



#### OUR MISSION

Literacy New York supports community efforts to enable adults to gain the literacy skills needed to reach their full potential as individuals, parents, workers, and citizens.

## **Trainer News • Summer, 2003**

### **Combined Basic Literacy and ESOL Trainer Guide Overview to be presented in three regions this program year**

In the past several years, there has been a significant interest throughout the LVA-NYS network in combining the Basic Literacy and ESOL tutor training. In response to affiliate interest and request, the LVA-NYS Trainer Corps has developed a combined training manual. The manual provides a 24-hr. design for affiliates who want to train prospective tutors to work with either Basic Literacy or ESOL students.

The trainer corps piloted their combined workshop in March 2003 and is now beginning to 'roll it out' to the field. We are offering a two-day overview of the manual that reviews the objectives of the 24-hour tutor training workshop and models some of the activities.

The first two-day overview of the workshop was held October 24 & 25 in Batavia for interested affiliate representatives in the western region of the state. Fourteen affiliate trainers and representatives attended and were pleased with the two-day overview. They received a hard copy of the manual to take back to their affiliate along with two stimulating days of training and networking with literacy colleagues from neighboring affiliates. The overview will be presented in Newburg, downstate region in December

and in Albany, eastern region in March, 2004. (see enclosed flyer for details and registration information)

The two-day overview covers selected topic areas including qualities of effective tutors, lesson planning, learning styles, cultural differences, real-life materials and conversational techniques among other topics. Participants leave with the combined training manual complete with trainer notes, overheads, and handouts.

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*The following article is of interest to trainers in relation to the issues of assisted reading, aural comprehension, and listening. It is an excerpt from an article by Thomas Sticht from the forthcoming September 2003 issue of Literacy Today, the quarterly magazine of the National Literacy Trust in the United Kingdom and posted by Thomas Sticht to the nifl-4EFF list serv.*

## **From Oracy to Literacy: The "Reading Potential" of Adults Assessed by Measuring Listening and Reading Abilities**

The concept of "reading potential" is important for adult literacy educators for at least two reasons. First, whether people are designated as "learning disabled" or not is frequently based on the idea that on some measure, such as an "intelligence" test, the people are at their appropriate age level or above, but on a reading measure they are one, two, or more years behind. That is, they are not reading "up to their potential." Listening tests are one way of assessing people's "intelligence" or "verbal IQ."

The second reason that the concept of "reading potential" is important in adult literacy education is that it is frequently thought that adults in need of literacy education have lived a reasonably long time and developed fairly high levels of competence in oral language. This provides the adult literacy learner with a fairly high level of "reading potential."

In turn, this leads to the expectation that the adult's literacy problems may be solved fairly quickly with a relatively brief period of training in some form of decoding the written word so that the language comprehension competence

already possessed in oracy may be transferred for use by the newly developed literacy.

Contrary to this expectation, in research in the United States, when some 2,000

adults were assessed to compare their skills in both listening and reading, the anticipated higher level of listening over reading ability was not found, even with adults reading at the 2nd grade level. In another study, a prison population of men reading at the 4th grade level showed only about 1.5 grade levels of "potential" (see references to studies in Sticht & James, 1984).

Generally speaking, data on listening and reading suggest that adult literacy educators may have to provide many of the least able adult readers (less than 4th grade abilities) with not only effective instruction in "phonemics," "phonics" and other decoding knowledge, but also extensive opportunities for these adults to develop lots of new vocabulary and content knowledge using their oracy skills. This way, they can raise the adults "reading potential" by listening and speaking and the instruction in decoding can help them comprehend what they are able to read at their new level of potential.

Sources for the studies cited above, and many others exploring listening and reading skills of adults, may be found in Sticht, T. & James, J. (1984). Listening and Reading. In R. Barr, M. Kamil, and P. Mosenthal (Eds.) Handbook of Reading Research. New York: Longmans. See also: Sticht, T. (2002). Teaching Reading With Adults. Online at [www.nald.ca](http://www.nald.ca) <http://www.nald.ca> under Full Text Documents. Contact Thomas Sticht at [tsticht@aznet.net](mailto:tsticht@aznet.net)

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## **Trainer Tip!**

**Modeled reading or ‘read alouds’ are a key component of the LVA-NYS Combined Tutor Training. Here is a list of reasons for using ‘read alouds’ with adults. Adapted from a post by Meta Potts, Moderator nifl-EFF listserv.**

- Listening to a good story nourishes student’s eagerness to learn, and provides a way for tutors to address content that will be useful to adults in their everyday worlds. Reading aloud presents books as sources of pleasant, valuable and exciting experiences.
- Sharing the reading experience provides physical and social supports, which expand the developmental potential of students, no matter what level they are experiencing as silent readers.
- Reading aloud increases phonological awareness. Phonics taught while reading emphasizes phonics as part of the reading process.

- Reading aloud provides a knowledge base and enlarges vocabularies that students will use as prior learning, helping them to make sense of new learning when they are on their own. Building visual images, then storing those images by increasing opportunities to hear messages help students to retrieve those images when necessary.
  - Reading aloud aids comprehension. Tutors can adopt monitoring strategies to help students think about the story, ask questions, extend learning, map the characters, demonstrate change and evaluate relationships, map the plot or events in the story, analyze story elements, make predictions and interpretations.
  - Reading aloud provides teachers with opportunities to share sophisticated ideas and themes from books that may be too difficult for students to read alone, but not too difficult to understand. Reading aloud teaches the language of books, which differs from language heard in daily conversations, on television, and in the movies. Book language is more descriptive and uses more formal grammatical structures.
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## **Reading Research Book Available**

### ***Research-Based Principles for Adult Basic Education Reading Instruction***

by John Kruidenier, Ed.D. October 2002.

This book, made available by The Partnership for Reading, a project administered by the National Institute for Literacy, makes reading research easily accessible to the working practitioner. Following the introduction and description of methods used to assess the research, the book lists emerging principles, trends, ideas and overall comments about particular instructional methods.

The main sections of the report focus on reading assessment profiles, alphabetics, phonemic awareness and word analysis, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. Sections are color coded and organized for ease of use. The last two sections address computer technology and summarize research results.

The report is being used in the adult literacy field to inform ongoing discussion about literacy instruction. For instance, it is used as a reference by the Equipped for the Future Reading Project. Coordinator, Amy Trawick notes the importance of teaching both comprehension strategies and auditory processing skills as evidenced in the report, in a post to the NIFL-4EFF list. "The comprehension section emphasize the cognitive and metacognitive activity that skilled readers engage in and which requires instruction for a

large segment of readers. The evidence is also strong that instruction in alphabetics and word analysis is important for many adult readers as is instruction in fluency and vocabulary.”

Practitioners who want access to a well developed, easy to use resource on reading research should get this book. To order copies contact the National Institute for Literacy at EDPubs, PO Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398, call 800-228-8813, or email [edpuborders@edpubs.org](mailto:edpuborders@edpubs.org). The book can also be downloaded at The Partnership for Reading web site, [www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading](http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading) <<http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading>> .

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**Trainer News is an online informational newsletter for tutor trainers in the Literacy New York affiliate network. If you have questions or comments about this newsletter, please contact Mary Bartlett, Training Coordinator, Literacy New York. 315) 662-3621 or [mbartlett@innovativebrains.com](mailto:mbartlett@innovativebrains.com)**