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ABSTRACT

This issue of the National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE) newsletter includes an article titled "Assessment and Accountability: What Do We Know and Where Are We Going?" and a profile of Inaam Mansoor, director of the Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP) in Arlington, Virginia. Also included are resource updates, news and notes, a review of Jhumpa Lahiri's book "Interpreter of Maladies," and a list of new publications. (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education) (VWL)

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## Assessment and Accountability

### What Do We Know and Where Are We Going?

Under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, programs that provide instruction to adults must be accountable for the outcomes of that instruction and must use standardized assessment procedures to document those outcomes. Now, 5 years later, what progress has the field of adult ESL instruction made in accomplishing these goals and meeting these requirements? What more needs to be done?

This spring, at a symposium on *Issues and Challenges in Assessment and Accountability for Adult English Language Learners* hosted by the National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE), over 100 teachers, program administrators, researchers, test developers, and policy makers gathered to answer these questions and to discuss the field's vision for ESL program accountability and learner assessment. Following is a summary from two of the symposium's presenters.

#### What is the vision?

Cheryl Keenan, director of the Division of Adult Learning and Literacy, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, highlighted the U.S. Department of Education's vision for adult education program accountability.

- Any adult who needs or could benefit from education services will have access to these services in a variety of venues, through a variety of service providers, at a variety of times, and in a variety of places.
- These services, including instruction, will be high quality and will be based on scientific evidence.
- Teachers will be well trained and knowledgeable about what they are teaching and how to teach the learners in their classes.
- Programs, states, and the federal government will be committed to preparing learners for whatever they need to achieve in terms of education and employment outcomes.

#### What do we know about assessment?

Dorry Kenyon, director of the Language Testing Division at the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), described what we know about assessing language learners in valid, reliable, and appropriate ways and how this knowledge applies to adult English language learners.

#### Appropriate assessments

In adult ESL education, we need to be able to determine the relationship

*Continued on page 9*

## *inside*

• Resource Updates	2
• News Notes	4
• The Book Shelf	8
• New Publications	11



### Her NCLE's Worth Inaam Mansoor

*A* colleague once described immigrants and refugees as ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances. I believe that they are extraordinary people who have been able to bring order back into lives that have been disrupted by war, persecution, or the search for freedom. (Mansoor, 2003)

Inaam Mansoor, director of the Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP) in Arlington, Virginia, retired this spring after 27 years of serving these extraordinary immigrants and refugees.

*Continued on page 10*

# Resource Updates

Virginia adult ESOL educator Kate Singleton has added four new picture stories to her popular collection on NCLE's Web site, **Using Picture Stories for Adult ESL Health Literacy**. Each story deals with a specific health literacy issue:

## Depressed

This picture story deals with mental health awareness, including different cultural views on mental health issues and available community services for mental health care in the United States.

## The Right Dose

This story shows how to follow directions and how to avoid making mistakes when taking medication. It also shows the difference between child and adult dosages.

## What Happened to My Body?

This story is about nutrition and exercise awareness. It explains nutritional values of different foods and diets, the importance of stress management and self-care when changing lifestyles and adjusting to a new culture, and the connection between bad nutrition and disease.

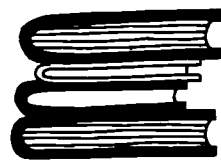
## Snack Attack



Childhood obesity has become an epidemic in the United States. This story looks at the problem, its related health risks, and the importance for health education and for parents to model healthy nutrition and exercise habits.

As with the original stories (**Emergency, A Doctor's Appointment, Stressed Out, and What Should She Do?**), Kate provides the basic story with background information and suggests steps for prompting class discussion. The new stories include links to online resources where teachers can find related information. All of the stories can be easily downloaded from the NCLE site at [www.cal.org/ncle/health](http://www.cal.org/ncle/health).

With current federal initiatives such as Reading First and Early Reading First and the proposed reconfiguration of Head First programs, family literacy issues continue to be widely discussed. One issue of major concern is how to work with immigrant families in literacy programs. **Family Literacy: From Theory to Practice** (2003, International Reading Association [IRA]) is a collection of articles that deal with theoretical and historical bases of family literacy; describe research findings, specific strategies, and practices; highlight specific family literacy programs; and discuss evaluation issues in family literacy. Family Literacy promotes the view that diverse literacy practices are beneficial and should be valued by society. IRA President Lesley Mandel Morrow writes in the book's foreword,



Many different forms of literacy practices that are not school-like exist in families from different cultures. These literacy activities may not influence school success, and conversely, the kinds of literacy practiced in classrooms may have little meaning outside school walls for children from these families. Because of the diversity in the world, we must adopt multiple ways of approaching family literacy and learn these ways from family members and children as well as from agencies, professionals, and scholarly publications.

