Focus on Basics

CONNECTING RESEARCH & PRACTICE

Pathways to Change
A Summary of Findings from NCSALL's Staff Development Study

by Cristine Smith & Judy Hofer

*O*pportunities for continued learning are viewed as an essential part of any professional's development, whether doctor, lawyer, farmer, or teacher. Indeed, one expert in the educational field calls teaching "the learning profession," since effective teachers are continually studying and learning how to serve learners better (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999). But why do some teachers get a lot from professional development, while others gain very little?

In our multiyear study of 100 New England adult basic education (ABE) teachers, we found great variation in the way teachers change after participating in professional development. Relatively few experienced major transformation, manifested as putting new ideas into action in a substantial

NCSALL

National Center for the Study of
Adult Learning and Literacy

WORLD EDUCATION

Welcome!

One of my art teachers once told me: When you hold up your painting, pay attention to the color of the shirt you're wearing. The same can be said for professional development for teachers. Professional development will only be of benefit to teachers if their working environment — the "background" that necessarily frames a professional development endeavor just as the shirt frames the art work — is addressed. This theme emerges in many of the articles in this issue of *Focus on Basics*. Federal and state policies, programmatic flexibility, and peer and collegial support must work together to enable teachers to make changes based on professional development; otherwise, those resources are, in a sense, wasted.

In our cover story, NCSALL's Cristine Smith and Judy Hofer present the findings from their multiyear study of staff development. Teachers' "pathways to change" are formed, they report, in part by the programs and systems in which they work. M. Cecil Smith and Amy D. Rose pick up that theme, in the story that begins on page 12, advocating for an approach to professional development that takes into account the organizations in which teachers function.

While not directly addressing the issue of teachers' working environment, Vermont practitioner Tom Smith and Connecticut's Shelly Ratelle make a strong case for it in articles on pages 16 and 19. Smith and his co-workers met in study circles to explore topics of interest and concern to them. The collegial setting enhanced their learning and set the stage for the development of programwide guidelines based on their experiences. Ratelle praises the peer support element of the Professional Development Kit (PDK), an online professional development resource for teachers, observing that recognizing peers as resources helps in successfully transferring the content of the workshops to the daily practice of teaching.

Sandra Kestner describes Kentucky's redesign of its professional development program in an article that begins on page 23. Key stakeholders from all levels of the system were involved in shaping the program. Writing candidly, Kestner points out that a commitment to improve the employment structure and preparation requirements of adult educators now in the field will be necessary to ensure the success of the new system.

The state's role in professional development for adult basic education is discussed by state leaders from Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Massachusetts in the "Conversation with FOB" on page 29. Resources for staff development are provided on page 31.

A variety of different approaches to professional development are featured in this issue, including study circles (page 16) and workshops coupled with online resources (page 19). Reuel Kurzet writes about using classroom videos taken at NCSALL's English for speakers of other languages lab site in Oregon as a focal point for professional development. Turn to page 8 for that article and for information on the role of the lab site in ABE research. And think about the color of the shirt you're wearing.

Sincerely,

Barbara Garner

Barbara Garner
Editor

Pathways to Change

way; likewise, relatively few experienced no change at all. Most teachers changed a small to moderate amount, some learning new knowledge and concepts, others applying new knowledge in the classroom. Teachers' pathways to change are neither simple nor linear, but complex and shaped by the interaction among who they are, what professional development event they attend, and how the programs and systems in which they work function.

In this article, we focus primarily on the individual factors that influenced how ABE teachers changed after participating in professional development activities. We present briefly the most important professional development, program, and system factors that explain teacher change. This does not mean, however, that we found that the individual factors are most important in explaining change; teachers are both shaped by and shape their programs, just as programs are also shaped by and shape the larger ABE system. When trying to understand what explains change, think of teachers as part of an ecosystem made up of the individual, the program, and the larger ABE system. Aspects of one affect all the others.

Who Teachers Are

Understanding the individual factors that influence teachers involves knowing something about their personal characteristics, educational backgrounds, attitudes, and motivation. Teachers who gained the most from professional development were those who were open to and felt a need to learn. These teachers came to the

professional development with a willingness to explore their own beliefs and actions as teachers and were not satisfied with just adding new concepts and techniques to their existing practice. They wanted their actions in their classroom and programs to match and reflect their evolving ideas about good teaching. They were able to initiate a back and forth process between their thoughts and actions to synchronize the two.

After participating in professional development, Elizabeth, for example, tried several new techniques to help learners clarify their individual goals. (Pseudonyms have been used through-

> **"***Teachers' pathways to change are neither simple nor linear, but complex and shaped by the interaction among who they are, what professional development event they attend, and how the programs and systems in which they work function.***"**

out the article.) The techniques helped, but she was not satisfied, because she held a competing belief that the class as a whole also needed direction. Elizabeth struggled with creating curriculum for the class that took into consideration learners' individual needs. Meg also tried a new technique, asking students about the forces supporting and hindering their persistence as learners. Listening to them, she realized she was not as learner-centered as she thought she was and wanted to be. To bring her actions into alignment with her new understanding of learners' needs, she persuaded her director to allow her to change the class schedule to fit with learners' requests. She also helped the students conduct a survey about preferred class scheduling for the

upcoming semester. By experimenting with developing curriculum more centered on the needs of students, she raised another series of questions: How to incorporate basic skills instruction into her more project-based approach to instruction? One year after participating in professional development on learner persistence, Meg could be described as still being in the thick of learning from the experience. Her "pathway" as a teacher has been profoundly altered.

Whereas both of these teachers were insistent and relatively skilled at bringing their actions into

alignment with their beliefs about good teaching, we found that many teachers did not possess either the desire or this reflective skill. They had difficulty connecting their new thoughts and actions to a framework or theory about teaching and discerning the implications for future actions.

In-depth interviews with 18 teachers revealed that 10 attended the professional development offered by the study because of a strong desire to improve their teaching or an interest in the topic. The other eight attended primarily for other reasons. Two felt external pressure to attend: they were sent by their director or participated to fulfill certification requirements. As one teacher of General Education

Development (GED) said, "[The program director] pushed me into it. I said, 'Are you going to pay me? Sure, I'll go. What's the problem? I can go on a Friday.' If they're going to pay me to do it and I can benefit from it, sure….But I would have wanted to go to a writing workshop if one had been available."

Others — particularly four of the experienced teachers who had attended training and conferences over the years — were attracted more by the model of professional development than by the topic. Two teachers talked about their desire to participate in a national study and be part of an important effort in the field. Almost all the teachers expressed the desire to attend professional development in order to share and learn from other teachers and, to a lesser extent, to gain reassurance that they were doing a good job. New teachers — as well as more experienced teachers who seldom receive feedback on their teaching — viewed professional development as a chance to hear about other teachers' practices and to assess whether they were moving in the "right" direction. This was the view of an English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) teacher, who said, "We're on our own… There's no support….Maybe that's why I gravitated towards the mentoring… I was so desperate for some kind of feedback! Am I doing a good job?"

Pressing needs, problems, or goals not directly related to the professional development topic motivated some participants to attend. For example, a teacher who was having difficulty with her director wanted advice on how to work with her colleague. The professional development activity provided an arena in which to confer with peers. And some teachers, usually new, were interested in learning any

teaching techniques that they could use immediately in their classrooms.

Teachers did not always enter into professional development fully aware of their needs. Sometimes their perceptions of their needs evolved or gained more definition during the course of the professional development; sometimes needs that had been previously dismissed gained importance. These teachers typically found the professional development to be meaningful, providing them with insights they had not previously had or appreciated in the same way. Caroline, for

---

*T*EACHERS who learned and did more to address learner persistence, after participating in the professional development, were more likely to be those who:

- began their teaching in the field of ABE,

- had fewer years of experience in the field,

- did not have master's or doctoral degrees.

---

example, attended a mentor teacher group. A new GED teacher, she recognized that her need to be treated with respect by her colleagues was, in fact, a legitimate desire. Having grown up poor, she often felt a greater sense of camaraderie with learners than with other staff. "Sometimes I relate to the learners maybe more than the teachers. Maybe that's some of my trouble," she said. By working with a mentor and the other teachers in her professional development group, Caroline learned that she did not have to take full responsibility for the problems she had experienced with her colleagues. In addition, she had the right to work in a more supportive environment.

Meg, the teacher who learned

about her need to become learner-centered, also realized the importance of her need for improved working conditions. By making a connection between learner persistence (the topic of the professional development) and teacher persistence, she realized that until teachers' needs were better met, services to students would continue to suffer. "If the teacher's not motivated, then learners will not be. What we came to realize is that we need to do something to make sure the teacher is motivated. As teachers we are always looking toward making sure that learners' needs are met. I can't do that if my needs are not met." She advocated for improved working conditions for teachers both in her own program and throughout the state, successfully lobbying her program director to pay teachers to meet regularly to talk about teaching issues and conducting an informal survey of teachers' working conditions in other programs.

Given the wide range of reasons teachers have for participating in professional development, the goals of policymakers and staff developers responsible for offering professional development may not match the goals of the teachers who attend. The variety of motivation that brings people to any given professional development activity means that a wide variety of outcomes should be expected.

Background Characteristics

Three very specific background characteristics appeared to influence how teachers changed as a result of participating in professional development. Teachers who learned and did more to address learner persistence, after participating in the professional development, were more likely to be those who:

- began their teaching in the field of ABE,
- had fewer years of experience in the field,
- did not have master's or doctoral degrees.

This does not mean that other types of teachers made no change, nor does it indicate anything about the quality of their teaching. However, in our sample, experienced teachers with more formal education (especially if they attended the activity for reasons other than a strong need to learn) do appear to be more settled. They seemed more likely than less educated or new teachers to enter the professional development with a high degree of confidence and satisfaction about their own teaching. We were surprised that teachers' educational levels emerged as such as strong factor in how they changed. It does, however, fit with the idea that those teachers who feel they really need to learn more about theory and practice of good teaching and learner success — those who are newer to teaching, newer to the field of ABE, and without as much formal education — would show more change in thinking and acting related to the topic of the professional development.

The Nature of the Staff Development

Another set of factors that emerged as important in understanding how teachers change relate, not surprisingly, to the professional development itself. It was surprising that the model of professional development in which the teacher participated — multisession workshop, mentor teacher group, or practitioner research group — did not have as much impact on change as other factors. The greater the amount of time

The Staff Development Study

Our research question was: *How do practitioners change as a result of participating in one of three different models of professional development, and what are the most important factors — individual, professional development, program, and system — that influence (support or hinder) this change?*

One hundred teachers from Maine, Massachusetts, and Connecticut participated in up to 18 hours of professional development in one of three models of professional development between July, 1998, and June, 1999. The three models were:

- *Multisession workshops:* up to 16 teachers came together for three or four full-day group sessions, over a span of one to three months

- *Mentor–teacher groups:* up to five teachers met for four group sessions over a span of four to six months, interspersed with two mentor observations of each teacher's classroom

- *Practitioner research groups:* up to seven teachers met over a span of six months and conducted inquiry projects in their own classrooms or programs.

The professional development topic was learner motivation, retention, and persistence. Designed by the research team, the professional development was facilitated by experienced teachers or professional development professionals in each state. The objectives of the professional development were to help participants to:

- learn more about the topic of learner motivation, retention, and persistence

- be critically reflective about their work

- try out new learning by taking action to address learner motivation in their classroom or program.

We measured change in terms of movement towards the objectives of the professional development offered by the study. We also took into account teachers' views about teaching and working in the field of ABE at the beginning of the study and at the end. When teachers named and took action based on concepts they learned related to the topic of the professional development (which, in this study, was learner persistence), we called it "change on the topic." When teachers felt that they gained in positive ways that were not directly related to the topic, such as by increasing their confidence, reducing their sense of isolation, or learning more about the field, we called it "change off the topic."

Each participant completed three questionnaires: the first before participating in the professional development, the second immediately after the professional development concluded, and the third one year later. The questionnaires asked about teachers' backgrounds; their program and teaching situation; amount and type of other professional development before, during, and after the NCSALL professional development in which they participated; their views about teaching; their thinking on the topic; and self-reports of action on and off the topic (as a learner, a teacher, a program member, and a member of the field). In addition, 18 participants (two from each model from each state) were selected randomly and interviewed before, immediately after, and one year after the professional development. Their classes were observed and their program directors interviewed. The 15 professional development groups were audiotaped and notes were taken as well. ❖

that teachers attended, for example, the more they learned and did on the topic of the professional development. The quality of the professional development also mattered. Both the teachers' own perception of the quality of the professional development, and the rating given to each professional development group by the researchers, were important. Skillful facilitation, good group dynamics, and a balance between adhering to the model and adapting activities to meet participants' needs and expectations characterized high-quality professional development groups. The higher the quality of the group, in the teacher's mind and according to a set of criteria, the more the teachers reported getting from their participation. Teachers' perception of low quality also played a role in whether or not they dropped out of the professional development before completing it, even in cases where the researchers rated the quality high, indicating that individual teachers assess professional development differently.

Although differences between professional development models were not significant, those who participated in practitioner research groups demonstrated the most change overall, largely via change off the topic in areas such as increased awareness of the field, a greater appreciation for learning with other teachers, and knowledge of research. Practitioner research groups, however, also had the greatest percentage of dropouts (38 percent dropped out of practitioner research, compared to 14 percent from mentor teacher groups, and no dropouts from multisession workshops). Mentor teacher group participants seemed to learn and do more to address learner persistence, and slightly more teachers who had participated in this model put

learning and action together in an integrated and substantial way.

Program and System Supports

A final set of factors that we identified as important in understanding teacher change is the programs and systems within which teachers

> **"...what we know about serving adult learners also applies to teachers."**

work: their working conditions. We defined working conditions as access to resources, access to professional development and information, access to colleagues and director, access to decision-making, and access to a job with benefits. (See "The Working Conditions of ABE Teachers," by Smith et al., *Focus on Basics*, 4D, p. 1, 2001, for more information.) The working conditions that influenced teacher change the most include access to benefits, number of working hours, access to prep time, and freedom to construct their own curriculum. Teachers who received benefits such as medical insurance and vacation through their ABE jobs seemed to get more from the professional development than those who did not. To a lesser extent, working more hours a week and having prep time were also related to teachers' acquiring new knowledge and taking action as a result. While access to more paid staff development release time was not directly related to more teacher change, it was related to the

number of hours teachers attended the professional development, and this was related to more change. Not surprisingly, being required to use a particular curriculum in the classroom limited teacher change; teachers who felt they were able to make changes in the goals, content, materials, or activities in their classrooms were better able to take action to address learner persistence. We also found that those who teach GED and define their main purpose as supporting students to pass the test as quickly as possible were the most bound to adhering closely to workbooks and the least likely to take actions that addressed the broader needs of learners.

