

Volume 11

Number 2

# FIELD NOTES

by and for the Massachusetts  
Adult Education Community

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**SABES**  
System for Adult Basic Education Support

Funded by the Massachusetts Department of Education

## September 11: What Is Our Role?

Many of us have been struggling, personally and professionally, with the events of September 11 and its aftermath. As educators we have powerful opportunities to explore the events with our students. The Network of Educators on the Americas has articulated goals for teachers relating to the September 11 tragedy. These goals seem a useful departure point for the discussion of our role in addressing these troubling times within our classrooms. As educators, we can

- ◆ Help (students) deal with the personal and collective emotions generated by such a visible and massive tragedy
- ◆ Prevent the racial profiling of Arabs, Arab Americans, and anyone from the Middle East or of the Muslim faith
- ◆ Place the current events in historic and contemporary context
- ◆ Encourage (students) to think critically about the next steps<sup>1</sup>

In an effort to meet some of these goals, we have created a special pull-out section of September 11 resources for teachers. You can find them on pages 10–15. The remainder of this issue focuses on program management, the original theme for winter 2001.

<sup>1</sup> <[www.teachingforchange.org](http://www.teachingforchange.org)>

# FOREWORD

*In early September, I was well underway with the winter 2001 issue of Field Notes. Articles were coming in, graphics were scanned, the foreword was done. I was confident that the issue would come out in early December with its focus on the management of ABE programs.*

*Then September 11 happened. I wondered how to address the recent events in the upcoming issue, which was, for all intents and purposes, complete. Should I wait until spring to address the terrorist acts and its consequences on us as adult educators? Should I scrap the management issue entirely and focus only on September 11? Or should I ignore the current events and go on with "business as usual?"*

*I was lucky to meet with the fine Field Notes Advisory Board on September 28. They all agreed that the newsletter should address the events by including teachers' reflections and resources for the classroom, and that this information should appear in the current, not the spring issue. I agreed with them. In supplementing the winter issue, my work began anew.*

*This issue, then, still presents a focus on ABE management, but it also includes a special section on September 11 resources. And this foreword supplants my original one, where I reflected on my early years directing a workplace education program and some of the things I learned there.*

*I realized in putting this issue together that I was facing the same challenge ABE teachers and directors face every day in the classroom and in programs. You have your syllabus, lesson plan, or agenda. Then significant life events happen, and you have to find a way to incorporate them into the teaching and learning process. Out with the lesson plan, out with the agenda. If not discarded, sometimes the best laid plans have to at least be modified and rethought, no matter how much extra work it means.*

*As adult literacy workers we require, above all else, flexibility and responsiveness, as recent events have illustrated anew.*

*Lenore Balliro, Editor*

*Field Notes* is a quarterly newsletter that provides a place to share innovative practices, new resources, and information within the field of adult basic education. It is published by SABES, the System for Adult Basic Education Support, and funded by Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS), Massachusetts Department of Education.

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Submissions are welcome. If you have an idea for an article or wish to submit a letter to the editor, call Lenore Balliro at 617-482-9485.

We do reserve the right to decline publication.

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# Making the Staff's Job Easier

By CHRISTINE TAYLOR

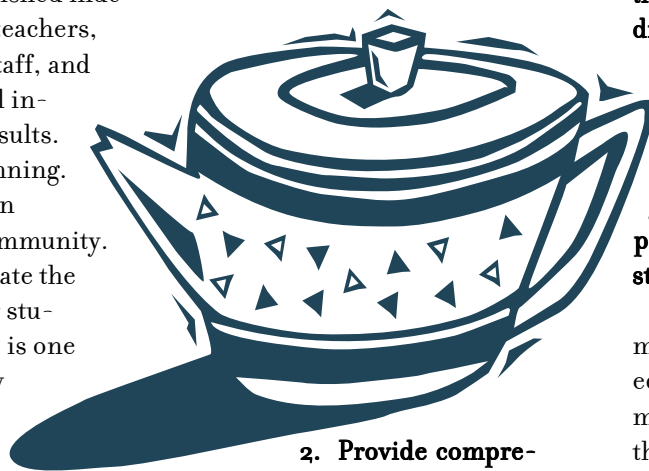
When asked to describe my job responsibilities as a program administrator for an adult education program, I begin listing a litany of tasks such as hiring, developing curriculum, implementing policy, long-term planning, and fundraising. None of these tasks is accomplished independently. Students, teachers, counselors, support staff, and board members are all involved in achieving results. Everyone looks at planning. Everyone is involved in reaching out to the community. Everyone works to create the best programming for students. However, there is one area that falls squarely on the shoulders of the administration, and that is supporting staff. Making the staff's job easier is one of the most important requirements of an administrator's job.

Keeping staff needs in the forefront begins with hiring staff members who are well suited for the position they will hold. No administrator is making the staff's job easier by giving them a role for which they are not prepared! But once staff members are in place, what next? The following are a dozen ways in which a program administrator can consciously "make it easier for staff" in any program.

## 1. Value staff experience and ideas.

Administrators should ask for and listen to staff opinions, especially when administrators lack direct teaching experience. Tap into the expertise of veteran staff as

you plan for new classes and projects. Ask staff how the program can improve. Give teachers a chance to share classroom experiences as they happen and let people vent when they need to. No complaint or concern is trivial to the person offering it.



## 2. Provide comprehensive orientation sessions for new staff members.

Make sure that new staff members become familiar with the entire organization. One of my colleagues, whose program is part of a larger organization, has created a checklist to ensure that nothing is missed in familiarizing new staff with "the big picture" or "the whole" of a multi-service agency. She has staff check off the areas that they feel they have covered and highlight areas where they feel they still need more information.

## 3. Provide a common area where staff can touch base, share ideas, and get to know each other.

This is critical in part-time programs where common time is extremely limited. Even if no staff room is available, create a gathering space near mailboxes, the copy machine, or other area where

people normally congregate. Place chairs, teacher resources, and a phone in this area.

## 4. Provide staff members with space to leave materials, notes, etc. If you are sharing classroom space, try to make sure that teachers have their own mailbox, shelf, or file drawer.

Everyone feels more effective when they're not operating out of their backpack or car!

## 5. Make it easy for staff to approach you when they need a substitute.

This is a tough one but administrators must realize that adult education is just a part of staff member's lives; it is not their whole life (nor should it be yours!) Family commitments, health issues, and even recreation, often need to come first!

## 6. Provide extra help to those staff members who need it.

Be on the look-out for staff who seem overwhelmed. In the same way, watch for staff who are spending a great deal of time over-preparing because they are not yet comfortable in their role. Some teachers may need staff development, but don't wait until you can arrange a formal training. Be prepared to offer concrete suggestions as the need arises. Offer to teach a class for the teacher to observe, or pair her up with a veteran teacher who can provide guidance. And be sure to offer positive feedback on any and all of the great things that you see happening.

*Continued on page 4*

## Making the Staff's Job. . .

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### 7. Keep the paperwork as manageable as possible, even if it means doing more of it yourself.

Organize paperwork so that staff members are not getting bombarded with bits and pieces every session. Distribute paperwork in packets (pre-semester, testing, end-of-semester). Make sure new staff members are familiar with the forms that will be used. Fill in as much information as possible, beforehand.

### 8. Bring in refreshments or treats occasionally for no other reason than that you have a great staff.

Celebrate holidays, birthdays, weddings, births, end-of-semester, first day of spring, first day of winter, a job well done, or a tough week completed. Have staff contests, trivia questions, comment boards. Have a program-wide "Hat Day," "Red Sox Day," or "T-Shirt From My Country Day."

Staff members are constantly listening to heart-wrenching stories from students and they are trying to keep up with lessons, paperwork, and staff development. Lighten things up at work. Make it fun!

### 9. Provide staff with the materials they need. Have them choose their own texts once they are comfortable with the curriculum.

Provide plenty of sample texts and materials for review. Look for small grants and donations to help supplement materials money if necessary. When possible, get donated goodies like folders, notebooks, or pens for staff.

### 10. Provide staff development options for staff at times that are convenient for them (even if they're not great for you!).

