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# FIELD NOTES

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## Teachers Observing Teachers

BY SUSAN CHERNILO

Teaching can be a lonely occupation. I know that sounds strange; of course, students provide wonderful interaction. But no one else, unless we are lucky enough to have a classroom assistant, is playing the same role that we are in the classroom. For some teachers, working solo is a plus. Some of us might feel that "too many cooks spoil the broth," and as with any creative endeavor, teaching is something better done alone. As a fiction writer, even though I write alone, I depend a lot on feedback from other writer. I have come to appreciate that the same is true of teaching: I appreciate the feedback my colleagues have to offer.

### Feedback Through Peer Observation

I participated in a peer teaching observation process twice. Both times the feedback I got from the other teacher was invaluable. I was all geared up for criticism, and happily surprised when what I got were helpful suggestions. Usually, the teacher focused on what I had pointed out as my "issues" in our pre-teacher meeting, in some cases giving me pointers on how to do what I was doing a little more effectively. In some cases the teacher told me I was fine and to keep on keeping on without worry. One of the most stunning pieces of feedback was when my observer gave suggestions to something I hadn't even been thinking of as an issue, my reading lesson. I learned that sometimes the thing you're most self-conscious about is the least of your problems because you're giving it attention.

### Observing Others

Equally instructive to me were the times when I was the person doing the observing. When the staff first started talking about the peer observation process, teachers were excited, but there were a lot of concerns. How would teachers who have completely different

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System for Adult Basic Education Support

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# F O R E W O R D

The last time we dedicated an issue of *Field Notes* to staff development, it was 1998. *Field Notes* was called *Bright Ideas*, and the ABE landscape nationally, regionally, and locally looked vastly different. The movement toward standards-based education, increased accountability, and measured outcomes under the Education Reform Act has affected not only classroom teaching in ABE but professional development as well. Teachers are continually balancing how they can engage in staff development needs intended to improve classroom teaching while also attending required trainings often related to increased demands for assessment and documentation of outcomes.

Within Massachusetts, several changes have strengthened staff development for ABE practitioners. The field testing, modification, and publication of the ABE Curriculum Frameworks through the Massachusetts Department of Education, Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) provides guidance for curriculum development. And through the Massachusetts Department of Education an ABE license is now issued on a voluntary basis. Practitioners seeking a license can now engage in professional development specifically designed to meet the needs of adult learners. SABES, the system for Adult Basic Education Support, has experimented with theme-based, long term initiatives that help teachers and programs increase the depth, as well as breath, of their professional development.

We have also seen an increase nationally in professional development organizations for ABE practitioners. The Association of Adult Literacy Professional Developers (AALPD), for example, develops and advocates for policies that support adult basic education programs in implementing stronger professional development systems. (See page for more information). Since 1998, more research has been conducted into what constitutes effective staff development for adult basic education practitioners. The National Center for the Study of Adult Literacy and Learning (NCSALL), for example, has worked on linking research with classroom practice and publishes their results in their quarterly *Focus on Basics*.

This issue of *Field Notes* touches on some of the changes in staff and program development that make choices for practitioners richer than ever. For example, David Rosen outlines possibilities for connecting with colleagues, resources and training on-line. Betsy Lowry describes a system the Community Learning Center in Cambridge has found useful in linking program and staff development; Susan Chernilo discusses her experience with teacher observation as a staff development choice. In addition to articles on policies, principles, and practice, this issue also offers an article by Tzivia Gover on stress reduction, and one by Mev Miller on the connection between spirituality and staff development.

As always, we welcome your feedback, suggestions, and submissions.

—Lenore Balliro, editor

## Field Notes Mission Statement and Editorial Policy

### Mission

*Field Notes* is an adult basic education (ABE) quarterly, theme-based newsletter. It is designed to share innovative and reliable practices, resources, and information relating to ABE. We attempt to publish a range of voices about important educational issues, and we are especially interested in publishing new writers, writers of color, and writers who represent the full range of diversity of learners and practitioners in the field.

*Field Notes* is also a place to provide support and encouragement to new and experienced practitioners (ABE, ESOL, GED, ADP, Family Literacy, Correction, Workplace Education, and others) in the process of writing about their ideas and practice. Editorial support is always provided to any writer who requests it. Teachers, administrators, counselors, volunteers, and support staff are welcome to write for *Field Notes*.

### Our Funder

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### Our Editorial Policy

Unsolicited manuscripts to *Field Notes* are welcome. If you have an idea for an article or wish to submit a letter to the editor, contact Lenore Balliro, editor, by phone at 617-482-9485, by email at <lbaliro@worlded.org>, or by mail at 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210. Submission deadlines for upcoming issues are published in each issue of *Field Notes*.

Opinions expressed in *Field Notes* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editor, SABES, or its funders. We do reserve the right to decline publication. We will not publish material that is sexist, homophobic, or otherwise discriminatory.

### Our Reprint Policy

Articles published in *Field Notes* may be reprinted in any publication as long as they are credited to the author and *Field Notes*.

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## Teachers Observing Teachers

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styles, or teach entirely different levels, understand what each other is doing? Both times when I was the observer, these issues came up. I came to see how they could be dealt with, and indeed, actually enhance the process.

The first year, for example, I observed a teacher whose approach was more "meat and potatoes" than mine. I gave her suggestions about doing more interactive and expressive activities; she was a bit defensive (and rightfully so) as she was a much more experienced teacher than I. But over the next year, she'd try out different things, get excited about it, and tell me about it. Meanwhile, in my own class, I was realizing the importance of the nuts and bolts of ESOL and had the luxury to incorporate methods that I had seen her use. Over time, we moved toward each other, not to some bland middle ground, but to a multi-dimensional place that incorporated a diversity of approaches.

The next year, I observed the literacy class, knowing little about teaching that level. I found that by just listening to the teacher during the preobservation meeting, I could help her unearth her concerns and come up with some of her own conclusions. And after sitting in on the class I was able to come up with some helpful suggestions. I was honored to have the chance to enter the class for a day.

*Susan Chernilo is an intermediate-level ESOL teacher and coordinator of the volunteer program at the Adult Learning Program of Jamaica Plain Community Center. She can be reached at <s.chernilo@jpccalp.org>.*

# Steps to Peer Observation at the Adult Learning Program

BY LEE HALLER

The Adult Learning Program of Jamaica Plain Community Center uses an annual peer observation and feedback process for teachers' professional development. We developed our process for this, including our document, *Elements of Quality Teaching* and all the forms, over a series of staff retreats.

- Teachers fill out a *Teacher Self-Reflection Form* where they describe their areas of relative strength and weakness, using our *Elements of Quality Teaching* document

- Teachers fill out a *Peer Matching Form* where they describe their areas of expertise someone observing them might learn from, what they would like to learn by observing, and whether they prefer to observe someone in a level close to theirs or something different.

- The director matches pairs. Some teachers observe and are observed by the same person (A B), others are part of two different pairs (A B, CA, BD). It gets complicated!

- Staff meeting time or a non-instructional night is used for pairs to meet, pre-observation, to discuss the self-reflection of the observee and what they each hope to gain. They use a *Classroom Observation Form* to decide what aspects the observer will pay specific attention to. The observer takes notes of that meeting.

- The director schedules observation sessions. Each observer sits in for a whole three-hour class, and takes notes. The observer's class has a sub.

- Pairs meet again after the observation. The observer writes up the *Classroom Observation Form* to share feedback with observee.

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## More Resources for Teacher Observation Projects

<[www.aelweb.vcu.edu/projects/observation/](http://www.aelweb.vcu.edu/projects/observation/)>

The Virginia Teacher Feedback and Guidance Project  
Description of a process, set of tools, guides for the observer, and supplemental materials for teacher observation projects designed to better understand classroom practice.

<[www.sabes.org/resources/observation/index.htm](http://www.sabes.org/resources/observation/index.htm)>

Teacher Observation in Adult Basic Education  
by Alex Risley Schroeder  
Description of an observation process plus links for tools and forms.

<[www.sabes.org/resources/observation/programs.htm](http://www.sabes.org/resources/observation/programs.htm)>

Teacher Observation at Two Massachusetts ABE Programs  
Description of process and samples of forms and guides.

# SABES Minicourse Links Research and Practice for Effective Staff Development

By ANNEMARIE ESPINDOLA, JANET FISCHER, AND MERILEE FREEMAN

The Introduction to Curriculum Frameworks and Curriculum Development is a 12–15 hour mini-course developed by SABES and designed for delivery to teams of ABE teachers or programs as a whole. This training model used by the Curriculum and Assessment Coordinators (CACs) incorporates program and practitioner needs into a rigorous multi-session training to help integrate new skills into practice. We accomplish our investigation of needs through surveys with the field, workshop evaluations, technical assistance requests, workshop pre-assessment questionnaires from participants and input from program directors and Adult and Community Learning Services at the Massachusetts Department of Education.

## Multisession Training Model

A multisession training model was designed in part because research has indicated that “the greater the amount of time that teachers attend [training]... the more they learn on the topic of the professional development.” (Smith & Hofer, 2002, pp. 5–6. Participants apply new skills in the training session as well as to project work between sessions. Curriculum development requires team-based, ongoing collaboration and full program participation. This three-part training provides an intensive introduction to the Massachusetts ABE curriculum frameworks and provides the skills to develop good curriculum. The focus of the training is to supply participants with the tools to help them define “curriculum” and to identify and understand specific components of the curricu-

lum frameworks documents such as habits of mind, guiding principles, core concepts, and the strands and standards of each of the frameworks. Participants will also be able to describe elements in the curriculum development process; develop a curriculum unit or lesson plan that incorporates learner goals and assessments, and to articulate how they plan to use what they’ve learned in their practice.

The process employed by SABES to deliver this training promotes a true change in practice. To ensure

of time during the first session perusing the curriculum frameworks. From the initial activity where participants are asked to summarize their experience with and knowledge of the frameworks until the very end of the training, the curriculum frameworks documents are explored and used so practitioners will have more familiarity with them by the end of the training.

Several curriculum development activities are designed to make sure that the wants and needs of our

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*Several curriculum development activities are designed to make sure that the wants and needs of our ABE/ESOL learners are always in the foreground...*

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success, we have discovered that it is essential to introduce new information or skills in a hands-on format; provide opportunities for practice—both in the training session and in the classroom—and establish a collegial atmosphere where participants receive constructive feedback from experienced SABES staff as well as peers.

Prior to the first day of training, a required reading assignment is mailed to participants: a preassessment and the Common Chapter of the frameworks. This prereading assignment provides a platform on which to build or scaffold the skills and knowledge they will acquire through the minicourse. Participants spend a significant amount

ABE/ESOL learners are always in the foreground, since we consider students’ needs an integral feature of curriculum development. We focus on goal setting in the classroom; expertise needed to break goals down into teachable skills; connecting those skills to the frameworks and proficiency levels.

Learner goals and assessment, along with curriculum frameworks, form a circular path for ongoing curriculum development. Practitioners are then introduced to thematic unit planning as a component of curriculum development.

Participants are expected to do a small curriculum development project,

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## SABES Minicourse Links Research and Practice...