Program structure plays a complex role. Teachers who had some voice in decision-making and who worked in programs that had not already implemented many of the strategies presented in the professional development seemed more able to advocate for and take action than teachers who had little voice in program decisions. For example, Debbie, an ESOL teacher who worked in a satellite site and rarely saw other teachers, was stymied by her inability to influence program practices. She wanted to start a learner "buddy" system for new learners, but after being turned down by her director when she asked to add Saturday classes to better accommodate student schedules, she never tried again to initiate such a system. In contrast, Erica, an ABE teacher working in a family literacy program with strong student involvement, was able not only to incorporate learner goal-setting into her instruction but also to work with other teachers in her program to explore how better goal identification could become part of the program-wide intake process.

Teachers in programs that were already implementing strategies

presented in the professional development generally did not feel the need to initiate further change outside of their classrooms. We also found ample support in our study for the common-sense idea that teachers who had opportunities to talk or meet with other teachers in their programs also felt more supported to take action based on what they had learned. For example, attending professional development along with colleagues whose names she had barely known struck one ESOL teacher as powerful: "Having it [the professional development] all within the same program, that whatever program change we needed to do we could do as a group. I thought that was very significant… very positive for the program." We heard over and over again, however, that opportunities such as this were rare in many programs.
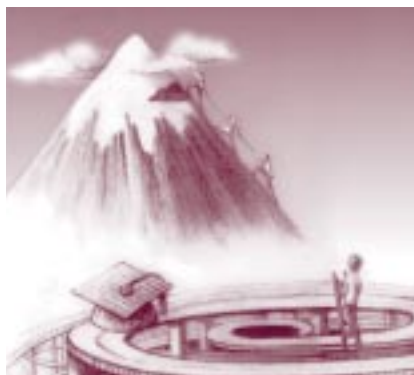
Implications

The most obvious conclusion is that all three models of professional development can support teacher change. However, the differences between teachers — their motivation for learning, background, program context, and reactions to the professional development — also means that one model will not suffice. One implication is that professional development systems should offer a variety of types of activities.

Our findings also indicate that what we know about serving adult learners also applies to teachers. Teachers' learning profiles are unique. Who they are, what they care about, what professional development they attend, and what program they come from all play a role in determining how much teachers will learn from professional development and what use they make of it when back in their classrooms and

programs. Also, like adult learners, teachers sometimes recognize needs and goals in the process of learning, and these new insights affect their "pathway" to change.

Just as adult learners are helped by identifying short- and long-term goals (Comings et al., 1999), teachers need help in identifying needs. Both new and experienced teachers can use guidance to develop plans for professional development. These plans, in turn, can help professional development staff and program directors to organize activities that meet the paramount needs of teachers, thereby maximizing what teachers will gain from them.

Teachers need to be supported to learn how to do their jobs. Teachers need to be supported to attend professional development for as many hours as possible, and the professional development needs to be of high quality. Our research found that professional development does not need to be facilitated by college professors or adult education experts; teachers, with training and support,

can run high-quality professional development for other teachers. On-site professional development activities are useful, too, especially when they provide teachers with role models or mentors from whom they can learn. Just as adult learners benefit from the support of other learners (Kegan et al., 2001), teachers greatly value and learn from

colleagues. Teachers want feedback from colleagues and directors, especially when these individuals have knowledge of the craft of teaching. Regular feedback would reduce the isolation many teachers feel, reinforce what they are doing well, and help clarify their needs and goals as learners. Regular feedback also builds a program culture that takes seriously the expectation that learning is an essential aspect of teaching.

The presence in our study of teachers who expressed the desire to connect theory and practice, but did not know how to do so, leads us to think that professional development should provide direct instruction in it. We believe that models such as mentor–teacher groups help teachers acquire these skills. They walk teachers through the process of thinking about a problem, taking action to address it, analyzing how it worked for learners, and reflecting on what this means for one's beliefs about teaching and learning.

Teachers care about their programs. They may make better use of what they learn in professional development when they have a chance to shape program policies and practices to serve learners better. This calls for program structures that allow teachers to share new ideas and strategies they have learned with both their fellow teachers and their administration.

Just as adult learners benefit from supports such as transportation, child care, and counseling, teachers who have supportive working conditions such as benefits, prep time, and paid professional development release time may find it easier to learn more and do more as a result of participating in professional development. Teachers might also benefit from the addition of activities, during professional development, that lead them to

NCSALL STAFF DEVELOPMENT

analyze how to increase their own supports, decrease hindrances, and realistically plan for next steps.

Conclusion

Acting upon our findings presents a challenge to the field of ABE. Resources will be needed to improve the quality of professional development, to enable teachers to attend for more hours, and to improve teachers' working conditions. Perhaps an equally important challenge for professional developers and program directors is how to support all teachers — no matter how experienced — to remain open to learning.

References

Comings, J., Parrella, A., & Soricone, L. (1999). *Persistence Among Adult Basic Education Students in Pre-GED Classes*. NCSALL Reports #12. Boston, MA: NCSALL.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Sykes, G. (1999). *Teaching as the Learning Profession: Handbook of Policy and Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kegan, R. & The Adult Development Research Group (2001). *Toward a New Pluralism in ABE/ESOL Classrooms: Teaching to Multiple "Cultures of Mind"*. NCSALL Reports #19a. Boston, MA: NCSALL.

About the Authors

Cristine Smith, World Education, Boston, is Deputy Director of NCSALL, and directed this study of professional development. She coordinates NCSALL's dissemination activities and is a co-editor of the *Annual Review of Adult Learning and Literacy*.

Judy Hofer is the Research Coordinator for NCSALL's study of professional development. She works for World Education in Massachusetts and the Coalition for Literacy in New Mexico and has been in the ABE field as a community-based educator, staff developer, and researcher for more than 10 years. ❖

Teachable Moments: Videos of Adult ESOL Classrooms
A Two-Way Model of Professional Development

by Reuel Kurzet

Have you ever attended a professional development session or read a research report and wondered if the presenter or author had ever even been in a real adult education classroom? Consistent with NCSALL's mission to build collaborative partnerships between researchers and practitioners, the English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) Lab School, based at Portland State University and working in partnership with Portland Community College, is developing and testing a two-way model of research dissemination and professional development. The goal is not only to disseminate research findings but also to create feedback mechanisms in the design of our professional development activities, so that ESOL practitioners and researchers in the field have input into the ESOL Lab School's research and professional development processes. Over time, the feedback loop should improve the quality and usefulness to practitioners of our research dissemination and professional development activities.

A Participatory Structure

We began by using a participatory model within the Lab School itself, creating teams for project management, research, and professional development. Our staff development team consists of Kathryn Harris, a research associate; Dominique Brillanceau and Sandra Banke, the practitioner research associates at the Lab School; and I am dissemination associate. We describe our dissemination efforts through the image of ripples radiating outward from a small pebble tossed into a pond. With our goals, internal structure, and direction set, the ESOL Lab School's professional development team began to formulate a professional development model by preparing a presentation for the annual conference of Oregon Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ORTESOL) on October 26, 2001. In other words, our first "audience" for professional development was ourselves.

Using Audio-Video Technology

The Lab School's professional development activities are designed to be informed by and connected to the teaching and research of the Lab School. As part of its research, all the adult ESOL classes are audio- and videotaped. Half of the classes that are recorded have their classroom interactions categorized; half of these (25 percent of the total) are transcribed. In particular, student pair work, group work, and brief student-to-student interactions (such as in a

"Find someone who...." activity) are targeted for transcription; in the future, other portions of classes will be selected for transcription, as determined by various research questions. This creates an ever-growing corpus of authentic material for research and professional development. For ORTESOL, we decided to explore how the data collected for Lab School research purposes and the technology used to collect that data also could be incorporated into a delivery strategy for professional development in ESOL. Thus, the first professional development project undertaken by and for those of us on the professional development team was to play with the audio and video technology and the collected data to understand the unique contributions to professional development that could be gained from the audio and video corpus of "real," as opposed to scripted, adult ESOL classes.

As the instructors whose classes were audio- and videotaped, our practitioner research associates lead the way. First they viewed videos of several classes that they had taught. Even that small step brought new insights about how different the classes looked when viewed on video from how they had seemed while being taught. The multiple cameras allowed close-up views of how individual students responded to an activity at a level of detail not possible when one is teaching an entire class of students in "real time."
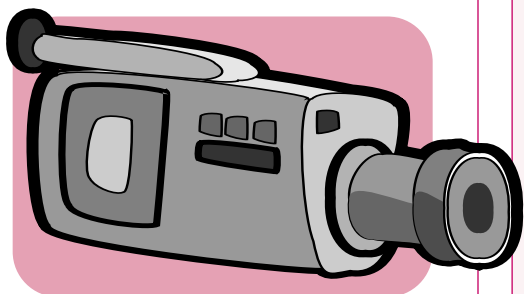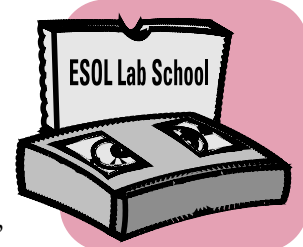
Next, the practitioner research associates looked for a clip that would illustrate one of several broad research interest areas of the Lab School, such as the development of

community among learners within the classroom. The Lab School had only been running for a month at that point; connecting research findings to professional development would have to wait. The focus returned to whether and how we could use the audio and video media and the data collected to date for worthwhile professional development.

Looking Closely at Teaching

While continuing to view classes, one of the practitioner research associates noticed a portion of a class illustrating a "teachable moment." The teacher had set up a paired language activity to practice talking about daily activities, but one student was completely off-task. He was telling

his partner about getting his car towed. The teacher overheard the digression and decided to take this incident and make it into a brief mini-lesson. The video clip lasts only a little over three minutes, but shows the entire progression of events involving the digression as a "teachable moment." Coincidentally, a similar "teachable moment" occurred in the paired class, which was the other same-level class taught concurrently. This incident was about a student getting a parking ticket and was about seven minutes long. The two practitioner-researchers looked at the two clips together and

---

Classroom Practices

The Lab School will investigate adult ESOL instructional practices believed by practitioners to be effective but that have not been empirically tested. Areas of particular interest include the most effective type of curriculum, the best role for grammar instruction, the effectiveness of various grouping strategies, the most appropriate uses of technology in the classroom, and the validity and utility of various kinds of assessment activities.

Second Language Acquisition
The Lab School provides an opportunity to address the great need for longitudinal research in second language acquisition. Research areas include the relationship between first-language literacy and second-language acquisition; the role of student interaction in language development; the roles that age, experience, and learning style play in second-language acquisition; and the predictable stages of language development in learners.

ESOL Program Retention
Typical research in adult education programs involves only those adults able to persist in their studies. Missing is the study of adults who are unable to persist. The Lab School research will address the issues involved in ESOL program retention including the reasons that some students persist while others do not, aspects of the ESOL programs that promote retention, life events that influence attendance, and life events that promote second-language acquisition.

Contact Information
The Adult ESOL Lab School is based at Portland State University, in the Department of Applied Linguistics. For more information, visit http://www.labschool.pdx.edu
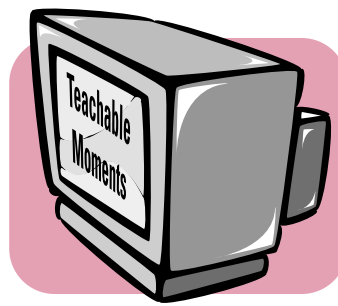
realized that they provided useful case study material for an exploration of digressions as potential "teachable moments."

Now the effort turned to seeing how all members of the professional development team saw the two video clips. We were preparing for our presentation at the ORTESOL Conference as we were still learning a great deal both from the audio and video media as well as from the content of the two clips selected. At the next professional development team meeting, the two practitioner research associates, the principal research associate, and I viewed the two clips together and discussed what we saw. It took us some time to learn how best to view the video segments of the classes. Eventually we realized that we needed to develop the habit of viewing the classes descriptively rather than judgmentally. The descriptive perspective was simply more effective for personal professional development purposes: not to critique the teachers but rather to understand the instructional choices they made, the strategies they employed, and how they might be similar to and different from what we ourselves might do in similar circumstances. To learn deeply from the media, we needed to avoid making judgments about what the teacher was doing and learn to look — and look again. This new way of looking at language classes became a focus for our presentation.

Next we viewed the video clips again and began to develop some questions to guide discussion of the video clips at the ORTESOL Conference. Another surprise: although all of us are very experienced ESOL teachers and/or teacher educators, we discovered that we each saw different things when viewing the video clips. Not only did we notice different elements from each other, but we also saw different things ourselves when we viewed the same video clips a second and third time. One viewer noticed how students were interacting with each other.

Another focused on how the teacher framed the "teachable moment" within the larger lesson. In a second viewing, someone's attention was drawn to what students who appeared not to be listening were doing. These different perceptions lead us to the realization that the video clips were powerful tools for professional development. The diverse observations allowed us to explore a wide range of possibilities for teaching a single lesson as well

> **"***To learn deeply from the media, we needed to avoid making judgments about what the teacher was doing and learn to look — and look again.***"**

as the considerations that might go into the process of deciding about what to do as a teacher at any given moment. We also realized that the discovery of the different perceptions and discussions about those different perceptions were in themselves powerful professional development experiences. Sharing different perceptions of the same video clips became another focus for our presentation.

Getting feedback from ESOL practitioners and researchers outside of the Lab School — the development of a two-way dissemination system — had been an established goal of the project since its initial planning stages. Providing for audience input and response was our

third focus. We came up with some questions to elicit other ways participants thought we could use the video clips and what kinds of research questions the clips might answer. At this point, we had not only learned a great deal from the video clips ourselves, but were also ready to initiate some "ripples" out to the community of adult ESOL practitioners in the state. Our own learning unfolded in an organic, developmental manner and had thus created the agenda for our presentation.

