CoP: Math Instructional Strategies

By Molly Sundar

As schools increase the rigor of their curriculum in response to Common Core and the 2014 GED test, many teachers wonder how to adequately prepare their students in mathematics. CALPRO offers a Community of Practice in Math Instructional Strategies to help teachers ground their work in research while exploring a multitude of effective teaching strategies appropriate for ABE, GED, and high school diploma students.

The Math Instructional Strategies Community of Practice (Math CoP) gives teachers access to dozens of innovative teaching strategies while helping them learn about research that supports mathematics teaching. It includes five components: an online pre-session, an initial three-hour face-to-face workshop, an online interim session, a follow-up three-hour face-to-face workshop, and an online post-session. During the Math CoP, participants read research, participate in hands-on teaching strategies, and implement two math lessons in their classrooms while receiving feedback and support from their colleagues and facilitator.

In June and July of 2013, eight participants from eight agencies participated in a modified version of the Math CoP as part of a Training-of-Trainers Institute. They began their program with an online pre-session, in which they read and discussed research. After reflecting on their own practice, teachers identified some of their favorite strategies from the readings.

Participants were attracted to a variety of teaching techniques. One educator wrote that she especially liked “the teaching vignette where the groups had to come up with different ways to attack the same problem.” Another teacher appreciated the suggestion of “telling students to write their own word problem.” Mental math was the choice of a third participant, because “it is an everyday skill and needed for the workplace.” Others liked different strategies, such as using student journals to promote the language of math.

After the online pre-session, Math CoP participants meet for an initial face-to-face session in which they explore a multitude of teaching strategies, including tips for reducing math anxiety, reaching kinesthetic learners, and helping students master word problems. They then join an online interim session, where reading and discussion assist them in the implementation of a new math teaching strategy in their classroom. Teachers reconvene approximately three weeks later for a follow-up face-to-face session to explore additional teaching techniques.

During this session, our summer participants especially enjoyed the human fractions activity by author Cheryl Ooten. In this kinesthetic activity, teachers ask their students to form groups to represent a designated fraction. For example, a teacher might request groups where half the students are wearing glasses. Students can create a group of two, four, or even six people, as long as glasses are worn by half of the members. The class discusses equivalent fractions and combining fractions while physically combining the groups together one at a time until the entire class is a single group, representing a whole number.

Continued on page 7
By Jacques LaCour, Director, CALPRO

There is a great opportunity right now in California adult education to harness professional expertise in service to students through reformed professional learning; at the same time, there is a risk that the focus will shift away from student learning toward the many competing priorities in adult education today. California adult educators are engaged in efforts to respond to AB86, and like colleagues across the country, are also reviewing the recently released findings from the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC – Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies; http://www.oecd.org/site/piaac/surveyofadultskills.htm) to consider the impact of the findings on their students and programs. What can be done through professional learning to maintain a tight focus on student outcomes as program reformation and service delivery system coordination take place across the state?

As service providers forge regional consortia, many topics require discussion, analysis, and coordination: student, program, and regional data; services provided and services needed; finances and leveraging of resources; articulation of programs; strategies for accelerating student progress; and provision of ongoing professional learning; among other critical issues. When discussions of professional learning occur, how can they be approached in a way that sets the stage for systematic improvement of student achievement?

It is tempting to dive into conversations about building on current professional development activities, identifying effective presenters, and making curriculum changes in response to College and Career Readiness Standards, among many other potential coordination topics. But before these topics are addressed, there are some foundational discussions that should take place that will help keep the focus on improving student achievement and ensure that subsequent planning for professional learning will effectively support such achievement. Three foundational discussion topics might include:

- Forming a shared understanding of professional learning. Discussions at regional meetings could begin with a review of the Standards for Professional Learning, which can be found on the Learning Forward Web site (http://learningforward.org/standards).
- Setting focused and substantive goals for regional student learning and achievement.
- Committing to ongoing, embedded professional learning opportunities for the educators who are facilitating improved student achievement.

Through the lens of shared standards, clearly articulated goals for student outcomes, and commitment to ongoing professional learning, consortium partners and members can prepare for meaningful discussions about precisely which kinds of collaboration activities will best support student achievement. Plans for professional learning will then be anchored by a student-centered focus, and decisions about educator learning can have a clear, widely understood link to projected student outcomes.

Investing the time in initial discussions that build a solid foundation of mutual understanding will set the stage for effective planning and for better systems and outcomes for students, teachers and programs.

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The “New Normal” for Adult Education

By Pat Terry

The current state of adult education in California and in the nation gives us reason for pause. We are alternately encouraged and skeptical about the direction in which adult education seems to be moving. On the one hand, the visibility of adult education has been raised in the state because of the discussions about whether a dual adult education system will remain in place and where governance should reside. On the other hand, there is a concern about whether adult education services will remain accessible to the whole gamut of adult learners—from the pre-literate level to the postsecondary level—regardless of the final decision regarding governance.

Future Funding

Adult education providers in the K–12 system have additional concerns regarding funding in the new world of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and the Adult Education Consortium Program per Assembly Bill (AB) 86. Current law requires school districts and county offices of education to maintain the same 2012 level of funding for adult education only for 2013–14 and 2014–15 (California Education Code Sections 42238.03(a) (7) and 2575(k)(2), respectively). At this point, the funding picture for adult education programming in 2015–16 and beyond is unclear.

Adult Education Programming

Other areas of concern include adult education program areas and the issue of the high school equivalency credential. AB 86 provides for planning grants to adult education regional consortia for programming in the following areas:

- Elementary and secondary basic skills, including classes required for a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate
- Classes and courses for immigrants eligible for educational services in citizenship and English as a second language, and workforce preparation classes in basic skills
- Education programs for adults with disabilities
- Short-term career technical education programs with high employment potential
- Programs for apprentices

Proposed legislation per Senate Bill 173 would eliminate the existing authorization for adult programs in parenting, home economics, and health and safety education, and adult programs for older adults to receive apportionments from the adult education fund.

