

## Learning to Understand Our World

By Elizabeth Cochran

“I was shaking with fear.” “My parents wouldn’t let me leave the house to come to school.” “I didn’t know what it all meant.” These were just some of the comments made by my students when I asked them to relate their initial perceptions of what happened on the morning of September 11th.

I had been listening to Public Radio that morning and had heard about the first plane hitting the World Trade Center. Thinking that it was just a singular tragic event, I turned off the radio and started making preparations for my class that day. I teach GED preparation to at-risk teenagers who have, for the most part, failed in high school programs.

I really had no knowledge of the extent of the attack until eleven o’clock when I arrived at school. None of us knew exactly what had transpired but, because we were all pretty shaken up, I moved my class from the huge community hall into a smaller, more intimate room. Instead of spreading out to work on individual projects like we usually do, we sat together in a circle and talked. My instructional aide, Ann Winters, hauled a television set into the room and we began to watch the news and attempted to answer our students’ many questions. Our class is sociable and informal; discussion, compromise, and negotiation are encouraged. On

this particular day, there were many tales to tell and a wide variety of topics to explore.

Ann and I wanted to make sure that our kids knew how important the morning’s events were. We compared what had happened at the World Trade Center and Pentagon with the day President Kennedy was assassinated and with the bombing of Pearl Harbor. We shared with the class where we were and what we were doing on the day our President was shot. We impressed upon them the magnitude of the events that were currently unfolding before our eyes on the TV screen.

This led us into a discussion of how modern communication technology allows us to view events as they happen and to remark on the freedom that we have in our country to do so uncensored. A week later we would practice writing a compare and contrast essay using freedom of speech as the topic.

We had so many varied and divergent questions among us; my instinct was to go to the board to illustrate and record the myriad of events as they occurred. I drew colorful, graphic sketches on the board depicting the planes hitting the Twin Towers and the Pentagon. We got out our maps to locate these places and spoke at length about the

symbolic nature of the targets—symbols of capitalism, wealth, and US military might.

We discussed multi-sided figures because my students did not connect the name of the Pentagon with its geometric shape. And, as one of my students pointed out, we discussed the fact that it is actually found within our state of Virginia, not in Washington, D.C. We named other possible targets for terrorism and admitted to ourselves that we live very near one of the country’s largest ammunition plants in Radford.

We spoke of how the Blue Ridge Parkway, where people come to enjoy the mountain scenery and the splendor of the

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## Dear Readers,

In putting each issue of *Progress* together, we print articles of broad interest as well as some stories that bring out a specific theme. This issue covers topics that include ESL issues and resources, and professional development experiences and opportunities. The special section highlights how teachers, tutors and learners dealt with tragedy in their classrooms.

The events of September 11<sup>th</sup> affected all of us. Teachers and learners alike brought their anguish with them into the classroom. In Fairfax County, the learners in Carolyn Kulisheck's ESOL class were close to the attack on the Pentagon. Many of them had experienced violence in their own countries. For a month, Carolyn maintained classroom routines, developed rapport with her new class,

**“Learning does not occur in a vacuum.”**

and gave comfort as needed. That breathing space gave the students time to reflect and then write about their experiences. Students in Elaine Marolla's class wrote about the

meaning they found in editorial cartoons; working together, they created a collage that expressed their patriotism. Debbie Daniels' Open Book Club and Elizabeth Cochran's class for at-risk youth both foster learning environments that value students' ideas and affirm their feelings.

Many adult students experience tragedy and trauma in their lives. Instructors need to deal with these situations and still make learning happen. Discussion, problem posing, and reflective writing were tools the teachers used to help learners make sense of their inner and outer experience. In Elizabeth Cochran's words, class discussion helped to, “Put what was happening in our world into perspective.” Learning does not occur in a vacuum. An individual's internal world of thoughts, beliefs, and emotions can enhance or interfere with learning. In fact, a new study of student persistence finds that students stay longer with programs that value their personal identity and give them a sense of belonging.

The Adult Learning Resource Center website at [www.vcu.edu/aelweb/](http://www.vcu.edu/aelweb/) has added resources to support the print edition of *Progress*. Visit the website to find the current issue in PDF format and an archive of past issues. The calendar of events on the website supplements the back-page calendar by providing registration details and up-to-the-minute information. Our goal is to make the newsletter inclusive and convenient. Let us know how we are doing.

Sincerely,



Susan Joyner, Director  
Adult Learning Resource Center

# Teaching Reading: An Educational Mt. Everest

By Phil Cackley

Teaching reading skills to adults is one of the hardest things to do in Adult Basic Education or ESL classes. Reading is a complex activity that most adults achieve without thinking. Thus, teaching it to low-literacy adults—especially those for whom English is a second language—is often a thorny proposition.

As someone who came into the ESL field as a second career, I have long felt my limitations when trying to teach reading to beginning-level students with limited literacy skills in their first language. At times, it's like trying to get to the top of an educational Mt. Everest. So, earlier this year, I jumped at the chance to take a graduate-level course at the University of Virginia titled, "Planning and Implementing Reading Instruction for Adult Learners."

Professor Neva Viise mixed a fair dose of reading theory with a lot of practical activities aimed at giving teachers a kit of tools to assess and then boost the literacy levels of their adult learners. Chief among these tools was the "Word Feature Spelling List," which helps diagnose reading difficulties through an assessment of spelling errors. By analyzing how students handle a list of predetermined spelling words—ranging from single beginning consonants and the inclusion of vowels to correctly writing 4- and 5-syllable words—a teacher can begin to specifically place where a learner is on the climb to gaining fluent literacy skills.

