

New Web site offers resources for persistence

Veteran research facilitators Andy Nash and Silja Kallenbach recently wrote on behalf of New England Literacy Resource Center/World Education about a new adult learner persistence Web site at www.nelrc.org/persist/.

“The site shares the resources collected for and generated by the New England Learner Persistence (NELP) Project. For each of six program areas (Program Design and Management, Intake and Orientation, Instruction, Counseling and Support, Student Involvement, and Seeing Progress), the site offers an inventory of promising practices that link to related research, program models, and tools,” they said. “For example, you can find research on the impact of shifting from open to managed enrollment, examples of how programs have built support networks to foster new students’ sense of belonging, or tools for helping adults recognize and document their learning progress.”

The site also highlights six drivers of persistence identified in the NELP Project, provides links to program self-assessment tools, and invites the field to contribute new examples of strategies that have impacted adult learner persistence.



Report emphasizes contextualized instruction

A study of 20 exemplary adult-education-for-work programs indicates that contextualized instruction — learning basic skills by applying them, in this case to specific occupational tasks — significantly increases student persistence, completion, and successful transition rates. The 27-page report *Expanding Horizons: Pacesetters in Adult Education for Work*, published this past June, is available at www.caalusa.org/Expanding.pdf.

With the beginning of its new fiscal year (October 1), the National Institute for Literacy (www.nifl.gov) reorganized some of the work of LINCS (its Literacy Information and Communication System).

“The Institute decided to more closely align the Discussion Lists with the Resource Collections, needs of the field, and priorities of the administration,” wrote Senior Program Officer Noreen Lopez. “The intent is to structure the Discussion Lists as communities of practice that can support teachers, administrators, and staff developers in critical literacy areas by sharing best practices and the best available research.”

To that end, the Institute has added three new Discussion Lists and expanded the titles and offerings of others. The 11 Discussion Lists will be affiliated with a specific Resource Collection:

Program Management Resource Collection

- Adult Literacy Professional Development Discussion List
- Assessment Discussion List
- Learning Disabilities Discussion List
- Transitions to Postsecondary Education Discussion List (new)

Workforce Competitiveness Resource Collection

- Adult English Language Acquisition Discussion List
- Technology & Distance Learning Discussion List
- Workforce Competitiveness Discussion List

Basic Skills Resource Collection

- Reading & Writing Skills Discussion List (new)
- Math & Numeracy Discussion List (new)
- Health Literacy Discussion List
- Diversity & Literacy Discussion List

The Special Topics and Family Literacy Discussion Lists were discontinued as of September 30, 2009. Those topics will be among the issues addressed online by all of the Institute’s moderators.

Strategies for Teaching English Pronunciation

The CAELA Network recently released a new brief, *Teaching Pronunciation to Adult English Language Learners*, that provides information about evidence-based strategies for teaching pronunciation. The document reviews features of English that can have an impact on teaching and learning English pronunciation, such as:

- ✓ contrasts between the sound systems of a language spoken and a language being learned;
- ✓ the importance of accent, stress, intonation, and rhythm in the comprehensibility of the speech of nonnative speakers;
- ✓ the effect of motivation and exposure in the development of native-like pronunciation; and
- ✓ intelligibility of speech among speakers of different English varieties.

The brief also describes ways to teach pronunciation more effectively. Visit www.cal.org/caelanetwork; enter “Teaching Pronunciation” in the search box.

Join the (King’s) English Club

EnglishClub.com is a free, comprehensive site open to students and teachers of English. “Members” can study English grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation; play ESL games and do ESL quizzes; have discussions with other students and teachers around the world, find pen pals to email in English; and create Web pages with blog posts, photos, videos, music, and friends.

The site is divided into easily navigable main sections, such as: Learn English online, Teach English, English references, and ESL resources.

The Club is based in Cambridge, England. It is written mainly in British English, taking *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* as a reference. For American English, the site references *Webster’s New World College Dictionary*. Some words are spelled differently in British English and American English (“colour” versus “color,” for example). The site clarifies the differences when they are important.

Students become published writers

Editor's note: Kristen McKenna, an ABE teacher at Bristol Community College in Attleboro, MA, wrote the following article for the Boston Herald and agreed to share it with adult educators throughout the country.

As a teacher, I seek out meaningful, socially relevant publications to use in my ABE classes. How much more meaningful a magazine is when it includes pieces by other adult learners – spoken from the heart and rooted in lived experience. And even more meaningful than that: sometimes the pieces are written by my own students!