The narrower programming focus in the legislation is a point of contention in the adult education world, as historically the program offerings for adults went beyond literacy and workforce concerns. How to preserve some of the expanded programming is as yet an unresolved issue, although adult education providers on both the K–12 side and the community college side are considering levying fees for some of the programs. Community colleges are prohibited from charging fees for some of their adult education programs, which presents an extra challenge.

High School Equivalency Testing

The discussion about high school equivalency began swirling with the announcement of the release of the 2014 GED® Test. The nonprofit GED® Testing Service partnered with the for-profit education and assessment company Pearson Vue in moving the GED® Test to a computer-based format. Concerns about the cost of the new GED® Test, the digital format, and the use of the Common Core State Standards as the foundation for test items raised concern. Consequently, many states began a quest to identify alternatives to the GED® Test.

California’s initial response to the new GED® Test was to begin the process of amending regulations to permit the CDE to recommend a different assessment for issuing a California high school equivalency certificate. The amended regulations took effect in January 2014.

On March 13, 2014, the State Board of Education approved the implementation of three high school equivalency tests in the state of California for eligible students seeking a high school equivalency certificate:

- Test Assessing Secondary Completion™ (TASC), from CTB/McGraw-Hill LLC
- High School Equivalency Test (HiSET™), 2014 edition, from Educational Testing Service
- General Educational Development Test (GED®), from GED® Testing Service

Continued on page 5
PAB Member News

By Carol S. Hirota

CALPRO has a Professional Advisory Board of field representative members who are highly engaged in professional learning. Carol Hirota, Director, Educational Services and Adult Education for Stockton Unified School District, is one of those members.

Stockton School for Adults’ participation in the CALPRO Professional Learning Community Institute reflects its dedication to “kaizen”—the pursuit of continuous improvement—and its focus on student outcomes and on fostering a culture of collegial collaboration. The PLC process supports Stockton Unified School District’s Data Teams for Student Success initiative; the initiative aims to enhance academic achievement and improve the learning process to ensure that all youth are empowered to meet the challenges of the 21st century. At the core of the initiative is the consistent use of data to monitor student progress—this is essential for successful PLC work. When data help narrow the focus to specific areas of student learning needs, educators can make immediate, targeted adjustments to instruction to address them.

Stockton Unified’s PLC implementation began with establishing meeting norms and discussing the cultural shifts embedded in professional learning communities—such as the shifts to focusing on learning vs. teaching, decisions based on individual preferences vs. those made collectively, remediation vs. intervention, and summative vs. formative assessments. Adult education goals ranging from graduation and postsecondary transition to employment, literacy, and numeracy were aligned with the district’s mission and goals. Other professional learning experiences included “unwrapping” standards, sharing documents through Google Drive or Google Apps for Education, collecting research-based learning strategies, and building an agenda focused on student learning.

Providing teachers ample collaboration time is essential to creating a successful PLC. Collaboration time can include common preparation, adjusted start and end times, shared classes, and scheduled meeting times. The Stockton Unified bargaining agreement identifies two meetings (faculty and departmental) per month. This year, Superintendent Dr. Steven Lowder offered an additional 12 hours of meetings to foster a culture of collaboration within the district. Building a collaborative foundation through the PLC process supports the implementation of the five Data Team steps created by the Leadership and Learning Center.

In addition to school site Data Teams, Stockton Unified has formed larger teams to cover each of the seven board members’ respective districts. Team members include board members, principals, administrators, and managers from various departments.

“This brings the PLC philosophy and framework to the district level,” Deputy Superintendent Dr. Sheree Audet said. “It brings educators, administrators, and other colleagues together to work as a group based on their expertise in their own field. Yet everyone is looking at student learning as their focus.”

Stockton Unified adult educators are currently moving through Development, stage three on the PLC continuum. Next year, the continuous improvement cycle will include Data Teams operating within the PLC, and we will strive to make progress into stage four, the Sustaining stage.

“Education is our business” is the slogan at Stockton School for Adults. By implementing Data Teams through the PLC process, school administrators plan to continue focusing on and documenting improved student outcomes. CALPRO annually offers a PLC Institute.
focused on helping teams improve student learning and outcomes. For more information, please contact Jacques LaCour at jlacour@air.org.

Additional information on Data Teams and PLCs can be found in the resources below and in the article on page 8 of this newsletter.


**Biography:** Carol S. Hirota is the Director of Educational Services and Adult Education for Stockton Unified School District. Carol is also a member on the CALPRO Professional Advisory Board, CASAS Program Evaluation Team and CDE Field Partnership Team. Carol has worked 19 years in adult education. Prior experiences include speech, language pathologist and Special Education administrator. Brian McCoy, SUSD Grant Writer, edited this article.

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“The New Normal,” continued from page 3

The HiSET™ and the TASC are offered in computer and paper-based formats, whereas the GED® Test is offered only in the computer-based format.

Currently, California students seeking a high school equivalency are taking the 2014 GED® Test, which is based on the Common Core State Standards. There have been some adjustments to the test since its roll-out—notably an extension of the time allowed to complete the mathematical reasoning test from 90 minutes to 115 minutes. GED® Test preparers have been scrambling to identify and implement test prep materials and learn more about the 2014 version in order to better serve their students. The increased rigor of the test and a need to “get up on the curve” of proficient test preparation have presented challenges to the field.

**Workforce Investment Act Applications**

And finally, eligible adult education providers in California were given the opportunity to apply for Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Title II: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funds for the 2014–15 year through an open competition. Higher expectations regarding professional development and partnerships were reflected on the Request for Applications for the 2014–15 funding.