This is a challenge for part-time programs, but if you set dates at the start of each semester, people are better able to arrange their schedules. Plan around meal-time (we all have to eat!) and have pizza or have a staff potluck before the meeting. Encourage staff members to facilitate or present staff development sessions. It is wonderful for everyone to see the talent in their own program.

### 11. Introduce the staff to your students via a newsletter or bulletin board.

Ask staff to complete a short questionnaire of likes, dislikes, hobbies, favorite movies, etc. It's a great way for students to get to know the program as a whole, and staff may learn a few surprising things about each other, too!

### 12. Always support staff in any situations that arise with students.

Listen respectfully to both sides of the issue. The student may be in the right, and you need to validate that. But you must do it in a way that never compromises the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom. The staff needs to know that they can come to you with classroom or personal issues and that all

problems will be handled with professionalism.

When administrators make a conscious effort to support staff, staff turnover drops and people are willing to go the extra mile for the program. High turnover rates waste huge amounts of energy and time spent interviewing, hiring, and training. Turnovers are disruptive to staff cohesiveness and especially devastating to students. Creating an atmosphere of responsibility, support, and enjoyment can go a long way towards reducing staff turnover.

Good administrators know that a good program is only as good as the staff working there. I am seen as a good administrator because my staff is outstanding. They make me look good! It is my responsibility to give back to them in return.

*Christine Taylor has been teaching English as a Second Language classes for the past 22 years both in the US and abroad. She was hired as the first ESOL teacher for the Framingham Adult ESOL Program, 17 years ago. She can be contacted at 508-626-4282 or by email at <ctaylor@framingham.k12.ma.us>.*

## The Massachusetts Adult Literacy Hotline



The Hotline is a statewide information and referral service. It serves adults who want to find a basic education program, volunteers who want to tutor, and agencies who want to obtain referrals for their clients.

# What Is Your Program's Philosophy?

By RICHARD GOLDBERG

*If you can't write your idea on the back of my calling card, you don't have a clear idea.*

David Belasco, American Playwright and producer (1853-1931)

If a student walks into your agency and says, "I need to improve my English," then asks about the specific program that you coordinate or in which you teach, are you able to succinctly explain what your program does and how you do it?

Can you clearly articulate whom you serve, and why, in one or two sentences? If not, you may be setting yourself up for frustrations in the classroom, misunderstandings among staff, and unfulfilled expectations for students. This article will offer some suggestions on how to establish a clear program philosophy that you can communicate to students and other stakeholders in your agency and community. It is important to have a clear program philosophy not only for your students but also as your community partnerships emerge so community stakeholders know who you are and how you do what you do.

## Learning From Experience

In late 1993, almost one year after the two major educational providers in Boston's Chinatown launched an ABE transition program as a bridge to college, skills training, and alternative high school diploma courses, our program was evaluated by a team of researchers from the University of Massachusetts Boston. Among other things, the research team conducted one-on-one and focus

group interviews with students. One particular student response made a powerful impression. "This program was to help us in getting ready for our futures; however, the course seems like it's lacking a theme—they talked a little bit about everything." (Kiang, et al, 1994). From this comment, it was clear that the program could have done a much better job in communicating its goals, methods, expectations, and anticipated results. As a result of the evaluation feedback we then set out to clarify and redefine what kind of a program we were supposed to be.

Beginning with the next round of testing sessions, we gave all prospective students a two-page fact sheet with program goals presented visually. We used the image of a staircase with steps ending in reaching the program's anticipated outcomes. These outcomes include college, job training, an alternative high school diploma program, or employment. The sheet has since undergone several revisions as our ABE program has grown to four levels. We now answer the questions "how will we teach you?" and "what will you learn?". We also clarify our expectations about homework, attendance, and students' commitment to program goals.

## Use of Native Language

We read all of this aloud with each group of prospective students, then the program counselor summarizes the fact sheet in Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese, the native languages of most of the people we serve. The result is that by making

our program more tangible and explicit at the point of first contact, there is a good deal of buy-in from our most important stakeholders.

## What You Can Do

At your next meeting with your staff, you might want to brainstorm some answers to these questions. You may discover that you are right on track with where you want to be. You may also discover, however, that you are having trouble, as a group, articulating or agreeing on a set of goals, or that your goals are not congruent with your practices. Whatever arises from such a discussion, it's always useful to reflect critically on the basic questions: what are we doing, why, how well are we doing it, and how well are we explaining all of this to our most important stakeholders, our students?

- ◆ What does your educational program stand for?
- ◆ Are you really doing what you are funded to be doing?
- ◆ Does your philosophy come across clearly in what all of your teachers do with their students?
- ◆ Can you explain it in one sentence?
- ◆ Are you successful, and how do your students know that you are successful?
- ◆ Is your educational culture consistent across all levels of your program? Is one teacher doing content-based or theme-based instruction while another puts more em-

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**What Is Your Program's . . .**  
Continued from page 5

phasis on grammar worksheets or is teaching to a test?

- ◆ What are your expectations of students?
- ◆ Do you set reasonable goals with students? Is this negotiated or dictated? Are these expectations consistent throughout your program?
- ◆ How do you communicate them among staff and to students?
- ◆ Is your program sensitive to your students' short term and long-term needs?

Notes:

Kiang, Peter, et al, 1994. *Research and Reflections on the English Transitional Program*. University of Massachusetts Boston.

*Richard Goldberg is the ABE Program Coordinator and teacher at the Asian American Civic Association. He can be reached by email at <goldber@massed.net>.*

## Try This!

By RICHARD GOLDBERG

Every program should be able to accommodate different teaching styles, but it is important to maintain the same underlying philosophy and to continually reinforce it with teachers and students. After nine years of trying fine tuning, I believe our program has finally come up with something that even David Belasco would be proud of.

We are an intermediate-level English program that prepares adult learners for college, job training, alternative high school diploma programs, or employment through integrated, theme-based instruction.

Now try writing your program philosophy in the space below.



## Upcoming Issues of *Field Notes*

### Spring 2002

***Youth in ABE Programs***

Call or email by: December 15  
Submit by: December 30

### Summer 2002

***How I Entered the Field of ABE and Why I Stay***

Call or email by: April 1  
Submit by: April 15

# Ten Resources on Management and Leadership

By MARCIA DREW HOHN

The following list of resources is based on an annotated bibliography in the *NCSALL Annual Review, Volume II*.

**Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In**

by Roger Fisher, William Ury, and Bruce Patton. New York: Penguin Books, 1981. Can be ordered online at <[www.brooklinebooksmith.com](http://www.brooklinebooksmith.com)>.

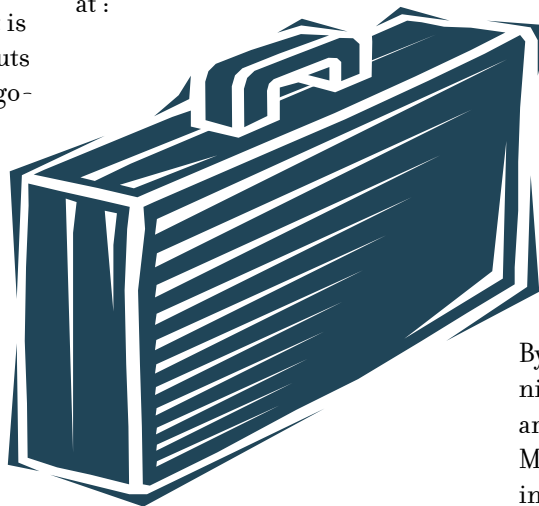
*Getting to Yes* is a classic in negotiation that has been widely used by businesses, non-profit organizations, churches, families, and a myriad of other groups. It is a short book of 200 pages that puts forth a new vision for how to negotiate by focusing on finding common ground. Topics include how to avoid bargaining over different positions, how to use a method that separates people from the problem, how to think strategically and objectively about mutual interests, and how to develop options for mutual gain. The book also deals with difficult areas of negotiation such as disparate levels of power among the negotiating parties. *Getting to Yes* is an excellent resource for adult basic education programs entering into community collaborations or alliances.

**Great Meetings: How to Facilitate Like a Pro** by Dee Kelsey and Pam Plumb. Portland, ME: Hanson Park Books, 1997. and can be ordered online at: <[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)>.