One chapter focuses specifically on "Family Literacy in English Language Learning Communities," but many chapters discuss issues important to English language learners. For those working with adult immigrant learners and their families, *Family Literacy* offers a well-documented resource on a variety of topics within an inclusive and positive framework.

*Family Literacy: From Theory to Practice* (A. DeBruin-Parecki and B. Krol-Sinclair, Editors) can be ordered from IRA online at [www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org) or by phone: 800-336-READ x266 or 302-731-1600 x266.

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**ESL /CivicsLink** is a new online professional development system for adult education ESL teachers. Designed to meet the needs of a diverse teaching force, the system offers, along with an orientation,



- **Units** (or modules) on teaching a citizenship class, meeting learner needs and goals, building cross-cultural awareness, using the Internet in the classroom, and integrating civics and English literacy;
- **Portfolios** where teachers can collect learning resources and save their own work;
- **Community Space** for teachers to network with other teachers; and
- **Resources** that provide access to ESL information and links.

ESL/CivicsLink was developed by the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) in partnership with Jefferson County (Kentucky) Public Schools Adult and Continuing Education; the National Center on Adult Literacy at the University of Pennsylvania; and KLRN-TV in San Antonio, Texas. Its development was funded by the English Literacy and Civics Education Demonstration Project of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education.

ESL/CivicsLink will be launched August/September 2003. Licensing is required to use the online service, which is offered to individual instructors as well as to adult education programs and states. For more information, contact Kentucky Educational Television (KET) by phone (800-354-9067) or email (adulted@ket.org) or visit the Web site ([www.pbs.org/literacy/esl](http://www.pbs.org/literacy/esl)).

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**Reading in a Foreign Language** is a refereed online journal on foreign and second language reading and literacy. The journal is sponsored by the National Foreign Language Resource Center and the Department of Second Language Studies, College of Languages, Linguistics, and Literature at the University of Hawaii.

*Reading in a Foreign Language* was founded in 1983 as a print publication at the University of Aston in Birmingham, England, and became an online journal in 2002 when it moved to Hawaii.

The journal is published twice a year, in April and October. A valuable source for the latest international developments in the field, it publishes articles on the practice and theory of learning to read and on teaching reading in a foreign or second language. It also reviews books and teaching materials, conference proceedings, and discussions.

Although the journal is free, by becoming a subscriber, you help it to continue to obtain institutional support. Also, as a subscriber, you can be notified via email when each new issue is released. Visit the *Reading in a Foreign Language* Web site at [www.nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl](http://www.nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl).

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## BEST Plus—An A+ Way to Assess Oral English Skills



A test administrator of the computer-adaptive BEST Plus questions an examinee and waits for her response before entering the score into the computer.

In this era of accountability, programs serving adult English language learners have been searching for an assessment tool that meets accountability requirements, can be administered in a reasonable amount of time, and provides feedback on learner progress and information that will assist in improving program quality. The BEST Plus satisfies these requirements.

Developed by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), the BEST Plus is an individually administered interview that assesses the oral language proficiency of adult English language learners. It is an adaptation of the Basic English Skills Test (BEST) oral interview that was developed during the early 1980s. Like the BEST, the BEST Plus assesses *interpersonal* communication using everyday language. It can assess a wider range of English language proficiency

levels than the original BEST—from Student Performance Level (SPL) 0 (no ability) to SPL 10 (native-like proficiency).

Additionally, the BEST Plus is an assessment tool that accommodates the examinee's growing proficiency: Examinees receive different items each time they take the test; as their skills improve, they are administered more challenging items.

The BEST Plus comes in two versions: a computer-adaptive assessment on CD and a semi-adaptive print-based assessment.

### **Computer-Adaptive BEST Plus**

In the computer-adaptive version, the test administrator, prompted by the computer screen, asks the examinee a question, listens to the response, scores the response, and enters the score into the computer. The computer continues to select test items, choosing items most appropri-

ate for the examinee according to the scores entered. At the end of the interview, the computer generates a report that includes the examinee's scaled score, SPL, National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS) level, and sub-scores for listening comprehension, language complexity, and communication. The computer-adaptive assessment takes from 5–15 minutes to administer, depending on the examinee's ability level. Generally, examinees with higher language proficiency have more to say, increasing the testing time.

