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## Teaching Math

### Fifty Years of Math 1957 - 2007

Last week I purchased a burger for \$1.58. The young counter person took my \$2, and to save change I pulled 8 cents from my pocket and gave it to her. She stood there, holding the nickel and 3 pennies, looking at the screen on the register. I sensed discomfort and tried to tell her to just give me two quarters, but she hailed the manager for help. Why do I tell you this?

Because of the evolution in teaching math since the 1950s:

#### 1. Teaching Math In 1950s

A logger sells a truckload of lumber for \$100. His cost of production is  $\frac{4}{5}$  of the price. What is his profit?

#### 2. Teaching Math In 1960s

A logger sells a truckload of lumber for \$100 His cost of production is  $\frac{4}{5}$  of the price, or \$80. What is his profit?

#### 3. Teaching Math In 1970s

A logger sells a truckload of lumber for \$100. His cost of production is \$80. Did he make a profit?

#### 4. Teaching Math In 1980s

A logger sells a truckload of lumber for \$100. His cost of production is \$80 and his profit is \$20. Your assignment: Underline the number 20.

#### 5. Teaching Math In 1990s

A logger cuts down a beautiful forest because he

is selfish and inconsiderate and cares nothing for the habitat of animals or the preservation of our woodlands. He does this so he can make a profit of \$20. What do you think of this way of making a living? Topic for class participation after answering the question: How did the birds and squirrels feel as the logger cut down their homes? (There are no wrong answers, and if you feel like crying, it's ok. )

#### 6. Teaching Math In 2007

First, turn off your cell phone and put away your iPods. Now turn your calculator on.

## High School Diplomas and Army Recruits

The Army is not meeting its goal of having 90% high school graduates for recruits since 2004. To read this article go to:

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/22779968/>

## Updated NW Links

The NW Internet Gateway for Adult Online Resources has been updated and includes many links to many excellent sites.

[http://www.nwlincs.org/NWLINCWEB/Whats\\_new.htm#January\\_2008](http://www.nwlincs.org/NWLINCWEB/Whats_new.htm#January_2008)

## Online Educational Comics Helping Families Write, Read and Tell Stories Both in English and Spanish; More Characters Introduced

I have launched a new web site -- <http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/> -- where children and adults can create their own comic strips. They can select from 15 fun characters with different moods -- happy, sad, angry, worried - and write words for blank talk and thought balloons to make their characters talk and think. There also are story ideas and prompts to help users create graphic stories.

This site can be used by educators to teach language, reading and writing skills, and also for students in English-as-a-Second-Language programs to facilitate self-expression and storytelling, as well as computer literacy. Some educational therapists use it with deaf and autistic people to help them understand concepts and communicate. Parents and children can create stories together, print them to create comic books or email them to friends and family. Others will find the site a resource to be creative, calm down and have fun.

Because so many Spanish-speaking users asked us for the ability to write their cartoons in Spanish as well as in English, we recently upgraded the site to accept words written in Spanish, including appropriate accent marks. This can be a useful tool for someone who is learning Spanish as well as someone whose first language is Spanish. In time, this feature will be extended to other languages ... As one who learned to read with comic books, I know that creating comic strips can help people tap into their creativity and practice their language and storytelling skills. The site is free and stems from my lifelong mission to create resources that help people find their voice and express themselves ...

Bill Zimmerman  
([wmz@aol.com](mailto:wmz@aol.com))

## ProLiteracy Expanded Online Course for ESOL Instructors

ProLiteracy has expanded its online courses for ESOL instructors. The first course, **Creating Engaging ESOL Activities Using Computers I, will begin February 11.** (Please note - the fall offering of this course filled within a week, so please register early if you're interested in participating.)

The course description is included below, and complete course and registration information is available at:  
<http://www.newreaderspress.com/default.aspx?cat=prof&hid=289&pid=PLAEL10-F>

ProLiteracy will offer several other courses for ESOL instructors and tutors throughout the spring, including:

- Creating Engaging ESOL Activities Using Computers I (a follow-up to the course described below)
- Managing the Multi-level ESL Classroom
- Using Cultural Artifacts to Teach ESL

For more information about these courses, please go to [www.Proliteracy.org](http://www.Proliteracy.org) and click on Professional Development, or click here:

[http://www.newreaderspress.com/downloads/product\\_support/Fall07FOCSchedule.pdf](http://www.newreaderspress.com/downloads/product_support/Fall07FOCSchedule.pdf)

Please feel free to call (888)528-2224 ext. 283 with any questions.