If it appears that adult education in California has a lot on its plate—that is a fair assessment. In addition to what has been previously shared, most adult education providers are participating in the AB 86 collaborative planning process requiring at least one community college and one adult school, and many applied for the 2014–15 WIA Title II funds.

The release of the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education in 2013, which are based on selected standards from the Common Core State Standards, represents another game-changer for today’s adult students, as they will have to demonstrate their use of critical thinking skills and writing skills on the high-stakes assessments.

The task for adult educators with shrinking resources to move students further, faster, has never been more daunting. On the upside, however, there is an increased focus on the development of a more nimble, responsive adult education system that is structured to meet the needs of diverse learners in a rapidly changing world that requires increased levels of literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy. The stakes are high and the demands are high—this is the “new normal” for the foreseeable future.
Promoting Teacher Effectiveness in Adult Education Project

By Marcela Movit, AIR Research Analyst/Deputy Director, Teacher Effectiveness in Adult Education Project

Two California programs are involved in a federally funded project built on the idea that teacher knowledge and instructional competence are key ingredients for adult learners’ success. A great deal of attention has been given to the skills and abilities, or competencies, teachers need to maximize student learning and achievement. Research on teacher effectiveness has found that teacher quality is the single most important variable for student achievement (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain 2005; Rockoff 2004). Because of this, effective processes and procedures to help teachers become proficient in these competencies are essential.

There are a growing number of programs across the country that offer support and guidance to new teachers as they go through the challenges of their first years in the classroom; these are known as induction programs. Although these programs vary, to be “comprehensive” (and thus effective), induction models must have several components (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004):

- High-quality mentoring
- Ongoing professional development
- A supportive network
- Evaluations and feedback

To promote teacher quality and effectiveness in adult education, the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) is building on its previous projects that sought to improve teacher practice in adult education to develop adult education teacher competencies and an induction framework. OCTAE’s Promoting Teacher Effectiveness in Adult Education project, a three-year project, is being implemented by the American Institutes for Research to support the advancement of adult education teachers. Some of the first work of the Teacher Effectiveness project included development and field validation of adult education teacher competencies. The project team also conducted an extensive environmental scan to get a more complete understanding of what is currently known about teacher effectiveness and its major subtopics, teacher competency and teacher induction.

From this research base, the project developed an Induction Framework that supports local adult education programs’ evidence-based instructional reform efforts by increasing the effectiveness of beginning teachers.

The Framework is designed to (1) support programs as they develop processes for continual instructional improvement, (2) train experienced teachers to act as mentors to beginning teachers, and (3) improve beginning teachers’ ability to use evidence-based instructional practices. To help support the goals of the Framework, the project team created several research-based tools to help beginning teachers and their mentors reflect and grow as they go through the induction process. The Framework and its related tools were designed to allow programs to adapt them to their specific needs and contexts while still providing the guidance needed to ensure that participants are successful.

The project is currently in the Field Test stage. The Field Test is an opportunity for OCTAE to pilot the Induction Framework and its tools in a real-life environment to ensure that the research has been appropriately and successfully translated into practice. The project team recruited strong programs that were ready to implement an induction framework to test the tools that were created to help teachers become proficient in these competencies. The program teams participating in the Field Test are playing an instrumental role in furthering the field of adult education. Through the Field Test, programs have provided critical feedback on the research-based tools, and will help to shape their ultimate design and content.

The two California teams in the Field Test are from Ventura Adult and Continuing Education and Huntington Beach Adult School. The Ventura team includes the principal, one mentor, and one beginning teacher. Their focus has been on targeted differentiated instruction. The Huntington Beach team includes the principal, two mentors, and two beginning teachers. Their focus has been on how to improve student transitions to college and career. Pamela Canlas is one of the beginning teachers from Huntington Beach who is participating in the Field Test. Here she shares, in her own words, her experience with the Induction Framework so far:

My name is Pamela Canlas. I have over a decade of practical experience as a lead pharmacy technician specializing in outpatient settings while at Kaiser Permanente and the USC, Harbor–UCLA, and King Drew Medical Centers. In September of 2010, I was hired by Huntington Beach Adult
School to prepare students to become pharmacy technicians. It has been an inspiration to see my students take on the challenge of passing the Pharmacy Technician National Board Exam; our current pass rate is 96 percent. My professional experience has been helpful in training future pharmacy technicians, but I felt I was missing pedagogical classroom skills. I genuinely love my students and I wanted to grow to meet any challenge.

My supervisor invited me and three other colleagues to participate in an induction project for beginning teachers. We were guided in the use of a Beginning Teacher Induction Toolkit by trainers from the American Institutes for Research. The toolkit included research and education briefs:

- Introduction to Beginning Teacher Induction and the Framework
- Evidence-Based Instruction
- Mentoring and Teacher Induction
- Program Conditions for Successful Implementation of Teacher Induction

The materials also included an Induction Decision-Making Guide, a Mentoring Guide for Teacher Induction, a Beginning Teacher Individual Learning Plan, a Program Professional Learning Plan, a Mentor Selection Guide, Evidence-Based Instructional Materials, and an Introduction to Beginning Teacher Formative Assessment. The toolkit materials were built around the concept of the induction project: helping “beginning teachers become experienced teachers.”

One of the activities that was crucial in my progress was hearing what my students thought of my instruction by conducting student surveys from the toolkit materials. One student shared that I needed additional organizational skills. I reflected on this feedback and decided to make a change. I followed the toolkit and concentrated on my individual learning goals and how to achieve them. I reached out to my mentor for guidance. Our focus was centered on our weekly meetings, mentor observations, beginning teacher goals, and professional development classes.