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as well as a substantial reflective piece on the process using the frameworks. A preliminary draft of the project is due on the second session. During this second session, participants receive constructive feedback from peers and facilitators on the work they have done through

that she is "much more aware of pinpointing skills within the content areas of the frameworks," and she has incorporated the use of rubrics into her assessments. In the six-month follow-up one participant reports that his program has begun monthly curriculum development meetings among all the teachers. Because they all participated in the training they "understand what each other is referring to when using the

impact of the training on both staff and ultimately learners. From the very beginning and throughout the training, participants are encouraged to engage in a reflective process that continues beyond the end of the training sessions. "Reflection and action are integral to the process of teacher growth and renewal." (Smith & Rose, 2002, p.15). In our experience, these components foster effective practices that bring about positive change in individual and program practice.

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*Because they all participated in the training they "understand what each other is referring to when using the common language of the frameworks" and have developed a means for an ongoing dialogue around curriculum development in their program.*

the use of a rubric developed specifically for this training. Participants are asked to incorporate feedback into the final project and to share their project and documentation during the final session.

"Just as adult learners benefit from the support of other learners" (Keegan et al., 2001), "Teachers greatly value and learn from colleagues ... and want feedback from ... those [who] have knowledge of the craft of teaching" (Smith & Hofer, 2002).

Practitioners also participate in discussions on the use of assessment in the curriculum development process and are asked to incorporate feedback into the final project. Participants will share their project and documentation during the final session.

We have anecdotal evidence of the success of our approach based on our follow-up interviews with participants. One practitioner noted

common language of the frameworks" and have developed a means for an ongoing dialogue around curriculum development in their program. In addition, they have been able to develop curriculum for various skill levels in the same content areas using a thematic approach to curriculum development. Another teacher reports that she is adjusting the plans she used last year by dialoging with her colleagues and using common themes to develop new content to teach skills. She further reports that the lesson plan format that her program uses "has been changed to include a reflection piece and habits of mind."

Several components in this research-based training model foster successful staff development, including team-based collaboration; multisession content exploration; project development with feedback; application to practice, and follow-up on action plans to evaluate the

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# Educating With Mind, Heart, and Spirit

By MEV MILLER

*Good teaching cannot be reduced to a technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher.* —Parker Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*

In recent years, the field of ABE has been developing greater emphasis on evidence-based practice and a growing desire to align professional/staff development with indicators of program quality. Teachers, administrators, and funders demand quality professional development, often with an emphasis on technical and practical knowledge and skills. But are “techniques” or “technical skills” enough? In this article, I’d like to challenge us to consider professional/staff development not only as the teaching and learning of new skills, but also as the embracing of our humanity.

Good teachers are not successful merely because of the knowledge they hold or their ability to impart that knowledge through well-constructed lesson plans. Administrators who create successful learning environments possess more than trained organizational capabilities. Successful counselors and other support staff gain the confidence of learners not merely because they make good referrals. Educators who consistently base their practice on educational research (evidence) may still not be successful in their classrooms. Teachers, administrators, and support staff who inspire learners and colleagues and who are revered as “great,” “role models,” or “admirable” have developed more than their content knowledge and practical skills. In many cases, these are also the educators who have embraced their students and colleague—and themselves—as whole persons who are cognitive, social, emotional, and physical. These are often educators who understand and

embrace their humanity, including their heart and spirit. In many ways, these are educators who embrace the spiritual<sup>1</sup> dimensions of teaching and learning.

In addition to the technical or practical needs teachers bring to professional development, over the years



I’ve heard these questions as well: How do I create a learning environment that has ethical integrity? How do I remain true to my own personal values without appearing to proselytize? How do I create a democratic environment that provides openness and safety for all learners to develop critical thinking abilities, both by expressing challenging views while also having their own views challenged? How do I create such an environment for myself and for my colleagues? How do we as a classroom (or program) navigate and encourage multiple communities with diverse assumptions and values systems? How do I create a just and respectful and multicultural community? The questions don’t stop there.

Some of the questions that bring spiritual dimensions to teaching and learning include: Why am I a teacher/adult educator? How does teaching/adult education inspire me? What is my integrity as an adult educator? What is my inner landscape as a teacher and learner? How do I engage not only the minds of my students (colleagues) but also their hearts and spirits? How do I encourage myself and others to be whole persons? And how/when do I give attention to the spiritual whole person dimensions of education when overwhelmed by testing, limited time, limited funding, and increased accountability?

These types of questions are generally not addressed in many ABE professional development opportunities. Notable exceptions might be adult learning/human development theory; diversity training or conflict resolution; or writing exercises that might allow room for self-reflection or mind/heart connection. Professional development activities that build on participatory practices or emphasize the view of “teacher as learner” may raise such questions for reflection as well. However, it’s rare for professional development in ABE to explicitly challenge educators to consider the ways in which their whole person or spiritual/cultural dimensions are fundamental to their identity and work as educators.

Creating the spaces and opportunities for practitioners to explore the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual connections to their work, though, are as necessary as providing current research or practical techniques in a particular teaching area. Through self-reflection, educators have an opportunity to renew and reconnect with their own sense

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## Educating With Heart...

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of identity and integrity as educators. In this way, educators understand again how they are learners as well as teachers and perhaps remember again or in a different way the whole-person life realities of their students and colleagues. Educating with heart and spirit sustains the passion and compassion needed for adult basic professionals who do so much with so little.

The questions listed previously could potentially bring additional substance and meaning to professional development. We should also recognize that bringing attention to these questions in professional development may be welcomed and desired by some educators while threatening or discomfoting to others. But discussing our experiences or reflections on these questions will bring vibrancy to our professional work, and in some cases, help us to make meaning of our identities as educators.

As we look at professional/staff development (our own and that of our colleagues), we may want to consider the places where we might integrate an awareness of educating with mind, heart, and spirit. There are many ways in which this integration could occur, from subtle and casual to direct and intense. Bringing attention to mind, heart, and spirit could take as little as ten minutes or be as long as a whole day or weekend.

Some examples include the following:

- Reflective writing exercises, dialog journals using a problem-posing question or prompts, discussion circles, and support groups
- Dialogic space in workshops
- Intentional book discussion groups on spiritual dimensions of teaching and learning
- Retreats, interactive art projects, interactive theater or

role-play, games and play, and storytelling

- Stretching or other breathing and relaxation exercises
- Diversity training, team-building and trust-building activities
- Meditation or moments of silence
- Exercises that focus on understanding one's identity and values systems
- Participant-developed ground rules for discussion (fostering an ethic of care)
- Refreshment/lunch breaks

Developing and identifying key questions and issues for oneself and with one's colleagues will bring relevancy to these activities.

There is an increasing body of literature on understanding the spiritual/cultural and whole person dimensions of being an adult educator and adult learning. I encourage you to explore the list of references

included here list and perhaps develop your own study/discussion circles.

*Notes*

*1 We should be careful not to confuse spirituality and religion (the codification of spirituality into a belief system). "Attending to spirituality can simply mean creating an environment and a space where people can bring their whole selves into the learning environment and acknowledge the powerful ways they create meaning through their cultural, symbolic, and spiritual experience, as well as through the cognitive."*

—Elizabeth Tisdell, *Exploring Spirituality and Culture in Adult and Higher Education*.

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# Mindful Moments in the World of ABE/ESOL

BY TZIVIA GOVER

Ask any teacher in an ABE/ESOL setting how she's doing, and chances are she'll reply, "busy" or "stressed." Our jobs are stressful. We work in a system that is chronically underfunded and with adult learners who are facing poverty, violence and the consequences of incomplete or interrupted education.

Many of us decided to be educators because we had a passion for teaching, for helping, or because of ideals in which we believe. But it's no secret that the demands of working in this system can be a challenge. Even taking the time to relax might bring on feelings of guilt, as we confront the fact that the time and solitude necessary for meditation—or even just a long, soothing bath, can be luxuries our students can not afford—and don't they need these things more than we do?

But in order to keep doing our work—and to do it well, we have to learn to manage our stress and to keep our minds focused on our ideals—and not be distracted by the frustrations inherent in our work. Studies show that stress can result in a wide variety of physical and emotional problems, including trouble sleeping, irritability, and having a hard time concentrating, among other effects. If we don't manage our

stress we are also likely to experience burnout.

Unfortunately, some of the most commonly recommended antidotes for stress, from taking a vacation to taking up meditation, can seem like just one more thing to do. In short, they can seem stressful.

In addition to teaching creative writing in ESOL and ABE settings, I am also the author of the book *Mindful Moments for Stressful Days* (Storey Books, 2002). Since writing the book, I have led workshops for adult learners and staff in ABE/ESOL settings. I have found that there are plenty of highly effective stress-busters that only take a moment, that don't require expensive classes or equipment, and that anyone, of any educational or financial background, can employ. In fact, one of the best ways to relax is to drop in to the present moment. Take a few deep breaths and check in with all of your senses. Let yourself be truly present. This is a technique you can use in the grocery store, during a rush-hour commute, while you're on the phone, or even teaching a class.

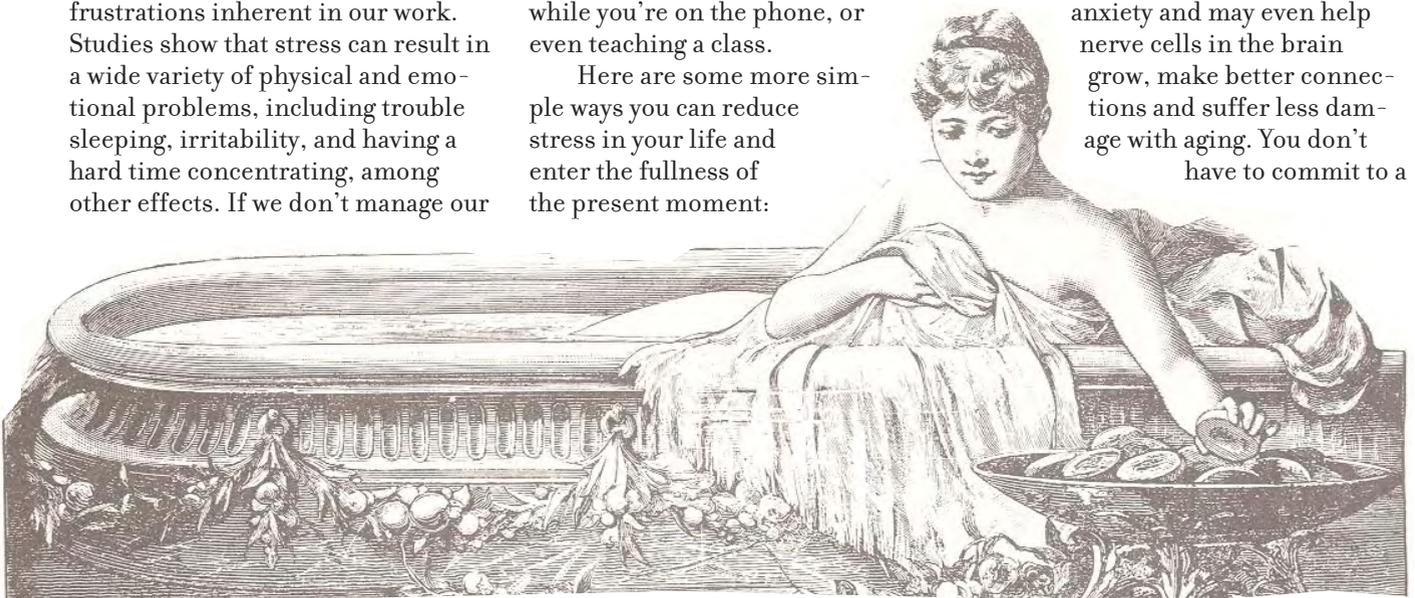
Here are some more simple ways you can reduce stress in your life and enter the fullness of the present moment:

*Exhale:* Research has shown yoga to reduce chemicals that cause anxiety and to heighten relaxation. Vital to any yoga practice is conscious breathing. Whether or not you take yoga classes, you can attain some of the benefits by learning the basics of yoga breathing. Practice by making your exhalation slightly longer than your inhalation. Try this any time you feel stress, or just to center your mind and body.