Professor Viise struck a balance between the competing reading development models of whole language and phonics. She said good teachers are willing to go back and forth, using the best of both theories to benefit their students. She also stressed the importance of both motivating students to read—helping them to read for meaning—and finding materials appropriate for the learners' reading levels.

The class, which was taught on alternate Saturdays over a 12-week period, was particularly useful because of Professor Viise's requirement that teachers try out the techniques they were learning on a group of students. This hands-on, project-based approach meant that the class became more real—something that you could use to solve current, pressing problems.

In my case—teaching a class of high-beginning ESL learners in Arlington—the homework tasks from my UVA class made me pay closer attention to my group of 25-plus students. I made surprising discoveries about them: I realized the quiet guy from El Salvador was reading at two levels beyond the rest of the class and the fellow from Bolivia, who had excellent spoken English and a high school education in his country, was only reading at a first-grade level in English.

Since the class ended, I haven't been able to do much with the Word Feature Spelling List or the focused reading tasks to help my learners address individual problems. However, I feel confident that when time allows I will have someplace to turn for practical exercises to get tangible results. And while lower-literacy learners' new reading skills remain an uphill battle for me, it's no longer like climbing a mountain.

Phil Cackley, a former newspaper reporter, has been an ESL instructor with REEP, the Arlington Education and Employment Program, for 10 years. 📖

The course *Planning and Implementing Reading Instruction for Adult Learners* (EDIS 589) is taught through the McGuffey TEMPO reading outreach program of the University of Virginia (UVA) School of Continuing and Professional Studies. Contact your local UVA Regional Center to arrange for the class to be taught in your area. For additional information contact Neva Viise at [neva.viise@gte.net](mailto:neva.viise@gte.net) or Susan Erno at [erno@esinet.net](mailto:erno@esinet.net).

For more information about the "Word Feature Spelling List" and how Dr. Viise used it as a research tool, visit the Journal of Literacy Research website at [http://nrc.oakland.edu/jlr/archive/v28/issue\\_28\\_4.html](http://nrc.oakland.edu/jlr/archive/v28/issue_28_4.html) and read the following article:

Viise, Neva M. (1996) "A Study of the Spelling Development of Adult Literacy Learners Compared with That of Classroom Children." JLR: Journal of Literacy Research, v.28 (4): 561-587.

"So I've Tested Them, Now What?" by Dr. Viise is available for loan from the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center. The Call Number for it is: LB1574 V55 1966.

## Organizer's Perspective

By Miriam Burt

Nearly 100 teachers and administrators participated in the National Symposium on Adult ESL Research and Practice held at the Smithsonian Institution's Ripley Center in Washington, DC on September 5-7. The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) sponsored the event. The National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE) worked with OVAE to plan and facilitate the activities.

The state directors of education nominated the participants; representatives from all states, the District of Columbia, and the territories attended. The purposes of the symposium were for practitioners and administrators to share challenges, concerns, and successes in providing English language instruction for adults and to learn about national initiatives, issues, and opportunities. Participants were encouraged to share information from the symposium in their state and local programs.

Participants shared ideas, heard from researchers and expert practitioners, and discussed the latest initiatives in adult ESL education. Topics covered included challenges related to adult ESL instruction, research on adults learning to read in English as a second language, research on effective practices in instruction, assessment issues, the National Reporting System, distance education, project-based learning, immigration trends and issues, ESL learners with special needs, civics education, professional development, and using museum artifacts for literacy-related activities.

It was exciting to have so many adult ESL educators together and I am glad that NCLE was asked to organize and facilitate this event with the U.S. Department of Education. The participant evaluations of the symposium were very positive, although several participants pointed out that they would have liked more time during and between activities for audience participation. Next time we'll know it's not only advisable, but imperative, to schedule time for interaction between participants and presenters.

Like many other adult ESL professionals, I got into the field because of how wonderful it is working with adult English language learners. I started my ESL

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## Facilitator's Perspective

By Debby Cargill

My role at the National Symposium—when small group discussions occurred—was that of facilitator. I have learned that a facilitator's role is to listen and record, arrange the discussion so that it follows the direction in which it should go, and refrain from inputting ideas or opinions into the mix.

From my perspective, I had the best of all worlds. I had the opportunity to listen in on policy discussions, research findings, and, most significantly, to meet teachers from around the country and hear what ESL issues were important to them.

There were several group discussions, but the one I will focus on gave participants the opportunity to discuss the challenges related to adult ESL instruction, to share ideas for addressing those challenges, and to identify information, skills, and resources that would help meet those challenges.

My group represented a diverse geographic mix, but the discussions quickly helped me see that many of the issues we face in Virginia are not unique. The participants at my table first identified major challenges that they face in their programs. The open discussion brought out issues centering on themes of finding part-time teachers, deciding upon effective assessments for students' progress, and funding for full-time ESL staff and classroom space. We discussed student retention issues and multi-level classes due to the number of students. Our next task was to discuss these issues and discover why they were challenges to our programs. We needed to determine which one of these challenges was the most relevant to the representation of our group and how the challenge might be resolved.

When discussing student retention, we debated whether students should pay for classes or attend for free, the need for good classroom instruction that met students needs, and the merits of a closed enrollment system. Funding issues centered on the need for programs to write proposals for grants and how time-consuming and taxing that approach is to programs that are already understaffed.