The First Professional Development Activity

In our first public professional development activity, we showed the two brief video clips of "teachable moments" in the Lab School classes to ORTESOL conference participants, both graduate student pre-service teachers as well as in-service faculty, from newly hired to veteran. We used these clips to provide not only a case study but also what we had found to be a shared experience of the classes. We then led several discussions to address our multifaceted agenda. First, we introduced the participants to the new way of looking at ESOL classrooms, so that they could experience firsthand the power of the Lab School's audio–video corpus of actual adult ESOL classes. Second, we helped participants begin to describe — rather than evaluate — what they saw happening in the brief clips. From there, we lead them to reflect upon and discuss both the instructional practices they saw illustrated in the clips and their own teaching practices in similar classes. Finally, as part of our goal to develop a feedback loop for the Lab School, we asked participants how they thought the media and technology of the Lab School could be used to deepen their understanding of second language

acquisition and to enhance their professional development.

Learning about Teachable Moments

The participants responded to the media much as we had. They realized that the video allowed them to see a class in ways that they could not while they were engaged in teaching. Most of the participants did not report great difficulty in looking at the clips descriptively and could see the value in that perspective. Little did we know that we were to be further engaged with our own professional development. When the professional development team had viewed the two video clips of "teachable moments," we had listed various criteria that we thought teachers considered, consciously and unconsciously, in deciding whether or not a digression was valuable as a potential teachable moment. At the ORTESOL workshop, participants identified some, but not all, of the criteria we had and came up with significant criteria that the four of us had not considered. The discussion then continued in a new direction as the participants also developed a list of criteria that teachers consider while they are exploiting a teachable moment. The participants seemed to be as amazed as we had been at how much they saw in two very brief video clips. They commented on how they could not see nearly as much when they were teaching their own classes.

Future Directions

Our next planned professional development activity is to initiate a modified study circle in which a small group of adult ESOL practitioners will meet four times to explore a single topic in depth. The meetings will be set up following the model of NCSALL's study circles (see page 16 for information). In addition to reading materials independently prior to group discussion, however,
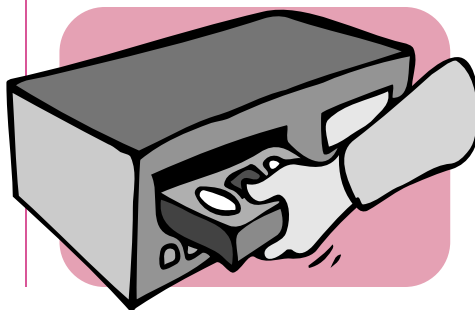
the participants will view relevant video clips at the meeting and discuss them immediately afterwards, as was done at the ORTESOL workshop.

The Lab School professional development team has also begun to search for literature on the impact of the immediacy of a shared experience through video as a professional development tool. We will be experimenting to find out what kinds of professional development delivery strategies not only exploit the unique opportunities provided by the Lab School's audio and video corpus and technology but also have the capacity to provide sustained professional development experiences.

The ESOL Lab School and its professional development activities are still in their initial stages of development. The success of the fall ORTESOL workshop, as judged by the breath and depth of participants new understandings of "teachable moments," has convinced us that the Lab School's media and technology are potentially powerful professional development tools. Gradually, we will gain increased understanding of the most effective ways to use these tools to provide state-of-the-art professional development opportunities in adult ESOL.

About the Author

Reuel Kurzet is professional development associate for the ESOL Lab School at Portland State University. She also teaches adult ESOL and chairs the English as a Second Language Department at the Sylvania Campus of Portland Community College in Portland, OR. ❖

What we learned about "teachable moments"

Through our viewing of the two video clips showing "teachable moments," and especially through our rich discussion with our colleagues about those video clips, we created a list of criteria that teachers consider, consciously and unconsciously, when deciding whether to exploit a digression for a "teachable moment." Later, I consolidated the lists into a series of questions teachers ask themselves to determine the potential value and use of the digression.

Criteria
How well does the topic of the digression fit with
- the curriculum of the program?
- the goals of the course?
- the interests of the students?
- the needs of the students?

How many of the students will have need for or interest in this topic?
- If it's only useful for a few, would this be better covered during office hours?

Does the digression lead to an opportunity to teach important information about
- US culture?
- Civics?
- English?
- Resources in the local community?

Is there anything extremely controversial about the topic of the digression?
- Will it offend any of the students?
- If so, is it still worth doing because of some strong link with the curriculum?
- Do I have enough information to cover the controversial topic(s) fully, openly, and in an unbiased manner?

Can I link this potential teachable moment to the day's/week's/term's
- Grammar point(s)?
- With other course content?
- In what ways?

Using a Learning Organization Approach to Enhance ABE Teachers' Professional Development

by M. Cecil Smith & Amy D. Rose

*P*rofessional development *is defined as a change process "in which instructors gradually acquire a body of knowledge and skills to improve the quality of teaching for learners and, ultimately, to enhance learner outcomes" (Kutner et al., 1997, p. 1). Most adult basic education (ABE) teachers do not have degrees or preparation in adult education, so continuing education and training are deemed essential in the field (Crandall, 1993; Belzer et al., 2001). Professional development activities often fall short, however, in meeting practitioners' needs for training. By extension, they also fail to meet the needs of the ABE programs that rely upon them to increase teachers' skills and knowledge and improve performance in the ABE classroom.*

We describe here an approach to ABE professional development and organizational change that can lead to greater alignment between ABE practitioners' needs and staff development offerings. We believe that professional development must be grounded in practice to facilitate teachers' transfer of knowledge learning and skills training to ABE classrooms. Such grounding is best accomplished through the adoption of a situated cognition approach to learning. Situated cognition involves the adaptation of knowledge and thinking skills to solve unique problems. It is based on the idea that knowledge is influenced by the activities, context, and culture in which it is used (McLellan, 1996).

The success of a situated cognition approach, however, requires a revamping of not only professional development training but also the manner in which ABE programs are organized. We advocate a shift from top-down organizational approaches to a collaborative teamwork approach that engenders a learning organization model (Senge, 1994). We call upon ABE program administrators and professional development trainers to adopt this model in working toward a closer alignment of teacher development with classroom practices.

The Problem

Professional development programs sometimes appear to be created and offered under the assumption that ABE teachers lack specific knowledge or skills. The result is that presenters seek to instill knowledge in teachers' heads as if teachers were empty vessels. This reflects a deficit-driven training model that Schon (1987) calls the technical–rational approach. Using this approach, someone identifies a deficit or gap to be filled and then training is provided to ameliorate that deficit.

Because many of ABE teaching's real-world problems do not come neatly packaged, practitioners may find themselves unable to transfer or adapt the technical knowledge obtained in professional development training to their classrooms. For example, teachers committed to a particular method of instruction may lack the flexibility needed to work with a heterogeneous population with a multiplicity of learning styles. The critical issue then, in Schon's (1987) view, is to redesign professional development so that it focuses more appropriately on the "actual competencies required of practitioners in the field" (p. 10).

ABE teachers may be highly motivated to improve their practices, yet the constraints of time and budget sometimes prevent them from carrying through with their plans. Also, the transfer of training from the workshop to the ABE classroom (i.e., far transfer) is problematic. The degree to which the knowledge and skills learned within professional development can be readily transferred from one teaching situation to another (i.e., near transfer) is likewise uncertain.

We do know that the kinds of knowledge obtained in artificial, time-limited in-service programs cannot be easily transferred to actual classrooms (Berryman, 1990; Perkins et al., 1990). The complexity, uncertainty, and "messiness" of classroom instruction can rarely be adequately reproduced within such programs. This lack of authenticity may impede both the transfer of knowledge from workshop to classroom and the transformation of instructors' knowledge into applicable teaching and assessment skills.

Given the apparent difficulty in achieving transfer of learning, how can professional development programs ensure that ABE teachers will be able to continuously improve their practice? Ideas from two theorists suggest some useful

approaches to training. Cervero (1988) argues that effective professional education programs need to be contextually specific, not premised on the notion that teachers will simply go out and readily apply the concepts they have learned. By "contextually specific," Cervero means that learning is never independent of the situation in which the acquired knowledge is to be applied — in other words, cognition is situated in particular contexts. Learning activities, from a situated cognition perspective, appear as imprecise and complex problems within authentic situations. They require learners to discover relevant procedures for solving these problems. Therefore, simply informing ABE instructors about adult learning theories, with the expectation that they can then apply these theories in any teaching situation, is both unrealistic and ineffective.

Schon (1987) claims that effective practice is shaped by two forms of knowledge: knowing-in-action and reflection-in-action. Schon uses the term knowing-in-action to refer to behaviors that are "publicly observable" (p.25). In other words, we reveal what we know through what we do. Reflection-in-action occurs whenever our behavior (i.e., knowing-in-action) fails to bring about a desired result and we pause to reflect upon what went wrong. Such cognitive reflection leads to experimentation, according to Schon, and ultimately to new behaviors. The task, then, for professional development programs is to assist ABE teachers in pairing knowing-in-action with reflection-in-action.

The implications of these ideas for professional development are significant. As noted above, ABE teacher training that is isolated and abstracted from the real world of the classroom will be less effective in knowledge transfer than training that intricately connects the teacher, the classroom, and the to-be-learned teaching skills and knowledge. In recognition of this, professional

development programs in which ABE teachers themselves assume the major responsibilities for planning, implementing, and evaluating their learning are increasingly common.

Facilitating Transfer of Training

Mikulecky and colleagues (1994) have described several approaches to training that can foster the transfer of newly acquired skills and behaviors. First, the trainer must explain and model the to-be-learned behaviors or concepts for the learner. This approach is, however, most effective

> **"***...professional development must be grounded in practice to facilitate teachers' transfer of knowledge learning and skills training to ABE classrooms.***"**

if the new knowledge is also linked to knowledge that learners already possesses. For example, complex teaching skills (such as instructing learning-disabled adults in metacognitive strategies to increase their reading comprehension) may need to be broken down into simpler components so that ABE teachers can learn each instructional component in a systematic way. Having teachers think about their own metacognitive skills, and how they use these skills and strategies for learning, can therefore be useful in helping them to understand the processes of teaching others how to use such strategies.

Second, sufficient time must be provided for the learner to practice the to-be-learned skills, acquire the

requisite knowledge, and adapt and modify what they have learned to fit their teaching environment. For this reason, single-session professional development workshops are largely ineffective in promoting long-term teacher change. Peer teachers or coaches may be particularly useful because they can monitor the practices of less-skilled teachers, provide corrective feedback, and help them adapt their knowledge to particular classrooms.

Third, the professional development trainer must provide substantial and specific feedback to learners regarding the adequacy of their skills or behaviors. The situated cognition model suggests that whenever learners serve as "cognitive apprentices" to experts, more effective learning can occur (Berryman, 1990; Collins et al., 1989). Thus, pairing skilled with less-skilled teachers in situations where learners have multiple opportunities to observe and receive coaching and constructive advice is effective. Putting their newly acquired knowledge into practice, ABE teachers can apply what they know (knowing-in-action), and can review and reconsider their methods (reflection-in-action) until they achieve mastery.

A situated cognition approach to professional development acknowledges that the movement from novice to expert teacher is highly complex. It also recognizes that expert–novice interactions are not one-way. Mutual decision-making and problem solving are involved, and expert teachers who model instruction are learning along with their less-skilled counterparts. Situated cognition is, therefore, highly consistent with Schon's ideas about reflection in practice, and can create seamless connections between professional development and actual classroom practices. Yet even situated approaches to professional development will be inadequate if the ABE programs themselves do not support teachers' critical reflection-in-action.

When ABE programs are structured to provide support for

The ABE program at Olney Central College

The ABE program at Olney Central College (OCC; Olney, IL) exemplifies a learning organization approach. The program employs one full-time and nine part-time teachers. A few years ago, OCC's Learning Skills Center Director, Donita Kaare, adopted a proactive approach to professional development. The ABE staff sought to serve better the adult students identified as having special learning needs. Kaare therefore enrolled in several professional development and training activities that focused on special-needs learners. She then had her entire staff participate in similar programs. The process of establishing a learning organization approach to ABE required about three years of work, according to Kaare. The result of this investment is that the ABE program today operates in a highly strategic and forward-reaching manner.

From a strategic perspective, every teacher is involved in professional development activities explicitly focused on helping the program to meet students' needs. These activities have included GED 2002 training, assessing learners with special needs, and using diagnostic and prescriptive approaches to instruction. Kaare reports that the ABE staff members now function as a collaborative team, mutually supporting and training one another. Often the teachers bring suggestions to Kaare for professional development activities they wish to pursue.

The forward-reaching features of OCC's learning organization approach are exemplified by the program's efforts to identify new areas of need. For example, the ABE program is now focusing attention on women's literacy issues and the provision of services for elderly learners. The teachers also make formal presentations to other groups and agencies, such as to rehabilitation services and adult literacy programs, regarding the characteristics of low-education adults. In doing so, the teachers gain confidence in their knowledge and skills.

Drawing from a variety of external and internal funding sources, Kaare has been very successful in supporting her teachers' professional development activities. Whenever staff members attend workshops and conferences, they share what they have learned with their fellow teachers in regular staff meetings that are highly structured and goal-oriented. Building a learning organization, according to Kaare, requires time, talent, and teamwork: "having a positive attitude towards learning and professional development" is essential to success.

The results for the OCC staff — and their students — have been remarkable. Over seven of the past 10 semesters, 95 percent of ABE students have successfully completed their learning programs. This compares to a success rate of approximately 75 percent prior to the program's evolution into a learning organization.

Contact Information
To learn more about how the ABE program at Olney Central College has implemented a learning organization approach, contact Donita Kaare by phone at 618-395-7777. ❖

teachers to implement their newly acquired knowledge, transfer of knowledge, and the transformation of that knowledge into teaching skills, is enhanced. This is further supported by research on transfer demonstrating how transfer is determined and arranged by the social and cultural environment rather than being a capacity of the individual problem-solver (Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition, 1983). ABE programs must establish environments in which teachers can engage in the kinds of critical self-reflection crucial to improving their teaching. Such supports are best established, in our view, when ABE programs function as learning organizations.

Learning Organization Approach

According to Watkins and Marsick (1993), the learning organization "…is one that learns continuously and transforms itself. Learning takes place in individuals, teams, the organization, and even the communities with which the organization interacts. Learning is a continuous, strategically-used process: integrated with, and running parallel to, work. Learning results in changes in knowledge, beliefs and behaviors. Learning also enhances organization capacity for innovation and growth" (pp. 8-9).