*Great Meetings* is a user-friendly resource on running meetings that is helpful to both experienced and novice facilitators.

Topics in this 164-page volume include: group development and group dynamics, designing meetings, understanding the problem-solving process, conflict within groups, and methods for interventions. Case studies illustrate points. *Great Meetings* will be especially useful for community partnerships.

**Leading Change** by John P. Kotter. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996. Can be ordered online at:



<[www.hbsp.harvard.edu](http://www.hbsp.harvard.edu)>.

*Leading Change* describes an eight-stage process for leading change. The eight stages include: establishing a sense of urgency to change, creating a coalition to oversee the change, developing a vision for outcome of the change, communicating that vision within the organization, empowering employees to contribute to the change effort, generating short-term "wins" to encourage people toward the larger goals, co-mingling key changes to leverage more change, and integrating changes into the

norms of behavior and shared values of the organization. This 186-page book brings together a wide range of theory and experience in the change process presented in a practical and personal manner that will "ring true" to anyone who has been involved in leading change.

**Imaginization: Mindsets for Seeing, Organizing, and Managing**

by Gareth Morgan. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publishing, 1997. Can be ordered online at

<[www.bkpub.com](http://www.bkpub.com)>.

*Imaginization* is a book about organizational change and transformation. It introduces the "imaginization" as a process through which organizations, and the people who populate them, can form new images of self, the world, and work through metaphor.

By developing an image of an organizational structure, a problem area, or some vision for the future, Morgan says it is possible to gain insight into how an organization operates and what it will take to change it. Nature is seen as a good source of images to use in the process. For example, an organization might be "imaged" as an ant colony, a spider plant, a river, or a spider's web.

*Imaginization* provides an electrifying new approach to understanding and changing organizations and the entire 388 pages are well worth reading. Morgan also wrote *Images of Organizations*, which can be read as a companion piece.

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Ten Resources . . .

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**The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization** by Peter Senge, Art Kleiner, Charlotte Roberts, Richard Ross, and Bryan Smith. New York: Doubleday, 1994.

Senge's original book, *The Fifth Discipline*, inspired the business community and many organizations when first published in 1990. However, many found it difficult to apply its concepts. *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*, a 560-page implementation guide, outlines strategies and tools to build a learning organization. Written simply and clearly, it uses case studies and references to underlying theory to illustrate points.

The foundation of a learning organization is systems thinking. Systems thinking shifts the focus away from the individual parts of the system to its functioning as a whole, with a deep appreciation for the interrelatedness of the various parts. Additionally, a learning organization emphasizes building a shared vision and breaking old habits through disciplined dialogue.

**Leadership and the New Science: Learning About Organization from an Orderly Universe** by Margaret Wheatley. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1999. Can be ordered online at: <www.bkpub.com>.

*Leadership and the New Science* has stirred new thinking about leadership across many types of organizations, including religious, social, and educational institutions. Wheatley invites the reader to look at natural systems such as rivers and forests for clues about organizing human activity. In nature, Wheatley says, there is underlying order in apparent disorganization (chaos perspective) that will help us better understand organizations. She urges us to look at organisms (such as plants) and the relationship of the organism to its environment (ecological systems) for information about adaptation and continuous improvement. One type of adaptive behavior is the promotion of self-organizing teams in the workplace. These teams can form quickly to respond creatively to changes in the external environment. A short book of 151 pages, *Leadership and the New Science* provides new insights for management and leadership.

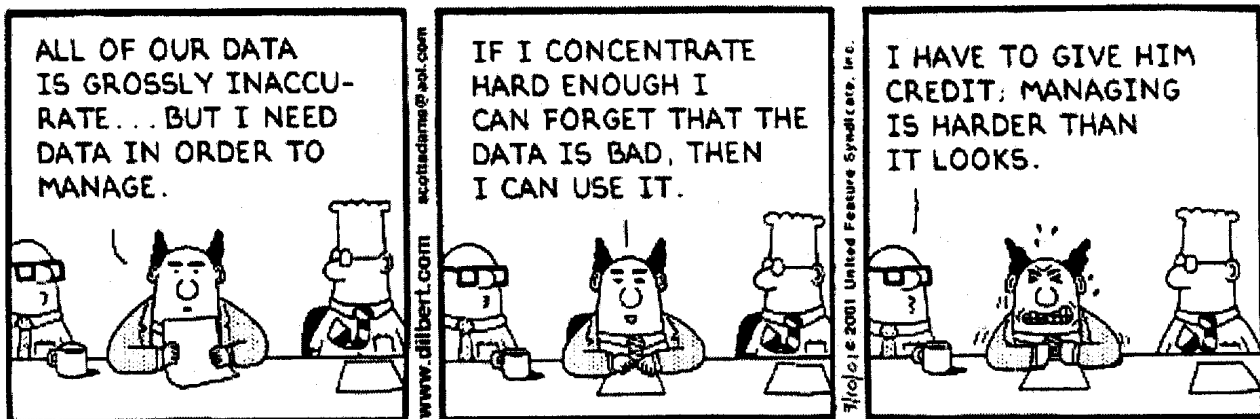
**Disappearing Acts: Gender, Power, and Relational Practice at Work**, by Joyce Fletcher. Boston: MIT Press, 1999. Can be ordered online at: <www.mitpress.mit.edu>.

*Disappearing Acts* is a 175-page book that describes a study carried out with female design engineers. It details how the need for relational skills and emotional intelligence associated with teamwork in modern organizations is often undervalued or undermined when it bumps up against male-oriented images of success. The behavior that organizations say they need is, in fact, "disappeared." Fletcher suggests some ways that individuals and organizations can bring relational practice into the workplace and make the hard work of collaboration and teamwork visible. This book has spawned seminars and courses in relational practice in the workplace.

**Creating and Implementing Your Strategic Plan: A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement** by John Bryson. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995. Can be ordered online at: <www.josseybass.com>.

This 295-page book explains strategic planning and its value to nonprofit organizations. It successfully outlines the dynamics of

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**Ten Resources . . .**

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strategic planning, the key steps in carrying out the process, and a plan for managing the process. The book also presents methods for identifying external threats and opportunities to strategic planning, offers an overview for an oval mapping process, and explores concepts for establishing an effective organizational vision for the future.

***The Rush to Merge: Considerations About Nonprofit Strategic Alliances***

by Ruth McCambridge and Mary Francis Weis. Boston: The Boston Foundation, 1997. Can be ordered from The Boston Foundation, One Boston Place, 24<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston, MA 02108.

*The Rush to Merge* is a slim, 30-page volume packed with sound advice about how non-profit orga-

nizations should approach alliances, collaborations, and mergers. Non-profits are increasingly asked to enter into community planning, collaborations with other providers, and alliances with organizations concerned with common populations. However, the benefits of such activities are based in largely unexplored assumptions. *The Rush to Merge* explores questions organizations should raise before they enter into negotiations, concerns that must be addressed for an alliance to succeed, and structural options for implementing a collaboration.

***“Three Roles of the Leader in the New Paradigm”***

by Stephen Covey in *Leader of the Future*. New Jersey: Jossey-Bass, 1996. Can be ordered online at: <[www.josseybass.com](http://www.josseybass.com)>.

No resource list is complete without attention to ethical and

moral considerations in management and leadership. Covey brings our attention to principle-centered leadership. He defines leadership in terms of three roles: developing a compelling vision and mission, forming continuity between the vision and the mission, and viewing employees as assets through which the vision and mission can be achieved. He stresses the importance of leaders in creating a value system based on principles of humility, courage, and integrity. Covey’s work has inspired many leaders to look beyond the traditional view of management, which is often divorced from personal qualities and values.

*Marcia Drew Hohn, Ed.D., is the director of Northeast SABES at Northern Essex Community College. She can be reached at 978-738-7301 or by email at <[MDREWHOHN@aol.com](mailto:MDREWHOHN@aol.com)>.*

## *Seeds For Change: A Curriculum Guide for Worker-Centered Literacy*

BY FRAN FORTINO

This valuable resource is now available from the Workplace Literacy Project of the Canadian Labor Congress. The publication offers a great “how to” guide based on years of experience with union literacy programs and has been well received. Written by adult educator and literacy pioneer Jean Connon-Unda, the guide is the latest publication in the *Learning in Solidarity* series of the Workplace Literacy Project. Bringing a union approach to the content and process of worker-centered learning, *Seeds for Change* uses practical examples to demonstrate how to integrate literacy into a problem-posing curriculum and encourage critical reflection and action in and beyond the workplace.