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# ESL Symposium Shares Challenges, Concerns, Successes

## Participant's Perspective

By Margaret Kiernan

Representing Virginia at the National Symposium on Adult ESL Research and Practice was the highlight of my ESL career. It was uplifting to be with colleagues from all over the country, Guam, the Marshall Islands, and Puerto Rico; we renewed old friendships and made new ones. Together we compared program structures, placement tests and texts, the availability of teachers, and the ways in which each state is meeting the data-reporting challenge.

The most interesting issues we discussed were the challenge of professional legitimacy, end goals, federally mandated student/teacher ratios, and data reporting. The best comment I heard was, "In God we trust, all others bring data." I participated in a hands-on activity at the Smithsonian Institution that demonstrated project-based learning and gave me numerous ideas for my classroom. It was reaffirmed in the Symposium that ESL is doing a good job but I discovered that our game plan must be about demographics, economics, and politics. The Symposium was nicely balanced with group work, panel discussions, and informative speakers.


The best-received presentation was by Frank Sharry, the Executive Director of the National Immigration Forum. Mr. Sharry told us that by 2008 the United States will need 5 million additional workers. Because of retirements and low population growth, the working population of the United States will not be able to fill all the available jobs. We will therefore need to increase the number of immigrants allowed to legally enter our borders; many of these workers will need the skills of experienced ESL instructors and the services of well-developed ESL programs.

I always go to conferences looking for ideas to bring back to the Adult Learning Center. Here are some I found particularly useful:

- Cyberstep's English for All video series and website are now available. The multi-media learning materials help teach basic skills and English as a Second language. The *English for All* website is located at [www.myefa.org](http://www.myefa.org) and Cyberstep is at [www.cyberstep.org](http://www.cyberstep.org).

- Mary Russell, representing the National Center for Adult Literacy, asserted that professional development should be consistent, appropriate, interactive, and accessible for all staff members. She cited, for example, the PBS ESL Civics Link at [www.pbs.org/literacy/ESL](http://www.pbs.org/literacy/ESL).
- A learning disabilities screening in Spanish is currently in development. According to Glenn Young, Disabilities & Adult Education Specialist with the U.S. Department of Education, the goal of the project is to have a tool in the field by the end of this year. Mr. Young's email is [glenn.young@ed.gov](mailto:glenn.young@ed.gov).
- Reading research from John Strucker concluded that there must be knowledge of the students' first language literacy level to be successful in teaching reading. Further, we need to teach decoding to all students and pronunciation in a formal way. Information about the Adult Reading Components Study is located at <http://ncsall.gse.harvard.edu>.
- The topics of assessment and evaluation were addressed in both formal presentations and small group discussions. What I now understand is that assessment is all about a standardized procedure—not a standardized test. Information about collecting and using data for implementing the National Reporting System is available online at: <http://www.oei-tech.com/nrs/>.

I arrived back at work on September 10 energized, positive, and uplifted from the Symposium experience. It looked as if ESL would be on the front burner of adult education; we would have some importance within the halls of Congress. Within four days of the closing session however, everyone's world turned upside down. In the months and years to come, all ESL teachers hope that our students will be perceived as the valuable contributors to our nation they have always been.

Margaret Kiernan is the ESOL Coordinating Teacher at the Virginia Beach Adult Learning Center. She is past president of the Virginia Association for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. 

# Workforce Improvement Network Developing GED 2002 Resource

By Barbara Gibson

The Workforce Improvement Network has received funding from the Virginia Department of Education to develop *GED as Project: a Problem-Centered Approach to Teaching the GED 2002* that will provide strategies and resources for GED teachers. The first sections of *GED as Project* will be available for use in June 2002 and will focus on integrated teaching approaches, assessment, and math. Sections on reading, writing, science, and social studies will be developed later. *GED as Project* will be provided in print, CD-ROM, and web formats to make it easily accessible to all practitioners.

Changes in the GED 2002 test require new approaches to instruction. Instructors will need to employ more integrated instructional approaches to assist students in achieving their goal of attaining a GED. In addition, the new GED provides more context-specific applications of basic skills. These contexts include, work, home, and civic life. Instruction for Pre-GED and GED preparation must combine the concrete and the abstract, the conceptual and the actual, for the learner to succeed. Further, effective instruction must facilitate the development of higher order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, which students will need to use in answering questions on the GED 2002 and, increasingly, on the job and in other areas of their lives.

*GED as Project* will not be a workbook or an actual curriculum for teaching the new GED but a presentation of instructional strategies and methods, examples of materials, and inquiry activities based on actual GED practice test questions. It will include a more integrative approach to teaching the five subject areas (math, reading, writing, social studies, and science) than previously employed in GED instruction. In addition, *GED as Project* will help teachers to incorporate higher order thinking skills into their instructional approaches. Field tests of each section will help to assure that *GED as Project* meets the needs of practitioners and GED students.

Dr. Diane Foucar-Szocki, director of the Workforce Improvement Network leads the project team. Susan Holt, Instructional Specialist, and Edmund Vitale, Jr., Curriculum Specialist, serve as core team members. Both have had years of experience teaching GED and pre-GED students. Mr. Vitale has developed numerous educational and training programs for community colleges, adult education programs, and workplaces. Barbara Gibson, Associate Director of WIN, provides administrative management for the project and Bonnie Burt, Program Coordinator, oversees the development of the website and CD-ROMs. Candace Miles is the program assistant for the project.


