

## Reading in English

**A**dult English language learners bring to education programs varied reading backgrounds and experiences. Some are fluent readers in their native languages; some are not. Their views of literacy are influenced by the literacy practices of their cultures. Yet they all share the experience of learning to read in English, and they approach reading differently from the way native English speakers approach it. The following activities can help learners develop reading proficiency. The choice of activity depends on the needs of the learners, the nature of the texts read, and the demands of the reading task.

### Reading Activities

1. Because good readers read with a purpose, learners should read texts that meet their needs and are interesting. Teachers can choose texts, or let the learners choose texts, that are relevant to the learners' lives. They also need to be exposed to texts that they are likely to encounter in everyday life, such as newspapers and magazines, work memos, schedules, and medical instructions.

2. In order to develop automatic recognition skills, learners who are preliterate or literate in a language with a non-Roman alphabet should be given opportunities to develop letter recognition and sound-symbol correspondence skills. This should not be done in isola-

tion, but with familiar texts that they have practiced orally or heard before. For example, learners can identify words that begin with a certain sound in a dialogue they have worked with. Learners who are literate in their own language may find phonics instruction unproductive unless differences between their native language and English are pointed out. Spanish speakers, for example, need to know that the letter "a" can express more than one sound in English.

Vocabulary development also plays a role in automaticity. In texts where vocabulary may not be familiar, teachers can introduce key vocabulary in prereading activities that focus on language awareness, such as finding synonyms, antonyms, derivatives, or associated words. Modified cloze exercises, where examples of the target structure (e.g., prepositions) are deleted from a text and learners fill in as many blanks as they can, are also helpful.

3. Using appropriate strategies for various reading tasks increases comprehension, but acquiring an array of strategies is a long and difficult process. Nevertheless, such strategies as skimming for the main idea, scanning for specific information, predicting what a text is about or what will happen next, and making use of the context and illustrations to discover word meanings are critical for English language learners beyond the beginning level.

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## A Standards Sampler

**S**tandards have been prominent in K-12 education reform as a way to promote high-quality education and accountability. Now, adult education programs are also developing standards, in part, as a response to the new Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Below is an annotated list of several major efforts related to adult education standards in the United States and Canada. (For an excellent in-depth article, see the cover article in the September 1999 *Focus on Basics* at <http://gseweb.harvard.edu/~ncsall/fobv3ic.htm>.)

### *National Reporting System*

Not a standards project per se, this U.S. Department of Education, Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) project aims to develop an outcome-based reporting system for state-administered federally funded adult education programs, including adult ESL programs. State directors of adult education are working with DAEL and a contractor, AIR/Pelavin, on this effort. Visit <http://www.air.org/nrs> to read the draft guidelines (revised as of 10/99) and access related training materials.

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# Resource Updates

The National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) and World Education are happy to announce the publication of the first volume of **The Annual Review of Adult Learning and Literacy**. Produced and edited by NCSALL and published by Jossey-Bass, the review is a yearly book of commissioned articles for policymakers, scholars, and practitioners in adult literacy. Each annual review will feature articles on the year's most critical topics, annotated reviews of the best books, and journal articles and updates on evolving policy and research.

Volume One—which includes an article on adult ESL assessment by NCLE's Carol Van Duzer—is available for \$34.95 (plus \$6.50 shipping and handling) from Jossey-Bass, 350 Sansome Street, San Francisco, CA 94104, 1-800-956-7739. The book can also be ordered from the Web at [www.josseybass.com](http://www.josseybass.com).



The NCLE website at [www.cal.org/ncle](http://www.cal.org/ncle) added a feature called **Worth a Visit** in 1999. This annotated list of carefully selected Web links is organized by category and includes links for adult ESL learners, international literacy and language organizations, and online ESL publications. Every three months this feature will be updated, and new sites will be added. Visit this new feature on NCLE's website today for some up-to-the-minute ESL resources.

**What Non-Readers or Beginning Readers Need to Know: Performance-Based ESL Adult Literacy** is a 44-page booklet by Shirley Brod. Written for adult ESL instructors, it describes adult English learners and factors affecting their literacy development. It also looks at performance-based instruction, discussing what it is and why it should be used. Appendices include reprintable worksheets to use with literacy students and a list of Web and print-based resources for instructors. To order the booklet, call the Spring Institute for International Studies at 303-863-0188. For information about other publications, check the Spring's website at [www.springinstitute.com/elt](http://www.springinstitute.com/elt).

