

# NEVADA Connections

*Bringing Resources to Nevada's Adult Education Community*

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## Join the global celebration of literacy on September 8<sup>th</sup>



Each year, a community of nations hosts local and national events that recognize the value of literacy to individuals, families, and communities. Thousands of reading professionals and volunteers are recognized for their daily work and dedication. The newly literate are applauded for their persistence and encouraged to go on learning. Leaders recommit to policies and practices that give hope to those marginalized by their lack of education, skills, and knowledge. An estimated 860 million adults (two thirds women) do not know how to read or write and more than 100 million children, again the majority female, lack access to school. This year's theme is "Literacy, the path out of poverty."

### International literacy Initiatives

The international community is involved in several initiatives that focus on education and development.

- ◆ Education for All (EFA), a commitment launched in 1990 and reaffirmed in 2000, set the goal of increasing literacy rates by 50% by 2015. Two of EFA's specific goals are included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) adopted by 189 countries, civil society groups, and development agencies.
- ◆ The United Nations adopted a resolution in 2001 to make 2003–2012 the Literacy Decade. This initiative demonstrates the collective will of countries facing literacy challenges and those in a position to provide assistance to promote literacy.

UNESCO awards five \$20,000 prizes on International Literacy Day. This year, the UNESCO International Reading Association Prize will go to the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) Pakistan, whose goal is to raise Pakistan's literacy level from 53 percent to 86 percent by 2015. (A half million people are newly literate.) Honorable Mention will be awarded to the Literacy Coordination Office of Yunnan Province (People's Republic of China) for its Program for the Realistic Reduction in the Number of Illiterate Women implemented in the mountainous border province of Yunnan, a poor province that is home to 25 ethnic minorities. This Prize was founded in 1979 by the International Reading Association.

In 1989, the Republic of Korea founded two King Sejong Literacy Prizes. This year, UNESCO will award one to Turkey's Mother Child Education Foundation for its contribution to literacy and to increasing women's self-confidence, independence, and participation in decision-making processes. The other will go to the Youth and Adult Literacy and Education Chair of the Latin American and Caribbean Pedagogical Institute of the Republic of Cuba (IPLAC) for its work "to advance individual and social potential through innovative teaching methods with successful outcomes in more than 15 countries, notably Ecuador and Venezuela."

The People's Republic of China founded two Confucius Prizes for Literacy in 2005. One will be awarded to the Ministry of National Education of the Kingdom of Morocco for its Non-formal Education Program, an innovative national literacy initiative designed specifically for marginalized adolescents in rural areas. The other will go to the Directorate of Literacy and Continuing Education of Rajasthan (the largest and poorest state in India) for its Useful Learning through Literacy and Continuing Education Program. The Directorate will be rewarded for having significantly

### Why September 8<sup>th</sup>?

**In September 1966, the World Conference of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy was held in Tehran, Iran. One recommendation resulting from this meeting was to proclaim September 8, the opening date of the conference, International Literacy Day. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) inaugurated its official observance of International Literacy Day in 1967.**

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## New at the Nevada Literacy Coalition!



The Nevada Literacy Coalition (NLC) is once again operating with two people! Kathy Biagi (at left) is the new literacy coordinator, supported by administrative assistant JoAnne Goena (at right, below).

Kathy served as Head Start State Collaboration Office Director for Nevada for the last six years. She also worked extensively in education, teaching grade levels from pre-K through high school and adult basic education. She holds a B.A. in English, a K-12 English teaching credential, and a Master's in TESOL.

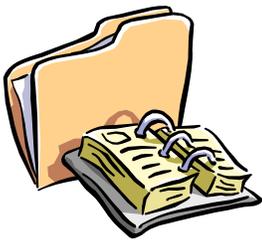
JoAnne's eight years with the State of Nevada have all been with NLC. Prior to that time, she worked in the casino industry, insurance sales, and health education; she has also been a small business owner. She currently teaches an ESL class for WNCC, is bilingual in Spanish, and holds a B.A. in Speech Communication and Psychology.

"During the next year, the literacy office will be developing a five-year strategic plan based on realistic and measurable goals and outcomes.

The plan will be developed through a series of consultations and regional summit meetings; partners will be identified and asked to contribute their issues and needs with regard to improving literacy in Nevada," said Kathy.

Friendly and approachable, Kathy's style is inclusive. "We look forward to getting input from ABE programs, libraries, volunteer tutor programs, early childhood education professionals, family literacy programs, and other entities who have a stake in Nevada literacy. These include those working with basic reading, math computation, ESL, health, financial, and computer literacy," she said.

Contact Kathy ([kabiagi@clan.lib.nv.us](mailto:kabiagi@clan.lib.nv.us)) or JoAnne ([jgoena@clan.lib.nv.us](mailto:jgoena@clan.lib.nv.us)) via email or at 800/445-9673 or 775/684-3340. The office is located at 100 North Stewart Street in Carson City.



## Upcoming conferences

**Additional events at [www.literacynet.org/nevada](http://www.literacynet.org/nevada) (click on calendar)**

**What:** ProLiteracy Worldwide Annual Conference, October 4-7, Atlanta, GA

**Contact:** [www.proliteracy.org/](http://www.proliteracy.org/); [conference@proliteracy.org](mailto:conference@proliteracy.org); 315/422-9121 ext. 352

**Preview:** 110 workshops, 20 pre-conference workshops, 12 dynamic speakers, numerous exhibitors, and plenty of networking opportunities. Six intensive workshop tracks: English as a second language, linking research to practice, program improvement and accountability, promoting literacy awareness and advocacy, students/adult learners, and innovative practices in literacy and adult education.