Learning organizations increase the capacity for organizations, and the persons within them, to adapt and change. Systemic thinking characterizes the individuals within learning organizations. That is, work roles must be considered within the context of a team, the work team's role within the organizational context, and the organization's role within a broader social context. Personal and professional development are crucial to the organization's success. For example, an ABE program can best function as a learning organization if the program's personnel challenge their prevailing assumptions and confront their own

and others' reluctance to challenge established ways of thinking — and teaching. The ABE program's mission and goals must be shared among all members of the organization. This suggests a team-oriented approach to professional development. Team learning, in turn, requires a systems perspective so that all members see themselves, and all teams that make up the organization, as interdependent (Chase, n.d.). For an example of how one community college ABE program established a learning organization approach, see the box on page 14.

Thinking of ABE programs as learning organizations goes beyond the notion of professional development as simply "filling in" skill deficits and knowledge gaps among teachers. Adult learners and teachers instead work together to analyze the different classroom situations that arise. These interactions can lead to novel, yet appropriate, solutions to the problems of literacy teaching, learning, and assessment. The learning organization model thus presumes a critical perspective that enhances the possibilities for continual professional growth. ABE programs organized as learning organizations create "teaching teams" consisting of a mix of expert, competent, and novice teachers who consult in a continuing, strategic, and goal-directed manner. Expert teachers model effective instruction and reinforce less-skilled teachers' efforts at improving their teaching. Expert teachers also benefit from these interactions by reflecting upon their actions as trainers

Reflection and action are integral to the process of teacher growth and renewal. Both the learning organization and the individual must change, however, if true growth is to take place. It does little good for ABE teachers to engage in professional development if the programs in which they practice remain inflexible and unresponsive. Literacy organizations must be vital organisms that constantly anticipate and adapt to

change: whether these changes are driven by societal concerns, legislative and policy actions, economic considerations, or learner preferences.

Finally, professional development outcomes occur at three levels: instructors, programs, and adult learners (Kutner et al., 1997). Although rarely measured, professional development also has an impact in several ways on the adult students who enroll in ABE programs. Their degree of satisfaction with the programs in which they are enrolled (in part, a reflection of their teachers' skills and knowledge), the learning gains that they make, and the ways in which their behaviors change as a result of learning can all be linked to their teachers' professional development activities.

References

Belzer, A., Drennon, C., & Smith, C. (2001). "Building professional development systems in adult basic education: Lessons from the field." In J. Comings, B. Garner, & C. Smith (eds.), *The Annual Review of Adult Learning and Literacy,* Vol. 2 (pp. 151-188). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Berryman, S.E. (1990). *Skills, Schools, and Signals.* New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, Institute on Education and the Economy.

Cervero, R. M. (1988). *Effective Continuing Education for Professionals.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Chase, M. (n.d.). *The Learning Organization.* http://websites.quincy.edu/~chasemi/learn.htm.

Collins, A., Brown, J.S., & Newman, S.E. (1989). "Cognitive apprenticeship: Teaching the crafts of reading, writing, and mathematics." In L.B. Resnick (ed.), *Knowing, Learning, and Instruction: Essays in Honor of Robert Glaser* (pp. 453-494). Hillsdale, NJ: Laurence Erlbaum.

Crandall, J. (1993). "Professionalism and professionalization of adult ESL literacy." *TESOL Quarterly,* 27, 497-515.

Kutner, M., Sherman, R., Tibbets, J., & Condelli, L. (1997). *Evaluating Professional Development: A Framework for Adult Education.* Washington, DC: US Department of Education.

Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition (1983). "Culture and cognitive development." In P.H. Mussen (ed.), *Handbook of Child Psychology, Vol. 1: History, Theory and Methods* (pp. 295-356). New York: Wiley.

McLellan, H. (1996) "Being digital: Implications for education." *Educational Technology,* Nov.-Dec., 5-20.

Mikulecky, L., Albers, P., & Peers, M. (1994, June). *Literacy Transfer: A Review of the Literature.* Technical Report TR94-05. Philadelphia, PA: National Center on Adult Literacy.

Perkins, D.N., Schwartz, S. & Simmons, R. (1990). "Instructional strategies for problems of novice programmers." In R. Mayer (ed.), *Teaching and Learning Computer Programming: Multiple Research Perspectives.* Hillsdale, NJ: Laurence Erlbaum.

Schon, D. A. (1987). *Educating the Reflective Practitioner.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Senge, P. (1994). *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization.* New York: Currency / Doubleday.

Watkins, K.E., & Marsick, V.J. (1993) *Sculpting the Learning Organization: Lessons in the Art and Science of Systemic Change.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

About the Authors

M. Cecil Smith is a Professor of Educational Psychology at Northern Illinois University. He has conducted research on adults' literacy skills and practices for the past decade. He is currently collaborating with researchers at Portland State University on NCSALL's Longitudinal Study of Adult Learning, examining the literacy practices of low-education adults.

Amy D. Rose is a Professor of Adult Education at Northern Illinois University. She is currently serving as the Chair for the Department of Adult, Counseling, and Health Education at NIU. Professor Rose has written extensively about non-traditional and vocational education. ❖

Study Circles Challenge the Intellect and Strengthen the Professional Community

by Tom Smith

As winter dragged into "mud season," a half dozen adult basic education (ABE) personnel huddled in the warmth of the literacy center, engaged in a debate over student–teacher boundaries. Unlike the tedious discussions of reorganization, impending state mandates, and updates on assessment requirements, teachers were hotly debating the work they care about most — teaching, — and how to best reach their students.

This discussion, held at the Vermont Adult Learning (VAL) offices in Burlington, was the second of three in a study circle focused on goal setting. Seven of us, a mix of teachers, administrators, and volunteers, participated in two study circles, each comprised of three sessions. NCSALL's Practitioner Dissemination Research Network (PDRN) had introduced the concept of a peer-led study circle. As a 15-year veteran teacher of ABE and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), I had been selected by VAL to participate in PDRN's training.

The training brought teachers from throughout New England together to do their own research and to share professional literature with their colleagues back home. To get the most from the professional literature, PDRN promoted the use of the study circle, providing us with a package of documents around a theme, including academic studies and published articles, and suggested activities to stimulate discussion. As a study circle leader, I chose to select my own topics rather than use the PDRN-developed themes. PDRN staff identified a variety of relevant readings and gave friendly critiques of my discussion plans. This level of professional support not only inspired confidence, it also expanded my range of teaching techniques and in itself was a form of individualized staff development.

In our first study circle, we at VAL examined goal setting, a topic introduced to us by a study by John Comings and colleagues (1999). Their research addressed the chronic problem of student turnover and "stopping out," concluding that students' sense of goals was a key component of their active participation (persistence) in ABE programs. After reading this, we read articles highlighting the obstacles to goal setting related to race, class, and family violence.

How Personal?

One of our more exciting discussions — judging from the animation and tension it provoked — revolved around how personal we get with our students. Do we simply interview them and try to deepen their understanding of their goals and possible avenues to achieving those goals? Or do we invite students to discuss what they see as barriers to their progress: past learning experiences or troublesome personal relationships, for example?

About half the teachers who use the more personal approach found that many students want to share stories from earlier educational experiences, or talk about their relationships and how these block their progress. Those advocating this approach found that the personal is educational and believe that this model is crucial to unlocking student

potential. Conversely, those who thought that this type of inquiry is intrusive and beyond our training were concerned that in uncovering pain we open a Pandora's Box that we cannot control. They worry that this

---

Ideal Components of a Study Circle for ABE Practitioners

- Five to eight participants
- Three or four sessions exploring a given topic of interest to participants
- Sessions lasting two to three hours
- Participants attend each session having read materials handed out previously
- Materials represent the most current thinking on a topic
- Participants agree on an agenda and specific discussion questions, leaving time for evaluation of the session
- Any member of the agency can lead the sessions

approach has the potential to hurt students more than help them.

In the third session of the study circle, we examined an approach used in Florida that asks students to integrate their past experiences with their current thinking. The group then developed a list of goal-setting recommendations (see box) with the aim of creating a uniform approach for our agency. We started from the perspective that many, if not most, students desire structure, approve of a mechanism that helps them focus, and welcome the opportunity to monitor their successes. Furthermore, these factors point to the efficacy of goal setting. We emphasized that goal setting is a process; it is an evolving skill best learned through practice, and publicized our work in VAL's statewide newsletter.

In reviewing our discussions, we agreed that teachers should be conscious of not imposing their expectations on or making judgments of students. It might be helpful if teachers share their goals, either personal or for the group, during the process. Finally, we voiced a need for more discussion about the relationship between creating group goals and the progress of individual learning.

Second Circle

The second study circle, comprised of a slightly different group of people, examined the "youthification" of ABE: the growing number of younger learners in ABE classes and the impact they have on programs and older students. This circle had a different tenor and outcome from the first. We read about the physiological and developmental issues of adolescence and looked at how race and class at this age play out in the ABE classroom. After discussing developmental issues, we assessed the positive and negative aspects of having adolescents in our classes. Taking the time to list the strengths that youth bring to the classroom moved us from stereotypical to more balanced

thinking about our younger students.

In our second discussion we sought to understand our younger learners better by remembering what those years had been like for us. What was scheduled as a half-hour discussion took most of two hours, as participants shared their past — and, in a sense, current — vulnerabilities with surprising openness. Not only were we able to reach back to those volatile years individually, but we also discovered unknown sides of each other. One participant spoke of herself as a confident 14-year-old lesbian who, by her senior year in high school, had lost almost all positive sense of self. I shared my experiences as a physically immature boy who was humiliated in the gym showers and further undercut by a sense of class (i.e., economic) inferiority.

From this eye-opening exercise, we went on to study what being in the classroom might be like for people who had experienced oppression related to class, race, sexual orientation, substance abuse, or backgrounds, and how teachers' or other students' stereotypes could undermine an individual's participation. Out of this discussion emerged a desire on our parts for more training to allow us to serve these student populations better.

The storytelling left the

most lasting impression on me. Our task had been to focus on the teens in our classrooms, but we found that examining our own experiences growing up helped us to understand more fully the issues facing our younger students. That sharing of personal stories was more powerful than any of us could have imagined. It helped to build new levels of trust among the participants, including the county coordinator, who had been on the job for only a few months and was unknown to other staff members.

Results

At the end of both study circles, participants' comments stressed how good it felt to be challenged

Goal Setting

We developed these guidelines on goal setting as a product of our study circle.

- Individualized.
- Contains well-defined steps that create a visual image of the process.
- Short-term goals are packaged in small bits that reinforce early successes; long-term goals speak to "dreams."
- Contracts work for some students.
- Goals should expand beyond the academic to include other roles the student has: spouse, parent, worker, etc.
- Goals should be re-evaluated periodically with the student: goals change as the student's self-assessment changes. This is especially helpful when done in a group context to broaden individual lessons and increase mutual support.
- "Guesstimate" the impact of meeting goals will be on family and friends — both positive and negative as students begin to make progress.
- Try to deepen an understanding about the roots of potential backlash: when a student's friends, relatives, and/or spouse attempt to sabotage the student's motivation.
- Groups have the strength to offer opportunities to confirm and validate as well as expand horizons and suggest new directions.
- A sense of personal safety is a prerequisite in initiating a group goal-setting process. This is especially true in light of students' experiences with trauma / violence.
- One-on-one is good for those students who don't work well in groups: those feeling vulnerable or not up to others' standards.
- Students welcome praise, celebration, and awards at certain steps along the way.

intellectually. The process had made them feel more professional, and the discussions provided participants with valuable insights. Unlike staff meetings, where subject matter too often seems imposed, this process affirmed our work, enhanced our self-respect, and built our sense of functioning as a team.

Two different county coordinators experienced the power of the study circles. Both spoke of these forums' value as a form of staff development and of the need to use this and perhaps other forms of study circles. As a result of their observation and participation, study circles are being implemented statewide within Vermont Adult Learning programs.

Reflections

In looking at this model, a few points need to be highlighted. Study circles must focus on topics that teachers have determined are priorities. The reading selections need to be relatively brief but represent quality research or expert opinion. If staff are responsible for organizing the material, time to do that must be budgeted into their schedules. Besides collecting valuable information, the exercise of organizing and leading a discussion is an effective form of leadership development. Diverting from the planned syllabus allowed for unintended discussions, which were most rewarding. Well-organized but free-flowing conversation focused on a particular topic can have positive effects on team building.

When teachers and staff choose the subject matter for study circles, it meets a direct and perhaps an immediate need. Instead of relying on outside experts, this peer-led form of staff development builds on a staff's strengths, integrating the knowledge they have collectively developed. In this sense, it is respectful of educators' experience and yet still intellectually challenging.

Although the primary purpose of these study circles was to increase VAL staffs' professional knowledge,

I cannot overstate the importance in them of the personal dimension. In the personal storytelling session, participants commented on how "exposing ourselves" had created greater bonds of trust. This made it easier for me to share some of the personal problems I was to face later. Since this experience, I have introduced more "storytelling" opportunities in my ESOL classes, which has strengthened our sense of community in the classroom.

We cannot always know where a reading will take us. If content goals are clear, however, and participants are willing to pursue topics in which

they are truly engaged, study circles can meet a wide variety of needs. Whether it is to increase pedagogical expertise or enhancing team building, our experience demonstrates that this kind of forum can be extremely productive.

About the Author

Tom O. Smith teaches for Vermont Adult Learning at the Community College of Vermont in Burlington. He has been teaching adult literacy and English for speakers of other languages for 16 years. He has been active in Vermont's third party politics, holding elective office for 12 years. ❖

Setting Up a Study Circle?

Interested in running study circles on the same topics we explored? Here are our resource lists.

Goal Setting

Comings, J., Parrella, A., & Soricone, L. (1999). *Persistence Among Adult Basic Education Students in Pre-GED Classes.* NCSALL Reports #12. Boston: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy.

Florida Human Resources Development, Inc. (1999). *Florida Works: Career Building Skills for Adult Basic Education.* Tallahassee, FL: Adult Education Division of Workforce Development.

Horsman, J. (1998). "'But I'm Not a Therapist' The Challenge of Creating Effective Literacy Learning for Survivors of Trauma." In S. Shore, (ed.) *Australian Council for Adult Literacy 21st National Conference: Literacy on the Line. Conference Proceedings.* Adelaide: University of South Australia.

Rockhill, K. (1987). "Literacy as threat/desire: Longing to be SOMEBODY." In J. Gaskell, & A. Mclaren (eds.). *Women and Education.* Calgary: Detselig Enterprises.

