteracy among adults, and interest in applying resources to the problem

This past fall, Zogby conducted a national telephone survey of 1,207 adults whose telephone numbers were drawn randomly from a nationally listed sample. The firm used sampling strategies in which selection probabilities are proportional to population size within area codes and exchanges. Weightings by geographic region, political party affiliation, age, race, religion, and gender were used to adjust for non-response.

### Key findings

- Americans view low literacy in adults as neither a particularly large nor a particularly small problem for the country. Thirty-five percent of the population considers adult low literacy to be a large problem, while 18 percent perceive it to be a small problem. Forty-two percent rated the problem of adult literacy as a three on a scale of one to five. Residents of western states, individuals over the age of 50, and African Americans are slightly more likely to see low literacy as a greater problem than members of other demographic sub-groups.
- Thirty-five percent of those surveyed attributed low literacy skills to adults receiving a poor education, while one in five said adults did not apply themselves in school. Some 13.5 percent attributed poor literacy skills to poverty, 11 percent to immigrants who speak/write a language other than English, and 8.5 percent to disabilities.
- Forty-two percent of respondents believe either the state or federal government should finance adult education or literacy programs. However, 20 percent said it is up to the individual or family, while nearly 17 percent puts the responsibility on local schools.
- The public appears willing to step up to the plate: Fifty-five percent of those surveyed said they would support a tax increase to fund government adult literacy programs and more than 70 percent said they would be likely to donate to a charity that promotes literacy programs.
- Asked about the best way to support parents to achieve literacy skills to help their children, nearly half the respondents chose community-based organizations as best suited for this purpose.

The survey showed that more than three-quarters of all Americans believe it is very important for the U.S. to come as close to a 100 percent literacy rate as possible; only one percent said this is not important at all.

### The Plan

Buoyed by this support and anticipating the release of the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy, on October 28 ProLiteracy Worldwide released Policy Update describing its 10-point National Advocacy Plan. Its purpose is to draw more attention to the issue of adult literacy in the United States and its correlation to other issues of pressing national concern — and to increase the resources that can be brought to bear on the problem. The Plan and complete *State of Adult Literacy*, which details the survey results, are accessible from [www.proliteracy.org](http://www.proliteracy.org).

The economic impact of functional illiteracy is clear every day in the legions of people who need welfare, food stamps and Medicaid assistance because they lack the knowledge and skills to get decent-paying jobs. —Robert Wedgeworth

# Free January workshops for Nevada's adult educators

ABE Leadership funds are providing in-depth training on a variety of topics throughout the year. ALL adult educators are welcome to attend, on a space available basis. Contact the appropriate host to reserve your spot for these upcoming workshops!