**My History is America's History** is an exciting new project launched by the National Endowment for the Humanities to encourage people to cherish, record, and share their family stories. Among the activities for classroom, home, and community are Web-based family trees, add-to collections of stories, and photo sleuthing and interview ideas. Information about preserving objects (including photographs, books, and fabrics) and links to many related genealogy resources should engage adult learners and teachers. Visit [www.myhistory.org](http://www.myhistory.org) to begin your own journey!

The *My History* guidebook is available free (\$3.75 for postage and handling) from My History, Pueblo, CO 81009, or call toll-free 1-977-634-4478.



*Courtesy National Endowment for the Humanities*

A one-hour **training video** (\$50 including shipping and handling) is now available to accompany the short form of the **Basic English Skills Test (BEST)**. Developed by educators in Oregon, the video leads viewers through the oral test and shows them how to conduct and score interviews. Visit the Center for Applied Linguistics' website at [www.cal.org/public/besvid.htm](http://www.cal.org/public/besvid.htm) for details about ordering the video or call CAL at 202-362-0700, ext. 220.

## TESOL Navigates into the New Millennium

TESOL's 2000 convention, Navigating the New Millennium, will be held March 14-18, 2000, in Vancouver, British Columbia. For information about the event, contact TESOL at [www.tesol.edu](http://www.tesol.edu) or by e-mail at [conv@tesol.edu](mailto:conv@tesol.edu).

### NCLE Presentations at TESOL 2000

NCLE staff will be making a number of presentations at TESOL 2000, and we invite you to join us. Also, be sure to visit NCLE's booth in the exhibit area!

- **Writing to Promote Reflection and Change**  
Joy Peyton and Carol Van Duzer
- **Instructional Strategies for Secondary School ESOL Students**  
Joy Peyton
- **Incorporating Critical Literacy in the Adult ESL Classroom**  
MaryAnn Cunningham Florez
- **Using Poetry with Adult English Language Learners**  
Joy Peyton
- **Research Directions in Adult ESL**  
Joy Peyton and Carol Van Duzer
- **Using Video and Text to Enhance Learning**  
Miriam Burt and Carol Van Duzer

## Most Hispanics Are Bilingual

A recent marketing survey of the U.S. Hispanic population reports that 64% of Hispanics are equally proficient in English and Spanish. The 2000 edition of the U.S. Hispanic Market Study by Strategy Research Corporation includes information on Hispanic population and demographics, purchasing power, and politics. Read a summary of the report online at LatinoLink [www.latinolink.com/news/1999/1104bili.htm](http://www.latinolink.com/news/1999/1104bili.htm).

The report itself (designed for commercial use) costs almost \$700. For ordering information, see [www.strategyresearch.com/blue.html](http://www.strategyresearch.com/blue.html) or call 305-649-5400.

## ESL Literacy/Civics Education Grants Awarded

January 18, 2000, is the deadline for the U.S. Department of Education's English Literacy and Civics Education Demonstration Grants Program. This initiative will help states and communities provide adult English learners with expanded access to high quality English literacy programs linked to civics and life skills instruction. This includes understanding and navigating the U.S. government system, the public education system, the workplace, and other key institutions. Approximately \$7 million in discretionary grants will be awarded to support English literacy and civics programs to increase access and improve adult education English literacy services. You can find more information about the program at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/ELCIVICS>.

## LINCS Has a New Look

The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) has redesigned and relaunched its LINCS website at <http://novel.nifl.gov>. The site serves as a central location for links to Web pages for many related projects such as listservs, regional literacy hubs, and specialized Web collections. Resources such as a calendar of literacy conferences, funding and policy information, and state and national directories complete the picture. The LINCS search engines locate literacy websites, online publications, and other literacy resources.

This redesign effort has taken a couple of years and has involved many literacy practitioners. Please give the site a visit and give the LINCS staff some feedback. NIFL itself now has a distinct website at [www.nifl.gov/nifl/](http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/), reachable from an easy link on the LINCS site.

### Fran Bids Farewell

*After nine years at the National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE), I am making a move across the Potomac River to PBS in Alexandria, Virginia. I will be coordinating an online ESL project with PBS's LiteracyLink. The time here has flown by. I've enjoyed working at NCLE and editing this newsletter, which will continue under a new editor.*

Fran Keenan



NCLE celebrates 10th birthday

## NCLE Turns Ten!

On September 13, 1999, NCLE celebrated 10 years of service in the field of adult English language and literacy education. NCLE, an adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse, began operation in 1989 at the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) in Washington, DC. Our initial mission was to provide information, materials, and technical assistance on literacy education for adult English language learners (ELLs). Ten years later we are still going strong! We continue our work along with practitioners, administrators, literacy organizations, and policymakers in their efforts to address the growing needs of adult ELLs in the United States.