*Take ten:* Count slowly from one to ten. Breathe in and out and think one, breathe in and out and think two, etc. Don't let any other thought enter your mind. Don't look ahead to three when you are still on two. When you get to ten, start over from one.

*Access the arts:* Expressing your feelings through drawing, writing, painting, dance or photography is a good way to de-stress. Detailed writing including descriptions of sights, sounds and feelings has been shown to help combat depression.

*Get moving:* Physical exercise can also alleviate depression and anxiety and may even help nerve cells in the brain grow, make better connections and suffer less damage with aging. You don't have to commit to a



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# A Team Approach to Program and Staff Development

INTERVIEW WITH BETSY LOWRY BY LENORE BALLIRO

Over the years, the Community Learning Center (CLC) in Cambridge has developed an integrated program and staff development model that increases the strength of the organization and the competencies of the people within it.

Betsy Lowry, director of the CLC, described how the CLC integrates long and short-range planning to achieve maximum results. "Every three years the entire full-time staff and part-time representatives have a full-day retreat," Betsy said, "We discuss what the program should look like and what we want to do to improve it. During this process we also consider program needs as well as emerging trends in the field and emerging DOE requirements. We then come up with categories and from there we create goals and action steps to guide us. The broad categories include things like staff development, curriculum development, salaries/benefits/working conditions. Within those categories we look at specific areas."

This year's categories for program improvement include student leadership, study skills, counseling, student progress, and clean-up. Throughout the year, staff members generate other ideas and maintain a running list of suggestions to explore year to year. To make the ambitious plan work, the Center has designed a team-based approach. Betsy explained:

"We have always had full staff meetings on Friday afternoons. Our Friday afternoon staff meetings used to last two hours, always centered on business details without much time for substance, like addressing program improvement. We wanted more time for substance, but we didn't necessarily want more meet-

ing time. So we cut down on the whole staff meeting time to one hour and created teams to work on different areas during the second hour. Teams meet every other Friday for an hour, and in between, people do about a half hour of extra work to carry out the tasks they have come up with."

Now, staff meetings are held to discuss educational improvement for one hour, and a weekly in-house newsletter takes care of announcements. The teams generate their work around specific goals, which are drawn up by each team member in the first meeting. Teams run for at least one semester but may elect to continue throughout the year.

## Who Makes Up the Teams?

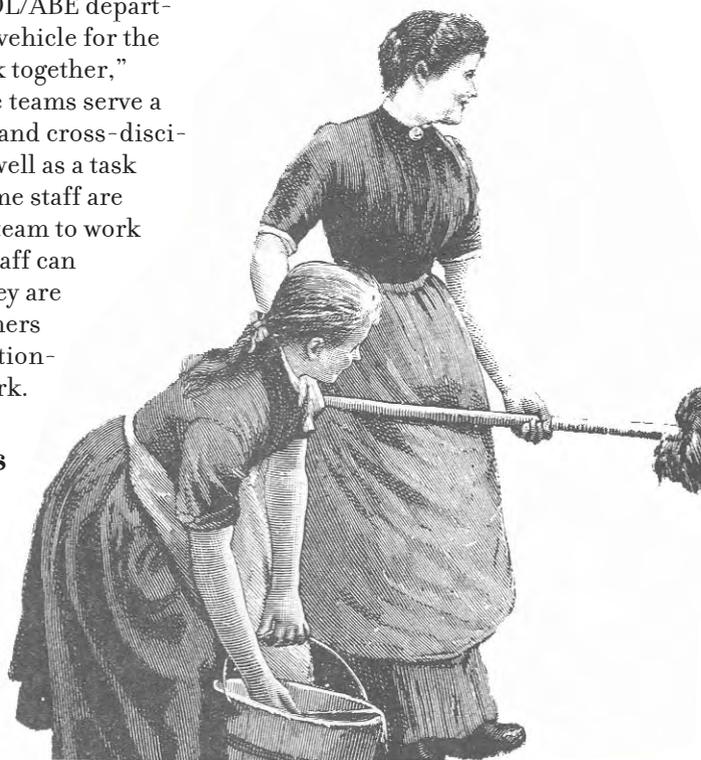
Teams are made up of both ABE and ESOL staff, a design that promotes cross-department understanding and sharing. "Because we are divided into ESOL/ABE departments, we wanted a vehicle for the departments to work together," Betsy said. Thus, the teams serve a kind of intra-social and cross-disciplinary function as well as a task function. All full-time staff are required to select a team to work on, and part-time staff can work on a team if they are interested. Part-timers get paid for the additional hours on team work.

## What Do Teams Do?

Teams propose policy to the staff as a whole, create materials, and do research—whatever it takes to make

the goals into reality. "The study skills team did a lot of work last year and has re-formed this year," Betsy noted. This two-year team has created lessons, packets of activities, and other resources to encourage teachers to integrate study skills in all levels—from ESOL literacy level through high school level. They also have presented workshops for the entire staff and have facilitated "study skills fortnight," when teachers were expected to try out some of the hands-on materials provided. The student progress team is examining the tricky issues around students who are not progressing and is asking hard questions like: should we have a time limit for students to be enrolled here (currently they do not), and how can we better help these students? The student leader-

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## A Team Approach...

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ship team is working on connecting the various student leadership initiatives in the CLC that have mushroomed over the past few years to the program as a whole. The counseling team is looking, among other areas, at referral systems and more effective communication between counselors in the two departments.

Not every team deals with heavy-duty content areas; each team's work, however, is equally important in improving the learning environment. For example, the library team was established to clean up the library and to make space for two more computer stations needed for ABE testing. The team was "ruthless in getting rid of precious files and books that we didn't need anymore," Betsy said. They gave away old CED books to students, rerouted materials to individual teachers, and generally improved the look and space of the room. This improved area makes for a more welcoming and pleasant space for meetings and will soon offer computer-based testing space.

"It's amazing what the teams can do in one or two semesters," Betsy said. Last year a team on supervision greatly improved the process for orienting new staff and clarified the supervision process for the CLC. As noted above, the teams propose policy and the whole staff votes on them.

Because of the stability of the staff, their years of experience, and their experiments over time with various improvement models, the Center is good at recognizing limits as well as envisioning possibilities. This recognition of establishing limits—and matching resources with goals—contributes a great deal to their success. For example, the Center has long dreamed of implementing a mentoring system where experienced teachers can mentor new teachers. "We're still hoping to do this, but it's a huge project that

requires additional funding and support," Betsy noted.

## Staff Development

Once again, staff development planning starts from the "big picture," the long range planning accomplished at the big retreat. The staff

description; part-time staff are paid extra for staff development time beyond teaching and preparation hours.

## Staff Development Conferences

Betsy explained that in addition to program development, two full

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*All full and part-time staff develop a plan that they review with supervisors. The plan is straightforward, asking each staff to describe what they want to learn about and how they are going to do it. For example, will they attend workshops, read on their own, observe classes, participate in online study?*

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chooses a yearly focus for staff development based on what they see as a need across the departments. This past year, the staff development focus has been study skills, which dovetails nicely with the programmatic work in that area. Each staff member designs an individual staff development plan. Recognizing that each staff member has individual needs, staff is not required to select a staff development goal that relates to the center's focus. All full and part-time staff develop a plan that they review with supervisors. The plan is straightforward, asking each staff to describe what they want to learn about and how they are going to do it. For example, will they attend workshops, read on their own, observe classes, participate in on-line study? Only one staff development goal is required, though two or three are encouraged. Full-time staff have a staff development component written into their job

days a year are set aside for staff development on-site. One of these staff development days is planned in collaboration with SCALE in Somerville; the other is organized by the CLC staff development coordinator. Both days are organized first by investigating staff development plans and identifying what people want to learn about. Teachers prepare their own presentations and a few outside speakers are invited to address additional concerns and interests. Local service providers from other agencies are invited to participate in both days. For example, for the CLC staff development day this past December, a representative of the Islamic society of Boston presented a Muslim sensitivity training; a publisher's representative explained how to make the best use of on-line materials that accompany student texts; a city rep-

*Continued on page 11*

## **A Team Approach...**

*Continued from page 10*

representative offered an orientation to the extensive Cambridge/Somerville Resource Guide so the staff could familiarize themselves with its contents and make active use of it for students.

## **Teacher Sharing Days**

In addition to the structured staff development days, staff can choose to participate in more informal one-hour teacher sharing meetings, based on their staff development plans. These take place four times a year, once in the morning and once in the evening. These informal get-togethers offer another opportunity for teachers to share

ideas and offer their expertise.

## **DOE Requirements**

Betsy noted that the CLC is in the process of developing a documentation system for staff development. "This year we developed a form for staff to fill out so staff will get into the habit of documenting all their staff development activities, whether in-house, SABES-organized, or other, and we'll be ready when we get the DOE guidelines for entering this information into the SMARTT system."

The CLC has established a systematic, and creative approach to program and staff development—one that is practical and productive. Another outstanding feature of this system is its dynamism. Betsy

stressed that while the year to year—or even semester- to- semester—activities all result from the big picture that emerges from the three year plan, that plan is continually modified in light of emerging needs and interests. Achieving such a balance is hard work and demands creativity and energy—something the CLC displays from year to year.

*Betsy Lowry is the director of the Community Learning Center. She can be reached at <elowry@CambridgeMA.GOV>*

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## **Mindful Moments...**

*Continued from page 8*

strenuous regime to get the benefits of exercise. Take a brisk walk, play catch with your dog or go out dancing.

*Have a good cry:* Aristotle sensed the benefits of a cathartic cry when

blood pressure and flush harmful chemicals produced by stress. Don't keep your feelings inside. Let your emotions out by talking to someone you trust. You might even rent a sad movie to give yourself an excuse to cry.

*Create an oasis:* Take time off from planning, plotting, progressing

each week when you turn off the telephone, the television, or the computer.

*Take a bliss break:* Walk through a greenhouse, read a favorite poem, float on your back in the community swimming pool, make a snow angel like you did as a child, listen to music, paint pictures, sit beside a babbling brook and listen to what it has to say... do anything that makes you feel awake and alive.