Consultants for the project include Dr. Thomas Valentine, Associate Professor of Adult Education at the University of Georgia, and Myrna Manly, an independent educational consultant. Dr. Valentine's curriculum development projects have focused on parent education, workplace education, young adult education,

and social issues education. He has directed many research projects in adult education in the Northeast, South, and Midwest, and provides advice and guidance on curriculum. Ms. Manly is the author of *The*

**“The new GED provides more context-specific applications of basic skills.”**

*GED Math Problem Solver: Reasoning Skills to Pass the Test* and *The Math Problem Solver*, published by Contemporary Books. She has extensive experience with the math portions of the old and new GED tests and serves as the subject matter expert for the math portion of *GED as Project*.

Field testing of the first sections will begin in January. The adult education programs participating in the field tests are New River Community College directed by Jenny Bolte, Prince William County Schools directed by Betty Sneed, and Planning District 9 Regional Adult Education led by Regional Specialist Phyllis Metzger. Three teachers at each site will participate in the testing.

Barbara E. Gibson is Associate Director of the Workforce Improvement Network, a partnership between James Madison University and the Virginia Literacy Foundation funded primarily by the Virginia Department of Education. She also serves as Associate Director of the Foundation. Workforce Improvement Network website: <http://cep.jmu.edu/workforce/> 

## One Month Ago

By Carolyn Kulisheck and Students

I teach adult ESOL classes at the Willston Multicultural Center in Falls Church, where we began our fall semester on September 19th. Our classes are international; about 25 percent of my students are Muslim and in each class I teach, I have several Afghani students. Because emotions were so intense and feelings were running high after the September 11 tragedies, I did not want to have an open-ended discussion, yet I did want to acknowledge what I knew to be their anguish. Every day I ended the class by saying a few words to them about the event—at first trying to give them words of comfort and hope, as well as making sure that everyone felt welcome in the class. In turn, they began to speak to me with profound words of compassion and optimism in addition to their deep feelings of despair. On October 11, I asked the students to write a paragraph about where they were and what their feelings were when the events of “one month ago” occurred.

— Carolyn Kulisheck

I am from El Salvador. On September 11, occurred something that I have never seen in my entire life. I had seen attacks in my country, because we had twelve years of war. I feel sad sometimes for the people who have already died. And for those who are dying now in Afghanistan for their beliefs. I feel worried for what will happen in the future. Sometimes I look at the sky to pray for everybody. Especially for those who are fighting against that organization that says that it is doing something good. When it is doing something totally wrong.

Miguel A. Sorto  
El Salvador

This day for me was a normal day like all the other days. I was at work. I am working near the Pentagon. Around ten o'clock, I heard a heavy sound come to my ear and then saw the Pentagon burning. In my mind I went back to my country Afghanistan. That thing I saw in Kabul when I was ten to fifteen years old. In this day, I was very depressed.

Why human kill human? I am a Muslim but in Koran it never says like this. For every thing we have a rule. Islam religion is a peaceful religion. I am upset about this. Why the terrorists like Osama bin Laden and Mola Mohammad Omer are saying they are Muslim?

Mohammad Asghar  
Afghanistan

Well, I was working in McLean. I was ironing some clothes and the lady had the TV on. It was a little far from me. I could hear it but I couldn't see it. Around 8:45, I heard something but I couldn't understand everything they said. I stopped ironing and watched TV. What I saw was the first tower was on fire but I thought it was a simple fire. Something easy to stop, but it wasn't. The owner of the house didn't realize what was happening until I told her, and she started crying because her nephew was there in the Pentagon. I started to worry because three airplanes crashed. It wasn't an

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hardwood forests in autumn, was originally designed as an escape route for federal government officials in need of an emergency evacuation of D.C. We wondered if they would still use it for that purpose.

We talked about the existence of secret underground locations for communication terminals and housing for important officials. Although we know these are, in part, holdovers from the Cold War, we wondered aloud if these installations might still be put into use in the face of terrorist attacks.

Overall, September 11 was a nerve-racking day but one that was filled with teaching opportunities. Students were eager to learn in order to put what was happening in our world into perspective.

Elizabeth Cochran teaches GED preparation for Future Works, Inc., a community-based, non-profit alternative education program, and the Montgomery County Public Schools. ■■

accident. That makes me remember my country, when my county had a civil war. The terrorists did the same things.

I felt so sad when I saw the images when some people decided to jump from that very high building and I think what were those people thinking when they decided to jump, what did they see? Then that makes me cry. I feel sad for those innocent people who died. After this day, I appreciate my life so much.

Ercilia Rosa  
El Salvador

Carolyn Kulisheck teaches English with the Fairfax County Adult Education Program. In 1983, she began sponsoring Vietnamese and Cambodian refugee families with Catholic Charities. ■■



ACDC Level 1 and level 2 Reading classes stand proudly in front of their American Bulletin Board.

## Special Section of 9/11 Resources in *Field Notes*

*Field Notes* is a quarterly newsletter published by the System for Adult Basic Education Support for adult educators in Massachusetts. The winter 2002 issue of *Field Notes* includes a special pullout section with resources for educators on the September 11 tragedy and its aftermath. The articles (found on pages 10-15) offer teachers' insights and classroom activities, advice for educators on anti-Arab and anti-Muslim discrimination, and websites to go to for more information and teaching resources. Here, for example, are two of several educational websites mentioned:

### 100 Questions and Answers About Arab Americans

[www.freep.com/jobspage/arabs/arab13.html](http://www.freep.com/jobspage/arabs/arab13.html)  
*Knight Ridder and the Detroit free press.* This site examines questions about the Arab world that help us move beyond stereotypes.

### Behind the Headlines

[www.teachingforchange.org](http://www.teachingforchange.org)  
*NECA, Network on Change on the Americas.* Resources for Educators on the September 11 Tragedy and the Response. This site includes articles, teaching ideas, and links to other relevant sites.