The staff thank all who have worked with and supported NCLE throughout the past 10 years. We look forward to many more!

## Reading in English from page 1

4. Prereading activities that introduce the text encourage learners to use their background knowledge. Class members can brainstorm ideas about the meaning of a title or an illustration and discuss what they know. The teacher can highlight cultural assumptions inherent in the writing. Awareness of various text types and their styles (advertisements, recipes, editorials) is also helpful.

5. Evaluating texts for implicit values and assumptions is another important reading skill. Reading texts that present different opinions or different descriptions of the same situation help develop an awareness of how language reflects values. Texts that present an issue without presenting a solution, such as “Dear Abby” letters (without the replies), can lead to discussion and writing about differing points of view.

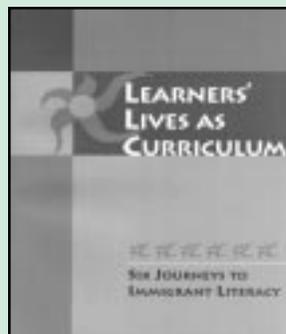
6. Good readers expect to understand what they are reading. Therefore, texts should contain words and grammatical structures familiar to the learners. However, it is not always easy to find texts that are both understandable and interesting for adult English language learners to read. Authentic reading material can often be written by the learners themselves and shared with each other.

7. Extensive reading for a sustained, uninterrupted period of time is not only valuable for developing vocabulary but is also an important way to develop reading proficiency and language acquisition in general. In class, learners can engage in Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) of materials they have chosen themselves. They can be encouraged to read outside

of class by maintaining (and periodically turning in) reading logs that list what they have read and by making one- to three-minute oral presentations recommending a book, story, or article to their classmates.

*This article is excerpted from Reading and the Adult English Language Learner, an ERIC Digest published in August 1999 by NCLE, written by Carol Van Duzer. The digest is available on our website at [www.cal.org/nclc](http://www.cal.org/nclc); by mail from NCLE, 4646 40<sup>th</sup> Street, NW Washington, DC 20016-1859; or by e-mail at [nclc@cal.org](mailto:nclc@cal.org). To request a copy, please specify the title.▼*

## The Latest



*Learners' Lives as Curriculum: Six Journeys to Immigrant Literacy* by Gail Weinstein is a teacher text and video that explore the use of learners' lives as the basis for English language and literacy development. The publication is the product of the work of learners and teachers at six sites involved in the California's Bay Area Immigrant Literacy Initiative. The video shows learners and teachers at the sites as they work on a variety of activities that incorporate stories from the learners' own life experiences. The teacher text outlines the concepts behind the curriculum and presents the practical knowledge gained by the staff.

**Perfect for adult ESL staff development!**

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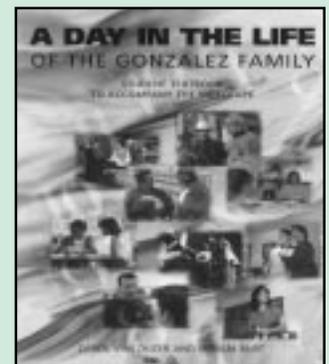
**ERIC Digests about adult ESL are available in full text on NCLE's website!**

**[www.cal.org/nclc](http://www.cal.org/nclc)**



## Delta

From



*A Day in the Life of the Gonzalez Family* offers high-beginning through intermediate level adult English language learners an opportunity to develop communication skills while acquiring cultural content knowledge relevant to their daily lives. A short video focuses an immigrant family from Mexico who live and work in California. The textbook, by NCLE's Carol Van Duzer and Miriam Burt, consists of ten thematic units that lead learners from guided language practice through the development of project-based activities.

Both publications can be ordered from Delta Systems Co., Inc. at 1-800-323-8270 or [www.delta-systems.com](http://www.delta-systems.com).

# Publications Order Form

## New ERIC Digests from NCLE

### Refugees as English Language Learners: Issues and Concerns

by Peggy Seufert

Addresses some of the most commonly asked questions about current refugees, including questions on their ethnic origins, cultural orientation training overseas, and their instructional support service needs in the United States.