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*Create an oasis: Take time off from planning, plotting, progressing—and just be. Find a way to put your urge to achieve, gain, and get on pause for an hour, afternoon or day.*

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*Tzivia Gover is the author of Mindful Moments for Stressful Days: Simple Ways to Find Meaning and Joy in Daily Life (Storey Books). She leads Mindful Moments workshops for community groups, educators, students, and professionals. She teaches poetry and creative writing to adult new readers and ESOL students. F. She can be reached at <www.tziviagover.com>.*

he said that crying at a drama cleanses the mind. Modern research backs this claim. Studies show crying relieves tension and may reduce

— and just be. Find a way to put your urge to achieve, gain and get on pause for an hour, afternoon, or day. You might set aside an afternoon

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The next issue of *Field Notes* will focus on the Massachusetts ABE Curriculum Frameworks. If you have an idea for an article, please contact Lenore Balliro, editor, at <lbaliro@worlded.org>. Deadline for submissions is April 30.

# Professional Development on Demand

By DAVID ROSEN

You have just browsed the SABES calendar for next month's professional development opportunities at <http://calendar.sabes.org/>. You see some great courses and workshops that you would love to take, but once again... you can't. If only they were offered at times when you could take them!

Suppose adult education professional development courses were available when it was convenient for you, with expert facilitators; suppose they included some short workshops and some longer study groups, courses, or projects; and suppose you could take these from your computer at work or at home.

Such a possibility is not far off. In some states—and to some extent in Massachusetts—it is possible now.

## Will I Even Like eLearning?

You may wonder, am I the sort of person who would like learning online? To find out, try "Is eLearning Right for You?" It's a free, quick, online assessment of technology/distance learning skills and attitudes, and it will give you immediate results. Go to [www.vto.vt.edu/survey.php](http://www.vto.vt.edu/survey.php).

But, you may ask, isn't distance learning just documents to be read on the Web? Sometimes, yes, but not always. Increasingly there are whole courses, with an instructor, assignments, discussions (often in real time through Internet chats or telephone conference calls, but also in discussion boards). Sometimes credit is offered. There are free, short (under an hour) workshops online for volunteers and others, for example, at Verizon Literacy Campus [www.vluonline.org](http://www.vluonline.org) and whole master's degree programs with graduate level online courses, for example, at

[www.worldcampus.psu.edu/wc/MasterinAdultEducation.shtml](http://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/wc/MasterinAdultEducation.shtml). In between, there are "pure" online distance learning courses with no face-to-face contact, and "hybrid" or "blended" courses that begin and end with face-to-face contact and have most of the courses online. There are also face-to-face courses that have an "extended" or "supplemental" online component.

## AE Pro Online

There are adult education professional development courses offered online for a modest fee by AE Pro Online Professional Development <http://midwestlines.org/aepro>. This site is sponsored by the Center for Literacy Studies at the University of Tennessee and the Ohio Literacy Resource Center. Courses include, among others: ESOL Basics; Introduction to Learning; Disabilities in Adults; Integrating Technology in the Classroom; Teaching Adults to Use Mathematics to Solve Problems and Communicate. They also offer an assessment course with former SABES assessment staff member, Marie Cora.

A six-week course here is \$149.00. A state can also buy seats in these courses for its teachers.

## ESOL Specific

But suppose you teach ESOL: Is there something especially for you? You could try ESL Civics link at <http://civicslink.ket.org/login.xml>

It's an online professional development program for adult education ESOL/ESL teachers. \$90.00 per teacher for six months. Or you could try TESOL's Online Education Programs at [www.tesol.org/](http://www.tesol.org/).

The Web site of the NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) is [www.ncte.org/store/learning/116665.htm](http://www.ncte.org/store/learning/116665.htm). Its menu includes the online program

called CoLEARN ESL. This online inquiry model is designed to promote professional development for ESL teachers. Through a structured yet flexible series of readings and writings, teachers are expected to reflect on their own beliefs about ESOL/ESL instruction, learn new strategies, and investigate how students respond best to various approaches.

## ESL CoLEARN

ESL CoLEARN provides teachers with a number of options for their professional development, including the following:

- Professional readings with over 2,000 full-text articles from NCTE and TESOL's many journals and books, searchable by title, author, or topic of inquiry.
- Reading invitations and writing engagements invite teachers to read and respond to a specific prompt about some aspect of ESL pedagogy.
- Online communities provide teachers with the opportunity to discuss their readings, writings, and reflections on teaching with interested teachers in their own school or across the country.
- Conversations with prominent writers, composition scholars, and teachers offer participants an opportunity to ask questions and learn from some of the most exciting professionals in the field.

## Online Courses for Your Students: Distance Learning 101 and Beyond

Suppose you want to learn how to organize an online course for your students. In collaboration with project IDEAL (a multistate distance learning project) SABES offers Distance Learning 101 and Distance

*Continued on page 13*

## Professional Development...

Learning 102. As Jennifer Rafferty, SABES ABE–Distance Learning Coordinator describes them:

“Distance Learning 101 is a six to eight week ‘course’ in planning to teach at a distance. Participants spend about two hours per week working on exercises designed to guide their planning for this new activity. The state’s trainer/facilitator reads and reacts to each exercise and facilitates an asynchronous discussion of each week’s topic among all the participants.”

“For example, one exercise asks each participant to develop a curriculum for a face-to-face orientation for prospective distance learners. After viewing all the exercises the trainer might post a discussion topic like this: ‘will you accept anyone that applies for your distance program or will you be selective and take only those students with the highest likelihood of succeeding? What indicators would you use to identify those most likely to succeed?’ Staff from the same literacy center are encouraged to work on the exercises together.”

The Web site looks different from Blackboard or WebCT, which are built on an expert-novice model of instruction. The Project IDEAL professional development model is one of community-building. We want teachers to feel they are professionals exploring a new area of skill development and getting assistance from fellow professionals, not guidance from a “sage on the stage.” All the exercises ask participants to develop a plan—for recruitment, orientation, teaching and assessment of distance learners. The trainer’s role is to get all of the participants in the course to provide constructive criticism of each other’s plan. The textbook (*Handbook of Distance Education for Adult Learners*) is a handbook with the collected wisdom of teachers in many states on these very topics.

The handbook is revised each year with new tips from participating teachers.

## Distance Learning 102: Study Groups

This second professional development course is for teachers with one-year experience teaching at a distance. Having mastered the mechanics of distance, teachers are ready to think in a more focused way about pedagogy. Each participant develops a case study of a difficult pedagogical problem. The essence of the study group is having the study

around the country. There is also a public policy discussion list, sponsored by the American Association of Adult and Continuing Education, the National Literacy Advocacy list. To subscribe to this, go to <[www.aaace.org](http://www.aaace.org) and select the AAACE-NLA list link.>.

## Wiki

A new technology on the block is the Wiki. (*Wiki-wiki* means “quick-quick” in Hawaiian street jargon). At the Adult Literacy Education Wiki you can find questions other teachers have asked – and in many cases

*This would be a good time to let your SABES Regional Support Center field technologist or director know what courses you would like to see offered.*

group members examine the cases one at a time, practicing the art of asking questions that further probe the nature of the problem and developing strategies to deal with the learner’s difficulties. Essence of a sample case study: “I have a student who is having a difficult time in ratios and wants to practice at home, and I’m having a hard time ‘talking’ to him online to explain the procedures.”

There are other online free professional development opportunities, some of which have been around for nearly a decade and others that are brand new. Do you know about the National Institute for Literacy Electronic Discussion lists? Assessment, learning disabilities, women and literacy, poverty, race and literacy, technology, and others will be found at <[www.nifl.gov/lincs/discussions](http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/discussions)>.

You can sign up— or later unsubscribe— there. These are communities of practice for a wide variety of adult education teachers

answered – from research and professional wisdom. And because it’s a wiki, you can add in your own wisdom “quick-quick.” To get there, go to <<http://wiki.literacytent.org>>. Once there, be sure to subscribe so you can add your ideas.

SABES, too, has begun to plan for more professional development online, and in the two and a half years you can expect to see more online and blended courses. This would be a good time to let your SABES Regional Support Center field technologist or director know what courses you would like to see offered.

*David Rosen was the former director of the Adult Literacy Resource Center/ Greater Boston SABES Regional Support Center. He is now the director of Newsome Associates in Jamaica Plain. He can be reached at <[djrosen@comcast.net](mailto:djrosen@comcast.net)>.*

# Promoting Professional Development

By CRISTINE SMITH AND MINA REDDY

How can we support professional development in ABE? Some states have policies that allow teachers and administrators to access high-quality professional development and to get the support they need to do their jobs well. However, this is not true everywhere. That's why the Association of Adult Literacy Professional Developers (AALPD), through a highly participatory process, developed the following set of policies for our field. AALPD is a network of people—teachers, professional developers, program administrators, state policymakers—interested in professional development for ABE practitioners. AALPD's goal is, "the adoption of policies at national, state and local levels that adequately support the participation of adult basic education, adult ESOL, and adult secondary education practitioners (including paraprofessionals and learner leaders who are staff members) in professional development that will help them be effective teachers, tutors, counselors, and administrators." We want to work together as a field—through advocacy at the federal and state level—to secure resources necessary for ALL states to enact these policies.

As you read through the policies, you will see that Massachusetts has already instituted many of them and is making progress toward others. With this strong foundation, we can protect what we have achieved and work toward improvements.

Here is a summary of the policies.

■ **Orientation/Induction for Teachers New to Adult Education:** All teachers new to adult education should have an orientation to teaching in the field of ABE within at least the first six months of their teaching.

■ **Expectations for Participation in Professional Development:** Every state and program should expect that all practitioners will continue professional learning throughout their careers. Teachers should have access to up-to-date knowledge of research and teaching methods in the content areas they are required to teach as well as general methods of adult teaching and learning.

■ **Professional Development Plans:** Each program should be funded a minimum of 0.5% (up to 8 hours) of its annual staff hours to support teachers in developing an



annual professional development plan that begins with a practitioner needs assessment and dovetails with its program improvement process.

■ **Paid Professional Development Release Time:** Each program should be funded so all practitioners receive a minimum of 2.5% of their annual working time as paid professional development.<sup>1</sup>

■ **Participation in Program Improvement:** Each program should be funded a minimum of 2% of its annual staff hours for teachers to participate and take leadership in program improvement, such as informing program policies, designing a new curriculum or assessments

(not just lesson planning), improving recruiting, or designing a new student orientation.

■ **Participation in the Field of Adult Education:** All full-time practitioners should be funded for at least 1% of their annual working time to participate in activities as a member of the field, including the following:

1. Providing professional development to other teachers inside or outside of the program
2. Working towards addressing students' needs (transportation, child care, health services, job assistance, etc.) that may prevent students from participating in the program
3. Building community partnerships (with the health care system, K-12 system, libraries, local businesses, career centers, etc.) to improve services to adult learners, and
3. Informing state adult education policies and state initiatives.