The material I found most helpful during the learning phase was the Teacher Effectiveness Self-Assessment. It guided me to focus on the evidence-based instruction component of the training. I worked on monitoring and managing student learning through data, and developed more plans and methods to deliver high-quality, evidence-based instruction. It also helped me find innovative ways to communicate to motivate and engage learners—especially my English language learners. My students’ performance improved, and to my great joy, one of my students who had recently emigrated from Mexico became a Certified Pharmacy Technician. The toolkit is more than just a guide; it transformed me as an instructor and, more importantly, changed the life of an adult student. I highly recommend the Beginning Teacher Induction Toolkit to new teachers in adult education.

“Math Instructional Strategies,” continued from page 1

The Math CoP continues to assist participants after their second face-to-face session through an online post-session. Participants select and teach another new math strategy in their classroom while receiving support through additional discussion and reading.

Throughout the process, participants are establishing relationships with colleagues who can support them in their growth while also exploring the unique features of our adult population. One participant aptly described the impact math has on our students’ success: “Most of my students believe math is their enemy. They blame math as a reason they don’t have a GED or high school diploma.”

You can help students conquer the enemy by participating in a Math CoP to hone your teaching skills. Add dozens of math instructional strategies to your toolkit while learning about research and creating a network of inspiring colleagues. For information about how to participate, please contact Dr. Cherise Moore at cmoore@air.org.

Biography: Molly Sundar has eight years of classroom experience with adults in addition to her work as a teacher trainer. She has taught Adult Basic Education, GED, high school diploma, online learning, and ESL at Burbank Adult School and Sunnyvale-Cupertino Adult School. She has also worked with Pasadena City College and West Valley College, teaching reading and ESL in their credit programs.
Highlights of CALPRO Activities

By CALPRO Staff

Leadership Institute

Congratulations to the CALPRO Adult Education Leadership Institute Class of 2013 graduates!
They are as follows:

Sally Dibbini, Antelope Valley Adult School
Dustin Gacherieu, Castro Valley Adult Education
Cynthia Gleason, Fontana Adult School
Joyce Hinkson, OTAN
Kathleen Lommen, Huntington Beach Adult School
Paul McGarry, Santa Barbara City College
Jeff Meredith, Foothills Adult School–Grossmont UHSD
Terri Nuckols, Delano Adult School
Kathleen Pearson, Milpitas Adult Education—Elmwood Correctional Facility
Joel Vilanova, Stanislaus Literacy Center
Mary Wilson, Grossmont Adult School

The one-year leadership development program is offered to practicing administrators new to adult education, providing them effective, high-quality management and leadership skills to enhance their ability to operate adult education programs. These graduates join the more than 600 adult educators who have participated in the Leadership Institute since its inception in 1985. We wish them continued success as they move forward in their careers.

The Class of 2014 Adult Education Leadership Institute has 21 participants, nominated in February 2014. This year, the eligibility to participate was expanded to aspiring administrators. The participants met in March for the two-day spring session of the Institute, and they will meet again in June for the three-day summer session of the Institute. The Class of 2014 is as follows:

Michael Aaron, Beaumont Adult School
Valeria Covarrubias, East Los Angeles College
Giuliana Brahim Crosby, Milpitas Adult Education—Elmwood Correctional Facility
Paige Endo, Mt. Diablo Adult Education

Jean Ellis, Ventura Adult & Continuing Education
Blanca Gil, Oxnard Adult School
Peter Mac Donald, Silicon Valley Adult Education
Carvette McCalib, Monterey Adult School
Angelica Mendoza, Milpitas Adult Education
Harkirat Namm, Overfelt Adult Center
Carol Otjens, Grossmont Adult School, Health Occupations Center
Teresa Palskill, Poway Adult School
Barbara Pongsrikul, San Diego Continuing Education
Leslie Quinones, San Diego Continuing Education
Crystal Robinson, National City & San Ysidro Adult Schools
Karyn Crowe Ruiz, Visalia Adult School
Mia Ruiz, San Luis Obispo Community College District
Alexandra Scott, Palo Alto Adult School
Julio Segura, Delano Adult School
Thomas Smith, LAUSD Division of Adult & Career Education
Ami Takanashi, Rowland Adult & Community Education

Professional Learning Community (PLC) Institute 2014

The Adult Education Office of the California Department of Education and CALPRO are pleased to announce the 2014 CALPRO Professional Learning Communities Institute (the PLC Institute). Applications were due by April 15, 2014, and interest in the Institute this year was particularly high. At publication the notices of accepted teams had not yet been released.

The PLC Institute prepares teams of school/agency representatives to establish results-oriented and process-driven teacher groups that collaborate to identify student learning challenges, set learning goals associated with those challenges, and collectively identify the instructional and assessment strategies that most effectively help students meet the goals. Beyond the training content, the Institute provides participants the opportunity to network with other California adult education PLC practitioners.

The Institute will be held in two sessions in June and November over a total of five days, and will also include online learning assignments. The June session will provide agencies the framework and the training needed to craft plans and start a PLC process of school improvement. This process will focus on student learning through ongoing professional development embedded in the agency’s school calendar. Participating schools are expected to use the intervening time between the June and November sessions to take action on plans to lay the groundwork for PLC implementation for the 2014–15 school year. The two days in November will be devoted to continuing training, feedback, evaluation, and problem solving in support of implementation.
Historically, we in education have spent a lot of time teaching to the middle of the class. The students at the lower end were lost and those at the upper end were bored. So we tended to focus professional development on teaching techniques and strategies that we hoped would connect with a wider range of students. Then Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) changed the focus from teachers and teaching to students and learning. As one teacher noted: “I used to do a lot of presenting and explaining; now I do a lot of questioning and listening.”