Youthification

Anderson, M., & Megyesi, A. (1999) "Youth in A.B.E: Going Beyond the Stereotypes." *The Change Agent.* Issue 9.

Erikson, E. (1950). *Childhood and Society.* New York: Norton, 261-262.

Begley, S. (2000) "Getting inside a teen brain." *Newsweek* 28 Feb 58-59.

Hayes, E. (2000) "Youth in adult literacy education programs." In J. Comings, B. Garner, & C. Smith, (eds.) *The Annual Review of Adult Learning and Literacy.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 74-110.

Shor, I. (1996) *When Students Have Power: Negotiating Authority in a Critical Pedagogy.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 12-19.

Tatum, B. (1999). *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* New York, NY: Basic Books.

PDK Couples Web Resources with Peer Interaction

Teacher Shelly Ratelle found it enlightening to be the learner in a learner-centered approach to professional development

by Shelly Ratelle

I teach adult basic education (ABE) and General Educational Development (GED) subjects and employability skills to youth and to women who are recipients of temporary aid to needy families (TANF; formerly AFDC) for EASTCONN, a Regional Education Service Center in Connecticut. Always looking for new ideas, I recently participated in training on how to use the Professional Development Kit (PDK) developed by the National Center of Adult Literacy (NCAL).

The creators describe it as follows: "The Professional Development Kit: Multimedia Resources for Adult Educators is a teacher-centered system that provides systematic and sustainable professional development opportunities to adult educators." PDK is indeed a comprehensive tool kit for teachers who are developing lessons. It includes a model for writing effective lesson plans, a large database of articles and Web sites for educators doing research, and a place to record your outcomes (i.e., lesson plans) and thoughts (similar to an online journal). Two other components particularly stood out for me: the engaged learning environment, and peer collaboration, including a customizable Web-based forum

in which to converse with other teachers about my work.

Engaged Learning

Engaged learning is an eightfold way of describing one kind of learning environment (see the table on page 20 for details.) In this environment, the learners are responsible for and the driving force behind the learning. They work in flexible groups. Under the direction of a teacher, who acts as facilitator, guide, or sometimes co-learner, they move through authentic tasks to produce useful products, which then serve as opportunities for assessment. For example, students studying writing may research a specific community and put together a guide that will be given to newcomers by realtors. The teacher may serve as a link to resources or make suggestions that would fill in gaps, but the students themselves propel the project. The assessment comes from two authentic sources: realtors' agreement to use the product; and community comments concerning accuracy and ease of use that are fed back through the realtors, who agree to compile comments in return for free use of the guide.

Peer collaboration, which is the other piece of PDK that struck me as particularly useful, takes many forms. Teachers are taught to support each other by asking questions about goals, learners, skills, time frames, and other specific factors. This practice aids teachers who are creating lesson plans to produce good-quality, relevant products. Peers are recognized as resources. This turned out to be important to me in transferring the content of the PDK workshops to my job, because I have many peers at work, but no "workshop presenters" available to remind me what to do.

I first learned about PDK at a state technology conference. Upon hearing that I had been selected to attend, I was asked to introduce myself to other participants via e-mail. That was the first sign that this training was going to be different. I sat, just like my peers must have, and nervously typed a message introducing

myself to 25 people, saying that I looked forward to working with them. We would meet for two days, work back in our programs for three weeks, and reconvene for a one-day follow-up session. We were required to attend the training and produce one lesson plan that integrated technology with any subject matter of our choosing. In

Indicators of Engaged Adult Learning

Variable	Indicator of Engaged Learning	Indicator definition
Vision of Learning	Responsible for learning	Learner involved in setting goals, choosing tasks, developing assessments and standards for the tasks; has the big picture of learning and next steps in mind
	Strategic (and Transformative)	Learner actively develops repertoire of thinking/learning strategies (and critical awareness to empower pursuit of individual and collective goals)
	Energized by learning	Learner is not dependent on rewards from others; has a passion for learning
	Collaborative	Learner develops new ideas and understanding in conversations and work with others
Tasks	Authentic (and Builds)	Pertains to real world, is addressed to personal interest (and on experience) rooted in the lived experience of the learner
	Challenging (and Rewarding)	Difficult enough to be interesting but not totally frustrating, usually sustained (and conveys clear and tangible benefits to the learner)
	Integrative	Involves integrating information of many types and from a variety of sources to solve problems and address issues related to daily life and work
Assessment	Performance-based	Involving a performance or demonstration, usually for a real audience and useful purpose
	Generative	Assessments having meaning for learner; maybe produce information, product, service
	Seamless and ongoing	Assessment is part of instruction and vice versa; learners learn during assessment
	Equitable	Assessment is culture fair
Instructional Model	Interactive (and Accommodates)	Instructor or technology program responsive to learner learning differences needs, requests (e.g., menu driven) (and adapts instruction to suit a variety of learning styles and preferences)
	Generative	Instruction oriented to constructing meaning; providing meaningful activities/experiences
Learning Context	Collaborative	Instruction conceptualizes students as part of learning community; activities are collaborative
	Knowledge-building	Learning experiences set up to bring multiple perspectives to solve problems such that each perspective contributes to shared understanding for all; goes beyond brainstorming
	Empathetic	Learning environment and experiences set up for valuing diversity, multiple perspectives, strengths
Grouping	Heterogeneous	Small groups with persons from different ability levels and backgrounds
	Equitable	Small groups organized so that over time all learners have challenging learning tasks/experiences
	Flexible	Different groups organized for different instructional purposes so each person is a member of different groups; works with different people
Instructor Roles	Facilitator	Engages in negotiation, stimulates and monitors discussion and project work but does not control
	Guide	Helps students to construct their own meaning by modeling, mediating, explaining when needed, redirecting focus, providing options
	Co-learner/co-investigator	Instructor considers self as learner; willing to take risks to explore areas outside his or her expertise; collaborates with other instructors and practicing professionals
Learner Roles	Explorer	Learners have opportunities to explore new ideas/tools; push the envelope in ideas and research
	Cognitive Apprentice	Learning is situated in relationship with mentor who coaches learners to develop ideas and skills that simulate the role of practicing professionals (i.e., engage in real research)
	Teacher	Learners encouraged to teach others in formal and informal contexts
	Producer	Learners develop products of real use to themselves and others

the spirit of engaged learning, we were not given the definition of technology, but were encouraged to explore what that term meant to us. Each of us created our own definition that we then used in our lessons. I prefer a definition that includes calculators, copy machines, video, and audio, along with computers.

Although apprehensive about what was to come, I nonetheless expected what I had usually experienced in workshops: lecture-style delivery, little hands-on work, and even less transfer to my job. I attend as much training as I can, but often I have to work hard to pay attention to lectures. I prefer to learn kinesthetically or through discussion. Kelly Limeul (PDK project manager, NCAL) and Jennifer Elmore (instructional design consultant) were the two facilitators. Acting in the Guide or Facilitator role as described in the engaged learning table, they did no lecturing. They are very knowledgeable about technology and the PDK model itself; they encouraged participants to help each other, getting us to utilize and support our peers and to think for ourselves. To best enable the PDK participants to support each other, we worked from a common model when writing our lesson plans. Kelly and Jennifer brought with them a generic lesson plan model, which you could find in any teacher resource book, and offered it as a basis for discussion. As a group we modified it slightly, making only minor changes, but yet making it ours. The resource database section of PDK provides articles about adult learners and was available as a reference while planning, but Kelly and Jennifer spent our face-to-face time asking guiding questions that helped us to evaluate our own work. Later, we used the same questioning technique to evaluate our peers' work. This experience with learner-directed, goal-driven learning helped us understand and include engaged

learning concepts in the plans we wrote. It was enlightening to be on the learner end in an engaged learning environment.

Peer Groups

The 25 or so participants would be forming smaller groups ourselves. We could choose our peer groups by geography (some participants came with several others from their work place), by subject taught, or any other method. About midway through the second day, after hearing all 25 people talk about engaged learning and the kinds of lessons they might

do, we chose and met with our smaller peer groups. (See Collaborative Vision of Learning and Flexible Grouping indicators in the table.) I had two criteria when selecting peers: I made sure they taught a subject that was related to mine; and I looked for people who were already using a project-based or nontraditional, engaged learning environment similar to mine. This brief meeting set the stage for what would come during our homework time.

In addition to modifying the lesson plan model, exploring engaged learning, and forming peer groups during our face-to-face time, we also learned how to post our drafted lesson plans, questions, ideas, and comments on peers' work to the PDK Discussion Board. Over the next three weeks, as

we wrote our lesson plans, we would use the Discussion Board (a password-protected area of the PDK online resource) to communicate with our peer groups and with Kelly and Jennifer, who asked and answered questions. Everyone who visited the board could read all messages and reply to any of them. (See Learning Context and Instructor Role as Facilitator in the table.)

We also supported each other during this homework period through peer group conference calls. Each of the approximately six peer groups made one call, and Kelly and Jennifer were included in all of them. During both the online discussions and the phone call, we used the questioning technique previously modeled by Jennifer and Kelly to help our peers evaluate their own work. We asked questions such as "Do you think your students would be able to read that?" or "What is the role of the learner in that situation?" We also did lots of encouraging.

The first task for the homework period was for each participant to complete one lesson plan. The second task was for each peer group to plan a short presentation featuring highlights of our lesson plans or what we learned from the PDK process, to be given on our final face-to-face day. I am not normally a "skit" person, but I was inspired to write one. My teammate was a great sport and acted with me. The final meeting was like a reunion, and the presentations allowed us to celebrate the accomplishments of the people with whom we had worked over the previous several weeks.

Reflections

The teachers with whom I worked in PDK were supportive, interested, and hard working. This training model allowed me to appreciate what my co-workers and others in the field know and are doing. I produced a good lesson plan for PDK,

The Professional Development Kit
Multimedia Resources for Adult Educators

by Kelly Hunter & Nathalie Applewhite

The Professional Development Kit (PDK) is composed of three main elements: an interactive Web site, a collection of videos on CD-ROM, and a guide to help users navigate the PDK system and design their own professional development plan. The online gateway to the PDK system is at www.literacy.org/pdk. Its three main sections are PDK Community, Investigating Practice, and Knowledge Databases.

PDK Community

PDK Community contains online discussion boards and personalized portfolio activities. The discussion boards provide the opportunity to communicate with other adult educators and experts around the country. Community members can also develop their own public or private discussion boards.

The portfolio takes a teacher–researcher approach in encouraging practitioners to investigate their own classroom practice through guided activities. The activities include self-assessment, data collection, action planning, lesson planning, case study development, and reporting. Practitioners who engage in these activities can save them online, and develop a personalized program for professional development.

Investigating Practice

The Investigating Practice section is designed to inform and engage teachers in an exploration of the major issues in adult basic education (ABE). This section contains more than 10 hours of edited video organized into three main areas:

- *"Voices from the Field"* presents short introductions to important issues, new directions, and professional development needs in ABE, General Educational Development (GED), English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), workplace literacy, learning differences/ disabilities, and integrating technology.

- *"Classroom Investigations"* is made up of in-depth explorations of actual teachers' practices covering the areas of writing for ABE and GED, math for ABE, reading, speaking, and listening for ESOL and reading and learning differences for ABE. This window into classrooms offers reflections from the teachers and students as well as classroom products and related resources.

- *"Topic Area Investigations"* explore issues such as learner anxiety, teachers' roles, and motivation from a cross-classroom perspective.

While viewing the material, teachers are encouraged to think about the following questions: *What's working? What isn't working? What is happening in my practice? What would I do differently and why? What do I need to know?* After exploring these questions, teachers are encouraged to document their thoughts, questions, and lessons learned in their portfolios or share their ideas in a discussion board. They may also want to gather more information from one of the Knowledge Databases.

Knowledge Databases

The Knowledge Databases section contains an extensive collection of articles, essays, lesson plans, and additional online resources related to the field of adult education. With more than 200 articles and still growing, the searchable "Articles" database contains online adult education documents from various resources and organizes them in one place, making it easy for users to find appropriate resources.

Using PDK

Teachers can use PDK to guide them in reflecting on and improving their teaching strategies and to connect with other professionals in the field. Professional developers can use PDK to extend and enhance professional development initiatives or design new ones. Depending on the needs of the individual or the program, PDK can be a short-term resource or part of a longer-term plan.

Cost

All of the PDK web resources, including the PDK Guide, are available for free at www. literacy.org/pdk. The CD-ROM, which contains the entire collection of videos, is available for free while supplies last. (Request them via e-mail from Ashley DelBianco at delbianco@literacy.upenn.edu; include your complete address and phone number). ❖

partly because of the encouragement and feedback that I got from my peers: an extremely valuable resource.

Since returning to my own program, I have tried to use the discussion board format to encourage Connecticut adult educators to exchange ideas and support each other. The small number of postings there (most of them are mine) suggests that the initial bonding is extremely important in getting users to feel ties strong enough to span the seemingly impersonal medium of the Internet.

After attending PDK, I have been even more inclined to apply engaged learning concepts to my classroom, especially through the specific application of project-based learning. Recently a student expressed discomfort when I asked my class to edit each other's writing. I asked if she would be more comfortable asking questions instead of pointing out mistakes, a technique that comes directly from PDK. Instead of telling her peer that her writing had no introduction, I encouraged her to ask, "Can you show me your introduction?" This enabled the author to realize her piece lacked an introduction, and the editor — the uncomfortable student — did not have to feel pushy or critical. My PDK experience will remind me to use my peers as an important resource in my work, as I guide students to use theirs in the same way. Meanwhile, I'm glad I got the opportunity to experience PDK. ✏

PDK is available online at http://www. literacyonline. org/pdk/about_pdk.iphtml

---

About the Author

Shelly Ratelle started in adult education as a volunteer math teacher in a multilevel class. She later earned her master's in Adult Education from East Carolina University (NC). She has taught ABE and GED preparation to a variety of populations in North Carolina and Connecticut. ❖

New Directions for Professional Development: Kentucky's Journey

How Kentucky's professional development system was redefined to support new, aggressive, statewide goals for adult education

by Sandra Kestner

The strength of adult education in Kentucky is the dedication of the many teachers often serving under difficult conditions, without adequate support, and often with compensation and benefits less than teachers in the public schools. Recognizing the seriousness of the adult literacy issues in Kentucky, there is clearly a need for a statewide strategy to improve the professional preparation of adult educators in Kentucky.