■ **Teachers' Working Conditions:** Programs should have sufficient resources to provide working conditions that will allow teachers to stay in the field, find the work satisfying, and grow professionally, including the following:

- adequate teacher salaries
- benefits for all teachers including part-time)
- access to full-time employment
- paid prep time for all teachers (including part-time)
- paid access for all teachers to at least one hour a week of professional sharing time with either colleagues or a coordinator who supports their teaching,
- monthly mechanisms (staff meetings, meetings with director) for voicing their ideas and

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## Promoting Professional Development...

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participating in decisions about the program.

■ **Tuition Reimbursement:** Programs should be funded to provide tuition reimbursement at the equivalent of one college course per semester to teachers who have higher education attainment as a part of their professional development plans.

■ **Performance Evaluation and Professional Improvement:** Programs should conduct performance evaluations of practitioners and gauge what practitioners have gained from professional development. Evaluation could include collecting evidence of practitioners' application of learning and reflection, or acquisition of new skills and knowledge as described in the goals of their professional development plans. The performance evaluation results should be used to inform practitioners' future PD planning.

■ **Professional Development System:** Each state should have a funded state literacy resource center or other agency that provides direct professional development and technical assistance to practitioners to help programs organize in-house professional development. A person in each program should be designated and paid as the coordinator of program and professional development.

■ **Balance Between State-driven and Teacher-Driven Professional Development:** Every state literacy resource center or professional development system/agency and every program should use the professional development plans of the practitioners in their state or program and/or use needs assessments (in which teachers, administrators, and adult learners have participated) to plan and balance professional development activities relevant to the needs of the

state ABE regulating agency/ies with the teachers' and (ultimately) students' needs as they define them.

■ **Access to Professional Development Activities:** The state literacy resource center or statewide professional development agency/system should have the mandate and funding to ensure that every practitioner has access to a variety of types of professional development throughout the year.

■ **Quality of Professional Development:** Full-time facilitators of professional development should complete an annual plan for organizing and delivering professional development, based on needs assessments of practitioners and adult learners. Professional developers should be funded to stay grounded in the field, such as spending a minimum of 2% of their time each year teaching in the ABE/ESOL classroom. States should also have an on-going formative evaluation system for gauging how well the professional development system is serving all ABE practitioners and program directors.

■ **Adult Learner Voice in Professional Development:** The state professional development agency and each individual program should have dedicated funding to ensure that adult learners' voices are included in developing professional development policies and in delivering professional development at the local program, state, and federal levels.

■ **Professional Development for Learner Leaders Who Work in the Field:** Current or former students who are tutors, administrators, program coordinators, and counselors, should have access to professional development to meet their needs.

■ **Data Collection Regarding Teacher Characteristics:** States should collect data each year about

the characteristics of their teachers to help them to schedule appropriate professional development activities for the largest number of practitioners. Data should include the experience level of practitioners (years in the field); population of students they teach (GED, ESOL, etc.); the most convenient times for practitioners to attend PD; preferred types of PD; the number of hours of paid professional development they receive; and their current addresses and/or email (for keeping them abreast of professional development opportunities).

For a complete listing of the policies, along with the research that supports each and an example of what the policy would look like in practice, go to <[www.aalpd.org/documents/PDPolicyMatrixFINAL10122005.doc](http://www.aalpd.org/documents/PDPolicyMatrixFINAL10122005.doc)>.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>A full-time teacher, working 40 hours a week at 40 weeks a year—summers and holidays off—would work 1,600 hours a year, so 2.5% would equal 40 hours of paid professional development a year—equivalent to 5 paid days).

<sup>2</sup> ABE teachers should be paid the equivalent salary earned by K-12 full and part-time professionals in the ABE teacher's city or county of employment. Pay should be more than what the city/county pays a substitute teacher.

*Cristine Smith was the chair of the Association of Adult Literacy Professional Developers between 2003 and 2005. She can be reached at <[csmith@worlded.org](mailto:csmith@worlded.org)>.*

*Mina Reddy is director of the SABES Central Resource Center at World Education. She is secretary/treasurer of the AALPD. She can be reached at <[mreddy@worlded.org](mailto:mreddy@worlded.org)>.*

# Program Continuous Improvement Planning and Professional Development

## Massachusetts DOE Definitions, Tools, and Policies

By HELEN JONES

In Massachusetts, ABE programs and practitioners have several tools available to help design and implement quality programming for adult learners. Two of the most fundamental tools are the Massachusetts Indicators of ABE Program Quality <[www.doe.mass.edu/acls/rfp/indicators.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/rfp/indicators.html)> and the Massachusetts Guidelines for Effective Adult Basic Education <[www.doe.mass.edu/acls/abeguide.doc](http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/abeguide.doc)>. The Indicators of Quality identify seven fundamental areas of consideration, such as curriculum and instruction, student progress, support services, community linkages, administration, program planning, and professional development, that are important to take into account in evaluating the overall merit of an educational program. The Guidelines address essential program components and processes such as student services, administration, and program and staff development.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) unit of the Massachusetts Department of Education (MADOE) developed both of these documents in dialogue with ABE practitioners and other stakeholders through task forces, public hearings and other venues, and in consideration of research and performance data. Together, the Quality Indicators and the Guidelines outline the essential program components and processes that characterize high quality and effective educational services for adults.

The importance of program development and staff development

is referenced in both the Quality Indicators and the Guidelines. Both effective program planning (indicator 5) and exemplary professional development opportunities (indicator 6) have been identified as signs of quality in an adult education program. These areas are further addressed in the "Program and Staff Development" section of the Guidelines.

### Program Continuous Improvement Planning

Program continuous improvement planning refers to a systemic approach to assessing programmatic needs, defining and prioritizing goals for program improvement, developing a plan to meet those goals, and engaging in activities to meet those goals. A "systemic" approach to planning and evaluation entails incorporating processes for soliciting and incorporating input from students, staff and ABE advisory council and for collecting and using data. The overall goal of continuous improvement planning is to improve program effectiveness in a way that enables programs to more effectively support learners in attaining literacy skills. All MADOE-funded ABE programs are expected to provide paid hours for some number of key staff to engage in meaningful continuous improvement planning, including at least two to four weeks of paid time during weeks that classes are not in session, and to use formal (staff meetings) and informal (individual and/or team assignments) approaches to engage all staff in the continuous improvement process. Continuous improvement activities might include but are not limited to:

curriculum development; developing and adjusting the program design and services based upon an analysis of student performance data; creating a student handbook; revising intake procedures; etc.

### Professional Development

Professional development focuses on the learning needs of individual practitioners; it is a systemic approach to assessing individual needs for professional development, defining and prioritizing goals, developing a plan to meet those learning goals, and engaging in learning activities to meet those goals. MADOE-funded programs are expected to provide paid time for each staff member to engage in professional development activities. The minimum amount of paid time required annually is equal to 2.5% of each staff member's paid time or 12 hours, whichever is greater. This applies to both full and part-time staff. For example, a full time staff member working 40 hours/week throughout the year receives support for and is required to complete 52 hours of professional development each year. When we think of professional development, we usually think of attending a course, training, workshop, or conference, but other activities may be considered professional development as well. In some circumstances, professional development may take the form of presenting or facilitating a training for others, conducting in-class participatory research or other independent study, publishing a piece of writing, or participating in a study circle.

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## Program Continuous Improvement...

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Often, these activities are most effective when several people from a program take on a joint professional development activity intended to help achieve program improvement goals. Such activities may even take place at the program.

## Integrated Program and Staff Development

The full power and impact of these investments in program planning for continuous improvement and the professional development of program staff can best be achieved when the two are joined systematically. MADOE-funded ABE programs are expected to use a process (a set of steps and tools) that integrates program continuous improvement planning and professional development. The process should include input from stakeholders and the analysis of data, and should include the following steps: assess needs and strengths, prioritize goals, develop an action plan to achieve the goals, implement the action plan, document the activities, and evaluate the efforts. Each step should address both the program and the staff. In this model, professional development is connected to the strategic goals the program has identified and adopted to increase the effectiveness of its services. All MADOE-funded ABE programs are required to identify a staff person—a “program and staff development facilitator”—who will be responsible for assisting the program to develop and implement a program planning process that links program development activities and staff/professional development.

## Required Trainings New Staff Orientation

Massachusetts’ Orientation for New ABE Staff, offered several times annually by SABES, provides an overview and introduction to the

field of ABE. All MADOE-funded ABE programs are expected to ensure that all direct service staff (e.g., teachers, counselors) and administrators new to ABE complete the orientation within 12 months of their start date in the program.

## Orientation for New Directors

MADOE’s Adult and Community Learning Services unit offers an Orientation for New Directors annually. All MADOE-funded programs are expected to ensure that new directors attend this orientation within 12 months of being hired.

## System for Managing Accountability and Results Through Technology (SMARTT) Training

Massachusetts’ Internet-based data collection and reporting database, the System for Managing Accountability and Results Through Technology (SMARTT), is the most comprehensive system of its kind in the country. The system tracks program and state performance, helps programs and the department meet their reporting requirements, and provides an important picture of how well we’re assisting our students to meet their academic and other goals. Proficiency in using SMARTT is a critical skill for every agency with federal or state adult education funding. All MADOE-funded programs are expected to maintain a minimum of two staff proficient in the SMARTT system; appropriate staff are required to attend SMARTT trainings as turnover and/or re-training requires in order to maintain the minimum requirement of two SMARTT-proficient staff.

## Required Positions

All MADOE-funded ABE programs are expected to maintain the following part-time positions as a part of someone’s job. Each of these required positions is supported with a combination of foundation funding plus additional rate-based fund-

ing, and SABES provides guidance and support to each in fulfilling the role:

*Program and Staff Development Facilitator*—to lead the program in using a planning process that links program development activities and staff/professional development.

*Technology Coordinator*—to provide support to staff and students in the areas of developing and implementing training for users of computer technology, integrating technology in the classroom, troubleshooting problems, and so on.

*Americans With Disabilities (ADA) Coordinator*—to provide, coordinate and document all counseling and ADA support services and to provide support services and guidance to assist them in meeting their educational goals.

## Questions?

Questions about MADOE policies and expectations related to program continuous improvement planning and professional development, the Massachusetts Indicators of ABE Program Quality, the Massachusetts Guidelines for Effective Adult Basic Education, or how the Massachusetts ABE rate system provides funding to support these policies can be directed to Helen Jones at ACLS.

*Helen Jones is a program developer for professional development at Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) of the Massachusetts Department of Education. She can be reached at <HJones@doe.mass.edu>.*

Check out the  
Massachusetts  
ABE Curriculum  
Frameworks online  
<[www.doe.mass.edu/  
acls/frameworks/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/frameworks/)>

# Meanwhile, Nine Time Zones Away... Professional Development in Russia

BY LINDA WERBNER

Last year, I lived and worked in Russia as an English language teaching fellow (ELF) with the state department conducting teacher development seminars for teachers—as many as possible, as often as possible.

Every waking moment was spent planning workshops and activities, pouring over methodology books and journals from my teaching methodology dowry, and surfing the Net for engaging and instructive communicative activities to blow back the teachers' set and staid hair.

My audience was vast and diverse—from those teaching in the humblest provincial villages to those in well-equipped, wired schools in Russia's sprawling metropolises where children of the elite—with their armed bodyguards nearby—studied.