Another important educational framework is Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL has been described as a process for “engaging students by presenting information in multiple ways, so it can be accessed by people with many different learning styles” (Bacon 2014). UDL stresses the importance of three dimensions of learning: the what of learning (content), the how of learning (how we organize and express our ideas), and the why of learning (being engaged and motivated).

These two educational frameworks (PLCs and UDL) both facilitate instructional approaches that have proven successful with a wide range of student abilities and backgrounds. This article presents a seven-step collaborative process for the adult classroom that uses both frameworks:

• **Step 1: What the instructor needs to know at the outset.**
  -Know your subject matter. For example, it is often assumed that anyone who can speak English can teach it. Likewise, just because you’re an English teacher doesn’t mean you know how to teach English as a second language. Knowing your subject matter includes understanding text complexity, having the required background knowledge necessary to understand the text, and using source texts to provide content evidence.
  -Know your students. As featured in the musical *The King and I*, the song “Getting to Know You” was fundamental to the instructor’s reaching her learners. One approach might be to place students in groups of three to five and have each student in each group answer a series of questions, such as: How do you hope this class will help you? What are your goals for the future? Ask each group to select a spokesperson to summarize the group’s responses. (Student goal setting, by the way, should be an ongoing class activity.)
  -Know a variety of ways to engage and instruct students. The instinct for most beginning teachers is to teach in the way they were taught. A major advantage of having collaborative instructional teams is the opportunity to try different instructional approaches when students are having difficulty learning and the opportunity to share successful strategies with other members of the team.

• **Step 2: Select the core ideas (standards) that students must be able to know and do by the end of your class to move successfully to the next level.**
  -Select no more than 8 to 10 core ideas or standards so that they can be learned and applied in depth. They will be the focus of your class, but not the only content. There will be class time for students to learn other
information and skills—especially the “soft skills” or habits of successful citizens.

- Each core idea or standard must be “unwrapped” to identify the essential concepts and actions required for success.
- Imagine with your fellow instructional team members what instructional approaches students might respond well to (and achieve success with). Invite students to participate in the selection of instructional strategies to help them take ownership of their own learning. Several models for the gradual release of responsibility from the teacher to the student are available. For example, Fisher and Frey’s model follows four stages: Stage 1: The teacher models while students listen and engage. Stage 2: Students participate with teacher guidance (scaffolding). Stage 3: Students collaborate on the task. And Stage 4: Students work independently. (Fisher & Frey 2003, pp. 396–407)

**Step 3: Find out what students already know and can apply related to each standard.**

- Develop some formative assessments to determine what students already know and to help them see what they need to learn and do. Having a rubric for each standard is one assessment device that students can help develop and use. Other strategies might include questioning that reaches beyond recall of information and uses Bloom’s taxonomies or other hierarchical thinking approaches.
- Continue to use a variety of task teams to discuss and resolve issues related to the core concept. That way, students will share both thinking strategies and language usage.

**Step 4: Plan the lessons for a collaborative classroom.**

- Have student teams brainstorm about various classroom activities they would like to participate in while studying the standard.
- Use proven approaches—such as Project-Based Learning (PBL), which allows students to assist in designing a project or solving a problem. The projects might include documents, guides, videos, or other projects that involve student research and development. Graham and Perin (2007), for example, found that having students write collaboratively had a significant, large effect on student learning.

- Involve blended learning possibilities (updating traditional forms of learning by using technology, such as Google research, online applications, and media demonstrations). The pressures on adult students often make consistent attendance and classroom participation difficult. Using collaborative learning via technology can include discussion boards, flipped learning, and online segments, for example.

**Step 5: Plan to assess the mastery of learning (core standards, concepts, and applications).**

- Plan the common formative assessments prior to instruction so that both students and instructors will understand the scope and importance of mastering the key standards.
- Invite students to participate in designing rubrics to assess the mastery of each standard and to place themselves on that rubric. The Buck Institute for Education (BIE) in Marin County, California, has done extensive research on Project-Based Learning and developing rubrics (Buck Institute for Education 2014). They have, in fact, developed a rubric for designing rubrics.

**Step 6: Carry out the instructional activities.**

- Vary the learning opportunities. If you go to a restaurant and there is only one item on the menu, you are unlikely to return soon. On the other hand, if there are a variety of choices on the menu, you can select the ones that appeal to you at the time. The classroom is like that restaurant. If there were only one method of instruction and style of learning available, who would look forward to returning?
- Expand the content beyond the narrowness of your subject. For example, think beyond the subject of English to the humanities. David Thornburg (2002) studied 500 job descriptions to identify the six most wanted workforce skills: technological fluency, communication, teamwork, leadership, problem solving, and creativity (p. 58). None of these fit neatly into our compartmentalized subject areas of language arts, math, science, or social studies. These skills are also not easily assessed on standardized tests; this is why we need to teach students how to learn. The shift from compartmentalization to contextualized learning broadens the student’s learning base. It also sets the scene for lifelong learning, a necessity in tomorrow’s world. Change is so increasingly rapid and pervasive that lifelong learning is now a survival skill.
• The collaborative classroom offers a variety of student activities, letting students find the activities they find most comfortable and involving. Students can take on tasks they can do well and, at the same time, learn from fellow students completing other tasks within the same activity. Some students may be reading, either by themselves or in a small group that will discuss the reading using a discussion guide. Some may be at a computer getting information for their group project; some may be designing visuals for project presentation. The composition of groups is flexible. The groups reflect student interests and needs and vary accordingly—they are not just ability groups.

• Embedded professional development must be an ongoing practice for the PLC instructional teams. Differentiation of instruction fits the UDL approach, and embraces other important classroom practices such as Direct Instruction (DI) and the process of gradually releasing responsibility to students. The collaborative classroom is a dynamic classroom; the teacher is rarely standing in front of the entire class, except to present new ideas, to give large-group feedback, or to organize activities and formative assessments. Instead, the teacher is the facilitator, the coach, and the monitor of all activities. He or she is, as is often stated, “the guide on the side.”