This and past issues of *Field Notes* can be downloaded or viewed in PDF format at: <http://www.sabes.org/fnotes.htm>.

## Collage of American Patriotism

### By Elaine Marolla and Students

Here at the Adult Career Development Center in Richmond, we were actually holding classes while the tragedy of September 11, 2001 was unfolding. Students and staff watched together on classroom TV sets, stunned by what we were witnessing. It was obvious to our staff that we had to deal with students' reactions and concerns. In the days following, we asked students to share their feelings in writing and used these reactions to create a bulletin board in the cafeteria. Some of the students went home and wrote heart-rending sentiment. In the GED Review class, students wrote reactions to political cartoons that had run in the *Richmond Times Dispatch*. Displayed together, we have a beautiful collage of American patriotism expressed by American citizens as well as immigrants.

– Elaine Marolla

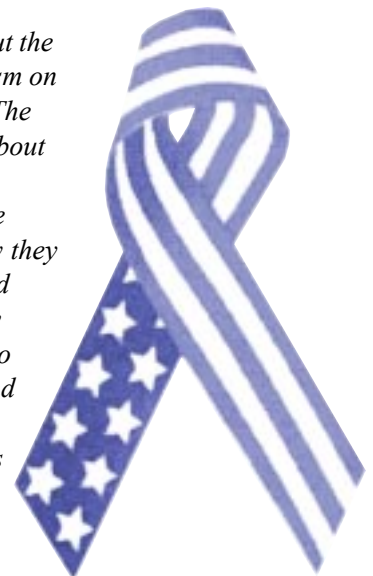
Elaine Marolla has taught adult and alternative education for the City of Richmond for the past 22 years. ■■

*On September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 our country was attacked by terrorists. Their attack not only took us by surprise, but it also has affected our thoughts of freedom and liberty. What these four cartoons are doing, I think, is commenting on some of the events of this terrible situation.*

– MercedesPomier

*These pictures are about the cowardly act of terrorism on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. The pictures talk or show about freedom, justice, and innocent lives that were taken on that day. How they hit the heart of N.Y and took our freedom. How Uncle Sam needs you so we can take justice. And how innocent people gave their lives for this country.*

– Brian Williams





## September 11: Dealing with Tragedy in the Classroom



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... the Statue of Liberty. She is a representation of freedom and liberty. She is not shown here standing proud, yet she is holding her head down crying. This cartoon is indicating sadness, and she's sad because of the attack on not only our country but also our liberty and freedom.  
– Mercedes

This first picture is about how the terrorists came into N.Y. with a hijacked plan and took our freedom. It shows Lady Liberty looking sad. And they also show the World Trade Center going up in smoke, or should I say our freedom going up in smoke.  
– Brian

... we need better security for our airlines. This is being stated because the terrorists got on our planes with weapons without being detected. If they were detected and let through this simply means that airport security should be evaluated more. If we had better security a lot of this would have been avoided.  
– Mercedes

... Uncle Sam (is) pointing at you saying, "I NEED YOU!" Uncle Sam represents the government or military. The picture shows how we need help for security at the airports. We need more people so we can get our pride and justice back.  
– Brian



This cartoon is commenting on the heroism shown by the people on United Flight 93. It has been said of the passengers that they had phone calls stating they were going to die, but something needed to be done. Whatever took place in the air that dreadful day, many are thankful because the airplane never reached its alleged destination. "We only regret that we have but one life to lose for our country," is saying that these people died for their country doing a heroic act.  
– Mercedes



This last picture also shows innocent lives dying for their friends, family, and children. It also shows the people who died on the plane compared to Nathan Hale who also gave his life for our country. And the only thing they regret is only having but one life to give for their country.  
– Brian

*This picture shows how brave policemen and firemen gave their lives to help those in need that tragic day. It shows one fireman saying, "The smoke has cleared," meaning he is in heaven for making a great sacrifice for his country. The picture shows that they died trying to help the people of the World Trade Center.*

– Brian



### The World Trade Center Tragedy By Debbie Daniels and Students

The Eastern Shore Literacy Council (ESLC) is a private non-profit organization established to provide free one-on-one literacy tutoring to low-literate and non-English speaking adults living in Accomack and Northampton Counties. The adult learners of the ESLC are encouraged to attend the monthly student support group known as the "Open Book Club." Leaders for the OBC are selected by their peers twice a year. Meeting once a month for 2 hours, the group attracts 6-20 students. The students invite guest speakers from the community, share information about their learning, and hold learning workshops. At one of their monthly meetings, students were asked what they thought about the World Trade Center tragedy and these are their responses

– Debbie Daniels

*"I feel the United States is letting too much information out about that we are doing as a country, that's why it so easy for terrorist to attack us."*

– Richard

*"Our country is too easy to get into and I think that's why this tragedy happened in the first place."*

– April

*"I am afraid something else is going to happen as a result of this. I don't believe it's over for us yet."*

– Frances

*"It's scary to know that we trained a lot of the terrorists right here in America."*

– Dale

*"It bothers me that innocent people (like children) are dying."*

– Morrice

*"I haven't let it affect my life too much. I believe that everything will work itself out eventually and I have a lot of faith in Lord."*

– Richard

*"It's affected me, but I am still trying to go about my daily life as much as possible."*

– Ruth

*"It has affected me because now I am scared of the mail and afraid something else might happening"*

– Morrice

Debbie Daniels is the Eastern Shore Literacy Council Program Coordinator and advisor of the Open Book Club. She also tutors for the program and assists with training new volunteers.