## The Dog-and-Pony Show

I wish I could say that my efforts to spread the pedagogical gospel made a huge impact and boosted legions of jaded, demoralized teachers that I armed them with fresh, exciting ideas for their educational bag of tricks, rekindling a love of teaching that had (once?) burned brightly.

But I'll never really know because the ELF program demanded that I spend as much time on the road as possible, a Herculean goal in the biggest country on the planet. The state department wanted numbers. Big, quantifiable numbers. There was little opportunity for follow-up, observation, or in-depth discussion. While the intrepid traveler in me was happy to comply, the practical teacher in me had serious misgivings that anything meaningful could result from these one-shot

workshops. Frankly, the whole year is sort of a blur.

I do recall making lots of photocopies at the consulate, packing and unpacking suitcases, buying plane and train tickets in my third-grade

in many varieties, too. It can mean city, state, or school-sponsored seminars or master classes (or peer coaching in the US) where experienced teachers share their knowledge with a group of teachers.

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*I do recall making lots of photocopies at the consulate, packing and unpacking suitcases, buying plane and train tickets in my third-grade Russian, telling corny jokes to rooms full of reserved and slightly wary teachers, some who'd been teaching when I was in diapers and others who were in diapers when I was in high school.*

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Russian, telling corny jokes to rooms full of reserved and slightly wary teachers, some who'd been teaching when I was in diapers and others who were in diapers when I was in high school.

In my heart of hearts, I knew that the dog-and-pony show model wasn't really effective. Still, I tried to make it enjoyable and edutaining for teachers as I worked those drafty rooms on Saturday mornings in Novgorod, Arkangelsk, Murmansk, and countless other cities.

## Professional Development, Russian Style.

Russia is a country with a proud and established pedagogical tradition and teacher development comes

In larger cities, free teacher development workshop series are conducted by fellows like me at libraries or community centers (usually former culture or pioneer palaces) or by the British Council (BC). The BC conducts year-long courses for a small fee like RESPONSE (Russian Education Support Project on Specialist English), which was developed by a team of British and Russian language specialists and was facilitated by Russian university professors.

I've met progressive teachers who engage in action research and teachers who've formed sharing groups to discuss ideas and prob-

*Continued on page 19*

## Meanwhile ...

*Continued from page 18*

lems. But these are the exceptions. For the most part, teachers in Russia are an overburdened lot and many grumble that it's not fair to expect so much considering their pitiful salaries.

Many teachers were guarded and reluctant to share with peers. As a fellow working in Yekaterinburg wrote recently, "Teachers get in their cliques here. I've never met so many teachers that have "enemies." They even hide lesson plans and books from each other!"

Intrigues and cliques aside, professional teachers' associations like FEELTA (Far East English Language Teaching Association) or SPELTA (St. Petersburg) as well as teacher refresher academies (see below) are key engines that fuel inservice teacher development in Russia.

Most Russian teachers agree that time and money are problems hindering professional development opportunities. But, as my teacher friend Irina wrote, "To find ways to develop, a teacher SHOULD WANT TO DEVELOP."

## Teacher Refresher Academies

One of the few positive holdovers from Soviet times are the teacher refresher academies. These academies are buildings in larger towns and cities which conduct recommended inservice trainings.

In Soviet times, every few years, teachers were required to take as much as an entire semester off to attend refresher courses to keep them abreast of developments and technology in their area: mathematics, art and music, or physics. Since the Soviet breakup in 1991, the future of this

venerable institution has been in question. Many of them simply closed due to financial problems.

St. Petersburg, where I was based, happens to host one of the most respected academies, drawing hundreds of teachers from all over the sprawling Leningrad oblast or region.

## A Door Is Opened

Once I learned about the Lomonosov (after a famous Russian educator) academy I was determined to become embedded—at least, when I wasn't on the road. This wasn't easy because the administration was

groups of teachers to work with.

Several discussions and needs assessments later, I learned that many were ambivalent about being there, especially the experienced ones. The green teachers—schools today are full of job changers, people made redundant by Russia's changing economy, who are trying their hand at teaching—were hungry for ideas and methods—or they were silent, intimidated, bored.

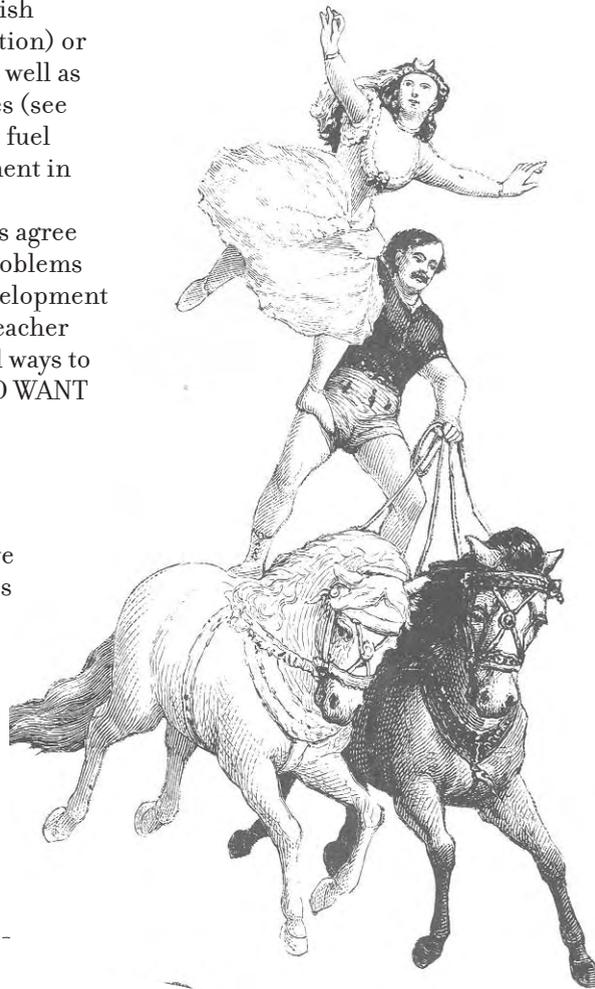
## Balancing Act

Another wrench thrown in the borscht was the disparity between what the academy directors wanted me to teach—grammar, vocabulary, collocations—and what the teachers themselves wanted to learn about—American youth culture, idiomatic English, modern music, literature, and history.

As a result, my seminars became a balancing act where I tried to satisfy two audiences. The directors wanted to prepare teachers for the high-stakes, unified state exam (Russia's "No Child Left Behind"), but teachers were miserable when we delved into this eye-crossingly dull stuff.

Despite the balancing act, I enjoyed teaching at the academy and feel that these seminars with teacher-selected themes, opportunities for follow-up and debate, sharing and reflection are far more enduring than my one-size-fits-all dog-and-pony-show trainings.

*Linda Werbner has been teaching ESL, EFL, and literacy for ten years. She currently teaches ESL literacy at Jewish vocational Services and is determined to master the banjo. She can be reached at <lwerbner@hotmail.com>.*



conservative, fossilized. But my polite tenacity paid off and a door finally opened. My reward: three

# How Intense Is It? SABES Sponsors Math Initiative for Staff Development

By LENORE BALLIRO

As SABES develops to meet the needs of practitioners, it explores different approaches to staff development. From 2003-2004, SABES experimented with an intensive theme-based initiative on teaching writing. Results from our evaluation showed that 97% of the respondents felt that their experience in this initiative made a positive difference in their program, and 100% said SABES should continue with this type of staff development as one of its services. So we did.

We switched our focus to math because it was identified as a critical need in the field. Adults need math in every aspect of daily life, and while many ABE teachers recognize this need, they often feel underequipped to teach math. In addition, a new ABE math assessment is in the development phase at UMass Amherst, based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and the ABE teacher licensure test contains a math section. But the initiative is meant to provide something much more in depth than meeting test requirements. Many ABE teachers like me, with backgrounds in the humanities or the arts, lack a basis in teaching math and carry a lifelong fear of it, largely because of how they were taught. As a result, they avoid integrating math into their ABE classrooms or treat the subject mechanically.

The SABES math initiative is attempting to address content areas in math with a focus on data and algebra at all levels. Helpful methods and resources for teaching math are part of this focus. Just as important, the initiative addresses teachers' anxieties about math by cultivating an

approach that builds confidence as it builds content knowledge.

## Working with TERC

Because SABES is partnering with the nationally recognized organization TERC, they are guided by state of the art approaches to teaching math and developing math curriculum in ABE. TERC has been recently

Massachusetts ABE Math Curriculum Frameworks.

## Process Update

Over the first year of the three year initiative, a group of teachers (practitioner leaders), staff developers, and policymakers worked with TERC to explore ideas for the math initiative and to design activities for the next two years. In addition to minicourses, workshops, and all-day math conferences, a variety of other ideas for staff development are being explored, and many have already been implemented in the various SABES regions.

## Math Circus

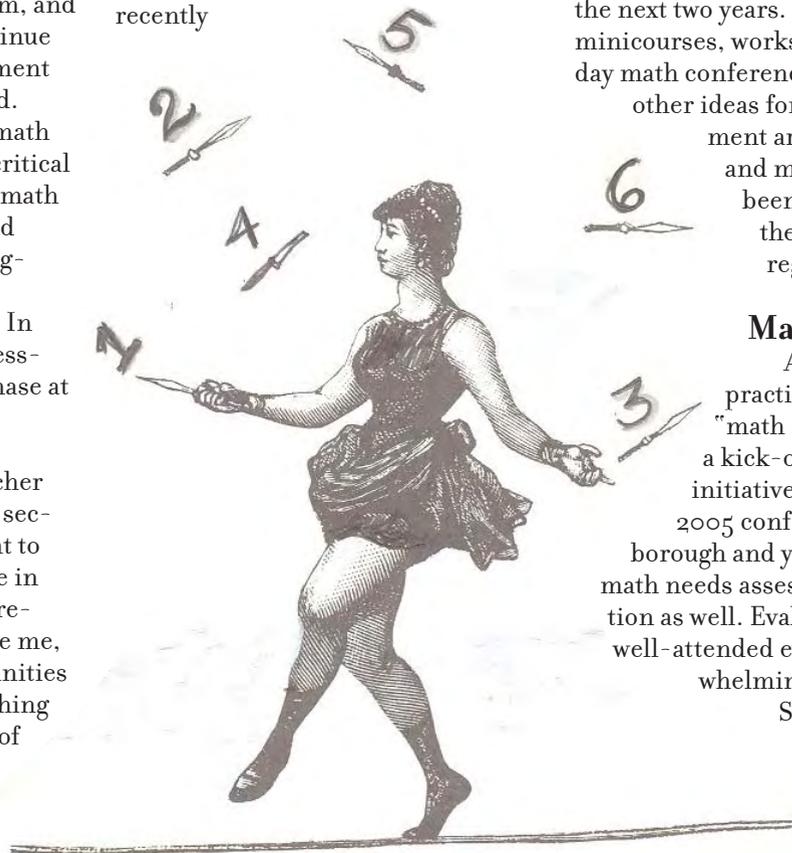
A lighthearted, practical, and engaging "math circus" provided a kick-off for the math initiative at the Network 2005 conference in Marlborough and yielded useful math needs assessment information as well. Evaluations from this well-attended event were overwhelmingly positive.