Step 7: Assessment of learning.
• Vary the formative assessments just as you have varied the activities. Conduct them continuously as activities progress. Include rubrics, questions, quizzes, and evaluation of written work and of presentations. As Carol Ann Tomlinson (2014) mentions in her excellent article in the journal Educational Leadership, “Formative assessment is the bridge between today's lessons and tomorrow’s … it is crucial to helping teacher and student see how to make near-term adjustments so the progression of learning can proceed as it should” (p. 11).
• Make sure that rubrics and observations include the workforce skills cited above.
• Share your findings with other members of your instructional team, if you are lucky enough to teach in a PLC. Discuss the findings with students, both individually and collectively, as appropriate. In this process, encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning and help them find ways to be truly involved in and excited about the learning process.

Conclusions
Many adult programs have initiated PLC programs. They have formed their collaborative teams and begun selecting and unwrapping key standards. But it is at this stage that programs often falter, largely because the members of the teams don’t know just what the process means for their classroom instruction. If classroom instruction doesn’t change, then student learning is unlikely to change. These seven steps are designed to guide instructors in their day-to-day teaching behavior. One great advantage of the PLC framework is the ongoing collaboration of the instructors, either face to face or online. A major strength lies in their sharing how they teach and how successfully the students learn. Teachers can brainstorm about alternate strategies and formative assessments—the results of which can be compared. As messy as this process may seem at times, it also provides the real joy of teaching: sharing successes and watching students learn.

References


Evidence-Based Writing Instruction: CALPRO’s Newest Community of Practice

By Ronna Magy, CALPRO Facilitator and Professional Development Specialist

Writing is one of the key academic literacy skills adult students need for success in the 21st century global economy. Whether a student is in the classroom, transitioning to vocational classes or further academic study, or moving along a career pathway, being able to communicate in writing is critical.

According to the Teaching Excellence in Adult Literacy Project Just Write! Guide from the American Institutes for Research (2012), “The pervasiveness of writing in daily life … underscores the need for learners and their instructors to focus on adults becoming flexible, fluent, and confident writers …. Preparing adult learners for further education or work advancement requires that educators help learners improve their writing skills ….”

Consider some of the many ways writing is used at school and on the job:

• At school, students write sentences, paragraphs, and essays; they write letters and research-based reports. They design charts and graphs and fill out registration forms.
• At work, students keep logs and make accident reports; write memos, work orders, and e-mails; and fill out performance reviews.
• In applying for work, they fill out job applications and resumes. Writing is a necessary skill in the 21st century.

CALPRO’s newest Community of Practice training module on Evidence-Based Writing Instruction (EBWI) trains instructors to provide guided paragraph-writing instruction at all stages of the writing process to intermediate and advanced ABE/ASE and ESL students. During the EBWI training, participants learn the stages of the writing process (pre-writing, writing, revision, editing, post-writing) and related evidence-based research, and learn how to:

1. Apply research-based instructional techniques in each writing process stage,
2. Evaluate student writing while applying level-appropriate assessment rubrics, and
3. Develop and implement instructional plans targeting the teaching of writing skills.

The EBWI Community of Practice training consists of five parts:

• Pre-session readings coupled with online reflection and sharing
• A first face-to-face meeting
• An interim assignment during which participants apply and reflect on what they’ve learned
• A second face-to-face meeting
• A post-session instructional assignment.

Providing practitioners with this kind of ongoing professional development guides them in integrating research findings with classroom application. It provides practitioners opportunities for learning, practice, reflection, and professional growth.

Instructors attending the recent “Highlights of CALPRO’s EBWI for ESL” workshop at CATESOL Los Angeles Regional at California State University Northridge commented that learning about the differences between the feedback given in the revision and editing stages of the writing process was extremely helpful. They appreciated learning to teach students how to use paragraph frames as writing scaffolds.

Two EBWI Communities of Practice are currently taking place in Southern California, one at the Santa Ana College School of Continuing Education, the other at Burbank Adult School. If your school or district would like to host an EBWI Community of Practice, please contact Dr. Cherise Moore at CALPRO, cmoore@air.org, for additional information.

Biography: Ronna Magy has trained adult ESL instructors and worked with English language learners for over 30 years. Formerly an ESL/CBET Teacher Advisor for the Los Angeles Unified School District’s Division of Adult and Career Education, Ronna currently works as a professional development specialist and materials writer.
CASAS Update

TOPSpro Enterprise Regional Network Groups:
The TOPSpro Enterprise Regional Network Groups are continuing to meet throughout 2014. Depending on the needs of each region, some meetings are held online and some are face to face. Each group has a field-based facilitator and discusses topics of importance to the group members at each meeting. CASAS staff are frequently available at these meetings to answer questions and provide pertinent information. This spring, CASAS is also offering a variety of online facilitated Data Detective workshops, which provide TOPSpro Enterprise (TE) users in-depth information about TE. Visit [http://www.caadultedtraining.org](http://www.caadultedtraining.org) for more information.

eTests® Users Network Meetings:
Each month, eTests® users meet online to discuss topics related to eTests® implementation. Visit [http://www.caadultedtraining.org](http://www.caadultedtraining.org) for more information.

2012–13 California AEFLA Annual Performance Report:
This report is now posted on the CASAS web site. The report includes information about California student performance and outcomes, state leadership projects and activities, significant findings from evaluation of adult education activities, collaboration with local Workforce Investment Boards and One-Stops, and successful activities supported with EL Civics funds. To access this report, visit [www.casas.org](http://www.casas.org), enter the California Accountability Peer Community, and click on “CA State Reports and Research Briefs.”

