



Reports show need for adult education

Several reports released during the past few months document the need for and importance of adult basic education.

NCAL advises us to aim high

The National Commission on Adult Literacy (NCAL) produced *Reach Higher, America: Overcoming Crisis in the U.S. Workforce*. According to the report, between 88 and 90 million adults are not prepared to meet the demands of today's global economy or secure a job with adequate wages to sustain a family. Eighteen million of them do not have a high school diploma, 51 million have not gone to college, and 18 million are not proficient in their English language and literacy skills.



Reach Higher, AMERICA
OVERCOMING CRISIS IN THE U.S. WORKFORCE

Noting "Current adult education services reach only 3 million adults annually and were designed for a different time and different challenges," the Commission recommends:

- Enacting a comprehensive new Adult Education and Economic Growth Act — a new domestic "Marshall Plan" that would overhaul and expand adult education and workforce skills training.
- Transforming current programs for adults into a comprehensive, integrated Adult Education and Workforce Skills System that can effectively serve 20 million American adults annually by the year 2020.
- Resetting the mission of this new System to attaining readiness for postsecondary and workforce training.
- Increasing public investments in the new System, reaching \$20 billion by 2020 plus additional support and involvement from philanthropy and business.
- Calling for strong bold leadership from state government — especially governors — and business.

NCAL is an independent panel of leaders from labor, business, government, education, literacy, and philanthropy. The full report and related materials can be accessed from www.nationalcommissiononadulthoodliteracy.org/.

College Board Commission recommends \$1B for adult education

Concerned about the current state of American education, the College Board convened the Commission on Access, Admissions and Success in Higher Education to examine demographic, socioeconomic, public policy, and education trends that affect college access and success.

The Commission's final report, *Coming to Our Senses: Education and the American Future*, sets an ambitious goal of ensuring that at least 55 percent of Americans hold a postsecondary credential by 2025. To reach this goal, the Commission makes a series of action-oriented recommendations spanning the P-20 pipeline.

You can access the report at: <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/>; search the site for "coming to our senses." The adult education discussion is on page 19 and there are a number of references to adult education in the "Recommendations" section beginning on page 21. Among them is the recommendation for a federal allocation of \$1 billion for adult education.



(Continued on page 2)

The College Board is a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity.

Estimated literacy rates by state and county

Last month the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) released the [*National Assessment of Adult Literacy: Indirect County and State Estimates of the Percentage of Adults at the Lowest Literacy Level for 1992 and 2003*](#). The report provides estimates of the percentage of adults who lack basic prose literacy skills for all states and counties in the continental U.S. There is an interactive Web tool that allows users to compare adult literacy rates by state, compare literacy rates by state or county, and trace adult literacy rates over time by state or county.

These estimates were developed using statistical models that related estimated percentages of adults lacking basic prose literacy skills in counties sampled for the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) and the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) to county characteristics, such as levels of educational attainment and race/ethnicity distributions. Based on the results of these models, NCES derived estimates for all states and counties in the United States and produced user-friendly tables to compare literacy estimates across states or counties and across years.

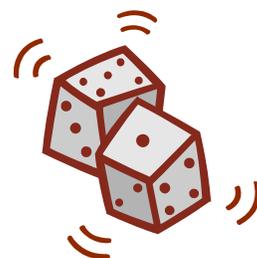
NCES advises users of the results to be aware that the margins of error associated with these model-based estimates are large. “However, they are considered the best predictions that can be made from the national survey data. In the absence of any other literacy assessment data available for individual states and counties, the estimates

do provide a general picture of literacy for all states and counties.”

The county and state indirect estimates themselves are provided at the NAAL website <http://nces.ed.gov/naal/estimates/>. The state indirect estimates are also provided in appendices to the 123-page report, which can be accessed from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/>; search for “indirect county and state”.

MPI warns Nevada: you’re gambling!

Last fall, the Migration Policy Institute released *Gambling on the Future: Managing the Education Challenges of Rapid Growth in Nevada*. The report addresses Nevada’s “exceptionalism” with respect to demographics, the labor market, and education. It highlights the critical need for service to K-12 English language learners and warns about the consequences if the needs are not met.



“In the past, the number and character of low-skilled jobs may have mitigated the economic and social penalties attached to worrying education trends. But efforts to meet the demands of the labor market in health, education, and technology and to diversify the state’s economy so it is less vulnerable to economic cycles will demand improved school performance.”

The report says about 15 percent of estimated job growth will be in high-skilled jobs requiring a bachelor’s degree or higher; about 28% will be in semi-skilled occupations that require some college, work experience in a related field, or long-term on-the-job training.

The Migration Policy Institute is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit think tank dedicated to the study of the movement of people worldwide.

CAL turns 50

The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) is celebrating its 50th anniversary throughout 2009.

Building on research, learning, and knowledge from its long history, CAL will take a fresh look at the significant issues of language and culture that both unite and divide our world.

CAL has launched a special Web site, www.cal.org/cal50/, to commemorate this event. It will provide new resources as well as information about CAL’s history and special anniversary events.