Several math-based workshops and activities were also presented at the

Network conference as a math strand organized by the initiative.

Because SABES has had a year of lead-time planning, participants have had time to develop guiding principles, clear goals, and a strong design before implementing the initiative in 2005. These goals have been articulated as follows:

*Continued on page 21*



awarded a four-year grant from the National Science Foundation for math ABE professional development; this work dovetails beautifully with the SABES math initiative work. As a result, the math initiative is better funded and more strongly supported than the writing initiative. The math initiative draws strongly and consistently from the

## How Intense Is It?

*Continued from page 20*

- To increase the competence and confidence of ABE teachers in teaching math

- To change teachers' classroom practices in teaching math

- To encourage "all math at all levels" in ABE classrooms, drawing from, and deepening the understanding of, the Mass ABE Frameworks

The guiding principles, drawn from research and practice and originally codified by the Adult Numeracy Network (ANN) in 2004, have been modified for the initiative, as well.

## TIAN

One of the most exciting features of this year's math initiative is the implementation of TIAN, Teachers Investigating Adult Numeracy. See TIAN article on this page for more information.

For listings on math activities in various SABES regions, please check out the new, updated SABES calendar at <calendar.sabes.org>. The SABES Web site will soon post math resources emerging from the initiative. Please contact your local SABES region for the most up-to-date information about the math initiative and accompanying activities or to contribute your own ideas about what you would like to see SABES offer for math-related events and activities.

Contact information for each SABES region is located on page 26 of this issue.

*Lenore Balliro, Field Notes editor, also coordinated the math initiative in its first year. She can be reached at <lbaliro@worlded.org>.*

# Project TIAN (Teachers Investigating Adult Numeracy)

By MARY JANE SCHMITT

In 2005, the Center for Literacy Studies received a \$1.16 million grant from the National Science Foundation's Teacher Professional Continuum program (NSF\_ESI-0455610). This four-year project, conducted in collaboration with TERC, a Cambridge, Massachusetts nonprofit educational organization, will develop, pilot, and field-test a model for standards-based mathematics in-service professional development for adult basic education teachers. The model uses teacher inquiry and reflective learning to engage teachers in learning how to design and implement purposeful and effective standards-based mathematics instructional approaches to algebra and data analysis. Massachusetts and Ohio are piloting the model this year (2005) and it will be field-tested in five additional states. The components of the model include three intensive two-day institutes, using materials developed at TERC under a previous NSF grant (EMPower), local between institute meetings, a website, and close coordination/buy-in from the state's ABE office and staff development resource center. For example, in Massachusetts,

TIAN was developed with a team from the Massachusetts Department of Education, SABES, and ABE math practitioners. In Ohio, the Ohio Department of Education and OLRC are the collaborators.

The formative and summative evaluations of the project will focus upon change in teacher participants' mathematical content knowledge, pedagogical practice, and connection to their state ABE mathematics/numeracy standards.

Principal investigators Beth Bingman and Mary Jane Schmitt expect that implementing this model will build the capacity of states' adult education agencies to support standards-based innovative math instruction for adults.

For more information, please contact: Beth Bingman <bingman@utk.edu> or Mary Jane Schmitt.

*Mary Jane Schmitt works with TERC and is a principal investigator of TIAN. She can be reached at <mary\_jane\_mary\_jane\_schmitt@terc.edu>.*



**The Massachusetts Adult Basic Education Curriculum Framework For Mathematics and Numeracy is available online at <www.doe.mass.edu/acls/frameworks/>. Check it out!**

# What Is Lesson Study?

TAKEN FROM LESSON STUDY RESEARCH GROUP

RETRIEVED, FEBRUARY 7, 2006, FROM WWW.TC.EDU/LESSONSTUDY/DECEMBER 2005

What is lesson study? "Lesson study is a professional development process that Japanese teachers engage in to systematically examine their practice, with the goal of becoming more effective. This examination centers on teachers working collaboratively on a small number of 'study lessons.' Working on these study lessons involves planning, teaching, observing, and critiquing the lessons. To provide focus and direction to this work, the teachers select an overarching goal and related research question that they want to explore. This research question then serves to guide their work on all the study lessons."

While working on a study lesson, teachers jointly draw up a

detailed plan for the lesson, which one of the teachers uses to teach the lesson in a real classroom (as other group members observe the lesson). The group then comes together to discuss their observations of the lesson. Often, the group revises the lesson, and another teacher implements it in a second classroom, while group members again look on. The group will come together again to discuss the observed instruction. Finally, the teachers produce a report of what their study lessons have taught them, particularly with respect to their research question.



## Questions for Teachers:

- Do you think the lesson study approach could work in your program?

- Is it an approach you might be interested in as a way to do your staff development?

- What resources would you need to make this happen?

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# Using *Field Notes* for On-site Program and Staff Development



*Field Notes* provides an easy catalyst for on-site staff development. Here are some ideas.

- Ask staff to pick an article they would like to read and discuss with colleagues at a staff meeting. A volunteer could summarize the article and put together a few questions to lead a discussion.

- Ask staff to examine the resource page. A few volunteers could look up some of the Web sites or other resources and report on their relevance to your program.

- Review the topics for upcoming issues (always on the back page) and see if anyone on staff would like to write about his or her own work or the work of the program. This is a good way to reflect on classroom practice and to make your program more visible. Remember: the editor (me) is very happy to work with a writer on drafts, and some articles can yield Professional Development Points (PDPs). Two or more people can share the writing of an article, or I can interview someone. I can also visit your program to discuss *Field Notes*.

- When student writing appears in an issue of *Field Notes*, make copies to share with other students in the class, and perhaps adapt lessons around the article. Ask students to write for *Field Notes*.

- Consider representing your program and geographical region by becoming a member of the *Field Notes* Advisory Board. You get to talk with other colleagues about their work and offer suggestions for future issues.

—Lenore Balliro, Editor

# Annenberg Media: A Resource for Self or Group Professional Development Study

By LENORE BALLIRO

ADAPTED FROM THE ANNENBERG WEB SITE: <WWW.LEARNER.ORG>

Are you looking for a way to expand your teaching methods but cannot invest the time to travel or take a class? Do you need a way to structure some on-site staff development activities at your program? Check out Annenberg Media resources. Annenberg produces videos for professional development, and teachers can use them in a group setting or alone. Annenberg describes their products as follows:

"Workshops and courses are appropriate for preservice and inservice teachers, and are targeted to specific curricular areas and grade levels. You will find training in content areas as well as supplemental video practice libraries that give a fly-on-the-wall' view of real teachers in real classrooms."

A section of the Annenberg Web site is devoted to students, and teachers can use these materials directly in the classroom. They also offer courses and workshops for administrators and policymakers.

Annenberg distributes their programs to schools and nonprofits through their own digital satellite

site. This means you sit in front of your computer and do your staff development at midnight, sipping your hot chocolate and marshmallows.

Participation in workshops and courses is free and teachers can download the accompanying print material from the Web site at no charge. You do have to register for the workshops and courses, but there is no charge; participation is free. Accompanying print material is also free and available for downloading from the Annenberg Web site. If you want graduate credit, there is a "reasonable cost" involved.

## Find Out More

If your program wants to purchase Annenberg materials for its resource library, order them through the Web site, <www.learner.org>, or call 1-800-LEARNER..

## A Sample of Free Annenberg Workshops and Courses

- Engaging With Literature
- Developing Writers
- Insights Into Algebra
- The Economics Classroom
- Essential Science for Teachers: Life Science
- Learning Math: Data Analysis, Statistics, and Probability
- Learning Math: Measurement
- Learning Math: Number and Operations
- The Arts in Every Classroom

channel called the "Annenberg Channel." They also make them available, on-demand, on their Web



**Call Today or tonight!**

## New Improvements to the Massachusetts Adult Literacy Hotline!

The Massachusetts Adult Literacy Hotline now has extended hours of operation: from 6am – midnight, seven days a week. Thanks to a grant from the Verizon Foundation, we've developed a Web search tool that makes it easy to look for adult education programs in your area. Go to <www.sabes.org/hotline/ and check it out.

The Massachusetts Adult Literacy Hotline is funded by the Massachusetts Department of Education.

# Worth Noting

## **Know Justice, Sow Justice: Strategies for Using The Change Agent in Adult Education**

This soon-to-be-published collection celebrates *The Change Agent's* first 10 years of providing social justice resources to adult educators. The book, both a gathering of its best and most timeless pieces and a guide for educators in how to use the paper for a variety of teaching purposes, addresses the needs of both new and experienced practitioners. For those looking for ways to continue exploring social justice themes as you build skills and address immediate student goals, here's a resource that will help you bring popular education and social analysis into the contemporary adult education classroom.



## **NCSALL Study Circle Guide: Research-Based Adult Reading Instruction Now Available**

This guide provides comprehensive instructions for facilitating a 10½-hour study circle that explores differing theories of the reading process, the four major components of reading and the implications for teaching, the development of learners' reading profiles, and the Equipped for the Future framework. The guide is based on a review of adult reading research, *Research-Based Principles for Adult Basic Education Reading Instruction*, and supplemented by other readings from a variety of sources. Summaries of research on reading and definitions of key terms and acronyms are included. This guide provides all the necessary materials and clear instructions to plan and facilitate a three-session study circle with an option for a fourth. Each session lasts 3 1/2 hours. For more information, go to <[www.ncsall.net](http://www.ncsall.net)>.

## **National College Transition Network (NCTN)**

In order to earn an adequate wage, adults are under a great deal of pressure to transition to college from adult education. One of the biggest challenges students find when they get to college is the amount and complexity of the reading assignments. Researchers in reading comprehension have studied the different reading processes of good readers and poor readers to determine how good readers come to understand and retain what they have read. Read more about these concrete strategies in a recent research to practice brief, "Strategies to Facilitate Reading Comprehension in College Transition Students," on the NCTN Web site at <[www.collegetransition.org](http://www.collegetransition.org)>. Just click on Promising Practices and look for the brief in the research to practice section.



## **Reaching Adult Learners Through Multiple Intelligences and Differentiated Instruction: Online Minicourse**

Expand your understanding of multiple intelligences (MI) theory and differentiated instruction, and learn how to apply them at all levels of ABE and ESOL. Drawing on course readings and discussion, participants will develop their own MI-based lesson units with guidance from the instructors. This six-module online course is designed for educators who already have a rudimentary understanding of MI theory.

Instructors Silja Kallenbach, codirector, and Wendy Quinones, teacher researcher, adult multiple intelligences study, will offer the course over six weeks, beginning May 1, 2006. The fee is \$149.00 per person. For more information, contact Silja Kallenbach, New England Literacy Resource Center/ World Education, at 617-482-9485 or email <[skallenbach@worlded.org](mailto:skallenbach@worlded.org)>.

# Practitioner Research as Staff Development

By LENORE BALLIRO

Practitioner research, an inquiry process where teachers take the lead in defining their own research questions, conducting their own investigations, and applying their results to teaching, is a highly effective tool for staff development.