*Seeds for Change* is for sale at \$14 per copy or \$12 for order of five or more. Contact Tamara Levine, Coordinator, CLC Workplace Literacy Project at 613-521-3400 or by email at <[tlevine@clc-ctc.ca](mailto:tlevine@clc-ctc.ca)>.

Special section on September 11-pages 10-15

# Anti-Arab, Anti-Muslim Harassment

Advice to Educators, Employers, and Community Leaders

By MARVIN WINGFIELD

Like millions of their fellow citizens, Arab Americans and Muslims stood around the TV, watching in horror and disbelief as one attack after another took place against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Unlike other Americans, however, many quickly found themselves the object of suspicion, hostility, and hate crimes.

Arab Americans and Muslims were also among the victims of the attacks. Many Arab Americans and Muslims worked in the World Trade Center and are among the missing. Several Arab Americans were passengers killed in the hijacked airliners. Arab Americans and Muslims were among the rescue workers in Washington and New York.

Arab American and Muslim organizations issued immediate condemnations of the attacks, but just as in the Gulf War, the Oklahoma City bombing, and other moments of crisis, the Arab and Muslim communities are being targeted by a wave of hostility and harassment. Numerous reports of harassment, assaults, shootings, and threats are coming in. There have been several deaths. Two Arab-American groceries in the Philadelphia area were looted. A store owner in Westchester, New York, was assaulted with pepper spray. Everywhere Muslim women wearing head coverings have been harassed, insulted, or beaten. There are many reports of harassment of Arab-American children at school. People are staying home and keeping their children out of

school. Arab-American organizations are receiving hate mail and hate calls. Asian Americans, especially South Asians, are also being targeted.

Similarly, during the Gulf War, in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing, and other moments of crisis, Arab Americans and Muslims experienced waves of hate crimes, physical assaults, bombings, death threats, and harassment.

At the same time, many non-Arab organizations, institutions and leaders have issued statements of support and called on others to avoid anti-Arab harassment. Individual citizens are reaching out in support of their Arab-American and Muslim neighbors. Strong condemnations of anti-Arab/anti-Muslim harassment and hate crimes have been made by President Bush, the Justice Department, the U.S. Congress, and numerous political, religious and community leaders.

## Support for Arab-Americans and Muslims

Arab-Americans and Muslims, especially young people, may be experiencing anxiety and confusion over the attacks, fearful of the danger of personal harassment, and suffering from a sense of shame or stigma from being identified with the suspected perpetrators of the attacks. Many Arab-American students feel intimidated and silenced. Some feel that they have to keep their ethnicity a secret and let anti-Arab remarks go un-

challenged. Non-Arab students may be feeling a sense of vulnerability, righteous indignation, anger, or hostility which is seeking any available outlet.

Educators and community leaders should take steps to address these potential problems. A great many are already doing so.

### 1. Public Statements:

It will be very helpful for school officials, university presidents and deans, student government leaders, employers, religious leaders, and others to issue public statements that innocent people should not be blamed for the acts of others. Let those who are upset and angry know that anti-Arab and anti-Muslim assaults, harassment, insults, and hate speech is the wrong way to respond to this tragedy. This could take the form of statements to the mass media, addresses to school or university assemblies, community forums, and op-ed articles in newspapers. Strong leadership is called for.

### 2. Educational Forums:

Schools, universities, and businesses can set up forums and discussion groups to discuss the attacks, give people a chance to express their views, and make clear that blaming individual Arab Americans or Muslims is an inappropriate way to respond. It is right to be angry, but it is wrong to blame innocent people. The impulse to retaliate can be an instinc-

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**Anti-Arab. . .**

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tive demand for justice, but justice can never be served by blindly

and reaching out to Arab Americans, Arab students and Muslims. Some are going shopping for people apprehensive about leaving their homes or accompanying them in public. Students in schools and

fact still friends and have support from others. Some share classroom lecture notes or offer to go to the library to take out books. Student organizations are inviting Arab Americans and Muslims to speak to their groups, show videos, plan joint actions, or to discuss their mutual experience of the crisis.

Students who observe harassment incidents or hurtful speech should speak out to counteract it, either immediately, or by reporting it to school authorities and asking them to take action.

For further information, please consult the ADC Web

*Marvin Wingfield is the education director at the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee.*

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*The most effective way to counteract hostile stereotypes is through coming in personal contact with other communities.*

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striking out in ways which victimize others. Reaffirm the inherent value of all human life.

It is important to invite members of the Arab-American and Muslim communities to speak. The most effective way to counteract hostile stereotypes is through coming in personal contact with other communities. Invite speakers and show videos on the Arab world and Islam. Remind everyone that the Arab world is an entire civilization with a rich and sophisticated cultural heritage. It is not merely a place of political conflict and violence. (See the ADC Web site at <[www.adc.org](http://www.adc.org)> for suggestions about print and video resources.)

**3) Counseling:**

Schools and universities can make counseling available to those who may wish to discuss their more personal and private concerns. Businesses and religious groups could do the same.

**4) Individuals:**

Many people are offering to help

on campus are calling their friends to let them know that they are in

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## Helping Kids Feel Secure

BY TINA TORAN

Hello from the Parent-Child Home Program. It's difficult to write a "newsy" piece for the October newsletter because the fallout from September 11th is still so real and overwhelming, and the repercussions seem so infinite. While we, as adults, are feeling off-balance in a crazy world, I think it's imperative that we do everything we can to make our children feel safe. Since this feels like such a daunting task, start with something simple. Set aside a half-hour each evening to read with your children.

Since you have to be still to read, you get a moment (every night!) to relax while your children feel the safety and pleasure of your closeness. You can do the reading (you're modeling behavior that just might last a lifetime), or you can let your children "read" to you. If they are really young, they make up their own stories using the pictures as a guide.

By working this time consistently into your schedule, and reminding them how much you look forward to spending reading time with them, you are letting your children know that reading is an important and pleasurable activity. Let us keep them safe and treasured.

*Tina Toran is a coordinator for the Falmouth Parent-Child Home Program and a part-time family literacy teacher. She is also an advisory board member for Field Notes for 2001-2002. She can be reached at <[ttoran@cs.com](mailto:ttoran@cs.com)>. This article is reprinted from the newsletter for her program.*

# Teachers Talk

Soon after September 11, ESOL teachers began discussing their classroom experiences on the TESOL Adult Interest Section listserv. With permission from the writers, *Field Notes* is offering excerpts from this discussion.

**From: Nancy Quinn, City Colleges of Chicago**  
**<trying4@hotmail.com>**

**Date: Sunday, September 16, 2001**

I teach low-beginning, with a four-hour class that started at 12:30 on Tuesday (September 11). Walking into the classroom, I still didn't know what I was going to do. We have people from every part of the world in every class, and I was especially concerned that the Muslim students feel comfortable, but I really was pretty confident that part would be okay, based on past experiences during the Gulf War, etc. I just didn't know how to approach it, since we couldn't have a "discussion." I ended up going over the facts of what happened and the related vocabulary with the class, and asked them to tell me if there were words they had heard on TV but didn't understand. I let them know that I knew that many of them had had terrible things happen in their countries, too. (One Somali student has no hands—only a kind of hook). I also let them know that I know there are reasons why some people hate our country. We spent quite a bit of time on it, and then it seemed okay to move on to "regular class."

In the following days (we meet four days, four hours each day) we did a quick update, and then moved on. It seems to be an okay approach for this group. We'll see how things develop.