### **Print-Based BEST Plus**

In the print-based version, a quick locator test determines the level of test items (1, 2, or 3) that will most efficiently determine the functioning level of the examinee. These items are arranged in fixed-form level tests. The test administrator asks the examinee each item on the level test, scores the items, and marks the scores on a score sheet. When the test is completed, the administrator can total up the score to receive an estimate of the examinee's proficiency. A precise proficiency level can be determined by entering the score data into a computer program that generates the same score report as the computer-adaptive version. The print-based assessment takes approximately 10–12 minutes to administer.

*The BEST Plus is available from CAL. For more information, visit the BEST Plus Web site at [www.best-plus.net](http://www.best-plus.net), phone 866-845-2378, or email [best-plus@cal.org](mailto:best-plus@cal.org).*

## Workforce Investment Act To Be Reauthorized

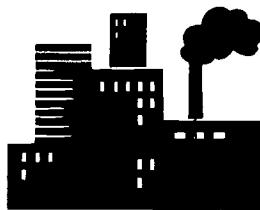
The Workforce Investment and Adult Education Act (WIA; HR 1261) is scheduled to be reauthorized by September 30. The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee is currently developing its proposal for the reauthorization.

When WIA was first passed in 1998, it encouraged service providers to create local and regional one-stop service centers to provide education, employment, and training to low-income populations, including immigrants. WIA is the major source of federal funding for most of this country's workforce development programs. It includes English as a second language (ESL) training in addition to job training and adult basic education (ABE). WIA is administered by the Departments of Education and Labor.

Provisions in HR 1261 to assist low-income immigrants are briefly described below. (The complete bill can be read online at [www.gpoaccess.gov/bills](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/bills).)

### Provisions for low-income immigrants

- Improve access to training services in order to reach "hard-to-serve" populations. (English language learners, however, are not mentioned as a hard-to-serve population.)
- Adjust performance measures to take into consideration low levels of English proficiency.



- Award bonus grants to states based on their performance in serving "special populations." (Again, English language learners are not mentioned as a special population.)
- Revise the Adult Basic Skills Education Act to include "assisting immigrants who are not proficient in English."
- Offer technical assistance to English language acquisition programs in state leadership activities.
- Improve access to ABE funding for community-based organizations. Require states, in awarding grants or contracts, to consider the degree to which the provider will serve those most in need, including individuals whose first language is not English.

### Editor's note

*As we go to press, Senator Hilary Rodham Clinton (D.NY) has introduced the Access to Employment and English Acquisition Act. The bill, S. 1543, would support demonstration grants under WIA Title I, allowing training programs to offer pre-vocational instruction to develop English literacy, communication, and interviewing skills. For more information, contact Clinton's office at 202-244-4051.*

For more information and frequent updates on the WIA reauthorization, visit the **National Immigration Law Center** online at [www.nilc.org](http://www.nilc.org).



## Immigrant Seniors Learn Workplace Skills

Of the U.S. population, 21.1% are 55 years or older, 15.9% are 60 or older, and 12% are 65 or older (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). Approximately 10% of the 55-or-over population was born outside the United States.

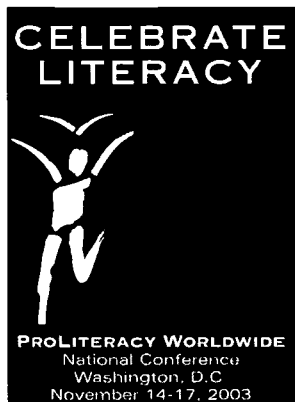
Many older adults work. Senior Service America (SSA) is a nonprofit organization, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, that provides training and employment opportunities to older adults, many of whom are refugees or immigrants. Through SSA's Senior Aides Program, low-income seniors are employed in local nonprofit and community-based organizations. The seniors receive pay and learn new job skills while serving in their own communities.

As an increasing number of immigrant seniors are enrolling in the Senior Aides Program, SSA service providers have expressed a need for culturally sensitive and effective strategies and activities to work with them.

SSA has contracted with NCLE to develop a guidebook for practitioners and programs working with linguistically and culturally diverse seniors.