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## To Read or Not To Read

The National Endowment for the Arts has released a research report today called TO READ OR NOT TO READ . See the full report at:

<http://www.nea.gov/research/toread.pdf>

## Information from conclusion

"Self-reported data on individual behavioral patterns, combined with national test scores from the Department of Education and other sources, suggest three distinct trends:

1. a historical decline in voluntary reading rates among teenagers and young adults;
2. a gradual worsening of reading skills among older teens
3. declining proficiency in adult readers.

The Department of Education's extensive data on voluntary reading patterns and prose reading scores yield a fourth observation: frequency of reading for pleasure correlates strongly with better test scores in reading and writing. Frequent readers are thus more likely than infrequent or non-readers to demonstrate academic achievement in those subjects.

From the diversity of data sources in this report, other themes emerge. Analyses of voluntary reading and reading ability, and the social characteristics of advanced and deficient readers, identify several discrepancies at a national level:

- Less reading for pleasure in late adolescence than in younger age groups
- Declines in reading test scores among 17-year-olds and high school seniors in contrast to younger age groups and lower grade levels
- Among high school seniors, a wider rift in the reading scores of advanced and deficient readers
- A male-female gap in reading proclivity and achievement levels
- A sharp divide in the reading skills of incarcerated adults versus non-prisoners
- Greater academic, professional, and civic benefits associated with high levels of leisure reading and reading comprehension

Longitudinal studies are needed to confirm and monitor the effects of these differences over time. Future research also could explore factors such as income, ethnicity, region, and race, and how they might alter the relationship between voluntary reading, reading test scores, and other outcomes.

Critically, further studies should weigh the relative effectiveness and costs and benefits of programs to foster lifelong reading and skills development. For instance, such research could trace the effects of electronic media and "screen reading" on the development of readers in early childhood.

Recent studies of American time-use and consumer expenditure patterns highlight a series of choices lurking in the question "to read or not to read." The future of reading rests on the daily decisions Americans will continue to make when confronted with an expanding menu of leisure goods and activities.

***The importance of these national findings, however, is that reading frequently for pleasure is a behavior to be cultivated with the same zeal as academic achievement, financial or job performance, and global competitiveness."***

Debbie Yoho  
Division Director, TURNING PAGES/VOAC  
(formerly the Greater Columbia Literacy Council)  
Secretary, SC Association for Adult Literacy Education

## Technology in ABE

Technology Colleagues,

I want to call your attention to the winter 2007 (free, online) issue of Field Notes, published by the Massachusetts System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES) with support from the Massachusetts Department of Education.

<http://sabes.org/resources/publications/fieldnotes/vol17/fn171.pdf>

The theme of this issue is *Technology in ABE*. It includes articles by Jennifer Rafferty, Diana Satin, Marian Thacher and me, Lenore Balliro and Akira Kamiya, and Lynne Weintraub. It is intended for ABE, ESOL, and ASE practitioners who want to learn about emerging trends in technology that may be useful for them and their students. "Digital immigrant" teachers might like the back-to-back articles on web cam use that reveal its challenges and its opportunities. And don't miss Akira Kamiya's Email Safety Tips.

It would be great to have your comments on the articles. You could post them here, send them to Field Notes Editor, Lenore Balliro <[lballiro@worlded.org](mailto:lballiro@worlded.org)> or to the individual authors whose email addresses are listed at the end of their articles.

David J. Rosen  
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## CAELA Brief

I'm pleased to announce that the latest brief from the Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (CAELA), *Adult ESL Teacher Credentialing and Certification*, is now available on the CAELA Web site and can be downloaded at [http://www.cal.org/caela/esl\\_resources/briefs/tchcred.html](http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/briefs/tchcred.html)

This latest CAELA brief was written by JoAnn Crandall of the University of Maryland Baltimore County and Genesis Ingersoll and Jacqueline Lopez of the Center for Applied Linguistics. This brief describes efforts to professionalize the workforce of adult ESL educators, including efforts to certify and credential these teachers; discusses the qualification requirements for adult ESL teachers in the 50 states and the District of Columbia; and recommends steps for states to take to continue to professionalize the field.

Of special interest and use, I think, is Table 1, which lists the credentialing and certification requirements by state, from each of the 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia. This information was gathered through conversations with staff at the state departments of education. The table is a hyperlink, on page 5 of the

printer-friendly version, in the section entitled Data Collection.

We hope you find the information helpful.

Miriam

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Miriam Burt  
Center for Adult English Language Acquisition  
(CAELA)  
Center for Applied Linguistics

### **The Politics of Adult Education**

MVAEA is excited to announce that Art Ellison, New Hampshire state director of adult education and chair of the policy committee for the National Council of State Directors will present this year's MVAEA Pre-conference Workshop and Leadership Academy. The workshop entitled "Politics in Adult Education" will be held Wednesday, July 16th 1:30-4:30 in Council Bluffs, Iowa. All adult educators, both instructors and administrators are encouraged to attend this critical workshop. Participants will gain the tools they need to be successful advocates for adult education at a state level. Mark your calendars and plan to attend.