The Change Agent, a national newspaper published by the New England Literacy Resource Center at World Education, includes writing by adult learners. Twice a year, *The Change Agent* sends out a “Call for Articles,” inviting students to submit their essays, poems, illustrations, and reflections.

I always take advantage of the “Call for Articles” because it acts as a writing prompt and it leads to a real-world process: submitting a piece of writing to be evaluated and possibly accepted for publication. Preparing to write a piece for *The Change Agent* is a group activity that fosters community-building among our students. When one of our own student’s articles is published, all the students seem to take pride in their fellow student’s accomplishment.

Knowing someone who got published or knowing that many of your peers in adult education are being published provides a great gateway to more reading and exploring.

The September issue of *The Change Agent* focuses on the economic crisis. The March issue, “Coming Home from War,” will address the issues and challenges facing veterans. The Call for Articles, due November 6, is posted on the web site.

Students might initially be attracted to the magazine or newspaper because they recognize the writers, but then they hold on to it and browse through the other stories. They enjoy being able to hold something in their hands that is fully accessible, engaging, and relevant to their everyday lives.

Many students in our program receive a copy of *The Change Agent* as if it were a textbook. (Except that it is a lot cheaper – only about a dollar per copy when you buy in bulk.) The articles are written at a variety of levels so teachers can make adjustments to their lessons to suit the right audience. A new and value-added feature is the online lessons that accompany and extend the articles. These “extras,” along with the current issue and all the back issues of *The Change Agent*, can be found at www.nelrc.org/changeagent. To order the biannual publication, call 617/482-9485 or visit the web site.

Try out TeacherTube



If you find sites such as YouTube or www.yourteacher.com helpful, be sure to check out www.teachertube.com. The site’s goal is simply “to provide an online community for sharing instructional videos. We seek to fill a need for a more educationally focused, safe venue for teachers, schools, and home learners.”

Topics are wide-ranging and include: Technology Tools for the Classroom; Pre-algebra, Distributive Property; Citizenship Interview Clarification Strategies; and Citizenship Students Practice for the N400 Interview,

Members are encouraged to not only upload educationally relevant videos, but also to make constructive comments and use the rating system to show appreciation for videos of value to educators and learners.

This is awesome!

AwesomeStories is a gathering place of primary-source information. The purpose of the ten-year-old site is to help educators and individuals find original sources from national archives, libraries, universities, museums, historical societies and government-created web sites.

The site organizes stories in categories — biographies, disasters, trials, flicks, history, inspiration, religion, and sports. It provides thousands of hand-selected slide shows, videos, audio clips, documents, and other primary sources linked in context to the stories. There are lesson plans, too!

Documented experts have approved many stories on the site and hundreds of teachers have provided input.

Membership is free, at www.awesomestories.com.

Sources held in institutional archives are sometimes not searchable by popular search engines. One needs to search within the institutional sites directly, using specific search phrases not readily discernible to non-scholars.

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Resources for working with LD students

Nevada is home to several adult educators who are experienced in working with adults who have learning difficulties and disabilities, and they have offered to share what they know. The document "Resources For Serving Students With Special Needs" lists contact information and specific areas of expertise for Lyn Pizor, Paula Kizis, Linda Schneider-Erger, and Noreen Tabb-Martin. It also lists 12 educators from throughout the state who are certified to screen for Irlen Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome.

To find these and other resources, go to www.literacynet.org/nevada; click on the teacher/tutor button along the left; navigate to "Learning Difficulties and Disabilities" at bottom right.

WNC Boot Camp yields 88% pass rate for *GED*® Exam

Sixteen of the 27 students who enlisted in Western Nevada College's July-August GED Boot Camp completed the rigorous GED preparation program. Fourteen of the 16 passed the *GED*® Exam — a whopping 88% pass rate!

WNC continues to tweak this unique program. "We're adding TABE for assessment and piloting a 12-hour 'mini-math' class for pre-GED students," said ABE Program Director Teri Zutter. "Then we'll start our third Boot Camp on November 2."

Contact Teri at tzutter@wnc.edu or 775/445-4451 for more information.

New CATESOL date

The date for the CATESOL Los Angeles Regional Conference was changed from October 24 to November 21. Information at <http://www.catesol.org/regional.html>.

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