



# Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education News and Views

*Through others, we become ourselves.*

*L. S. Vygotsky*



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The "Bringing in the Sheaves" Issue

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## **STUDENTS, STUDENTS, WHERE ART THOU?!?!**

**Cynthia Stark, Assistant Principal**

Enrollment is still alarmingly low in many classes. We have run classes with less than 8 students for more than a month! We have advertised extensively in English and Spanish newspapers, radio stations and TV. We have ESL advisors and Outreach Support people to talk to parent groups and go out to the Santa Cruz Fair and other fairs to talk about what classes WAAE offers. It has helped, but not enough. It is time to return to the Old Ways of the Old Days before we had the luxury of all this advertising and outreach personnel.

It is time to put on our entrepreneur hats and go out and sell our own classes. In the past, teachers knew the continuation of their classes (and livelihood) depended on getting out into the community themselves when the attendance was falling and passing out flyers, posting them in places frequented by their targeted student population and talking to certain groups if that helped. Personal contact by teachers works better than any flyer. They knew you had to get the students in the class first. Teachers need to step up to this challenge or they may not have a class. We need to come up with some ideas to attract students who have never come to our school.

Then the second challenge of keeping can begin by creating student-centered communicatively interactive, fun classes in which students are learning relevant skills and language that they practice and apply to their lives immediately. Student Council students again said they wanted more communicative interactive practice!!! How does that song go? "How many times must a student ask for, "more talking" before it is heard?" We have some excellent teachers who do this and we cannot pry their students away from them even though they belong in a higher class. What does this tell us!

*(cont. on page 3)*

Contributions for the victims Hurricane Katrina are being collected at both offices until Sept. 27, for the Red Cross, Catholic Charities and Community Labor United.

## **SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETS SEPT. 21, WILL DISCUSS LAST YEAR'S DEFICITS**

The regular school council meeting next week will address a number of important issues, not the least of which is to review the final financial reports from last year, and to explore the level of deficit spending that we can sustain. I am going to suggest that a "budget taskforce" look at some issues (small classes, materials expenses, conference and extra-duty work, out of classroom assignments) that have an impact on our fiscal solvency. We've been struggling a bit ever since the budget "rebenching" of a two years ago. Obviously, the number of students per class is the single greatest factor in having sufficient funds (see Cynthia's article on this page). Other topics will include emergency preparedness, and professional development and evaluation process.

# Persistence #2

Our professional development theme for the year is to explore practices and policy that have an impact on student persistence. One of the greatest sources of research on this subject in the last decade has been the National Center for Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. One of the factors that they identify as having a significant impact on student persistence is for students to be conscious about the assets and obstacles they have to reach their goals, and to critically look at how to access the assets to overcome the obstacles.

*(the following was accessed on Sept. 7, 2005 from the NCSALL website:  
<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=327>)*

## Focus on Teaching Support and Hindrances:

### A Force-Field Analysis

by Andrea Parrella

*The following activity guides a group of learners in thinking about the forces that hinder and help them to achieve their goals. For beginning English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) students, you might need to explain or demonstrate vocabulary.*

**Step 1:** Ask the learners to think about what it takes for them to continue to pursue their educational goals.

**Step 2:** Write "Pursuing Educational Goals" at the top of a large sheet of paper on the wall. Then, draw a vertical line down the middle of the paper, and write "+" (plus sign) over the left-hand column and "-" (minus sign) over the right-hand column.

**Step 3:** Ask the learners to brainstorm all of the things that make it hard for them to stay in the program and continue to pursue their educational goals. As they brainstorm forces, write them, one by one, on the right side of the paper, under the minus sign. Use the question: Who or what gets in the way of (hinders you from) continuing to come to this program?

**Step 4:** Ask the learners to brainstorm the things that help them to attend class or to continue to pursue their education goals. Write these on the left side of the paper, under the plus sign. Use the question: Who or what helps you (supports you) to continue to stay in this program?

**Step 5:** Ask the learners to look at the lists and talk about what they see. Are there more negative than positive forces? Where do the forces come from (the class, family, work, etc.)?

**Step 6:** Give each learner an index card or a blank piece of paper and ask each to write down the answer to this question: What two forces from the list do you most want us to work on in class? Point out that they can take their forces either from the positive "+" force list (forces they would want to work on strengthening), from the negative "-" force list (forces they would want to work on weakening), or from a combination of the two.

**Step 7:** Have the learners get into pairs and discuss the forces they have written down. They must reduce the number of forces from four (two each) to the two they feel are most important to work on in class. One person in each pair should write the new list of two forces on a piece of paper.

**Step 8:** Have sets of pairs join to form small groups of four. Each pair shares its list of two items with the other pair. The group of four now has several minutes to come up with a new list of two forces on which all four agree. They write their new list of two forces, which represents their "consensus," on a large piece of paper.