Mary Schaefer, Past President  
MVAEA

# **Rural Revitalization White Paper**

## **NATIONAL COMMUNITY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**

### **January 21, 2008**

In the United States, two specific problems have characterized the plight of rural communities over the past several decades -- disproportionately high rates of both poverty and outward migration among younger age groups. While there are several other factors that have contributed to the current state of rural communities in the United States, these two specific issues appear repeatedly in the rural revitalization literature. If left unchecked over time, these issues will result in the probable demise of some rural communities as their ability is diminished to support an increasingly impoverished and aging population. If the United States is to maintain the necessary economic and cultural diversity in rural communities, efforts must be made to implement innovative means of mitigating these disturbing trends.

Today, an estimated one in seven Americans lives in poverty. In addition, trends in rural poverty have remained higher than in urban areas since the late 1950s.<sup>1</sup> Currently, rural communities claim approximately 7.5 million residents who live below the national poverty line, a number representing 14.2 percent of the rural population as opposed to a 12.5 percent poverty rate found in non-rural areas.<sup>2</sup> In many cases rural communities struggle to compete with urban areas, which have the advantage of greater accessibility to economic opportunity. Given the concentration of people in cities and the availability of health and welfare resources, urban dwellers have a decided advantage over their rural counterparts.

This problem is compounded by the imminent retirement of the baby-boom generation, which will severely tax the health care, housing, and transportation systems in rural communities. The most significant demographic change in the non-metro population has been the increase, of 7.8 percent, in the 40-59 year old age group and an actual 5.3 percent decline of those under age twenty.<sup>3</sup> In addition, older Americans who live alone run a considerable risk of slipping beneath the poverty line; a risk that is increased as their children move away in search of employment in urban places.

Although the trends in domestic migration in the United States have been decidedly one way from rural to urban centers, the aggregate population has grown for many non-metro areas. Those classified as unskilled immigrants arriving in the United States look to rural areas, home to most of the country's labor intensive agri-business, for employment. This means that the existing human services infrastructure, already inferior in many ways to urban areas, must support a greater percentage of both impoverished and working poor.

The plight of chronic poverty in rural America has been a concern since poverty statistics were first recorded in the 1950s. However, the issues confronting many struggling communities today in an era of a competitive global economy puts the long term viability of these communities into question. The need to replenish the human capital of these communities and to preserve the levels of social capital many of these communities have traditionally enjoyed are issues that must be addressed and remedied if these communities are to be restored and sustained.

Human and social capital can be replenished by way of a carefully orchestrated reinvention of how education is implemented as a vehicle for rural empowerment, as well as long term sustainability. The school and the community must be integrated for the purpose of economic development and community

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<sup>1</sup> Rural Sociological Society; "The Challenges of Rural Poverty": Issue Brief: Challenges for Rural America in the Twenty-First Century; No. 2, January 2006

<sup>2</sup> Housing Assistance Council; "Poverty in Rural America"; June 2006

<sup>3</sup> United States Department of Agriculture; "Rural America at a Glance: 2006 Edition", Economic Information Bulletin, No. 18, August 2006.

sustainability. Our rural education system must reflect this integration as demonstrated through the advent of Community Schools.

Perhaps the most successful efforts toward rural revitalization with the community's schools involved have occurred in South Australia. This remote and decidedly rural region saw their small and isolated communities losing both population and economic activities before the initiation of programs aimed at reversing this degrading process. The initiative begins with community conversations, which draws together key community stakeholders. The stakeholders must identify the positive aspects of the community and define goals necessary to improve the socio-economic fabric of the place. The initiative aims at grass-roots solutions to economic expansion with the schools significantly involved in the process. Closer to home; a state-supported New Mexico Rural Revitalization Initiative (NMRRI), based largely on the model developed and underway in South Australia; has been experiencing positive results since 2005.

The National Community Education Association (NCEA) is prepared to work with other organizations in responding to the needs of America's rural communities as pursuant to the Association's mission statement. NCEA and its membership is committed to the rural revitalization movement, advocating greater access for communities to the educational resources available in their public schools in a manner that would not conflict with the work done by the school during traditional school hours. Efficient use of existing school resources for the purpose of developing a community-wide knowledge base rich with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, combined with necessary infrastructural components, will empower rural communities to be viable competitors for jobs in a variety of sectors.

NCEA proudly stands with other like-minded organizations as we work together to ensure that rural communities remain vital components of our social and economic framework.

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