According to Jereann King, (2005), "Inquiry-based staff development is a process in which practitioners come together with colleagues over a period of time to systematically explore issues, questions, or problems emerging in their work. The framework for organizing inquiry-based staff development can differ from context to context, but always involves reflecting on practice, formulating problem statements, taking new action or trying out new approaches, and evaluating their effectiveness."

With the proper structure and support, teachers can become more

knowledgeable about how to come up with research questions, how to collect data from their own classrooms, how to analyze that data, and how to use it to improve their teaching. The results of small, localized projects can also contribute to the larger knowledge base in adult literacy by addressing present questions and generating others. Such a contribution is valuable because, as Alisa Belzer (1993) suggests, "What is largely missing from the field of research in adult literacy education are the voices of practitioners themselves—the questions that they ask and the interpretive frameworks that they use to understand and improve their practice."

## How Do You Do It?

The Virginia Adult Education Research Network strongly supported practitioner research as a staff development method, and their



online material helps clarify the process. As a result of an extended project from 1998-2000, they published *Practitioner Research as Staff Development: a Facilitator's Guide*. Available online at <[www.aelweb.vcu.edu/publications/research/](http://www.aelweb.vcu.edu/publications/research/)>, this guide offers clear steps for generating research questions, collecting data, and interpreting findings. It also presents teachers' testimonies to the value of this kind of staff development work. To learn more about practitioner research, check out some of the resources below.

## References

- Drennon, C. (1994). *Adult literacy practitioners as researchers*. ERIC Digest. Washington, DC: Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education. ERIC Number: ED372663 Web: <[www.ericdigests.org/1995-1/adult.htm](http://www.ericdigests.org/1995-1/adult.htm)>
- King, J. (1998) Facilitating inquiry-based staff development. *Focus on Basics*, 2,(c).
- Lyle, S.L, Belzer, A., & Reumann, R. (1993). *Initiating practitioner inquiry: Adult literacy teachers, tutors, and administrators research their practice*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. Available online in pdf format at <[www.literacy.org/products/NCAL/pdf/TR9311.pdf](http://www.literacy.org/products/NCAL/pdf/TR9311.pdf)>
- Pates, A., & Fingeret, H.A. (1994). *Innovative training practice: Practitioner research as staff development*. Durham, NC: Peppercorn Books.

## Job Readiness Skills in ABE Programs

Are you interested in learning more about how to include job readiness skills in your classroom to help ABE learners be prepared for a job or a better job? SABES can help you and/or your program. If you are interested, please contact the SABES regional Workforce Development Coordinator in your area:

**Boston:** Jiashan (John) Zhang, Associate Coordinator/ Workforce Development Coordinator, 617-287-4076. E mail: <[john.zhang@umb.edu](mailto:john.zhang@umb.edu)>

**Northeast:** Shirley Lyon, Workforce Development/Community Planning Coordinator, 978-738-7304. E mail: <[slyon@necc.mass.edu](mailto:slyon@necc.mass.edu)>.

**West:** Charlie Herbert, Associate Coordinator/ Workforce Development Coordinator/ Community Planning Coordinator, 413- 552-2019. E mail: <[cherbert@hcc.mass.edu](mailto:cherbert@hcc.mass.edu)>

**Central:** Cathy Gannon, Associate Coordinator/ Curriculum & Assessment Coordinator/ Workforce Development Coordinator, 508-854-4296. E mail: <[cgannon@qcc.mass.edu](mailto:cgannon@qcc.mass.edu)>

**Southeast:** Sally Gabb, Sally Gabb, Regional Director, 508-678-2811, ext. 2320. E mail: <[sgabb@bristol.mass.edu](mailto:sgabb@bristol.mass.edu)>.

# Resources for Staff Development

## Books, Articles, Manuals, & Briefs

Bingham, B. & Bell, B. (1995). *Teacher as learner: A sourcebook for participatory staff development*. Knoxville TN: Tennessee Literacy Resource Center, Center for Literacy Studies.

King, J. "Facilitating inquiry-based staff development." *Focus on Basics* 2(c), 1998.

Lytle, S. & Cochran-Smith, M. (1992). Teacher research as a way of knowing. *Harvard Educational Review*, 62, 447-474.

Spacone, R. (2002). *Practitioner research as staff development: A facilitator's guide*. Arlington, VA: Virginia Adult Education Research Network  
<[www.aelweb.vcu.edu/publications/research/](http://www.aelweb.vcu.edu/publications/research/)>

Taylor, K., & Matthews-Aydinli, J. (2006). *Online professional development for adult ESL educators*. Washington, DC: Center for Adult English Language Acquisition.  
<[www.cal.org/caela/esl\\_resources/](http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/)>

## Journals and Magazines

*Focus on Basics*  
<[www.ncsall.net/index](http://www.ncsall.net/index)>  
Quarterly publication of the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL).

*Rethinking Schools*  
<[www.rethinkingschools.org/index.shtml](http://www.rethinkingschools.org/index.shtml)> An activist publication.

*Radical Teacher*  
<[www.radicalteacher.org](http://www.radicalteacher.org)>  
A socialist, feminist, and antiracist journal.

## Professional Development Organizations

*COABE: Commission on Adult Basic Education* <[www.coabe.org/](http://www.coabe.org/)>  
Conducts and/or sponsors professional development conferences and activities to provide staff development and advance adult education and literacy.

*Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL:)*  
<[www.tesol.org/s\\_tesol/index.asp](http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/index.asp)>  
A global professional association for English language educators who teach English as a second, foreign, or other language. Offers online courses, annual conferences, publications.

*AALPD: Association of Adult Literacy Professional Developers*  
<[www.aalpd.org/](http://www.aalpd.org/)>  
A national group for professional developers in adult literacy. A special interest group within COABE.

*National Staff Development Council (NSDC)* <[www.nsd.org/](http://www.nsd.org/)>  
NSDC works on establishing standards for effective staff development, maintains a resource library, and sponsors conferences.

*Adult Numeracy Network*  
<[www.literacynet.org/ann/framework11.html](http://www.literacynet.org/ann/framework11.html)>  
An affiliate of the National Council Teachers of Mathematics.

## Online Opportunities for Staff Development

*Ask CAELA: What You Need to Know About Teaching Adult ESL*  
<[www.cal.org/caela/](http://www.cal.org/caela/)>  
This month's question: "What is a professional learning community and why might adult ESL practitioners want to participate in one?"

## SABES Regional Support Centers

*SABES Boston/(ALRI)*  
University of Massachusetts/Boston  
Wheatley Hall, Room 04-167  
Boston, MA 02125-3393  
Tel. 617-287-4070  
SABES Director: Steve Reuys  
Librarian: Sandra Darling  
<[www.alri.org/](http://www.alri.org/)>

*SABES Central*  
SABES/Quinsigamond Community College  
670 West Boylston St.  
Worcester, MA 01606  
Tel. 508-854-4493  
SABES Director: Sue Miller  
Library staff: Merilee Freeman  
<[www.centralsabes.org/](http://www.centralsabes.org/)>

*SABES Central Resource Center*  
World Education, 44 Farnsworth St.  
Boston, MA 02210  
Tel. 617-482-9485  
CRC Director: Mina Reddy  
Information Coordinator: Lou Wollrab

*SABES Northeast*  
SABES/Northern Essex Community College, 45 Franklin St.  
Lawrence, MA 01840  
Tel. 978-738-7301  
SABES Director: Carol Bower

*SABES Southeast*  
SABES/Bristol Community College  
777 Elsbree St.  
Fall River, MA 02720  
Tel. 508-678-2811, x2320  
SABES Director: Sally Gabb  
Library staff: Mev Miller  
<[www.sabes.org/southeast/](http://www.sabes.org/southeast/)>

*SABES West*  
SABES/Holyoke Community College  
303 Homestead Ave.  
Holyoke, MA 01040  
Tel. 413-552-2069  
SABES Director: George Kohout  
Library staff: Michele Sedor  
<[www.sabeswest.org/](http://www.sabeswest.org/)>

# Mark Your Calendar

Check the SABES Web site <[www.sabes.org](http://www.sabes.org)> for local and regional activities.

## March 19-21

National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL)  
5th Annual National Conference  
Location: Louisville, KY  
Contact: NCFL, 877-326-5481  
Web: <[www.famlit.org/Conference/](http://www.famlit.org/Conference/)>

## April 7-11

American Educational Research Association (AERA)  
Annual Meeting  
Location: San Francisco, CA  
Contact: AERA, 202-223-9485  
Web: <[www.aera.net/annualmeeting/](http://www.aera.net/annualmeeting/)>

## April 27-29

Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE)  
National Conference Location: Houston, TX  
Contact: Texas A&M University, 800-441-7323  
Web: <[www.coabe06.org/](http://www.coabe06.org/)>

## May 1-2

Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)  
Technology Conference  
*Beyond Technology: The Bigger Picture*  
Location: Springfield, MA  
Contact: CREC, 860-247-2732  
Web: <[www.beyondtechnology.org/](http://www.beyondtechnology.org/)>

## May 4-6

Institute for Healthcare Advancement (IHA),  
5th Annual Health Literacy Conference:  
*Beyond the Written Word: Alternative Solutions to Low Health Literacy*  
Location: Irvine, CA  
Contact: IHA, 800-434-4633  
Web: <[www.ihah4health.org/](http://www.ihah4health.org/)>

## May 18-21

Adult Education Research Conference (AERC)  
47th Annual Conference  
*The Many Faces of Adult Education*  
Location: Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN  
Contact: Tom Sork, <[tom.sork@ubc.ca](mailto:tom.sork@ubc.ca)>  
Web: <[www.edst.educ.ubc.ca/aerc/informat.htm](http://www.edst.educ.ubc.ca/aerc/informat.htm)>

*If people  
did not do  
silly  
things,  
nothing  
intelligent  
would  
ever get  
done.*

*—Ludwig Wittgenstein*



# SABES Offers New Detailed Online Calendar

[calendar.sabes.org](http://calendar.sabes.org)

By LOU WOLLRAB

This past summer, SABES staff crafted a much richer event calendar. You may search for SABES events by region, by topic, or by keyword. Upon finding interesting matches, you may submit an online registration for each event. As of October 14, the new calendar is the only online calendar for listings of SABES professional development events. We offer a handy Quick Guide to the New SABES Calendar in a three page PDF). Happy exploring! Also, explore the on-going statewide math workshops, activities, and mini-courses as part of the SABES math initiative posted on the calendar!

## Two Cautions:

Registrations from Macintosh computers running OS 9 or using the Safari browser (OSX) trigger an error message. We're working on a fix.

Even though you'll receive an autogenerated email message with your registration information, that email is not final confirmation; each RSC will contact you to confirm your enrollment.

## Upcoming Issues of *Field Notes*

### Summer 2006

*Curriculum Frameworks*  
Call with an idea by April 7.  
Submit by April 14.

### Fall 2006

*ABE Math/Numeracy*  
Call with an idea by June 9.  
Submit by June 16.

### Winter 2006

*Teaching From the Heart*



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