**Aims McGinness, Jr.,
Adult Education
Task Force Report, 1999.**

The National Literacy Act of 1991 required states to utilize a minimum of 10 percent of certain federal funds for instructor training and development. In response, Kentucky's Department for Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) created a branch to focus on training and selected me to lead the effort. Before that, staff development in Kentucky consisted primarily of an annual adult education conference, sponsored by DAEL. Some regional workshops had been offered, but the information

presented was often inconsistent from region to region. I observed that program quality varied, especially in the manner in which students were assessed and instructed. Too few professional development activities were offered to meet all of the needs of the system and certainly no comprehensive plan existed to improve the skills of our adult educators. Practitioners were doing the best they could with limited training.

One of my first assignments as the new branch manager was to create a plan for professional development. Working with other specialists in the field, our branch designed a practitioner-centered, comprehensive, long-range training plan for the continual delivery of professional development. Policy was established and

requirements were put into place that included mandated training for new instructors, specific number of hours of participation each year, and professional development plans for all instructors. Professional development

funds were allocated to programs by a funding formula to be used as incentives for instructors' participation.

To help make professional development more accessible and to meet growing demands for training, DAEL issued a request for proposals for professional development (PD) services. Submitted proposals had to reflect the department's newly designed PD system's policies and procedures. By 1996, six regional PD coordinators were contracted to facilitate, coordinate, and provide local professional development activities for adult education practitioners.

Issues Influencing Our System

Many issues had an impact on the efforts of our professional development system: part-time instructors, often with no background in adult education; rapid turnover in the field; many adult education supervisors who had numerous other responsibilities and limited time to devote to adult education and program improvement; large numbers of nondegreed paraprofessionals teaching in isolation; and instructors with underdeveloped teaching skills. To meet the needs demonstrated by instructors, we offered a wide variety of professional development activities, including workshops, inquiry-based projects, family literacy support groups, study circles, and collegial network groups. Our efforts resulted in a strong program for adult basic education (ABE) instructors, but we nevertheless struggled with the growing need for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), workplace, and leadership training, while learning about new national initiatives such as Equipped for the Future (EFF), the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), and the

National Reporting System (NRS).

Although the Department for Adult Education and Literacy had established goals and objectives for professional development, the needs of providers were so great that it was hard to focus our efforts. We tried to offer what new teachers needed, and what more experienced providers

"Our regional professional development system was an effective model that accomplished a great deal; however, the adult education delivery system was about to change. As a result, the professional development system also had to change significantly."

wanted, as well as everything in between. Balancing local and individual professional development needs and the growing needs of new state-level initiatives directed from the top added to the tension. Our regional professional development system was an effective model that accomplished a great deal; however, the adult education delivery system was about to change. As a result, the professional development system also had to change significantly. In the spring of 2000, with the passage of new state adult education legislation and the introduction of a new governing body, our contracted regional PD system, as we knew it, came to an end.

The Call for Change

Over the past decade, Kentucky has taken bold steps to improve its total system of public education: the

Kentucky Education Reform Act in 1990 (K-12 education reform) and the Postsecondary Education Act in 1997. However, much remains to be done to educate the adults who missed the opportunities now being provided to young students (Sherman, 2000). In response to the need to enhance services for undereducated adults, and alarmed by the growing gap between the skill level of workers needed to attract new industry and that possessed by the majority of the workforce, the Senate passed a Concurrent Resolution (SCR) in 1998 to create a Task Force on Adult Education. The goal of the Task Force was to "develop recommendations and an implementation plan for raising the literacy level and educational attainment of Kentucky's adults who have not graduated from high school, have poor literacy skills, or lack the skills for job advancement" (Task Force, 1998). Chaired by Governor Paul E. Patton, task force members (six senators, six representatives, and six members appointed by the Governor, including a community leader, health care leader, correction administrator, and three adult educators) were to study the "state of adult education in Kentucky."

The Task Force's Findings

The Task Force met 10 times over 18 months to address the directive of SCR 126 and heard testimony from representatives of adult education, business and industry, students, and the community. Task force members visited local adult education programs across the state and talked with providers about their concerns. DAEL's former Commissioner presented an overview of adult education in Kentucky to the Task

Force, pointing out that while total funds for adult education are at an all time high of $21 million annually, this funding is serving about 40,000 Kentuckians per year (1999), or only about five percent of the target population.

Concerns voiced by key stakeholders outside the adult education system included an increasing number of single-parent families; decreasing education participation by men; continued high dropout rates that feed the adult literacy problem; low number of four year degrees being awarded; an aging population; and, changing workplace needs. In short, Kentucky lags behind other states with too many undereducated adults.

Concerns voiced by adult educators included significant disparities among counties in the basic grant funding allocations; lack of a comprehensive financial policy that addresses the issues of performance, continuity, and equity; inconsistent scope and quality of adult education services from county to county; and no clear policy or political support to deal with low-performing, inefficient providers (McGinness, 1999).
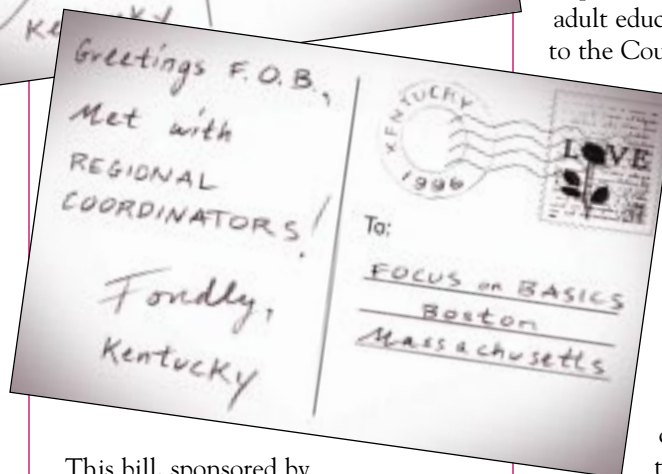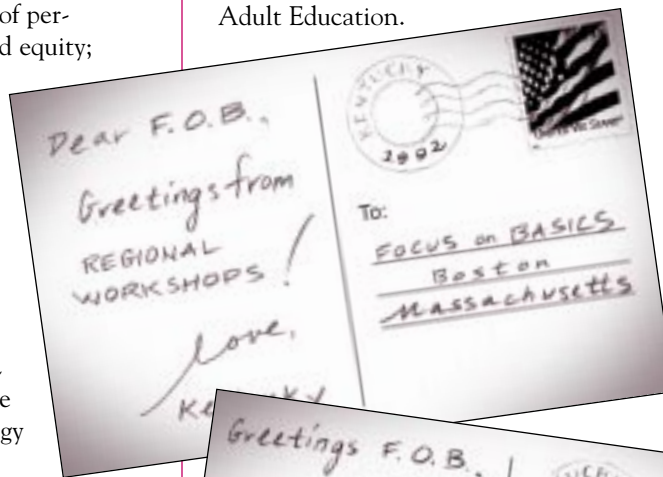
At that time, DAEL had no statutory mandate to lead a statewide strategy to see that the target population was served, which the task force recognized: "A fundamental problem is that Kentucky has focused on implementing a federal law and allocating resources to programs, rather than establishing a statewide strategy to address the fundamental, far-reaching problem of adult literacy" (McGinness, 1999).

Although the Task Force heard about weaknesses in our system, they also heard testimony to its strengths. One of the strengths is the dedication of its many teachers often serving under difficult conditions, without

adequate support, and often with compensation and benefits that are less than those of teachers in the public schools. Testimony before the task force characterized this work as "missionary" in nature (LRC, 2000). The absence of a comprehensive approach to the professional preparation, development, and support of adult educators was a major concern. Although DAEL had taken action to improve the skills of adult educators, the conclusion of the Task Force was that more was needed.

The Act for Adult Education

Recommendations of the Task Force, guided by the belief that adult literacy is a fundamental barrier to every major challenge facing Kentucky, resulted in the passage of Senate Bill 1 (SB 1), an act for Adult Education.

This bill, sponsored by the Senate President with the backing of several key legislators, outlines reforms designed to improve the state's adult education delivery

system and dramatically increase the percentage of Kentucky's residents served by adult education programs. In addition, the bill calls for the credentialing and professional preparation of adult educators.

At the same time, postsecondary education received a mandate to increase its enrollment by 80,000 students by 2020. A low birth rate in the state meant a lack of potential students feeding into the postsecondary system, as well as a potential dearth of workforce members. Legislators soon realized, however, that postsecondary education could draw from the large number of adults who did not finish high school or who needed remediation. A significant number, however, would have to enroll in adult basic education (ABE) to feed into the postsecondary system. To increase enrollment, encourage improvement, and stimulate reform of adult education services, the Kentucky General Assembly appropriated $7 million in new adult education funds for fiscal year 2001 and an additional $12 million for 2002, and established the Adult Education and Literacy Trust Fund to finance the various mandates, initiatives, and activities set forth in SB 1.

Policy and decision-making responsibilities and oversight of the adult education trust fund were given to the Council on Postsecondary Education (referred to as the Council), while the DAEL, which remained in the Cabinet for Workforce Development, continued to coordinate adult education services in Kentucky. The Council, in collaboration with DAEL, was directed by legislation to develop an Adult Education Action Plan allocating the Trust Fund according to two criteria: all investments should be capable of expanding to increase the number of participants in adult education programs; and all

investments should help build community adult education capacity. The plan is shaped on the premise that all initiatives should be assessable, accountable, and avoid duplication of services to leverage and maximize resources (Action Plan, 2000).

The Task Force's Charge

One of the recommendations of the Task Force was the "professional preparation, development and certification of adult educators" (Task Force, 1998). To support change initiated at the policy level, we needed to design a new, statewide professional development system with an infrastructure capable of supporting a large-scale reform effort while still being responsible to the needs of practitioners. The professional development system had to be able to support 900 adult educators, 51 percent of who teach less than 24 hours each week and 49 percent teach 24 hours or more each week. These practitioners would be required to serve 300,000 adult learners by the year 2020, in contrast to the approximately 65,000 adults a year currently being served.

Early in 2001 a team was formed to guide the renovation of our professional development system. Consisting of key stakeholders from all levels of adult education and all service delivery areas, the collaborative partners included representatives from public universities, community and technical colleges, Kentucky Educational Television, the Kentucky Virtual University (KYVU), the Kentucky Virtual Library (KYVL), the Council, public libraries, business and industry leaders, and adult education practitioners, approximately 20 people in all. The new system needed to include standards and competencies for adult educators and the development of a coordinated, integrated, and search-able database for centralized resources for instructors.

The adult education professional development team worked for more than seven months crafting a plan that would meet the charges set forth by the Council. Wanting to know what other states were doing, we invited Lennox

McLendon, Executive Director of the National Adult Education Professional Development Consortia (NAEPDC) for state directors, to attend our first meeting to provide us with a "national perspective" on professional development. In addition, Senate Bill 1 infused new resources into adult education, which offered extended possibilities for our PD plan. For example, through our partnership with the Kentucky Virtual University, we had opportunities for distance learning for the first time. Based on previous knowledge of research and "best practices" for professional development, the new system would support program improvement, link standards for adult educators to demonstrate performance, and offer methods to improve per-formance and learner outcomes. Our previous system targeted the improvement of instructors' skills but had been ineffective in measuring student learning as an outcome; we wanted evaluation to be an integral part of our new PD system (Kutner et al., 2001).

Our New Professional Development Plan

In July 2001, our new comprehensive professional development plan was presented to the Council. It called for an integrated system in which all processes and activities sponsored by the collaborative partners support the practice of adult educators, provide long-term opportunities, are data-driven, guided by administrative practitioners, and utilize multiple delivery methods of professional development. The Council, committed to raising the skills of our providers, awarded DAEL $1.3 million from the adult education trust fund to offer a comprehensive professional development program for adult educators currently in the field.

As part of the new professional development plan, DAEL will continue to offer orientation training for new providers (instructors and program managers) and offer online training so that instructors can remain in their programs while participating in orientation. Through the use of technology, new instructors can access training online immediately after being hired; they will no longer have to wait until a workshop is available. To address the needs of our more experienced instructors and program leaders, a new center for professional development, financed from the Trust Fund, was established at Morehead State University. The Adult Education Academy for Professional Development (referred to as the

Academy) is a university-based center for the professional preparation and development of adult educators. Through research, instruction, and model demonstration sites, the Academy will offer continuous, high-quality learning opportunities for all adult educators. Morehead was selected as the location for the Academy because it is the only postsecondary institution in Kentucky offering a master's degree in adult education, which will eventually tie into an adult education teaching credential. The Academy will also serve as the "hub" that will coordinate and work closely with other state universities to offer quality instruction for adult educators.

The Collaborative Center for Literacy Development (CCLD), housed at the University of Kentucky, was created in 1998 to strengthen the literacy skill development of Kentucky's citizens from early childhood through adulthood. CCLD currently provides research-based, in-depth, innovative professional development activities designed to improve the instructional practices of preschool-12 teachers of literacy (reading and writing). Finances from the Trust Fund were allocated to CCLD to address the instructional needs of adult educators by offering the Kentucky Adult Educators Literacy Institute (KAELI). KAELI will provide intensive instruction in adult reading and participants may earn three hours of graduate credit after completion of project requirements. The project will include four days of intensive instruction with follow-up activities twice a year at the three state universities sponsoring KAELI, and two coaching visits during the year from the KAELI professor.

Located at the National Center for Family Literacy in Louisville is the Kentucky Institute for Family Literacy (KIFL). KIFL was created in 2000

to expand and improve Kentucky's family literacy programs. Because of their expertise in family literacy, the Trust Fund awarded KIFL funds to provide all of the required family literacy implementation training to all new DAEL-funded family literacy staff, provide technical assistance to all DAEL-funded family literacy programs, and coordinate regional family literacy network opportunities for instructors.

To sustain adequate, continuous funding for professional development, and to provide evidence to document effective professional development, an essential component of the PD system will be the continued and systematic evaluation of each initiative (Guskey, 1997). University staff will be involved early in each project to develop a plan for collecting learning and behavior measures that will include both qualitative and quantitative data. The following components will be measured: instructors reactions to the

> **"***Our previous system targeted the improvement of instructors' skills but had been ineffective in measuring student learning as an outcome; we wanted evaluation to be an integral part of our new PD system.***"**

professional development experience, participants gain of new knowledge and skills, changes in instructional practices, and, changes in learner outcomes (Kirkpatrick, 1994).