2014 CASAS National Summer Institute:
Join your colleagues at the 2014 CASAS National Summer Institute, which will take place June 17–19 at the Town and Country Resort & Convention Center in San Diego, California. The Summer Institute greatly benefits local agency staff and is a valuable opportunity to attend the most up-to-date training and workshops on TOPSpro Enterprise, eTests®, and Implementation and Accountability Training. Participants also learn about issues such as the Common Core State Standards and high school equivalency tests and are able to network with other adult education providers. For more information, please visit [www.casas.org](http://www.casas.org).

Outreach and Technical Assistance Network (OTAN)

The OTAN Technology and Distance Learning Symposium 2014 (TDLS14) took place March 7–8 at Baldwin Park Adult School. Attendees selected from over 30 workshop presentations ranging from online and distance learning topics to what technology skills students will need when they transition from paper-based to online testing. Many participants shared comments and resource links via Twitter, using the hashtags #tdls14, #adulted, and #edtech.

Keynote speaker David J. Rosen, former director of the Adult Literacy Resource Institute, showed a variety of free educational videos and demonstrated how to use them effectively in the classroom. He also shared strategies for previewing and using videos in a flipped classroom model and in a distance learning environment.

Session handouts and keynote presentation are available at: [http://www.otan.us/tdlsymposium/index.cfm?fuseaction=symposium-schedule](http://www.otan.us/tdlsymposium/index.cfm?fuseaction=symposium-schedule), and videos of the keynote and selected sessions will be available soon.

Technology Integration
OTAN offers both online and face-to-face workshops, and all workshops are free. New workshop topics, based on constituent feedback, include:

- Apps for Administrators and Teachers: How Your Phone or Tablet Can Make You More Productive
- Digital Literacy and Citizenship Toolkit
- Google Tools and Drive
- iPads in the Adult Ed Classroom: An Affordable Teacher Resource

To find and register for these and other technology-focused workshops, visit [http://www.caadultedtraining.org](http://www.caadultedtraining.org). You can search specifically for OTAN trainings using the “Filter events” boxes on the left side of the screen; select OTAN from the “By Sponsor” dropdown menu.

Other
To be environmentally friendly, OTAN’s newsletter will now automatically be sent electronically instead of being printed and mailed to constituents. OTAN members may opt to change the delivery option in their profile if a hard copy is preferred, however.

Contact Us!
OTAN staff may be reached by phone via the main office number at 916-228-2580, or by email at support@otan.us.
OCTAE Invests in Improving Adult ESL Instruction

By Mariann Fedele-McLeod, Principal Researcher, American Institutes for Research

More than 40 percent of students in the Federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)-funded adult education program are English language learners (ELLs).

In California:

- According to the American Community Survey, in California there are 6,805,770 people who speak “a language other than English at home” and “speak English less than very well.”
- In the 2012–13 school year, there were approximately 1.3 million English language learners in California public schools
- In its AEFLA-funded system, California served 287,125 adult English language learners

Nationally, most of these learners are immigrants and refugees, but in many areas significant numbers are heritage language speakers and “generation 1.5” learners who lack English proficiency despite having attended school in the United States. ELLs are diverse, varying in native language literacy, language and cultural background, prior schooling, age, and nationality. Consequently, adult ELL educators face enormous challenges in meeting these students’ instructional needs.

Because adult ELLs are a significant part of the adult education system and instructors are constantly in need of high-quality, up-to-date resources, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) has provided assistance and professional development to states to promote effective teaching of ELLs through numerous projects for the last 15 years. An aim of these efforts is to help states better address the diverse challenges adults face when learning English, has helped the field identify what teachers of adult ELLs need to know, and has developed a collection of effective professional development resources.

OCTAE is continuing its efforts to improve instruction for adult ELLs through a new three-year effort undertaken by the American Institutes for Research called the LINCS ESL Professional Project. AIR is joined by partners Portland State University (PSU) and the Center for Social Innovation (C4) in this effort.

A main goal of the LINCS ESL Professional project is to curate OCTAE’s existing ESL resources into a coherent and up-to-date body of professional development materials to improve ELL instruction. The current Adult English Language Learners collection is found on the LINCS site at https://lincs.ed.gov.

The effort will be conducted by compiling, revising, and increasing awareness of resources from previous key initiatives related to adult ELLs. The initiative will encourage innovative uses of these resources by exemplary classroom teachers by establishing a Teacher User Group that will provide expert reviews of ESL-focused “open education resources,” or OERs. The Teacher User Group will work alongside subject matter experts to produce a sustainable approach to professional development with quality, research-based materials.

Finally, this initiative will support states’ efforts to improve adult ELL teacher effectiveness by infusing OCTAE-sponsored resources into state teacher training initiatives; this will help increase states’ capacity to prepare teachers to meet the needs of adult ELLs and to help all ELLs achieve the educational outcomes that will lead to academic and career success. The project period is September 2013 to September 2016.

Project activities will be grounded in the research literature of best practices in teaching and professional development and include:

- Identifying trends and issues in adult ESL instruction
- Developing and disseminating materials for adult education practitioners that address the trends and issues identified
- Updating and revising existing OCTAE resources for ESL instruction
- Identifying appropriate OERs for the ESL classroom; and
- Encouraging innovative uses of OCTAE resources by infusing them into existing state teacher training initiatives

Resources will be developed and disseminated over the three years of the project. AIR and its partners and subject matter experts look forward to sharing resources with California’s adult educators, and working in continued collaboration to improve services and instruction to adult English language learners.
Professional Learning Online – Making Access Easy

by CALPRO Staff

CALPRO is back in business this spring with a big lineup of online professional learning offerings. Instructors and administrators are free to choose the options that best fit their learning needs and their schedule.