About CAL (www.cal.org)

CAL carries out a wide range of activities to accomplish its mission of improving communication through better understanding of language and culture. The Center for Applied Linguistics:

- Promotes and improves the teaching and learning of languages
- Identifies and solves problems related to language and culture
- Serves as a resource for information about language and culture
- Conducts research on issues related to language and culture

NAE News — MPAEA conference all set!



The planning committee is ready to welcome you to the 67th annual Mountain Plains Adult Education Association Conference. Among the highlights:

- ✓ Have your picture taken with a genuine Las Vegas showgirl at the Sunday night reception.
- ✓ Hear three keynote speakers give their perspectives on critical issues affecting lifelong learning: Cheryl Keenan, Director, Division of Adult Education and Literacy, U.S. Department of Education; Jim Rogers, Chancellor, Nevada System of Higher Education; and Punam Mathur, Senior Vice President, Corporate Diversity & Community Affairs, MGM Mirage.
- ✓ Select from more than 50 different breakout sessions, including a special half-day tour of Desert Rose High School and Career Center, Las Vegas' premiere adult education center.
- ✓ Choose from three inexpensive pre-conference sessions delivered by nationally recognized experts on advocacy, Web 2.0, and a new health literacy curriculum.

Space for the Web 2.0 pre-conference session and for the half-day tour of Desert Rose High School and Career Center is limited, but it's not too late to ensure a spot! See conference details at www.mpaea2009.org.

Questions?

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How is ESOL reading instruction different from ABE instruction?

*By Nancy Faux, ESOL specialist at the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center
Excerpted from Progress (Virginia's newsletter for adult educators), Fall 2008*

An essential part of instruction in any adult education class is to help the learners, whether native or nonnative English speakers, learn how to read in English. Although the goals for literacy proficiency are similar for both groups, according to Miriam Burt, Joy Peyton, and Carol Van Duzer at the Center for Adult English Language Acquisition, there are differences in how reading instruction should be carried out for adult native English speakers and English language learners. What may be appropriate for native speakers in some cases is not always appropriate for nonnative speakers.

In a notable 2005 research brief, *How Should Adult ESL Reading Instruction Differ from ABE Reading Instruction?**, the authors discuss reading strategies for ABE and their applicability for teaching ESOL students. After introducing the four components of reading defined by John Kruidenier in *Research-based Principles for Adult Basic Education Reading Instruction* and listing his suggested instructional strategies for teaching each component to native English speakers, the Brief discusses how some of these strategies are not suitable for those who are learning the English language, then reviews special issues for English language learners (ELLs) for each component and give suggestions for working with ELLs.

The discussion targets the differences in instruction for ELLs compared to ABE learners, which in many instances stem from ELLs' limited vocabulary base, written and oral. Instructional strategies that rely on oral comprehension of vocabulary may not be successful with those that lack English oral skills. For example, teaching vocabulary through semantic sets (e.g., foods, days of the week) may actually impede vocabulary acquisition. Research has shown that if new words are presented together, ELLs may confuse their meanings.

Another instructional strategy that is not effective with nonnative English speakers is the use of choral readings in trying to achieve reading fluency. This difference arises due to interference from ELLs' native languages, which may affect many elements of fluent reading, from letter-sound relationships to stress and intonation.

* Access the complete Brief at www.cal.org/caela/; use the quick link to Briefs.

The entire Fall 2008 issue of *Progress* is focused on reading. Visit www.valrc.org/publications/, click on "Progress" along the right to access the publication.

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Back issues archived at: <http://www.literacynet.org/nvadulted/newsletters.html>

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ProLiteracy sets new direction

David C. Harvey, President & CEO of ProLiteracy, recently wrote members, "Over the past year, our board and staff have adopted a new strategic plan and mission statement. We have a new tag line: Improving lives and communities through adult literacy.

"I hope you have also noticed some changes in ProLiteracy's image and communication capacity over the last few months," said Harvey. "A new Web site, new advocacy program, online newsletters, online surveys, and expanding online professional development opportunities are a few of the changes we've made to better serve our members."

Enhanced professional development services include an International Literacy for Social Change Training Project Web site and several new, free, facilitated online courses. The organization conducts regional training institutes and Leadership Excellence Academies (a credentialing program for adult literacy program managers) across the U.S.

The organization will host a joint conference with the Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE) in March, 2010 in Chicago. ProLiteracy is also partnering with VALUE, the only organization for and by adult learners, to sponsor the Adult Literacy Congress & National Adult Learner Leadership Institute this May in Washington, D.C.

"We plan to expand our work in health and financial literacy and in workforce/workplace readiness and to increase our work on community-wide literacy initiatives in partnership with Literacy Powerline," said Harvey.

To learn more about Literacy Powerline, visit www.literacypowerline.com. ProLiteracy's home page is at www.proliteracy.org.

State Library unveils new Web site

NSLA (Nevada State Library and Archives) recently migrated its Web site to a new one: <http://nevadaculture.org/nsla/>.

The change affects the Web pages for the Nevada Literacy Office, the State Literacy Resource Center, and Nevada's Calendar of Events. The new URLs are rather long, but you can search from the NSLA home page or visit Nevada's literacy Web site (www.literacynet.org/nevada), which has direct links to them.