Although funding for the three programs is from the Trust Fund, DAEL remains the policy-making body for professional development. The adult education action plan set the vision and established appropriate

goals and guiding principles for statewide professional development.

Identifying Standards and Competencies

Early on, Kentucky recognized a need to identify the knowledge base necessary for instructors' success. As a result, a group of "expert" adult educators identified standards and competencies for adult education instructors, which were officially adopted in our state in 1995. One of the challenges for the new PD team was to create a standards-based professional development system built on using the competencies of adult educators. Since we already had the 1995 standards and competencies in place, we decided to revise and update them and add measures. For example, old language was replaced with terms representing newer initiatives, such as technology: when the standards were first developed, few programs had computers. In addition, references to Equipped for the Future and the National Reporting System were also added. The vision of the PD team is to have a competency-based credential through which educators can demonstrate that they have the required knowledge and skills to facilitate student learning. Activities conducted by the Academy will provide the foundation for future credentialing requirements. Acknowledging that we lack the necessary resources to meet salary requirements for credentialed instructors, we will continue to strive for the professionalization of adult education.

Technology and Online Resources

Another piece of the adult education action plan was a mandate for an electronic resource database for

adult educators that would become part of the Kentucky Virtual Library. Leaders wanted Kentucky's adult education instructors to have access to online resources and web-delivered curriculum products. We struggled with the assignment, knowing that a national resource database already existed. The Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS), a cooperative electronic network for literacy information provided by the National Institute for Literacy, is collaboratively built by educators to benefit all stakeholders. However, DAEL and the Kentucky Virtual Library have collaborated with NIFL to build a version of this database that allows users to access the LINCS database using their own user interface and simultaneously perform cross-database searches.

To help instructors supplement their current instruction with Web-based curriculum applications, a centralized Web-based system provided through the Kentucky Virtual University (KYVU) will improve access to adult literacy programs. Web-based curricula will enable Kentucky's adult education system to reach beyond the barriers of time and place to deliver education anywhere, anytime, freeing learners from the need to attend traditional learning centers. These Web-based applications are rich in content and visual impact. A new Kentucky Virtual Adult Education website (www.kyvae.org) hosts Web-based curriculum products (PLATO, WIN, and Destinations) free for adult learners in Kentucky and will offer an online reading literacy course for first level learners.

The Future

Given new, aggressive statewide goals for adult education, what does the future hold for adult educators in Kentucky? Will our new professional development system work? Will Kentucky be successful in implementing a credential for adult

educators? Enormous opportunities for shaping and reforming professional development now exist in Kentucky that were not available before. We received state funds for professional development for the first time. We have collaborative partners to help us with our vision of creating a professional development system that will support adult educators who will be required to serve increasing numbers of diverse adult learners.

It is too soon to determine the effectiveness our reformed PD system. The goal is to move from a system that depends on instructors with limited knowledge of adult learning to one in which professional competence is a basic requirement. It is a system that will use technology for professional development and that will offer instructors more options in order to serve more learners. The new system will have online learners working independently, allowing instructors to serve more students than they can in a traditional learning center environment. The challenge will be to have our teachers embrace technology and the new virtual classroom as a response to the need to participate in intensive professional development opportunities.

The call for action is clear. Unless Kentucky makes a commitment to improve the employment structure and preparation requirements of adult educators now in the field, it may not be able to offer a brighter opportunity to those who will be entering the adult education profession in the future. We believe the foundation is in place to move this system forward. It includes the support of key stakeholders who have helped to shape the content and delivery methods of professional development. The need is great and the challenge is daunting. As we look to 2020, we will continue to re-examine our goals and strategies, access our progress, and redesign our professional development system as needed (CPE Adult Education Action Plan, 2000).

References

Belzer, A., Drennon, C., & Smith, C. (2001). "Building professional development systems in adult basic education: Lessons from the field." In J. Comings, B. Garner, C. Smith (eds.) *The Annual Review of Adult Learning and Literacy, Volume 2.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

CPE Adult Education Action Plan. (2002) Home page. April 1, 2002. http://adulted.state.ky.us

Guskey, T.R. (1997). "Research needs to link professional development and student learning." *Journal of Staff Development.* 18(2), 36-40.

Jennings, E.T., (1997). *Kentucky Adult Literacy Survey of 1995.* Lexington, KY: James W. Martin School of Public Policy and Administration, University of Kentucky, Lexington.

Kirkpatrick, D.L. (1994). *Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Kutner, M., Sherman R., Tibbits, J., & Condelli, L., (2001). *Evaluating Professional Development: A Framework for Adult Education.* Washington, DC: US Department of Education.

McGuinness, A.C. (1999). *Task Force Report: Adult Education in Kentucky.* Boulder: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.

Legislative Research Commission (2000). *Adult Education and Literacy in Kentucky. Research Report No. 126.* Frankfort, KY: Legislative Research Commission.

Senate Bill No. 1 (2000). General Assembly, Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Sherman, R. (2000). *Forward: Research Report No. 126.* Frankfort, KY: Legislative Research Commission.

About the Author

Sandra Kestner is manager of the Professional Development and Instructional Support Branch in the Department for Adult Education and Literacy, Frankfort, KY. A former classroom teacher, she has 15 years experience in adult education and holds a doctorate in educational leadership from the University of Kentucky. ❖

A Conversation with FOB...

Three States Share Advice on Staff Development

Focus on Basics *talked to Bob Bickerton, state Director of Adult Basic Education in Massachusetts; Roberta Pawloski, Chief, Bureau of Career and Adult Education in Connecticut, and Ella Morin, Special Programs and Projects Division Chief in Bureau of ABLE, Pennsylvania, about the role of the state in staff development for adult basic education. Each spoke about the strong responsibility states have in this regard.*

Massachusetts' Bob Bickerton describes his state's role in shaping and supporting staff development as "convening the field to develop a consensus around two broad issues: the level of investment we'll put into staff and program development, and what the priorities need to be for that staff and program development. Bringing people together to get consensus is key."

In Pennsylvania, a similar partnership between the state and the field has been forged, reports Ella Morin. "We have a bottom up / top down relationship [with the field]," she explains. "With the state leadership funds, we provide professional development opportunities that the field feels are needed. For example, several years back, when we began

the program improvement initiative, we discovered some basic needs, such as assessment. We found that programs didn't use consistent pre and post tests, that they weren't using the data... so we did training on assessment, then branched out to connect it with the National Reporting System. So that area of training is a state idea but also shaped by what is happening in the field."

These three states fund organizations to provide staff development services to adult basic education programs and practitioners. Connecticut's Roberta Pawloski explains, "When provision for professional development became part of federal legislation (in around 1965), Connecticut's Department of Education made a commitment to offer professional development on a statewide basis through a single organization, the Adult Training and Development Network. Part of the Capital Regional Education Council, a regional educational service center, it's a quasi-public agency that competed for and receives a multi year grant from us. We work closely with them. Their training enhances our policies. Each year we revise the goals and objectives and they revise their plans. All the training we do statewide is coordinated through that agency. For example, we are a CASAS implementing state, so they [the Adult Training and Development Network] handle the ongoing Connecticut CASAS System training

for new programs. They also provide the statewide coordination of our English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) institutes, tech efforts, reading and writing initiatives, our workplace training."

In Massachusetts, Bickerton says, "The field has said that we're going to target 10 percent of our total resources as the investment for this. Our office's role is to be sure that we build and support SABES [Massachusetts' statewide staff development system]. At $3 million year, it's one of the best-supported program and staff development systems in the nation. We also support, via $.5 million of federal Special Ed funding, the Young Adults with Learning Disabilities (YALD) program, which we use to better prepare teachers to instruct students with learning disabilities. We annually negotiate a work plan with SABES and YALD, and in that process we listen to what they have learned from the field about professional development needs. We also support new initiatives and directions and that becomes a relatively expensive work plan for the coming year."

Combining federal and state and local funds seems to be key in all three states. As Bickerton explains, "Our federal allocation is only $10.5 million dollars. We require every grantee to set aside funding to support access to additional staff development (up to 50 hours of staff development per year for everyone, and 3.5 percent for program development.) That adds another $2 million to staff and program development, above the $3 million that goes to SABES."

Pawloski describes Connecticut's approach: "Our primary delivery system is the local school district. Our state law requires all local school districts to offer on-site or cooperate with another district for adult basic education (ABE), ESOL, citizenship, and high school completion. The state reimburses districts on a sliding scale for the cost of operating the program. Local districts also have to provide matching funds in cash.

These state and local dollars give us tremendous leverage, allowing our federal dollars to do local enhancement."

Emphasizing the need for staff development through the funding process as well as supporting it financially creates a climate that encourages staff development. In Massachusetts, a set-aside for staff development is not requested of programs: from 1991 it has been required, explains Bickerton. "It's encouragement and exercising some direction. We don't believe in unfunded mandates; you [the state] have to pay for the real costs. In addition to the 2.5 percent [required], we give programs comfortable funding for substitutes...and I think we've created an environment that encourages people to stay focused on honing their skills. We are trying to do a better job. These changes provide enormous motivation and need for people to provide further development."

"In addition to the set-aside," he explains, "we require that every program identify a staff and program development facilitator to help the program integrate staff and program development. We also require every staff to take new staff orientation. And, we apply this focus to our own office: every person on staff has to include in their annual evaluation form their goals for professional development for the year. We practice what we preach."

Connecticut programs report via proposal in their annual applications what they have chosen as their target area for professional development and how they plan to do it. "We allow them to put in the cost of professional development activities and allow them to put the cost of substitutes into their state grant," explains Pawloski.

Pennsylvania programs do the same: "In part of the proposal that they write for funding, [programs are] supposed to talk about the professional development that they do for program improvement. Part of that

is identifying needs for professional development," reports Morin.

These experienced policy makers have much useful and practical advice for other states. Bickerton has four suggestions:
1. Make sure that the state is dedicating resources to support professional development at all of its different levels. Unfunded mandates only yield illusions. You really need to provide the supports.
2. Look at the literature of high performance workforces if you're concerned about this funding competing with the dollars for direct services. Business has learned the need to invest in high performance workforces.
3. Get the field's consensus and support about the resources necessary to invest for this...the field has to be united behind any investment of time and money.
4. Visit other states and look at what they're doing in professional development. We don't have to reinvent wheels.

Pawloski focuses on the diversity of states, and the need to contextualize decisions. "A lot depends on how much funding a state has available for this activity. How much has to be assumed by the state DOE? 12 percent is all you have available without state money. Also, states really need to look at what is most effective delivery mechanism based on the needs of their state. How much collaboration and assistance can they get from existing organizations and entities or at the local level? I can't say one approach, local or centralized, for example, works better. Sometimes if you diffuse professional development to the local level totally, it's hard to assure it's happening. A centralized system works for us: I can, on an annual basis, direct more of how I want the professional development money to be spent. If we hear, during the course of a year, for example, that we have a gap in this, we can negotiate the inclusion of that topic."

Vision and leadership are also

important, Morin reminds us. "Cheryl [Keenan, the former Bureau Director of ABLE in PA] had a long-range vision. She knew where she wanted the state to go. It can't be haphazard. There has to be a plan. Program improvement and accountability have helped a lot in shaping and identifying [professional development] needs, and then the state provides opportunities for professional development along those lines. I really like to think that we're meeting the needs of programs. You have to have buy in from the bottom up; the field has to see that it's not being "inflicted" on them, but that it's happening because they said they needed it."

Expanding Access
Web Resources for States Interested in Improving and Expanding their Professional Development Systems

For more than 30 years, as a teacher, program director, state director, and now director of the National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium (NAEPDC), Dr. Lennox McLendon has provided professional development opportunities to adult basic educators that respond to their varied needs and time constraints. For this issue of *Focus on Basics*, Dr. McLendon compiled a list of web-based resources, predominantly posted by states, that he has used successfully in building a staff development system. Only a sample of the rich resources available to states interested in exploring professional development options,they are organized in sections based on six interrelated components that Dr. McLendon has identified as key to creating an effective professional development system. State policy, pre-service training, systems training, responsive professional development, opportunities for each practitioner to share, and self-evaluation and program evaluation combine to create an atmosphere in which all educators are accountable to learn and develop as professionals.

— Jessica Mortensen

State Policy
State policy should communicate expectations and guide development, implementation, and evaluation of professional development resources.

Ohio — *http://literacy.kent.edu/Oasis/ABLE/ProfDev/docs/pd_policyguide6-01.pdf*
Guidelines for financial support and compensation for professional development activities.

Pennsylvania — *http://www.able.state.pa.us/able/lib/able/gdgprn.pdf*
A policy clarifying expectations for both new and experienced staff, roles and responsibilities of each, available and allowable financial support, and rewards and sanctions

West Virginia — *http://wvabe.state.k12.wv.us/professionaldevelopment.htm*
A state policy that sets expectations for each

practitioner's annual professional development and encourages programs to consider not rehiring those who do not fulfill the recommendations.

Preservice Training
Preservice training should orient new practitioners to the profession and clarify roles, relationships, and expectations that may be different from their previous educational experience.

Connecticut — *http://www.crec.org/atdn/workshops/otnae.shtml*
A two part training workshop (that carries CEU credit) and 100-page handbook for teachers with less than two years experience.

Connecticut — *http://www.crec.org/atdn/teacher_resources/cdrom.shtml*
A CDROM with information for newcomers to adult education, it has major sections: the Adult Learner, the Adult Education Program, Adult Education, and Professional Development.

Kentucky — *http://www.kyvae.org/*
A virtual education program.

Kentucky — *http://www.kyvu.org/*
A virtual university with professional development courses for adult educators.

Kentucky — *http://www.kyvl.org/*
A virtual library with an adult education section.

Kentucky — *http://adulted.state.ky.us/PD_Catalog_01.doc*
A list of Kentucky's on-line and face-to-face professional development orientation resources.

Texas — *http://cie.ci.swt.edu/newteacher/contents.htm*
A "tool kit" of links to resources on the principles of adult learning; the teaching–learning transaction; diverse learning styles, abilities, and cultures; accountability; funding streams; and continuing professional development.

Virginia — *http://www.vcu.edu/aelweb/*
"Core Training for New Instructors" provides training on the basics of effective instruction for teachers in their first two years of practice. Delivered via workshops, e-courses, and mentoring, it includes a discussion of "The Adult Learning System," which depicts how adult education fits into a community's system of adult education and training services.