### Using Videos with Adult English Language Learners

by Miriam Burt

Provides a rationale for using videos in instruction, presents guidelines for selecting and using them, discusses commercial videos, and looks at the future of instructional video use.

### Reading and the Adult English Language Learner

by Carol Van Duzer

Describes major reading approaches, discusses what fluent readers do, and suggests ways to improve English reading skills for adult learners.

### Poetry in the Adult ESL Classroom

by Joy Kreeft Peyton and Pat Rigg

Discusses ways to select and use poetry in adult language and literacy classes and provides information about poetry collections and resources for further reading.

### Improving Adult English Language Learners' Speaking Skills

by MaryAnn Cunningham Florez

Describes what speaking involves and how good speakers express themselves. It also presents an outline for creating an effective speaking lesson and for assessing learners' speaking skills.

### Native Language Literacy and Adult ESL Instruction

by Klaudia Rivera

Reviews recent research related to the role of native language literacy and describes program types and instructional approaches that incorporate learners' languages into instruction.

## ERIC Digests (Free)\*

- Poetry in the Adult ESL Classroom** (December 1999)
- Native Language Literacy and Adult ESL Instruction** (December 1999)
- Refugees as English Language Learners: Issues and Concerns** (September 1999)
- Using Videos with Adult English Language Learners** (August 1999)
- Reading and the Adult English Language Learner** (August 1999)
- Improving Adult English Language Learners' Speaking Skills** (June 1999)
- Using the World Wide Web with Adult Learners** (December 1998)
- Using Multicultural Children's Literature in Adult ESL Classes** (December 1998)
- Project-Based Learning for Adult English Language Learners** (December 1998)
- Improving Adult ESL Learners' Pronunciation Skills** (December 1998)

\*All 64 of NCLE's ERIC Digests are also on the Web at [www.cal.org/nclc](http://www.cal.org/nclc)

**Send this form to: Product Orders, NCLE/CAL, 4646 40th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20016-1859**

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## Electronic NCLEnotes?

If you would like to receive *NCLEnotes* electronically, please let us know! Send an e-mail to **[NCLE@cal.org](mailto:NCLE@cal.org)** and mention *NCLEnotes* in the subject line.

**NCLEnotes** is published twice yearly by the National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE) and distributed free to individuals and organizations on NCLE's mailing list. *NCLEnotes* is also published on NCLE's website at [www.cal.org/ncl](http://www.cal.org/ncl). Please address comments, suggestions, or material for consideration to  
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## **A Standards Sampler** *from page 1*

### *Equipped for the Future*

This multi-year undertaking led by the National Institute for Literacy has already involved many educators and learners and identified the skills adults need to know and the main roles in which those skills play a part. Now, content standards are being revised and field-tested. See the EFF website at [www.nifl.gov/EFF](http://www.nifl.gov/EFF) for more information.

### *Canadian Language Benchmarks*

Educators in Canada have developed a set of national performance standards for adult ESL instruction. In addition to the contents of the benchmarks themselves, a website (<http://www.language.ca>) provides descriptions of the Centre's programs and services, links to related sites, and an overview of the CLB process. The publications section contains numerous ESL and CLB-related materials (many online in full text).

### *TESOL Adult Education Program Standards*

A draft version of the Adult Education Program Standards, identifying key criteria of a quality adult ESL program,

was distributed at TESOL's 1999 convention and posted on the Web for feedback. Now being revised, the standards will be made available through TESOL's publications unit. Watch the TESOL website or NIFL-ESL listserv for an announcement. For more information, see *NCLEnotes*, "TESOL Defines Quality Programs" (Vol. 8, No. 1, p.4). (Go to [www.cal.org/ncl](http://www.cal.org/ncl) to view past issues of this newsletter.)

TESOL also sponsored the development of K-12 ESL content standards. View these at [www.cal.org](http://www.cal.org).

### *State Standards*

Several states have developed their own content and performance standards for adult ESL. Some, like Arizona, have begun posting these efforts on the Web. (View Arizona's ESL standards at [www.ade.state.az.us/programs/assistance/Adult-Ed/standardsproj/default.htm](http://www.ade.state.az.us/programs/assistance/Adult-Ed/standardsproj/default.htm).) If your state has information available about its ESL standards, especially on the Web, please contact MaryAnn Florez at NCLE ([maryann@cal.org](mailto:maryann@cal.org)) with the information or the Web address. ▼