## Adult ESL Information and the NCLE Website: Start Here!

The website of the National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE) is designed with one thing in mind: to provide busy adult ESL professionals access to the tools—theory and practical application—they need to support and improve their practice.

At the National Symposium on Adult ESL Research and Practice, NCLE provided participants with numerous resources to support the discussions and presentations that occurred there—all accessible through the website. Here are a few examples to give you additional information on the issues discussed at the Symposium, as well as a good idea of what you will find on the NCLE website.

### **Digests and Q & As** <http://www.cal.org/ncle/digests/>

Two- and four-page overviews of topics such as assessment and evaluation, instructional practices, technology, professional development, workplace ESL, and special needs populations.



### **Resource Compilations** <http://www.cal.org/ncle/RESC.HTM>

A variety of collections and lists of resources (often annotated) related to specific topics, including learning disabilities, reading research, assessment, adult ESL statistics, and publishers of adult ESL materials.

### **EL/Civics Activities for Adults** <http://www.cal.org/ncle/civics/>

A collection of activity ideas integrating civics content and English language instruction for beginning to advanced level learners.

### **FAQs** <http://www.cal.org/ncle/faqs.htm>

Frequently Asked Questions (and answers!) such as “*How can I incorporate technology in my instruction?*” and “*How long does it take an adult to learn English?*”

### **Books and Major Publications** <http://www.cal.org/ncle/Majpubs.htm>

Publications addressing topics that include instructional approaches, assessment, workplace ESL, and family literacy, as well as NCLE’s *Research Agenda for Adult ESL*.

Visit the NCLE website at <http://www.cal.org/ncle>. If you have questions, contact MaryAnn Florez at [maryann@cal.org](mailto:maryann@cal.org).

## Internet Courses from the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center

### ESL Basics and The Adult Learner Online Spring 2002 Course Schedule March 11 - May 5

Looking for a professional development opportunity that’s worthwhile and close to home? Thanks to the Internet, with the Resource Center’s online courses, your computer becomes the classroom. You can learn at your own pace from the comfort and convenience of your home or office. All you need to participate in these innovative courses is an email account and access to the Internet.

**ESL Basics Online** is designed for adult education and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) teachers and volunteers with less than two years of experience working with ESL learners. The content of this course includes the characteristics of adult ESL learners, methods and issues in language teaching, teaching language skills, and lesson planning.

**The Adult Learner Online** is designed for new adult education teachers. Learn the keys to success in teaching and working with adult learners. The content of this course includes the characteristics of adult learners, the dimensions of learning, goal setting, learner-centered lesson planning, and professional development resources.

An experienced instructor is on hand throughout each course to assist you. Communication among students and instructors is highly interactive. All participants who successfully complete the course requirements will receive a certificate.

For more information, contact Laura Boone at the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center, (800) 237-0178 or [s2laboon@mail1.vcu.edu](mailto:s2laboon@mail1.vcu.edu).

# ESL Symposium Shares Challenges, Concerns, Successes

...Organizer's Perspective  
from page 5

career teaching in intensive English programs (IEP), at a university, where learners were focused on getting enough English to pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language. At my next job, in an adult education program, I was delighted by the attitude of the learners there. They wanted and needed to learn English. I never went back to working with IEP and university students. It has always seemed important to work with adult English language learners and with those who work with them. It is good work.

The Tuesday after the symposium—September 11—the world changed forever. I hope that the positive trends reported in the symposium (for example, renewed interest in funding programs and research for the adult English learners and the growing awareness of the value immigrants bring to the United States) will continue. The work we do is needed now more than ever.

Miriam Burt is the Associate Director of the National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE) at the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) in Washington, DC. She has worked with adults learning English and with those working with these learners, both in the US and overseas, since 1975. 📍

## TESOL Publishes Action Agenda for Adult ESL

Citing that nearly half of the learners enrolled in federally funded adult education programs are English language learners, *Adult ESL Language and Literacy Instruction: A Vision and Action Agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* calls on the United States to “develop a system of high quality, appropriate language and literacy services...no less in quality, recognition, and support than the system in place for K-12 and higher education.” The document, which was completed in collaboration with NCLE and with widespread input from practitioners, outlines a national agenda for adult ESL policy and practice for the next decade. The Agenda is available for free and can be downloaded from the TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) website ([www.tesol.org/](http://www.tesol.org/)).

...Facilitator's Perspective  
from page 5

Though all of the issues were deemed important, my group unanimously agreed that funding for full-time ESL staff and faculty is the most challenging—the need to find teachers who bring background knowledge and experience to the profession, who are better trained, or whose training can be utilized as an investment in

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**“With full-time ESL staffing, teachers and staff would be more capable of meeting classroom challenges and would have more time for program development.”**

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staffing. With full-time ESL staffing, teachers and staff would be more capable of meeting classroom challenges and would have more time for program development.

My role following our discussion was to report back to the Symposium participants on the challenge we found most compelling—with a solution that would address that challenge. In my facilitator's role, I maintained an objective stance but was very rewarded at a personal level when the group called for action on the professionalization of the field of adult ESL instruction. This call will have to be voiced at all levels of federal, state, and local policy. Federally mandated ratios of full-time staff to students or full-time teachers to part-time teachers could be a possible solution to our challenge.

During the report-back session, other groups raised the full-time staffing issue as well. That this is an issue not just locally, but around the country, was a validation of our concerns. We are not alone in our challenges but are part of a dialogue that could positively impact our field when the results of the Symposium issues are heard at all levels.

