



Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education News and Views

Through others, we become ourselves.

L. S. Vygotsky



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The Issue of Firm Resolve

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(the following is the official NCES press release for NAAL)

New Report on Adult Literacy Levels, First Since 1992, Shows Need for High School Reform

Washington, D.C., Dec. 15, 2005 — American adults can read a newspaper or magazine about as well as they could a decade ago, but have made significant strides in performing literacy tasks that involve computation, according to the first national study of adult literacy since 1992.

The National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL), released today by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), found little change between 1992 and 2003 in adults' ability to read and understand sentences and paragraphs or to understand documents such as job applications.

"One adult unable to read is one too many in America," said U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, who today announced plans to coordinate adult education efforts in 2006 across multiple federal agencies. "We must take a comprehensive and preventive approach, beginning with elementary schools and with special emphasis in our high schools. We must focus resources toward proven, research-based methods to ensure that all adults have the necessary literacy skills to be successful."

African Americans scored higher in 2003 than in 1992 in all three categories, increasing 16 points in quantitative, eight points in document and six points in prose literacy. Overall, adults have improved in document and quantitative literacy with a smaller percentage of adults in 2003 in the Below Basic category compared to 1992. Whites, African Americans and Asian/Pacific Islanders have improved in all three measures of literacy with a smaller percentage in 2003 in the Below Basic category compared to 1992.

Hispanic adults showed a decrease in scores for both prose and document literacy and a higher percentage in the Below Basic category. The report also showed that five percent of U.S. adults, about 11 million people, were termed "nonliterate" in English, meaning interviewers could not communicate with them or that they were unable to answer a minimum number of questions. *(cont. p.2)*



Spanish Teacher (s?): We need Spanish teachers for both conversational Spanish and Spanish for the Workplace. Afternoons and evenings. Contact Marilyn Files for more information.

Saturday "ESL Computers" Teacher: We need a teacher who is experienced in both language acquisition and technology. 9:00 - noon, Saturdays at the Porter Building. Contact Cynthia Stark or Karen Reid for more information.

CathyJo and Natalie would like to formally invite each adult education staff member to participate in the planning of the "150th Years of Adult Education March celebration"! We would like to have as many staff members participate as possible (you know ... the more, the merrier!). The more help we have the better the celebration will be. Please join us in making this a fantastic celebration!

We will need help on the following committees:

- Refreshments
- Decorating
- Entertainment
- Publicity
- Activities/Events
- Program
- Welcoming & Greeting

National Assessment of Adult Literacy (cont.)

NAAL in 2003 assessed a nationally representative sample of more than 19,000 Americans age 16 and older, most in their homes and some in prisons. NCES, which is part of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, conducted the assessment in both 1992 and 2003.

NAAL uses three categories to define English-language literacy: prose, document and quantitative. Prose literacy includes the skills needed to understand continuous text, such as newspaper articles. Document literacy is the ability to understand the content and structure of documents such as prescription drug labels. Quantitative literacy involves using numbers in text, such as computing and comparing the cost per ounce of food items.

NAAL reports literacy in each category using a 0-500 scale score. Scores are then grouped in four literacy levels: Below Basic, Basic, Intermediate and Proficient. Below Basic is the lowest level and indicates having "no more than the most simple and concrete literacy skills." Those who can perform "complex and challenging" tasks are considered at the Proficient level. The report, *A First Look at the Literacy of America's Adults in the 21st Century*, analyzed literacy results based on a variety of factors, including race/ethnicity, gender, age, and level of educational attainment. A companion report, *Key Concepts and Features of the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy*, describes the assessment's key features and major data types. It was also released today.

Other report highlights:

- White adults' scores were up nine points in quantitative, but were unchanged in prose and document literacy.
- Hispanic adults' scores declined in prose and document literacy 18 points and 14 points, respectively, but were unchanged in quantitative literacy.
- Asian/Pacific Islanders' scores increased 16 points in prose literacy, but were unchanged in document and quantitative literacy.
- Among those who spoke only Spanish before starting school, scores were down 17 points in prose and document literacy between 1992 and 2003.

To put its findings in perspective, NAAL also reported on U.S. population changes between 1992 and 2003. During the decade, the percentage of white adults decreased from 77 to 70 percent, while the percentage of Hispanic adults increased from eight to 12 percent. The percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander adults doubled (to 4 percent). The percentage of adults who spoke only English before starting school decreased from 86 to 81 percent.