**From: Abigail Tom, Durham Technical Community College, Durham, NC, <abtom@mindspring.com>**  
**Date: Saturday, September 15, 2001**

I am appalled by Tommy's story about the teacher who wouldn't discuss the events with his/her students. I feel very strongly that when this and other terrible events occur, we must give our students an opportunity to talk about them. A few years ago there was a shooting near where our classes meet; another time there was a suicide at a middle school which the children of some of my students attended. All of these events are extremely distressing to our students, as they are to us. To imply that they aren't is in some way to deny the humanity of our students. I teach high beginners. On

Wednesday I asked them to tell what happened. As they did so, I wrote on the board what they had said. In this way, the events were written in English which was comprehensible to them. They said this helped them later understand the language of the TV reports. In my intermediate conversation class, I asked them before class to write any comments or questions they had about the events. They wrote various things. Then I asked if they wanted to say more. Some did. I left a lot of "wait time" to be sure that everyone who wanted to could talk, but didn't force anyone. I feel that both of these strategies give students a chance to talk about what happened and to share their thoughts about it. To do less is a great disservice to our students.

**From Elsa Auerbach, UMass Boston**  
**<elsa.auerbach@umb.edu>**

**Date: Friday, September 14, 2001**

I had two undergraduate classes yesterday, each of which turned out completely differently from each other and from what I expected/planned... I need to start by saying that in both classes, there was absolute unanimity in our horror and sadness about the events of September 11th. In both classes, people from all points of view were overwhelmed by the enormity and their shock, outrage, compassion, grief came out through the discussion. . .

. . . The second class is for first year students; most are ESL students and all but one are women. I started by asking students whether they wanted to talk about the events of the week (rather than just digging in). Students had written poems about themselves and I had brought a poem by a Palestinian woman about how to be Palestinian in times like these. Immediately one student said she resented the way teachers were trying to connect the discussion to course material and said we should just talk about it without trying to work it into the curriculum. So I told them that I had just done that very thing in my previous class. One very outspoken bicultural Latina-North American student said she did NOT want to talk about it because she had almost gotten into a fist fight in her previous class when she raised her fears about racist attacks on Arabic-looking people and her perspective that the US was sowing what it had reaped—she spoke about the experiences of U.S. involvement in Latin America. From here, the discussion took its own course with a young very quiet woman from El Salvador talking about the fear she is experiencing and her sense of loss: she came here because she thought she would be safe, and now feels there is nowhere left to be safe. She cried and

*Continued on page 13*

## Teachers Talk

Continued from page 12

several other women also began crying and spoke of similar feelings. There was quite a back-and-forth between women from Eritrea and Haiti talking about what the U.S. had done in their countries and women from Vietnam who saw this as the land of freedom.

All the while, the Muslim women said nothing. One is "invisibly" Muslim (blond, from Turkey) and the other who had been wearing a head scarf in earlier classes, came to class without the covering. At a few points, I asked them and others if they wanted to say anything. They said no. A self-identified "American Jewish" woman voiced her concern about the government using this as a way toward more violence. At the end, a young "American" woman thanked the group, saying she had never had a chance to hear how people who aren't American are thinking about these events. The "outspoken" woman said she was glad we had discussed it because it was a different experience from her previous one. After class, I asked the Muslim woman if she had left off the head covering because of the events of the week. She said yes. I asked her why she hadn't participated in class to share what she is experiencing and, interestingly, she said she had wanted to, but her parents told her not to talk about this in any way.

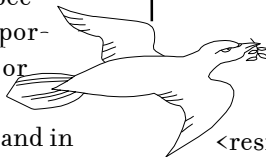
What do I see in this? I think there are a few points that stand out for me:

1. NOT jumping into the conversation, but rather asking people whether they would like to talk about these events was useful. It ended up leading into a discussion, but I don't think people thought I was forcing them to talk about it. (In fact one student said this—that in another class, the teacher didn't give them a choice.)

2. Abandoning my own plan for how to get into the discussion was important—that is, NOT orchestrating the discussion. I told them how I was thinking about this and what I had planned, sharing my thinking, and sharing my own uncertainties;

3. Trusting that they could bring a full range of perspectives to the discussion, that I didn't need to assume I was the only one who had a critical analysis was important.

4. Not being "goal-oriented"—that is, not trying to work the discussion around to one perspective or unanimity or "good feeling" was important; being comfortable with not resolving or clarifying things. I would be interested in whatever others see in what I've described and in hearing about how they've proceeded.



# Free Movie Rentals From Women Make Movies

FROM WOMEN MAKE MOVIES WEB SITE

<[WWW.WMM.COM](http://WWW.WMM.COM)>

As the nation collectively responds to this horrific event, we have become increasingly concerned with the violence against Arab-Americans and Muslims, as well as the alarming trend toward racial profiling. We believe it is of the utmost importance to sensitize people about the culture and traditions of the Arab and Muslim community, both abroad and in the United States, in order to avoid further prejudicial attacks and denouncements of any one ethnic group. To accomplish this feat, we believe it is vital to share educational resources that teach tolerance and an appreciation for cultural diversity.

At *Women Make Movies* we have chosen to contribute to this effort by providing FREE rentals on a selected group of titles on the Middle East and Arab culture through December 31, 2001. We simply ask that those who accept this offer pay the minimum shipping and handling fees.

It is our sincere hope that this gesture will assist to humanize the Arab American and Muslim community and demonstrate the vast sources of alternative educational media available to the viewing public.

To find out more about the films, please click on the film titles below that directly link to our Web site. <[www.wmm.com](http://www.wmm.com)>. You may also send us an email to [orders@wmm.com](mailto:orders@wmm.com) to place your order.

Please refer to code 500G when placing your order.

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## Peace Network

This listserv has been created in response to September 11 as a place for educators who are "committed to peace and wish to discuss their plans of action; post information updates; relate fears, challenges and victories, etc., without fear of negative responses from those who feel that war is the answer. To join the list, send a message to: <[resistwar-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:resistwar-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)>

# Integrating September 11 into the ESOL or ABE Classroom

BY NANCY SHERIDAN

Classes for the Stoughton Adult Basic Education Program began on September 20 for FY01. As I sat and chatted with my colleagues before class on the 20th, the inevitable question came up among the instructors: should we, or how should we deal with the September 11 tragedy in our classrooms? One of the veteran teachers quickly spoke up. "I need to open the class with a discussion of the topic, somehow prompting students to acknowledge and share their feelings. She explained that before the class could begin its study of English, it needed to "debrief" about the tragedy. This discussion prompted those present into brainstorming about strategies for integrating the tragedy into the lessons that would take place in the days and weeks to come.

I followed up with the instructor to find out how her lesson went. She chose to conduct the debriefing part of her lesson in a purely oral format, prompting students to relate as best they could how they felt or had been affected by the images and news accounts of the events of September 11. It was a positive yet challenging lesson since many of the beginner level students in the program struggled to relate in English. "They knew how they felt in their own languages, but had to be prodded to give the English equivalent." The one doubt this instructor had about bringing the topic into the classroom was a comparison a Russian student made of the tragedy to the Chernobyl disaster. "This was very powerful and brought the student to tears; it was difficult knowing how to respond to the student and how to move away from the topic."

Following are some ways that some ESOL instructors have brought the topic into their classrooms:

**1. Having the class do an Internet search.** The search could include topics like: USA/Middle Eastern policy; the Islamic faith; fund-raising and others ways of helping the victims of September 11; stories of survival. Students can practice a variety of literacy skills while researching and reporting their findings to the class. While this exercise is clearly suited to a more advanced population, many students could benefit from getting the news in this interactive mode. The

<bostonchannel.com> is one of the many sites that could be used with this exercise.

**2. Using picture dictionaries.** Especially for beginner English language learners experiencing intense feelings, picture dictionaries are a great resource to help students identify relevant vocabulary. Most of the picture dictionaries have a whole section on "feelings" and "life events" that can be used to stimulate the beginnings of a conversation or basic sentence. In my level 1b ESOL class, I had my students reference the picture dictionaries to tell the class about the many feelings people affected by the tragedy were having. Students were able to generate quite a lengthy list of both psychological feelings like shocked and worried, and physical feelings including nervous, tired, and thirsty. "Conversations" included comparing how children felt to how adults felt and whether or not students felt homesick in the wake of the attack.