# Focus on Teaching Support and Hindrances: A Force-Field Analysis *(cont.)*

**Step 9:** Ask a member from each group to post the paper with their two forces written on it, reading the forces aloud as they do so. Then ask the whole class to look at the papers for similarities: Are there any forces that appear on all the lists? If so, write them on a fresh sheet of paper. These represent the consensus of the class.

**Step 10:** Continue looking for forces that appear on more than one list until all the forces listed on more than one sheet are on the "consensus" list. Ask the class to consider which items still remaining on the original lists are important enough to include on the fresh list. The fresh list represents the forces that the class wants to work on in the coming term.

**Step 11:** If only two forces are listed on the "consensus" sheet, skip to step 12. If there are more than two forces, have the learners vote for the two forces they see as the highest priority.

**Step 12:** The class has now determined the two forces that they most want to work on. The next step is to brainstorm the various ways in which you can work together as a class to address these forces by strengthening the positive and weakening the negative.

**Continuing the Process:** This is just one way you can help learners understand what is helping them achieve their goals and what is hindering them from doing so. You, of course, will be learning at the same time. Try to set aside some time each week to work, as a class, on strengthening the supporting forces and weakening the hindering forces. You and the learners can assess what effect these activities are having. The forces that the learners want to work on may change over time. To capture these changes, repeat the force-field activity with the class or with individuals throughout the semester.

## Being an Entrepreneur, Cynthia Stark *(cont. from the page 1)*

It tells us the same thing I discovered from teaching very multi-level classes. Teach something that is relevant to the students' lives in a manner that makes it comprehensible to all; that is practiced in a variety of ways so that all learning styles are addressed and so that students actually remember and use what they are learning. Making it interactive meets a social as well as a learning need. It builds a sense of community while the students are actually learning to use the language. They get immediate feedback if they understand or are understood. It builds their confidence and a sense of mastery.

I hope we can all step up and meet these two challenges that will ensure the survival and quality of our school. I encourage teachers to write about what they are doing to get new and returning students to come to their classes and how they are keeping them.

### Classified News *(submitted by Natalie)*

**Debbie** has received her teaching credential and has actually subbed several lifelong learning classes this last week, YEA!!!

After years of no salary increases, the classified staff will actually see a pay increase this year...the **Classification Study** has been completed and approved by the Board retroactive to July 1, 2005. Not all positions made a move, but, not anyone received a decrease in salary. Each employee will receive a letter (at home) explaining the process and letting you know where you are to be placed. If you have any questions or problems with where you're placed or with your new job description, please see me. FYI...Years past, CSEA negotiated that 1% of a salary increase be put into a interest baring account to help with the cost of the Classification Study.

# WAAE Calendar - Fall, 2005

Sept. 21 - School Council, GV, 4-6pm, Agenda, All Welcomed!

1. School opening - Departmental Reports
2. **Budget Review.** Unaudited Actuals from 2004-2005. Projections and Plans for this year. Budget taskforce? Budget study session?
3. Langendorf Update
4. Safety/Equity – Earthquake/disaster preparedness , *Are we ready?*
5. School Improvement Plan - Outreach efforts to increase attendance.
6. Evaluation and Professional Development Persistence – which competencies? Portfolio, Peer coaching, or traditional evaluation. Coaches - role
7. Data Projects. Cabrillo match. District match. AIM/TopsPro interfaces.



***Natalie's Place*** - A Column of News and Reflections from the Office Manager

## Staff Sunshine Committee

Over the past few weeks there have been several birthdays, anniversaries and, unfortunately, some of our employees have lost loved ones, how do we as an organization deal with these events as they come up? Not well, sometimes either site will handle it and the other site doesn't hear or know about it until after the fact or it's not recognized at all. Up to now, we've celebrated events on a "hit & miss" basis. How can we coordinate and do a better job at recognizing our employees? An idea is to have a "Staff Sunshine Committee". We would collect \$1 or \$2 a month that goes into a "Staff Sunshine" fund that will go towards buying cards, flowers or whatever is needed for recognition of such events. We will have a person responsible to make sure that employees are recognized. It's not an easy job and maybe we can rotate the responsibility every two months. Do you have any other ideas, please contact me. We welcome and

*I'd like to take this time to make a public apologize to Juanita and Lucila, and anyone else I may have forgotten, for leaving the "classified staff" birthdays off the News & Views Birthday list. Juanita's birthday was August 29 and Lucila's was September 5. My best wishes to both of you!!*

<http://wiki.literacytent.org/>

For those of you who are interested in the "wiki" environment, or movement, you may want to check out the above wiki website for adult educators. Remember way back in the 1990's when the Internet was going to usher in a golden era of free, democratically shared information? A do-it-yourself utopia? The "wikis", where a group of interested users manage content of a site, is one of the few tangible artifacts of those halcyon days of digital revolution. Especially look at the "discussion topics" list at the bottom. It has links to some very interesting information for adult educators.