New Course: Evidence-Based Writing Instruction

A new course on writing instruction will be available in a variety of formats. First will be a Community of Practice (CoP) that combines online discussion and instruction with two face-to-face meetings, which will be offered in several locations. A facilitated four-week online course for ESL teachers will be offered in the summer and for ABE/ASE teachers in the fall. Additionally, a self-directed online course will be available in the fall for those who prefer to work independently and at their own pace.

All facilitated formats will address what the research says about teaching writing to adults and will discuss how to use evidence-based methods to analyze student writing and identify specific skills that need focused instruction. Participants will then get to put into practice the recommended instructional techniques.

Online Courses

A total of seven online courses are being offered this spring, with two remaining open for registration. These courses are four weeks long and are facilitated by an expert on the topic:

- Integrating Education and Training (April 28–May 25)
- Managing the Multilevel ESL Classroom (April 28–May 23)

Webinars Can Provide Timely Information on Hot Topics

CALPRO offers several webinar series for different audiences. CALPRO’s online Event Calendar offers information and registration; spring topics include:

- GED 2014
- Maintaining and Building Short-Term Career Tech Programs
- Math Instructional Strategies
- College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education Programs
- College and Career Readiness Standards in the Classroom
- Building Regional Consortia for Adult Education Planning and Delivery
- Conducting a Regional Needs Assessment

Video Library

Sometimes a video is worth a thousand words. Actually hearing and seeing a national expert explain a topic, or a classroom teacher integrate basic skills with workplace training, can jumpstart your understanding in an area where you have questions. The CALPRO Video Library offers a wide variety of videos on topics of interest to both instructors and administrators, including sessions on:

- Workforce readiness
- Multilevel ESL instruction
- Instructional approaches to evidence-based reading instruction

New CALPRO Training Module – College and Career Readiness Standards

By CALPRO Staff

To continue its support of California adult education efforts to prepare students for transitions to postsecondary education and career training, the California Department of Education (CDE) has tasked CALPRO with the development of a new training module on College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS). On April 30 and May 1, 2014, representatives from the CDE Adult Education Office and CALPRO, as well as several local agency teams from across the state, will participate in the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education Implementation Institute, sponsored by the federal Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE; formerly OVAE, the Office of Vocational and Adult Education). Following the CCRS Implementation Institute, CDE and CALPRO will establish specific goals and objectives for the to-be-developed training module and finalize plans for the drafting, reviewing, piloting, and refining of the module, and the training of trainers and other activities associated with module development. As is customary in such efforts, CALPRO will invite support and assistance from field, specifically from educators engaged in CCRS implementation work at their sites and in their regions. Work on the module will take place through fall 2014, and the tentative timing for dissemination of the new module is winter of the 2014-15 school year.
Meet New CALPRO Professional Staff

Marian Thacher

Marian Thacher brings a wealth of experience in adult education to her new position as Senior Researcher at CALPRO. She began teaching ESL in Chicago many years ago, and then moved to San Diego, where she taught ESL for Grossmont Unified School District and San Diego Community College District Continuing Education. In San Diego, Marian taught various workplace basic skills classes, in which she developed customized curriculum for companies such as Qualcomm, Teal Electronics, and for the maintenance crew at the Jack Murphy Stadium (when she arrived, the maintenance supervisor would get on the stadium PA system to announce, “The schoolmarm’s here!”). She was an early adopter of technology, and created and taught customized distance learning courses for laborers at the National Steel and Shipbuilding Company shipyard as well as electronics assembly workers at Kyocera, the mobile phone manufacturer.

Marian came to OTAN in Sacramento in 2001 as the Technology Projects Coordinator, where she created the Technology Mentor Academy—a project that has now provided a year-long professional development experience to over 100 adult educators, who have in turn mentored many more colleagues at their sites. She became the Director of OTAN in 2006, and under her guidance OTAN expanded into the area of distance learning for adult learners by training teachers in the use of Moodle for online courses, supporting curriculum development for students, and hosting hundreds of adult education courses. Marian “retired” from OTAN in 2012, and worked with the adult literacy program at the Sacramento Public Library, where she provided intake and assessment for many adult learners at the lowest literacy levels, before coming to CALPRO. At CALPRO, Marian is managing online courses, workshops, and a Webinar series for instructors.

Chris Pepper

Dr. Christine Peppers joined the CALPRO project as a Research Associate in January 2014. Chris most recently served as the Technology Coordinator at Learning Quest, Stanislaus Literacy Centers. In that role she was responsible for directing, planning, implementing, and maintaining software applications and technology use throughout the multi-site organization. Chris coordinated the operation of all technology-based applications, including hardware, software, Internet, audio-visual equipment, training, instructional design, and short and long-term planning for Learning Quest. Additionally she also implemented, solely administered, and taught online GED. Her other related experience includes serving as an Instructional Designer at Gurnick Academy of Medical Arts; Technology Coach at San Joaquin Valley College; Instructor at San Joaquin Valley College; and Professor at California State University, Stanislaus. Chris has also owned and operated Dr. Peppers’ Chiropractic for the last 18 years. Chris enjoys problem solving and creating new ideas. She considers herself to be technologically fearless, which is great as in her new role. She is responsible for using and providing all aspects of technical support for online courses, Moodle courses, webinars and addressing issues to the CALPRO help desk. Chris has a Doctor of Chiropractic from Los Angeles College of Chiropractic and her B.S. in Psychobiology from the University of California, Riverside.


The CALPROgress periodical is published annually and features issues related to adult education and literacy. It contains news about local programs in California and CALPRO services that support professional development to enhance adult learning.

CALPRO invites readers to send their articles related to professional development in adult education and literacy to Dr. Cherise Moore at cmoore@air.org.

Read CALPROgress online at: http://calpro-online.org/calprogress.asp.