<u>Title, date, place, and contact</u>	<u>Workshop presenter, description, and objectives</u>
<p>Writing and Error Correction for High Intermediate and Advanced ESL Students</p> <p>1/13/06; Las Vegas</p> <p>Linda Faulk Churchwright 702/434-6858 <a href="mailto:faulkclinda@aol.com">faulkclinda@aol.com</a></p>	<p><b>Judy Marks.</b> This workshop will give all levels of teachers and tutors practical tools to use when working with intermediate-advanced ESL students in writing courses. Additionally, the workshop's participants will look at what students need to know for college-level courses so they can provide their learners with the skills needed to succeed.</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> Prepare to teach advanced writing to ESL students. Focus on specific problems ESL students have when writing. Develop the skills to train ESL students for more advanced/college-level writing.</p>
<p>How to Incorporate EL/Civics into Instruction</p> <p>1/14/06; Carson City</p> <p>Teri Zutter WNCC 775/445-4451 <a href="mailto:tzutter@wncc.nevada.edu">tzutter@wncc.nevada.edu</a></p>	<p><b>Colleen Sullivan.</b> This workshop is designed for all levels of instructors and administrators who would like to implement EL/Civics into their current ESL Program. It will give an overview of the WIA Title II Grant requirements associated with EL/Civics and lay the foundation for program implementation. Participants will identify meaningful and student-centered civic objectives, practice incorporating them into existing curriculum, and create new curriculum to meet the needs of all English Language Learners. Assessment types, rubrics and rating scales, and other factors that influence instruction and successful implementation will also be discussed.</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> Implement the key elements in the WIA Title II Civic Participation Program. Apply civic objectives that correlate with student needs assessments. Create curriculum that reflects the chosen objective and additional assessment.</p>
<p>ESL Basic Training</p> <p>1/21/06; Reno</p> <p>Brad Deeds TMCC 775/829-9052 <a href="mailto:BDeeds@tmcc.edu">BDeeds@tmcc.edu</a></p>	<p><b>Judy Marks.</b> This workshop is designed to empower new, nearly new, or forgot-everything-they-learned ESL teachers by giving them tools to understand the normal stages of language acquisition and destroy imaginary walls to learning erected by anxious L2 students (the Four Stages of Learning Acquisition &amp; "The Affective Filter" theory). Participants will also receive a concise overview of two major teaching methodologies—Total Physical Response (TPR) and The Communicative Approach. Emphasis will be placed on practice, discussion, and activities designed to encourage implementation of these concepts as tools in addressing and reducing emotional and motivational barriers to learning.</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> Understand the value of the Communicative Approach in teaching ESL in "real world" social context, through activities meaningful to students' everyday lives. Implement Total Physical Response as a valid method to jump-start low-level students' comprehension, build learner confidence, and increase retention. Contrast and compare between two models of teaching methodologies.</p>
<p>Here Today and Gone Tomorrow: Strategies for Motivating and Retaining Adult Learners</p> <p>1/28/06; Carson City</p> <p>Teri Zutter WNCC 775/445-4451 <a href="mailto:tzutter@wncc.nevada.edu">tzutter@wncc.nevada.edu</a></p>	<p><b>Lennox McLendon.</b> Are you frustrated because several of your adult learners enroll in the program but don't stay very long? What would it take to keep them motivated and able to participate on a regular basis? Are they "dropping out" or perhaps just "stopping out?" This session will examine the latest research from NCSALL's Learner Persistence Study and translate that research into practical strategies and tools for promoting learner retention. Participants will design a student persistence plan to meet their program's needs.</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> Examine the latest research on student persistence to determine factors that promote retention. Explore a variety of instructional and programmatic strategies to address those factors. Outline a student persistence plan to pilot in your local program.</p>

## Give your students writing POWA

POWA (Paradigm Online Writing Assistant at [www.powa.org](http://www.powa.org)) is an interactive, menu-driven, online writer's guide and handbook. "It can really help you understand ways to help your students' writing," wrote New Hampshire mentor teacher Susan Bubp. "This thorough compendium will remind you of all the tricks you learned a long time ago in English 101." Packed with ideas and activities for writing informal, support, exploratory, and argumentative essays, the site will likely provide a few new tricks to add to your bag!



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## Free online training for tutors

Literacy Volunteers of the Lowcountry, based in Hilton Head, SC, has posted training modules geared to tutors. Topics available are Learning Disabilities, Using Games in ESL Groups, Health Literacy, Using the Newspaper with Students, and Pre-GED/GED Resources. These self-paced, asynchronous courses are comprised of standalone instructional material. Anyone may access and complete them via the Web; there is no additional interaction with a facilitator or other students. To access, visit [www.lowcountryliteracy.org](http://www.lowcountryliteracy.org); click on “volunteers.”

ProLiteracy America’s Verizon Literacy Campus (<http://www.vluonline.org/course/>) also offers free online courses on a variety of topics, such as Principles of Adult Learning, Working with English Language Learners, Phonemic Awareness Instruction for Adult Literacy Learners, etc.

## Veteran TMCC teacher receives many accolades

Carmen Hirsch is one of but 25 U.S. “Women of Triumph.” She received the award from Women Work — the National Network for Women’s Employment in recognition of her work and challenges she’s overcome. In 2003 she received the Escalante Award for outstanding Washoe County teacher from the Education Collaborative. Last September she was named to a three-year term on Nevada’s Board for Education and Counseling of Displaced Homemakers.



Paul Marsala, director of TMCC’s ABE program, adds what may be the most important recognition of all. “She’s a natural teacher and one of our best. Her work with students in the ABE and Re-entry programs is absolutely outstanding — students persist and learn!”

The *Las Vegas Review-Journal* recently reported that according to the National Academy of Sciences the average immigrant contributes \$1,800 more in taxes than he or she receives in benefits.