**3. Studying discrimination and racism in the United States.** *News for You*, a New Readers Press publication used in many ABE classrooms, presented an article in late September entitled "American Arabs and Muslims Face Backlash" This article can be used as a reading activity used to stimulate discussion about discrimination and racism in our country. The October 3 episode of *The West Wing*, a series on network television, presented the issue of discrimination against Arab Americans in the wake of the tragedy. A guided viewing of this segment is another possible way to engage students in this difficult topic.

**4. Using news photos.** There has not been a day yet that the media has not presented us with images that depict some aspect of the conflict and the tragedy itself. Many instructors, particularly those teaching ESOL, have chosen pictures from newspapers and magazines to stimulate conversations and writings in the classroom. Teachers can also bring in media literacy with students by examining which images are presented to us and why. For help with this, see <[www.mediachannel.org/atissue/conflict/](http://www.mediachannel.org/atissue/conflict/)>.

*Continued on page 15*

## Integrating . . .

Continued from page 14

**5. Examining patriotism.** A discussion about the resurgence of American patriotism since September 11 can be generated in a variety of ways. Using lyrics from American patriotic songs can be used to understand the patriotic feelings that Americans have during wartime periods or to identify American icons. Students can compare examples of patriotism in America to patriotic actions in their homelands. Teachers may also want to discuss whether all Americans view the flag the same way, why, and why not?

While we all hate to admit it, there is a real reason to believe that we may have to revisit the terrorism topic, or ones like it, with our students again. While the depth to which this topic is explored is a decision each teacher or program must make, ignoring its existence is not an option. Needless to say, I've found ABE practitioners to be absolute masters of integrating survival/real life needs into their instruction. If nothing else, this is an opportunity, however grim, to share effective strategies for teaching a very sensitive subject.

If you would like to share a lesson or strategy used in your class about the September 11 tragedy, or if you would like to recount an experience you have had in the classroom around this topic, please contact Lenore Balliro, editor, at <lballiro2000@worlded.org>.

*Nancy Sheridan is the project coordinator of the Stoughton Adult Basic Education Program. She can be reached by email at <sheridan@gis.net>*

### **Mental Health and the ESL Classroom: a Guide for Teachers Working with Refugees**

**[www.refugeesusa.org/help\\_ref/esl\\_manual.pdf](http://www.refugeesusa.org/help_ref/esl_manual.pdf)**

Produced by the International Institute of Boston and the Immigrant and Refugee Services of America with support from the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

**[www.mediachannel.org/atissue/conflict/](http://www.mediachannel.org/atissue/conflict/)**

This site looks at the role of media in the current crisis, including bias, accuracy, rumor, etc. Includes toolkits for parents and teachers.

## Useful Web Sites

### **Behind the Headlines**

**[www.teachingforchange.org](http://www.teachingforchange.org)**

NECA, Network on Change on the Americas. Resources for Educators on the September 11 Tragedy and the Response. This excellent site includes articles, teaching ideas, and links to other sites. It is updated regularly.

### **Resources for Adult Educators in Response to the World Trade Center Crisis and Its Aftermath**

**[www.laccnyc.org](http://www.laccnyc.org)**

Literacy Assistance Center, New York City. Excellent resources on alternative media and curriculum development.

### **100 Questions and Answers About Arab Americans**

**[www.freep.com/jobspage/arabs/arab13.html](http://www.freep.com/jobspage/arabs/arab13.html)**

Knight Ridder and the Detroit Free Press. This comprehensive resource examines questions about the Arab world that helps us move beyond stereotypes.

**[www.brown.edu/Departments/Swearer\\_Center/Literacy\\_Resources/](http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Swearer_Center/Literacy_Resources/)**

Literacy Resources/RI has collected a number of resources on September 11.

### **Who Are the Arabs?**

**[www.ccasonline.org/publications/teachmodule\\_whoarabs.htm#classroom](http://www.ccasonline.org/publications/teachmodule_whoarabs.htm#classroom)**

The Center for Contemporary Arab Studies offers a teaching module about the Arab world and Islam.

### **Attack on America: Explaining the Inexplicable to Your Students**

**[www.educationworld.com/a\\_lesson/lesson244](http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson244)**

An amazing number of links to lessons and resources dealing with terrorism.

# A Workplace Program Unionizes

## An Interview With Lisa Jochim

BY LENORE BALLIRO

After 15 years of sponsoring union-based workplace education classes, The Workers' Education Program at UMass Dartmouth is now addressing its own workplace equity issues. Six of the full-time staff who work through the Labor Education Center are now members of the Educational Services Unit (ESU) of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

"We always thought it was ridiculous," said Lisa Jochim, director of the UMass Dartmouth program, "that we've been trying to teach workers about their rights and the protection of being in a union, and we have none of that!" Lisa explained that the last funding cycle was an excellent time to bring staff members into the union. "Since DOE had included 'attracting and retaining staff' as one of their proposal priorities, we thought that creating benefited positions through the ESU would go a long way toward retention." She went on to explain, "During the past few years, certain teachers said they wanted to stay long term. We recognized the irony: here we are working for the Labor Education Center—a place that works to strengthen unions—with no job security or benefits, but we love our work. For many of us, now that our jobs are stable, this is the job we want to keep forever. For the past three years, we've had no turnover in staff."

### How Did They Unionize?

"Before the last refunding cycle," Lisa said, "we went through

the SABES program planning process. One of the goals was to increase and stabilize wages and to get benefits, since none of the staff had benefits. We went through the ESU at UMass Dartmouth, a division of the AFT that represents professional, non-faculty positions. Even though our program is



funded by soft money (grants) we convinced the university that the program was stable and long term, since we have been consistently funded for 15 years. Not all of our positions are in the union: you have to be 18 3/4 hours to be eligible, and we do have part-time teachers who work fewer hours than that. We started off with adding me to the union. With the last big RFP round we were able to get six full-time jobs and one part time job with full benefits, insurance, days off, pension, tuition waivers, and other benefits union members enjoy."

Lisa explained that the pay structure of the program was designed by the staff and takes into account experience. The staff also works a flexible schedule to make it all work. "No one works a 9–5 schedule." Lisa said, "We have to work when the classes are offered,

some in the day and some in the evening."

The program has evolved over the years since it started, in 1986, with a small workplace education demonstration grant under Governor Dukakis' workplace literacy initiative. The program now offers 15 classes on site at the program's center on Purchase Street in New Bedford. Some of the students are members of UNITE, the Teamsters, United Steel, BCTGM and SEIU and some are from the community in general. The program also offers customized classes for UNITE in Fall River and for the United Front Child Development Program workers (represented by the United Auto Workers). The program has always worked closely with union leadership to recruit workers and to integrate workers' rights, social justice, and union content into the curriculum. Lisa noted that the curriculum is largely student-driven and participatory, reflecting the needs of the students and what they ask for.

"We're proud of what we're doing," Lisa said, "and we're happy we were able to get our own workers stable positions with benefits and a better salary—all the things we believe in for our students."

*Lisa Jochim is the director of the Worker Education Program sponsored by the Labor Education Center at UMass Boston. She can be reached at 508-999-4047 or by email at <jochim@UMassD.Edu>.*



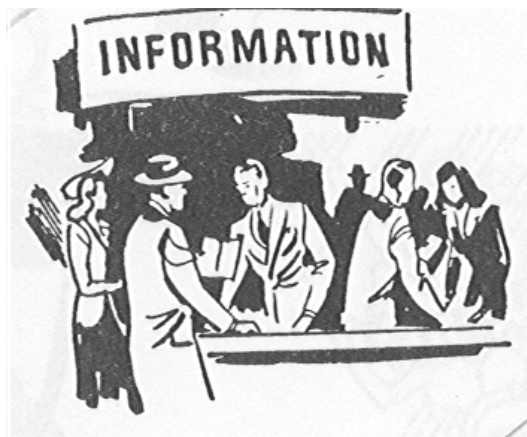
# SABES Launches Field Test for ABE Teacher's License Support

By CAREY REID

This past summer, SABES staff worked with a group of five veteran ABE teachers to help design a support system for teachers who might want to obtain the new ABE teacher's license, which was officially rolled out on October 1, 2001. An additional twenty teachers have been recruited for the Field Test, which was launched at a half-day meeting at Central SABES on November 13<sup>th</sup>.