**What:** California Literacy Conference (in partnership with COABE), October 19-21, Pasadena, CA

**Contact:** [www.caliteracy.org/education/conference/](http://www.caliteracy.org/education/conference/); [conference@caliteracy.org](mailto:conference@caliteracy.org), 626/405-9272

**What:** AAACE Annual Conference, November 7-10, Milwaukee, WI

**Contact:** [www.aaace.org](http://www.aaace.org)

**What:** National Reading Conference, November 29 – December 2, Los Angeles, CA

**Contact:** <http://www.nrconline.org/>

**What:** Meeting of the Minds II: National Adult Education Practitioner-Researcher Symposium  
November 30 – December 2, Sacramento, CA

**Contact:** [www.researchtopractice.org/](http://www.researchtopractice.org/); [mcorley@air.org](mailto:mcorley@air.org) or [eoka@air.org](mailto:eoka@air.org)

# Content Standards: What? Why?

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In 1998, the federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) required funded agencies to implement a comprehensive, performance-based accountability system to assess the effectiveness of their adult education programs. Content standards and tests that assess performance mastery enable programs to measure student progress and meet federal accountability guidelines.

Standards spell out what students should know and be able to do at specific points along their educational pathways. They set expectations for student learning and guide programs and teachers in establishing a clear sequence of instruction that will lead to fulfillment of students' goals: educational gain, employment, high school proficiency, citizenship, or readiness for postsecondary education/training.

Several years ago, Nevada's AEFLA-funded programs adopted CASAS as their standardized method of assessment for measuring student progress and student level progression. Standards are now developed and aligned to these CASAS assessments.

Nevada's Standards provide a guide for developing curriculum and help a teacher focus on what to teach, rather than merely covering page after page of a textbook, assuming students are getting what they need. They provide clear direction in the classroom and offer evidence that students are learning what is expected of them and what they need to know to achieve their goals. They help teachers work by design, not by accident!

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**The ESL/EI Civics and ABE Standards are posted at [www.literacynet.org/nevada](http://www.literacynet.org/nevada) (click on teacher/tutor). The ASE and Citizenship Standards are in development.**

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## NDE harassment policy posted to Web

The Nevada Department of Education has developed *Procedures for the Prevention of Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Harassment* and posted it to the Department's Web site — go to [www.literacynet.org/nvadulted](http://www.literacynet.org/nvadulted), then click on "links". For more information, contact Garry Wyatt, [gwyatt@doe.nv.gov](mailto:gwyatt@doe.nv.gov), 775/687-9167.

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**Until now, the focus has been on what our students should know. Standards elevate this goal to now determine what students should be able to do with their knowledge. Standards are written with active verbs to help teachers, tutors and students envision ways that students can demonstrate mastery of the application of their newly acquired knowledge.**

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Linking standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment establishes a structured system that:

- ◆ Provides programs and teachers with clear, consistent measures of the skills and competencies our adult students should have mastered when they exit our programs.
- ◆ Establishes students' trust and confidence that our programs provide professional, quality instruction that will help them achieve their goals.
- ◆ Produces meaningful data that reflects program improvement, ensuring accountability.

Subsequent articles will address various issues pertaining to standards, such as the pros and cons of content standards, connecting standards to student goals, and practical ways teachers can incorporate standards in their lesson planning.

\* Claudia began working with the National CASAS Consortium Content Standards Technical Work Group in March 2004 to develop a master list of aligned standards for states to adopt or adapt as guidelines. Then, working with a team of Nevada's teachers, she expanded the Standards to enhance competency alignment and matched them to curriculum and resources for each of Nevada's eight AEFLA-funded programs.

**Experience is that marvelous thing that enables you to recognize a mistake when you make it again.**  
—F.P. Jones



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## International Literacy Day *(continued from page 1)*

raised literacy during the past decade and for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. The government of the People's Republic of China also invites the Confucius laureates to visit literacy program sites in China.

### The "local" scene

The International Reading Association cosponsors an annual celebration of International Literacy Day in Washington, DC. The event usually follows a symposium format and includes representatives from many groups working in partnership with the Association on international literacy projects.

What can you do closer to home? The IRA suggests you "think globally, act locally." Some ideas:

- ◆ Use newspapers — conduct a scavenger hunt for country names or compare how stories are covered by newspapers from different parts of the world.
- ◆ Have students match different alphabets (Chinese, Cyrillic, Arabic, Hindi, etc) to countries.
- ◆ Tap your students' creativity for ideas about how to make the community more aware of literacy issues.

For more ideas, visit [www.reading.org/association/meetings/](http://www.reading.org/association/meetings/), click on "International Literacy Day" along the left, then scroll down to the bottom third of the page for "Idea Starters."



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**Reno's Northern Nevada Literacy Council is holding its first annual Community Literacy Recognition Gala on September 8<sup>th</sup> in the Sienna Hotel ballroom. Contact 775/356-1007 for information!**

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