Debby Cargill has taught ESOL for five years. She is the Lead Teacher for Prince William County Schools Adult Education, and also conducts training workshops for the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center. 📍



# Summer VAILL: An Off-Peak, Mountaintop Resort Experience?

By Anita Prince

The Department of Education has funded the Virginia Institutes for Lifelong Learning (VAILLs) to support and enhance the professional development of adult educators in Virginia for more than a decade. Practitioners from both public and private arenas have an opportunity to attend in one of three venues—Northern, Southeast, or Southwest Virginia. Typically 2½ days in length, the institutes offer professional development opportunities through in-depth sessions (4 or more hours), workshops (less than 4 but at least 1½ hours), and numerous mini-sessions, poster sessions, focus groups, book and other discussion groups (less than 1½ hours each).

The VAILL in Northern Virginia has developed as Virginia’s ESL (English as a Second Language) VAILL. Its strong program for both novice and expert adult ESL educators has gained it statewide and national prominence. VAILL ESL is held on the campus of

Marymount University in Arlington. Southeast VAILL will be held at Christopher Newport University in Newport News this year and Southwest VAILL is held at Radford University. Both Southeast and Southwest VAILLs have well-rounded programs to meet the needs of a diverse audience of adult education providers. Basic ESL content is also available at these VAILLs.

So . . . is VAILL the off-peak, mountaintop resort experience you need this summer? VAILLs are “off-peak” in that they are held during late summer when teaching requirements are lightest. They are also “off-peak” in terms of cost to attend; registration fees are a modest \$10 and campus housing provides affordable lodging. But a mountaintop resort experience? Yes, because food, entertainment, and a relaxed atmosphere round out an experience which some might characterize as the pinnacle of their professional development each year.

Anita Prince is an Adult Education Specialist for the Virginia Department of Education. As a “career switcher” after 25+ years (from social services to education), Anita is a strong believer in the value of lifelong learning and transfer of learning. 📖



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

### SW VAILL:

#### Modeling Quality Now & Beyond

July 24-26, Radford University

Jane Swing: (540) 831-6207

[jswing@radford.edu](mailto:jswing@radford.edu)

### SE VAILL:

#### United for Success

July 29-31, Christopher Newport University

Wayne Virag/Janette Coles: (804) 524-5377

[wwirag@vsu.edu](mailto:wwirag@vsu.edu)

### ESL VAILL:

#### Civics, Communities and Cultures

July 31-August 2, Marymount University

Pat Bowyer: (703) 714-5560

[pbowyer@fcps.edu](mailto:pbowyer@fcps.edu)



**The registration brochure will be mailed in May.**

<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/>

# 2002 VAACE Conference: Learning from the Past, Planning for the Future

By Susan Erno

When I think of VAACE (Virginia Association for Adult and Continuing Education) conferences that I've attended over the years, I think of quality, relevance, networking, congeniality, and high involvement. Past VAACE conferences have afforded me the unique opportunity to learn from the leading thinkers in our field nationally and the leading thinkers in our field statewide—too many to name.

This tradition of excellence will continue with the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual VAACE Conference to be held April 3-5, 2002, at the Omni Hotel, in the heart of Charlottesville. As indicated by our theme, this year's conference will weave both tradition and innovation (as well as a few surprises) into a meaningful and rewarding experience for conference participants.

Traditionally, one of the most enduring and effective ways to learn has been through storytelling. Think of the stories you heard growing up—family stories, folk tales, religious stories—they were memorable and powerful. Some aspect of storytelling and the implications for adult education will be the focus of several presentations and workshops at this year's conference. Here's a preview:

- Discover the African-American Oral History Project, which brought together a group of community college and adult education students to collect stories through personal interviews.
- Meet a group of ESL Learners who share their stories about living in a new community and learning in a monthly newspaper that they write and publish.
- Come and hear the "Best of Voices of Adult Learners," a presentation of favorite stories from the fruitful collaboration of a regional literacy committee and the Virginia Festival of Books.
- Learn ways to work sensitively with students who can't tell their stories due to trauma.
- Try out some children's books to teach and comfort adult learners in all kinds of classes.

Other workshops will focus on coping with change and making transitions, health education and literacy, understanding diversity, collaborations and partnerships



## Lifelong Learning Week Raises Awareness

February 25 – March 1, 2002

Special activities for Lifelong Learning Week are planned in adult education programs across Virginia. The purpose is to raise community leaders' awareness of and involvement in adult education and to help show how adult and K-12 education connect. Local and regional literacy programs will participate by inviting school officials, legislators, and the media to visit schools and attend special activities and open houses.

This year, the theme for Lifelong Learning Week is "Families United in Learning." Programs are encouraged to emphasize to guests that the children of adult learners are inspired by their parents' model and consequently improve their own academic performance. The key message: Families that learn together achieve.

Lifelong Learning Week is sponsored annually by the Virginia Association for Adult and Continuing Education (VAACE). For more information, contact Nancy Hildebrandt, at [nancyhild@catel.net](mailto:nancyhild@catel.net).

that work, teaching/learning applications of current brain research, and the GED 2002.

Informally, you'll have your own opportunities to seek and share stories. Visit the Connections Café during breaks; get acquainted at the New Members' Reception and meet the past VAACE presidents. (Did you know there are more VAACE presidents than U.S. presidents?) Enjoy dinner with old and new friends at restaurants located within an easy walk of the hotel. Learn more about historic Charlottesville in a guided walking tour and hear rarely told stories of plantation life on a post-conference trip to Monticello. Honor outstanding business-education partnerships at the Workforce Luncheon and finally, celebrate our own VAACE members at the 52<sup>nd</sup> VAACE Awards Banquet.