As determined by the summer planning, the Field Test teachers are working as peer-support groups, one in each of the five SABES region. They will try out and improve newly developed materials—a Handbook, worksheets, and templates—as they seek the license together. After producing and submitting Application Packets to DOE's Office of Educator Certification and Licensure, the Field

Testers will also be using lists of resources, which have been compiled for each of the license's teaching standards, as they help each other put together portfolios



to submit to DOE Review Panels. The successes and difficulties they meet as they move forward will help SABES refine the support system and its various elements.

To support the Field Test teachers, and *any* teacher who

wants help going after the new license, SABES has developed a new Web site, <[www.sabes.org/license](http://www.sabes.org/license)>. The Web site provides the same support materials being used by the Field Testers, plus links to connect license-seeking teachers to SABES and DOE staff members, other teachers, resources, training opportunities, and official documents. Speaking of official documents, the regulations governing the new license, plus application and other forms, are steadily appearing on <[www.doe.mass.edu/cert](http://www.doe.mass.edu/cert)>. Guidelines and additional materials will be posted as they are approved.

If you'd like more information, or if you have questions, please contact Carey Reid at <[creid@worlded.org](mailto:creid@worlded.org)> or 617-482-9485 or the Office of Educator Certification and Licensure at 781-338-6600.

*Congratulations to Mina Reddy  
as the new director of the SABES  
Central Resource Center.*

# Supervisor Self-Assessment

CONTRIBUTED BY ALEX RISLEY-SCHROEDER

The quiz below is adapted from “Effective Supervision Survey” in *Grassroots and Nonprofit Leadership—A Guide for Organizations in Changing Times*, by Berit M. Lakey, George Lakey, Rod Napier, Janice M. Robinson, and published by New Society Publishers, 1995, page 136. It is designed to be answered by employees about their supervisor.

## Instructions

As supervisors we are used to wearing a variety of different hats. In this exercise put on the hat of a staff member of your organization and look at your behavior through the eyes of your staff. Use this instrument to assess yourself as a supervisor. With each question, rate yourself on a scale of 1-10. (10 = excellent) Be honest!

## Points

- 1. Clearly defines her or his own limit of authority. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Provides me with clear organizational goals and priorities. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Provides me with a clear understanding of my own authority as it relates to my role. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Helps me to establish my own goals and objectives in an atmosphere of openness and collaboration, where my ideas and concerns are seriously considered. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Determines with me the criteria of success upon which my own performance will be measured. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Believes that my career development is a crucial part of the supervisory process and actively focuses with me on career opportunities and my own long-term goals. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Meets with me regularly to keep in touch with my progress. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Establishes with me a climate of help and accessibility that makes it easy to approach him or her. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Provides me with organizational information I feel is important to my own work and maintains my interest and involvement in the organization. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. Provides me with the opportunity to develop specific skills or experience necessary for my present job or future development within this organization or elsewhere. \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. Helps me develop a clear and easily followed plan that outlines my progress and how well I am meeting my own goals and objectives, both in terms of the job itself and my personal and professional development. \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. Helps me evaluate my own performance in areas of strengths and limitations. \_\_\_\_\_
- 13. Takes time periodically to observe me on the job, doing those things that are most important for my success. \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. Solicits my own views of my performance based on the criteria to which we previously agreed. \_\_\_\_\_

Continued on page 19

# What Makes a Good Supervisor?

COMMENTS FROM THE FIELD COMPILED BY BY LENORE BALLIRO

What do you respect most about your supervisor? What does your supervisor do that you find especially helpful? I took an informal survey of practitioners around the state. Here are the responses, in their own words.

"A hands-off approach, meaning that I'm trusted to act autonomously, with limited direct supervision. I'm . . . held accountable for my performance, but it gives me great satisfaction to not have someone looking over my shoulder, scrutinizing my every task."

"I . . . find that the freedom to explore and initiate new projects with the knowledge that I can look to her for support is invaluable. I value her confidence in me so that I

may work independently while knowing I have support when I need it."



". . . my current supervisors. . . grant me intellectual freedom in the classroom and . . . encourage, but not try to micromanage, my professional growth."

". . . working with a supervisor who shares a similar vision of the mission of adult education is key to my job satisfaction."

"(My supervisor) is culturally competent. Not only has he acquired an impressive array of Vietnamese vocabulary, he is aware of the factors that influence the Vietnamese-American adult ESL learner."

"The supervisor I have now knows what's going on in the classroom and she brings in articles and resources that pertain to our lessons."

"He (supervisor) is a cookie jar of ESL/Classroom ideas (yummy!). His experiences both as a teacher and administrator are rich and readily tapped."

*Continued on page 22*

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**Self Assessment . . .**

**Continued from page 18**

**Points**

15. Solicits, along with me, information from individuals I impact in my job and compares this with his or her conceptions of my performance, as well as with my own.

\_\_\_\_\_

16. Works with me to improve my performance in areas that appear to need strengthening, based on the information I have gathered.

\_\_\_\_\_

17. Gives problems I have within the organization appropriate attention, shortly after I've stated them.

\_\_\_\_\_

18. Shapes my supervision according to my unique and changing needs.

\_\_\_\_\_

19. Involves me in problem solving where I have the expertise or where I feel the eventual decision will directly influence my own life.

\_\_\_\_\_

20. Uses observation/evaluation tools that I am both familiar and comfortable with.

**Total:**

\_\_\_\_\_

*Alex Risley-Schroeder is the Changes Project coordinator at SABES west regional resource center. She can be reached at 413-552-2066 or by email at <arisley-schroeder@hcc.mass.edu>.*

# Journey From Teacher to Program Director

By MARYANA HUSTON

I'm the new adult ESOL program director at Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC), formerly called the Quincy School Community Council. I came to this position after teaching ESOL/EFL and a little ABE/GED in a variety of settings. Before becoming the program director, I was an ESOL teacher here at BCNC. This move from teacher to new director has presented a number of challenges, and my current focus is communication.

Like many program directors in adult basic education programs, I am responsible for a variety of tasks: getting money, following the guidelines and requirements of contracts; overseeing ongoing evaluations; implementing program and staff development; and making sure that all staff are happy and fulfilled in their jobs. Most important, and sometimes easiest to slip from our minds, I am also responsible, along with teachers and staff, for making sure that students are learning to communicate in English and are becoming more comfortable in their lives here in Boston.

## Background on BCNC

We are a large, multi-service agency serving about 400 students a year, 250 at one time. We offer 16 classes: eight are bilingual Chinese/English, three are transitional, and five are monolingual, English. We also have volunteer

tutor and peer tutor programs. We sponsor a citizenship education program and a computer lab. In addition, another 200 or so com-



munity members (people not enrolled in classes at BCNC) drop in throughout the year for various reasons. Our students are largely Chinese speakers, and several dialects of Chinese are spoken. Of the eight ESOL teachers, two coordinators, two part-time office staff, and one counselor, ten are Chinese. Two of the American staff also speak Chinese.

## Where Does Teaching Fit In?

Like many programs, we do not have enough time or space. We have a waiting list of over 600 people; the average wait for classes is 6 months to a year. We have space in a decrepit building between Washington Street and Harrison Avenue which is scheduled to come

down this winter, and we share space with Josiah Quincy Public School. We spend a lot of time figuring out space for classes, trainings, testing, intake, eating lunch, and graduation.

I won't say anything about how much time SMARTT has taken from several of us. If we just had another 30 or 40 thousand dollars and could hire. I don't want to complain (!) but with all the responsibilities we have, there never seems to be enough time to really relax and teach English.

## Biggest Challenge: Communication

My biggest challenge as the program director, besides running around making sure everything is getting done and all teachers have classrooms for their students, is communication.

First, and a heads-up to anyone contemplating becoming a director, is the change in relationships with staff that happens when you now have people's "lives"—their visas, income, ability just to stay in the U S— in your hands. Second is the balancing act of dealing with the cultural differences between American and Chinese staff.