Note from Bob: This report has been waited for with great expectations in the adult education community. The last "NAAL" caused a stir in the Clinton years, and seemed to reinforce the need for and importance of adult education programs. It is interesting that in the 11 years between the reports there was some progress, and there was some lost ground. Initial comments may signal that attention will be given to high schools, to "prevent" lack of literacy, perhaps at the cost of serving adult learners. I think the report should make us renew our own commitment to addressing the need for adult literacy: low literacy is a contributing factor to the increasing divide in our nation between the affluent, and the people whose work form the foundation of our economy. I strongly encourage you to look at the full report: <http://nces.ed.gov/naal/>

Women as Social Warriors (WSW) IV

Thursday, February 2, 2006 from 6 PM-9PM at UCSC, College 9&10 Multipurpose Room

The Women as Social Warriors project is a UC Santa Cruz student, staff, faculty, and community collaboration that spotlights Chicana and Latina activists and artists challenging local, regional, cross-border and global injustices in their communities.

The upcoming event features three of the most important experts and activists on health policy for Latinas. Xóchitl Castañeda of the California-Mexico Health Initiative will offer a perspective on the relationship between Mexican migration and HIV/AIDS transmission for women on both sides of the border. Barbara Garcia, Deputy Director of Health for San Francisco, will speak on health services and the role of Latino/a-serving agencies, drawing on her previous work as Director of Salud Para La Gente in the Pajaro Valley. Juanita Quintero, of UCSF will offer a regional perspective on her work with Latina health in San Francisco.

OTAN is pleased to announce the appointment of Marian Thacher to



replace Linda West as Director of OTAN. Marian has been the Coordinator of Technology Projects for OTAN for the last four years, and in that capacity she has worked with agencies to support the effective use of technology in the classroom, first through the Instructional Technology Assistance Project and now with the Technology Integration Mentor Academy (TIMAC). Marian has also been responsible for the Technology Planning process required for many EL Civics agencies, and you may have attended one of her many conference presentations on technology topics. Prior to her work with OTAN, Marian taught Adult ESOL for many years, and was involved with several technology projects in San Diego, including developing online literacy courses targeted to

employees in the workplace in conjunction with the California Distance Learning Project. She also coordinated the VESL program in San Diego, provided basic skills instruction in many workplace settings, and managed multimedia projects to design online instruction and instructional CDs

This month's website of resources for adult educators:

GlobalLocalPopEd.org

What is GlobalLocalPopEd all about?

Corporate-driven globalization increasingly influences the problems we face in low-income communities and communities of color in the U.S. Faced with the complexity and abstract language of globalization, community-based organizations are using popular education to communicate the issues clearly and to build new grassroots leadership for global justice. This clearinghouse banks profiles of organizations doing effective popular education that links global and local issues, tools and games that dozens of organizations have used in their curriculum, and resources that will help you formulate your own popular education.



WAAE Calendar



*Spring Semester Begins
Tuesday, January 3, 2006*


*ESL Awards Ceremony Post meeting
Thursday, January 5, 5:00-6:00 p.m., Green Valley*

*Student Councils
Monday, January 9, Green Valley, morning and evening
Tuesday, January 10, Porter, morning and evening*

*Student Support Center Meeting
Wednesday, January 11, 4:00-6:00 p.m., Porter*

*Martin Luther King Holiday
Monday, January 16*

*School Council
Wednesday, January 18, 4:00-6:00 p.m., Porter*

 *Community Advisory Council
Wednesday, February 8, 10:30 a.m. - noon
Career and Technical Education at WAAE, County Job Market Outlook*

*150th Anniversary of California Public Adult Education
WAAE Celebration
Saturday, March 11, 8:00-noon, Green Valley*

el·lip·sis . . .

n. pl. el·lip·ses (-s z)

The omission of a word or phrase necessary for a complete syntactical construction but not necessary for understanding.

...our sympathy goes out to Karen Reid whose father passed away peacefully on Christmas Eve... it was good to see a good group of staff and friends at the holiday potluck including the last two directors, Claudia Grossi and Joellen Bruce... the Langendorf Building plans are still held up in the city of Watsonville's planning department (and dates for the start of construction are unknown)... before the holidays we reached a negotiated agreement with the certificated bargaining unit, the Pajaro Valley Federation of Teachers, it calls for a 2% raise which, if approved by the teachers and the Board of Trustees, will be retroactive to July 1, 2005... Sylvia Austerlic, one of our Spanish teachers has informed us that she will not be able to teach for us this year... thanks to Sylvia for her skills and ideas y buena suerte... we've agreed to partner with the District's Technology Department in jointly offering a series of technology workshops...