Send in your registration now! It's available on the web at <http://www.vcu.edu/aclweb/vaace.htm> or call the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center at (800) 237-0178 to request a VAACE conference packet.

Susan Erno is the president of VAACE, the adult education program coordinator for the Charlottesville City Schools, and a regional instructional specialist for Planning District 10. ■■

# The Home Project Writing Curriculum Guide

## A Book Review

By Linda Whitlock

Once homogenous, the South is now home to people from a host of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The challenge of finding ways to integrate this new diversity into literacy, ESL, and GED classes led to the creation of *The Home Project Writing Curriculum Guide*. Sponsored by Literacy South, the project brought together six practitioners from literacy, language, and social work backgrounds for the purpose of creating a learner-centered curriculum that would promote positive cross-cultural relationships while teaching essential skills. Although “home” may mean different things to different people at different times of their lives, “home” was chosen as the curriculum theme because this idea is one to which everyone can relate.

*The Home Project Writing Curriculum Guide* provides a variety of practical and interesting lessons that practitioners are encouraged to adapt to their own circumstances, goals, and learner needs. The home and community focus assists learners from diverse

backgrounds in developing an appreciation for their differences and recognition of their similarities as they improve their writing and critical thinking skills. Yet the lessons also work well with groups that are not so diverse. As an example, most of the learners in my GED class are single mothers from similar backgrounds—participants in a welfare-to-work training program. Nevertheless, Jeff Burkhart’s lesson, *Simplicity and Community*, gave them opportunities to think critically about what it means to be living in community and to write reflectively about how community is or is not happening in their lives.

Linda Whitlock is an ABE instructor for TAP (Total Action against Poverty) Entrepreneur Training and MicroEnterprise Loan Program in Roanoke. Linda made a midlife career change to adult education after having spent over 17 years in banking. 📊

***The Home Project Writing Curriculum Guide***  
Edited by Jereann King, published by Literacy South, distributed by Peppercorn Books and Press, 2000. ISBN 1-893547-12-4  
VALRC call number: D16.H62000

## NEW From the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center: The Family Literacy Starter Kit

### What is it?

An overview of the issues, a quick read, a first step in learning about family literacy. The kit introduces:

- program design options
- suggestions for recruitment and retention of families
- issues in parenting instruction
- approaches to parent-child activities
- ideas for planning program evaluation

The kit also directs readers to additional sources for in-depth coverage of family literacy topics.

### Who is it for?

Administrators and teachers who are planning/expanding a family literacy program or adding a new family-focused service.

New staff in existing programs may also find it helpful as an overview of the issues and a first reference for background information.

### How can programs get it?

Call the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center at (800) 237-0178 (One kit is available for each Virginia program, region, or organization.) The full text of the kit may be downloaded at <http://www.pubinfo.vcu.edu/vaelc/publications>.



Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center  
1015 West Main Street  
PO Box 842020  
Richmond, VA 23284-2020

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## Calendar of Events

To view the Resource Center's complete calendar of events, go to: <http://www.pubinfo.vcu.edu/vaelc/events/calendar.asp>

### STATE

**Workshop: *Workplace Instruction***  
March 8, Roanoke  
Workforce Improvement Network  
Ruth Vest: (434) 971-7544  
[rcf9k@sprintmail.com](mailto:rcf9k@sprintmail.com)  
<http://cep.jmu.edu/workforce>

**Virginia Association for  
Adult and Continuing Education  
Annual Conference**  
April 3-5, Omni Hotel and  
Conference Center, Charlottesville  
Susan Erno: (434) 245-2825  
[erno@esinet.net](mailto:erno@esinet.net)

**Workshop: *Workplace  
Curriculum Development***  
April 19, Blue Ridge  
Community College  
Workforce Improvement Network  
Ruth Vest: (434) 971-7544  
[rcf9k@sprintmail.com](mailto:rcf9k@sprintmail.com)  
<http://cep.jmu.edu/workforce>

**The Literacy Fair of Virginia**  
May 16, Southside Virginia  
Community College, Keysville  
Shelia Harper: (800) 200-7549  
[shelia.harper@sv.vccs.edu](mailto:shelia.harper@sv.vccs.edu)

### NATIONAL

**11th Annual National  
Conference on Family Literacy**  
March 3-5, Albuquerque  
Convention Center  
National Center for Family Literacy  
[http://www.famlit.org/conference/  
conf2002.html](http://www.famlit.org/conference/conf2002.html)

**Teachers of English to Speakers  
of Other Languages, Inc. Annual  
Conference**  
April 9-13, Salt Lake City  
(703) 836-0774 Fax: (703) 836-7864  
[conventions@tesol.org](mailto:conventions@tesol.org)  
<http://www.tesol.org/conv/>

### International Reading Association 47th Annual Convention

April 28-May 2, Moscone Center  
San Francisco (302) 731-1600  
[conferences@reading.org](mailto:conferences@reading.org)

### Commission on Adult Basic Education Annual Conference

May 8-11, Charleston Area  
Convention Center, Charleston SC  
(803) 929-2571  
<http://www.COABE2003.org>

### 2002 Laubach Literacy Action Biennial Conference

May 28-June 1, Town and Country  
Resort and Convention Center,  
San Diego (315) 422-9121 ext. 352  
[info@laubach.org](mailto:info@laubach.org)

### 2002 International Symposium on Technology and Society

June 6-8, Sheraton Capital Center,  
Raleigh, NC [http://social.chass  
.ncsu.edu/herkert/istas02.html](http://social.chass.ncsu.edu/herkert/istas02.html)