West Virginia — *http://wvabe.state. k12.wv.us/ misc_pdf/pd_catalog.pdf*
A professional development catalogue that outlines requirements that must be completed prior to beginning instruction, including different requirements for full versus part time teachers.

Systems Training

Systems training should equip every practitioner with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to implement state procedures (e.g., data systems, assessment systems, etc.) consistently.

Florida — *http://www.aceofflorida.org/ inservice/*
Online training for the GED 2002.

West Virginia — *http://wvabe.state. k12.wv.us/misc_pdf/pd_catalog.pdf*
A variety of systems training activities can be found in their Pathways to Success catalogue.

Responsive Professional Development

Responsive professional development options should engage and support practitioners in identifying and developing those parts of their professional repertoire that need improvement.

Arkansas (hosted on Rhode Island's web site) — *http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Swearer_Center/Literacy _Resources/ark.html*
An outline of various staff development activities that provide examples of alternative ways to respond to teachers' professional development needs.

Rhode Island — *http://www.brown.edu/Departments/ Swearer_Center/Literacy_Resources/inquiry.html*
Teacher inquiry projects and related research resources.

Virginia — *http://www.vcu.edu/aelweb/ checkbox_pdpform.pdf*
An inquiry-based process for teachers to create a

professional development plan based around self-assessment.

Virginia — *http://www.vcu.edu/aelweb/Sampler2000.PDF*
A sample of learning activities that can support the above process.

West Virginia — *http://wvabe.state. k12.wv.us/ professionaldevelopment.htm*
Types of elective in-service training that instructors may select. These include self-directed learning, collegial sharing, training, and inquiry.

Self and Program Evaluation

Self and program evaluation should be carried out in relationship to some standard.

NCAL — *http://www.literacyonline. org/pdk/*
The National Center on Adult Literacy's Professional Development Kit (PDK), a multi-media teacher-centered system, contains a teacher self-assessment.

Ohio — *http://literacy.kent.edu/ Oasis/ABLE/ProfDev/ self-assessment7-00.doc*
A teacher self-assessment model that identifies potential professional development activities by rating performance in attaining specific competencies.

Pro-Net — *http://www.pro-net2000.org/CM/info.asp*
Competency lists for teachers and program managers, including an assessment that can be conducted by an instructional leader or used as a self-assessment.

Sharing

Opportunities for practitioners to share with peers what they learned through professional development activities should be provided.

Virginia — *http://naepdc.org/State%20Staff/ evaluation.html*
At the end of the year, local program tutors, teachers, program managers get together to 1) report on completed professional development projects, 2) evaluate program strengths and weaknesses, and 3) plan for new professional development and program improvement plans.

NCSALL Publications

NCSALL Reports — present studies that inform policy makers and practitioners on up-to-date research findings on key topics in the field.

Reports #21: **Open to Interpretation: Multiple Intelligences Theory in Adult Literacy Education. Findings from the Adult Multiple Intelligences Study.** Kallenbach, S. & Viens, J. (2002) $10

Reports #20: **Documenting Outcomes for Learners and Their Communities: A Report on a NCSALL Action Research Project.** Bingman, B. with Ebert, O. & Bell, B. (2002) $5

Reports #19a: **Toward a New Pluralism in ABE/ESOL Classrooms: Teaching to Multiple "Cultures of Mind."** *Executive Summary*. Kegan, R., Broderick, M., Drago-Severson, E., Helsing, D., Popp, N. & Portnow, K. (2001) $5

Reports #19: **Toward a New Pluralism in ABE/ESOL Classrooms: Teaching to Multiple "Cultures of Mind."** *Research Monograph*. (750 pages) Kegan, R., Broderick, M., Drago-Severson, E., Helsing, D., Popp, N. , Portnow, K. & Associates. (2001) $35

Reports #18: **Classroom Dynamics in Adult Literacy Education.** Beder, H. & Medina, P. (2001) $10

Reports #17: **Effecting Change in the Literacy Practice of Adult Learners: Impact of Two Dimensions of Instruction.** Purcell-Gates, V., Degener, S., Jacobson, E. & Soler, M. (2000) $10

Reports #16: **The Devil is in the Details: Evidence from the GED on the Role of Examination System Details in Determining Who Passes.** Tyler, J., Murnane, R. & Willett, J. (2000) $5

Reports #15: **Cognitive Skills Matter in the Labor Market, Even for School Dropouts.** Tyler, J., Murnane, R. & Willett, J. (2000) $5

Reports #14: **An Overview of Medical and Public Health Literature Addressing Literacy Issues: An Annotated Bibliography.** Rudd, R., Colton, T. & Schacht, R. (2000) $5

Reports #13: **"I've Come A Long Way": Learner-Identified Outcomes of Participation in Adult Literacy Programs.** Bingman, B. & Ebert, O. (2000) $10

Reports #12: **Persistence Among Adult Basic Education Students in Pre-GED Classes.** Comings, J., Parrella, A. & Soricone, L. (1999) $10

Reports #11: **Changes in Learners' Lives One Year After Enrollment in Literacy Programs: An Analysis from the Longitudinal Study of Adult Literacy Participants in Tennessee.** Bingman, B., Ebert, O. & Smith, M. (1999) $5

Reports #10: **The Impact of Welfare Reform on Adult Literacy Education: Conference Papers and Themes from Small Group Sessions.** D'Amico, D., Levenson, A. & White, C. (1999) $5

Reports #9: **Findings from a National Survey of State Directors of Adult Education.** Rudd, R., Zahner, L. & Banh, M. (1999) $5

Reports #8: **Adult Educators' Perceptions of Health Issues and Topics in Adult Basic Education Programs.** Rudd, R. & Moeykens, B. (2000) $5

Reports #6: **The Outcomes and Impacts of Adult Literacy Education in the United States.** Beder, H. (1999) $10

Reports #6A: **The Outcomes and Impacts of Adult Literacy Education in the United States—Appendix A: Abstracts of Studies Reviewed.** Medina, P. (1999) $5

Reports #5: **Integrating Health and Literacy: Adult Educators' Experiences.** Rudd, R., Zacharia, C. & Daube, K. (1998) $5

Reports #4: **Practitioners Speak: Contributing to a Research Agenda for Adult Basic Education.** Bingman, B., Smith, C. & Stewart, K. (1998) $5

Reports #2: **Adult Literacy Program Practice: A Typology Across Dimensions of Life-Contextualized/Decontextualized and Dialogic/Monologic.** Purcell-Gates, V., Degener, S. & Jacobson, E. (1998) $5

Reports #1: **Contested Ground: Performance and Accountability in Adult Education.** Merrifield, J. (1998) $10

NCSALL Occasional Papers — articles that allow individuals in the field to better understand research processes and to be informed on key up-to-date research and policy issues.

Building a Level Playing Field: The Need to Expand and Improve the National and State Adult Education and Literacy Systems. Comings, J., Reder, S. & Sum, A. $10.

Multiple Intelligences in Practice: Teacher Research Reports from the Adult Multiple Intelligences Study. Kallenbach, S. & Viens, J. Eds. (2001) $10

Outcomes of Participation in Adult Basic Education: The Importance of Learners' Perspectives. Bingman, B. with Ebert, O. & Bell, B. (2000) $5

How the ARCS Was Done. Strucker, J. with Davidson, R. & Hilferty, A. (2000) $5

NCSALL Interim Evaluation #2: The Prospects for Disseminating Research to a Hungry Field. Wilson, B. & Corbett, D. (2000) $5

Evaluation of the Impact of *Focus on Basics* **on its Readers.** Garner, B. (2000) $5

NCSALL Teaching and Training Materials — including *Study Circle Guides*, are designed for use by teachers and professional development staff working in adult basic education.

How Are We Doing? An Inquiry Guide for Adult Education Programs. Bingman, B. with Ebert, O. (2001) $10

Beyond the GED: Making Conscious Choices About the GED and Your Future. Lesson Plans and Material for the GED Classroom. Fass, S. & Garner, B. (2000) $5

NCSALL Study Circle Guide: Performance Accountability in Adult Basic Education. (2000) $10

TO ORDER, CALL JESSICA MORTENSEN AT (617) 482-9485 OR GO TO HTTP://NCSALL.GSE.HARVARD.EDU

BLACKBOARD

Staff Development: the State Policy Perspective

- *Professional Development for Adult Education Instructors*, December 2001, by Michelle Tolbert, is available in print and online at http://www.nifl.fov/nifl/policy/devel opment.pdf. This National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) publication provides background on professional development in adult education, summarizes the funding sources for professional development, and reviews data collected from the NIFL survey of state professional development systems. In addition, the report highlights professional development activities in four states — Kentucky, New York, Oregon, and Tennessee — and describes current and upcoming federally funded professional development initiatives and research projects.

- *"Building Professional Development Systems in Adult Basic Education: Lessons from the Field,"* by Alisa Belzer, Cassandra Drennon, and Cristine Smith, is a chapter in *The Annual Review of Adult Learning and Literacy, Volume 2,* (2001), edited by *Focus on Basics* editor Barbara Garner, NCSALL Director John Comings, and NCSALL Deputy Director Cristine Smith. It examines how five state professional development systems were built, evolved, what has been learned along the way, how they currently work, and the challenges they face. For ordering information, see page 34.

Articles on Staff Development Previously Published in *Focus on Basics*

- *Adult Basic Education and Professional Development: Strangers for Too Long*
  Bruce Wilson & Dickson Corbett
  (Volume 4, Issue D, April 2001)

- *Professional Development and Technology A Conversation with FOB…*
  (Volume 4, Issue D, December 2000)

- *The New York City Math Exchange Group Helping Teachers Change the Way They Teach Mathematics*
  Charles Brover, Denise Deagan, & Solange Farina
  (Volume 4, Issue B, September 2000)

- *Guiding Improvement: Pennsylvania's Odyssey*
  Cheryl Keenan
  (Volume 3, Issue B, June 1999)

- *Why is Change So Hard?*
  Marcia Drew Hohn
  (Volume 2, Issue C, September 1998)

- *How Teachers Change*
  Virginia Richardson
  (Volume 2, Issue C, September 1998)

- *Facilitating Inquiry-Based Staff Development*
  Jereann King
  (Volume 2, Issue C, September 1998)

- *An Unexpected Outcome*
  Edith Cowper
  (Volume 2, Issue C, September 1998)

Focus on Basics Electronic Discussion List

Focus on Basics electronic discussion list is a forum for discussion about the articles published in *Focus on Basics*. It is a place to converse with colleagues about the themes examined in the publication; to get questions answered and to pose them; to critique issues raised in the publication; and to share relevant experiences and resources.

To participate in the *Focus on Basics* discussion list (it's free!), go to the LINCS homepage at http://nifl.gov. Choose "Discussions." Scroll down to and click on *"Focus on Basics."* Then click on "Subscribe," which is to the left, and follow the instructions. Or, send an e-mail message to LISTPROC@LITERACY.NIFL.GOV with the following request in the body of the message: SUBSCRIBE NIFL–FOBasics firstname lastname. Spell your first and last names exactly as you would like them to appear. For example, Sue Smith would type: subscribe NIFL–FOBasics Sue Smith

There should be no other text in the message. Give it a couple of minutes to respond. You should receive a return mail message welcoming you to NIFL–FOBasics.

The manager of this list is Barbara Garner, editor of *Focus on Basics*. She can be reached at Barbara_Garner@WorldEd.org. Please DO NOT send subscription requests to this address.❖

All About NCSALL

- NCSALL works to improve the quality of practice in adult basic education programs nationwide through basic and applied research; by building partnerships among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners; and through dissemination of research results. A joint effort of World Education, the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Portland State University, Rutgers University, and the Center for Literacy Studies at The University of Tennessee, NCSALL is funded by the US Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

NCSALL Publications

- **http://ncsall.gse.harvard.edu**
  Most NCSALL publications can be downloaded from our web site or call Jessica Mortensen at World Education, (617) 482-9485, to purchase them for a nominal fee.

- **NCSALL Reports**

  #20 Documenting Outcomes for Learners and Their Communities: A Report on a NCSALL Action Research Project, by Mary Beth Bingman with Olga Ebert and Brenda Bell.

  #21 Open to Interpretation: Multiple Intelligences Theory in Adult Literacy Education.

  Findings from the Adult Multiple Intelligences Study, by Silja Kallenbach and Julie Viens.

NCSALL Labsites

- NCSALL has established two labsites, an ESOL labsite in Portland, OR, and an ABE labsite in New Brunswick, NJ. The labsites provide stable environments in which to conduct research; facilitate close collaborations between researchers and practitioners; allow for systematic innovation, experimentation, and evaluation of promising new instructional methods, materials, and technologies; and create knowledge that increases our understanding of adult learning and literacy and improves practice. For more information, visit http://www.labschool.pdx.edu and http://ncsall-ru.gse.rutgers.edu

Subscribing to *Focus on Basics*

- *Focus on Basics* is distributed free through most state ABE systems to many ABE programs. All issues are available and indexed on NCSALL's web site: http://ncsall.gse.harvard.edu.

  To receive your own printed copy, please subscribe, for $8 a year, by sending a check or money order for the appropriate amount, payable to World Education. We also accept purchase orders but are not able to process credit card orders. We publish four issues each year and encourage multiple year orders.

Please send your check, money order, or purchase order to: *Focus on Basics*, World Education, 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210-1211. To discuss discount rates for bulk orders, call Jessica Mortensen at World Education, (617) 482-9485, or e-mail her at fob@worlded.org.

Reprint Permission

- Feel free to reprint articles from our publication, but please credit *Focus on Basics* and NCSALL, and send a copy of the reprint to NCSALL, World Education. Thanks!

Back Issues Available

- Order back issues for $2/copy from: *Focus on Basics*, World Education, 44 Farnsworth St., Boston, MA 02210-1211. Topics available: Research; Reading; Multilevel Classrooms; Content-Based Instruction; Learner Motivation; The GED; Change; Project-Based Learning; Adult Multiple Intelligences; Accountability; Standards-Based Education; Writing Instruction; Learning from Research; Mathematics Instruction; Technology; Research to Practice; First-Level Learners; Adult Development; Literacy and Health.

NCSALL Web Site
http://ncsall.gse.harvard.edu

NCSALL

National Center for the Study of
Adult Learning and Literacy

Focus on Basics is printed on recycled paper.