As a teacher, I hung out with other teachers and staff and dreamed of what changes we would like to make in our program. We ate together, chatted about personal lives, and even got together outside of work occasionally. While I was

*Continued on page 21*

**Journey. . .**

Continued from page 20

supported in my move to director, expectations and comfort levels, especially of the Chinese staff, shifted. I tumbled into the discomfort of having to say "no" to people. Sometimes I felt as if those who

**New Goals**

Last year, my goal as program director was to get the program closer to the DOE's expectations and organize some systematic procedures for getting more done efficiently. Since those goals have been accomplished for the most part, I would now like to focus on some program

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*As a teacher, I hung out with other teachers and staff and dreamed of what changes we would like to make in our program.*

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were closer friends wanted to take advantage of me, but maybe this interpretation results from my guilt at having to say "no" sometimes. I also realized that as director, unlike as a co-teacher, my personal life and opinions had to be kept to the minimum, something difficult for me, a typically open, verbose person.

development around that intangible thing called culture. Often, Chinese and American cultures are opposites. This gives rise to many questions for our program. As a bilingual program in Boston, do we draw on Chinese ways, or American ways? Do we compromise? What does that look like? Sometimes more traditional, sometimes more participatory?

Always a little of both? These are questions we need to explore more deeply as a staff.

I realized that some of the communication problems arose because we had not made explicit many expectations and preferences in our new relationship when I moved from co-teacher to director.

I trust that with some careful and conscious planning and conversations, this year of cultural exploration will be fruitful, and we will find ways of at least better understanding our expectations and preferences, even if we are not willing or able to completely change the way we do things.

I also hope that as relationships become more comfortable, roles are better defined, and expectations are clearer, we will be better providers for our wonderful students, the reason we are here in the first place.

*Maryana Huston is the program director at Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center. She trained as a mediator and intercultural training specialist at Lesley College and has experience teaching and tutoring English. She can be reached by email at <maryana\_34@yahoo.com>.*



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## What Makes a Good Supervisor?

Continued from page 19

“Assistance with goal setting.”

“I find specific feedback to be the most useful from my supervisor.”

“Willingness to process issues, change, and innovation in-depth. . . or a long enough time that collective ownership had a decent chance of emerging.”

“Sharing frustrations, challenges, and triumphs and encouraging others to do the same. . .”

“We are not bogged down with unnecessary paperwork, and if we have a meeting it’s important. If we have done something noteworthy she shares our successes with anyone who will listen.”

“A good supervisor makes sure everyone gets paid in full in a timely manner.”

“I . . . value a supervisor who will stand up for workers when necessary.”

## What’s missing, or what doesn’t work well?

“Not modeling reasonable work/life boundaries.”

“Trying to maintain lines of communication when working part time and when my supervisor is gone to so many other meetings.”

“Things I would have respected: matching words with actions more often.”

“(In one class) (the supervisor) . . . exploded and berated me in front of the students.”

## As a supervisor what are you most proud of?

“Reflecting over time on how people have grown in their jobs developed new skills...new ways of solving problems . . . seeing staff develop a sense of teamwork.”

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*I . . . value a supervisor who will stand up for workers when necessary.*

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“I am most proud of being able to foster a professional environment where there is a lot of genuine sharing and support.”

“Of engaging folks in a way that is deeply respectful of their own goals and needs”.

## As a supervisor, what is most challenging?

“Being transparent enough in my own thought processes (hopes and fears and needs) in a way that begins to diffuse some of the inherent power dynamics.”

“Unclear roles, unclear expectations, unacknowledged tensions get in the way of managing well.”

“The most frustrating part of an (ABE) supervisor’s job is the constantly changing grant reporting requirements and the lateness of approval for funding. Right now we’re still hiring for courses that

have already begun, a typical fall situation. Teachers hired on the fly cannot plan their courses rationally. Our students suffer.”

“Managing a staff that is part-time, off site, and has little time to spend on program development and maintenance.”

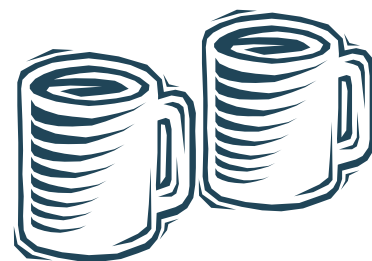
“Conflict resolution that some-

times occurs between staff members. Remembering the importance of feedback to staff—both positive and negative, and . . . , making time each day to let staff know that you’re available and appreciate their efforts.”

## Other comments from supervisors

“It would make a world of difference to have the DOE and/or SABES get more involved with training/mentoring managers. Also these (management) positions, no matter how small the program, should be full time, for what’s expected.”

“It’s very important for directors to develop a vision for their program with their staff and to maintain that vision afterwards—to be the management/peers, and I like it.”



# Mark Your Calendar

## **April 1-5, 2002**

American Educational Research Association (AERA), 83rd Annual Meeting  
*Validity and Value in Education Research* Location: New Orleans, LA  
Contact: AERA, 202-223-9485 Web: [www.aera.net/meeting](http://www.aera.net/meeting)

## **April 9-13, 2002**

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention  
*Language and the Human Spirit* Location: Salt Lake City, UT  
Contact: TESOL, 703-836-0774 Web: [www.tesol.org/conv](http://www.tesol.org/conv)

## **April 28-May 2, 2002**

International Reading Association (IRA), 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention  
*Gateway to Global Understanding* Location: San Francisco, CA  
Contact: 302-731-1600 Web: [www.reading.org/2002](http://www.reading.org/2002)

## **May 8-11, 2002**

Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE), Annual Conference  
*Doin' the Charleston!* Location: Charleston, SC  
Contact: SCLRC, 803-929-2571 Web: [www.sclrc.org/COABE2002](http://www.sclrc.org/COABE2002)

## **May 16-18, 2002**

University of South Florida, Cancer, Culture and Literacy Conference, 3rd Biennial  
*Developing Effective Communication Strategies to Reduce Health Disparities*  
Location: Clearwater Beach, FL Contact: Ann Gordon, USF, 813-903-4975  
Web: [www.moffitt.usf.edu/Promotions/ccl](http://www.moffitt.usf.edu/Promotions/ccl)

## **May 24-26, 2002**

Adult Education Research Conference, AERC 2002  
*Investigating the World of Adult Education* Location: Raleigh, NC  
Contact: Barbara Copeland, NCSU, 919-515-6297 Web: [www.ncsu.edu/cpe/aerc02](http://www.ncsu.edu/cpe/aerc02)

## **May 30-June 1, 2002**

Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education (CASAE), 21st Annual Conference  
*Adult Education and the Contented Terrain of Public Policy* Location: Toronto, Ontario  
Contact: Leona English, [lenglish@stfx.ca](mailto:lenglish@stfx.ca)  
Web: [www.oise.utoronto.ca/CASAE/cnf2002/cnf2002.html](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/CASAE/cnf2002/cnf2002.html)

## **June 8-13, 2002**

Special Libraries Association (SLA), 93<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference  
*Putting Knowledge to Work* Location: Los Angeles, CA  
Contact: SLA, 202-2340-4700  
Web: [www.sla.org/content/Events/conference/2002annual](http://www.sla.org/content/Events/conference/2002annual)

# New *Change Agent* Web Site

[www.nelrc.org/changeagent](http://www.nelrc.org/changeagent)

*The Change Agent* is a biannual, 24-page, theme-based newspaper that offers news stories; opinion pieces; student and teacher writing; graphics and cartoons; and lessons and activities specifically designed for the adult education classroom. It is a flexible and creative tool for educational development that is helping people become informed and active members of their local and global communities.

The paper is intended for use in intermediate-level ESOL, ABE, GED, and adult diploma classes. Each issue focuses on a different topic that is relevant to adult learners' lives. The paper's content is a mix of classroom-ready material and background articles that can deepen and extend educators' knowledge in the topic area.

In addition to the print newspaper, *The Change Agent* has a great Web site! Check out online learning activities and information about topics ranging from media literacy and immigration to economic justice on our improved *Change Agent* web site. You can now view and print selected articles to use right in the classroom, find out how to write for the paper or be on our editorial board, and learn about our upcoming issue. Current and back issues of the paper can be downloaded or viewed in PDF format. Check us out at <[www.nelrc.org/changeagent](http://www.nelrc.org/changeagent)>.

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on  
September 11  
and Its  
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