Although produced for practitioners associated with Senior Service America, the guidebook will be available for all who work with senior immigrants and refugees. Its publication is planned for Spring 2004.

## ProLiteracy Launches Campaign to Recruit Volunteers



One in four adults in the United States functions at the lowest literacy level, and over half of these adults are immigrants with a native language other than English (National Assessment of Literacy Survey, 1992).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has declared 2003–2012 the “Decade of Literacy” and has challenged literacy organizations to find new ways to make literacy services accessible and relevant.

In response to this challenge, ProLiteracy Worldwide, a leading volunteer-based adult literacy organization, has

launched a national campaign, “Celebrate Literacy,” to recruit 100,000 new volunteer literacy tutors.

In April 2003, ProLiteracy held a literacy symposium in Orlando, Florida, launching a national tour to raise awareness of the need for literacy volunteers and to help adult literacy organizations and practitioners utilize community resources to meet the challenge.

Celebrate Literacy’s final stop will be Washington, DC, November 14–17, where ProLiteracy will celebrate its first annual conference. NCLE staff will present at the conference.

*For more information on attending or presenting at the conference, visit ProLiteracy’s Web site at [www.proliteracy.org/conference](http://www.proliteracy.org/conference).*

## NCLEnotes Crossword

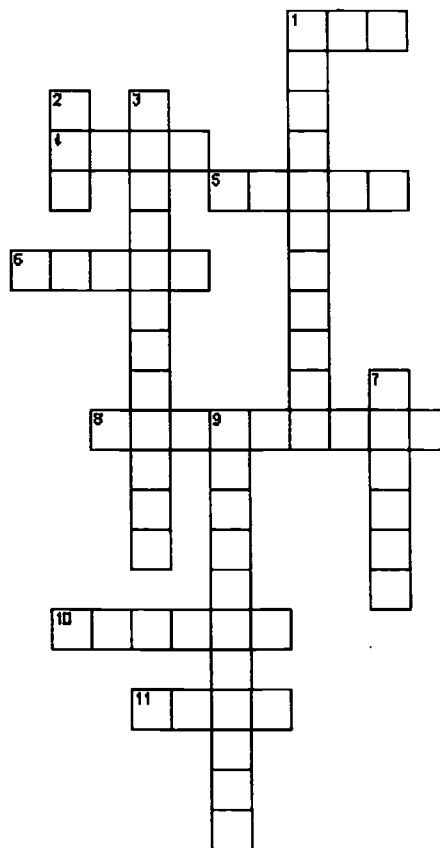
How well have you read this issue of *NCLEnotes*? Try your hand at our crossword puzzle and find out! (Answers on page 7)

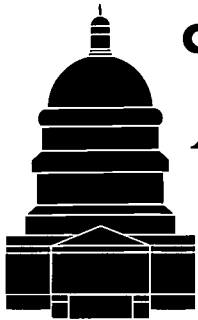
### Across

1. This nonprofit organization developed ESL/CivicsLink.
4. Inaam Mansoor immigrated to the United States from this country.
5. One version of BEST Plus is computer-based and one is \_\_\_\_\_-based.
6. Interpreter of Maladies is a collection of stories about immigrants from \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The director of NCLE
10. “Using Picture Stories for Adult ESL \_\_\_\_\_ Literacy”
11. Many older adults still do this.

### Down

1. Adult ESL education focuses on assessing learners’ \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Scheduled to be reauthorized in September 2003
3. NCLE’s home and the U.S. city that has the seventh largest foreign-born population
7. Ron Pugsley is famous for wearing this.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Worldwide is a leading volunteer-based adult literacy organization.





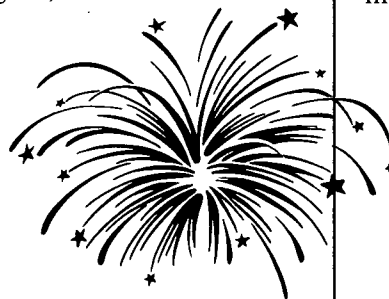
## Close to Home

*At Home in the Nation's Capital: Immigrant Trends in Metropolitan Washington* (A. Singer, June 2003), a recently released Brookings Institution report, analyzes data from the 2000 U.S. Census on the growth and location of the foreign born in the Washington, DC metropolitan area between 1980 and 2000. A synopsis of the report follows:

- From 1980 to 2000, the Washington metropolitan area became home to 575,000 new immigrants.
- Washington now has the seventh largest foreign-born population in the United States, following Los Angeles; New York; Chicago; Miami; Houston; and Orange County, California and preceding Riverside, California; San Diego, and Dallas.
- New immigrants made up nearly half of the total population growth in the area in the past decade. Although the immigrant population grew rapidly in the outer suburbs, the largest number of immigrants moved to the close-in suburbs of Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax County, and Montgomery County. This is a shift from 1970 when 26% of the area's immigrants lived in the District of Columbia; as of 2000 only 9% live in the District.
- The area's diverse immigrant population includes 39% from Latin America and the Caribbean, 36% from Asia, 12% from Europe, 11% from Africa, and 2% from other countries.
- Nearly 80% of the overall metropolitan immigrant population

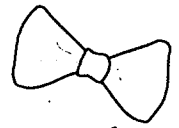
reported a good command of English: 62% said they spoke English "well" or "very well," and 17% reported speaking only English. However, in the more densely populated immigrant areas, nearly 30% reported speaking English "not very well" or "not at all."

- Only 10.6% of immigrants are below the poverty line. This is about half the rate of the officially poor in other impacted areas such as New York City and Houston, but it is 3.8% higher than the poverty rate of the native born in the Washington, DC area.



For more information or to read the complete report, visit the Brookings Institution Web site at [www.brook.edu/es/urban/gwgrp/publinks/2003/immigration.htm](http://www.brook.edu/es/urban/gwgrp/publinks/2003/immigration.htm).

## Thank you and farewell



In June 2003, Ron Pugsley, former director of the Division of Adult Education and Literacy and, recently, senior advisor on International Education, retired from many long and productive years of service with the U.S. Department of Education. He will be greatly missed by friends and colleagues working in the field of adult education, where he brought vision and commitment.

We at NCLE are especially appreciative of the contributions Ron made to research and practice in the education of adults learning English as a second language. These include, most recently, support for the BEST Plus oral English assessment (see article on page 4), NCLE's synthesis of research on the reading development of adults learning English, and NCLE's overview of the state of the field in adult ESL education.

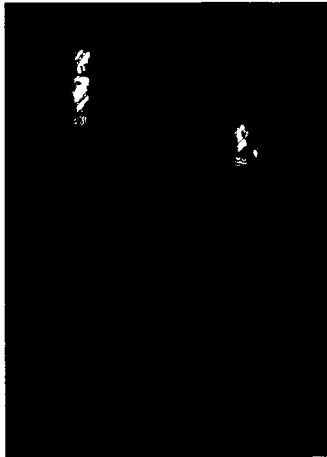
Happy retirement, Ron. ¡Que te vayas bien!

## Answers to NCLNotes Crossword

- |                  |        |
|------------------|--------|
| 11. work         | Across |
| 10. Health       |        |
| 8. Joy Peyton    |        |
| 6. India         |        |
| 5. print         |        |
| 3. Washington DC |        |
| 2. WIA           |        |
| 1. proficiency   |        |
| <b>Down</b>      |        |
| 9. ProLiteracy   |        |
| 7. bowtie        |        |



# The Book Shelf



## Interpreter of Maladies

By Jhumpa Lahiri

1999/2000 Houghton Mifflin

Reviewed by Miriam Burt

More than 10 million people in the South Asian countries of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka speak English as a second language. Because these countries have a long colonial history with Great Britain and because of internecine factions among the countries, many South Asians prefer to speak English rather than the language of a group with an opposing culture, religion, or life view; for example, Hindus don't want to speak Punjabi, and Tamils don't want to speak Singhalese. In India, much of the education is in English.

Thus, learning English is less likely to be an issue for South Asian immigrants in the United States than for some immigrant groups. However, cultural challenges remain. In *Interpreter of Maladies*, a collection of short stories, Jhumpa Lahiri chronicles the immigrant Indian's experience both in India and the United States. The stories "capture the out-of-context lives of immigrants, expatriates, and first-generation Americans of Indian descent" (*Wall Street Journal* [review]).

One story, "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine," is told in the voice of Lilia, a 10-year-old American-born girl of Indian parents. The year is 1971, and there is violence in Dacca, East Pakistan (the city that becomes the capital of Bangladesh). Lilia lives in Boston where her father teaches at a university. Mr. Pirzada, a visiting professor from Dacca, has dinner most nights with Lilia's family, where they all watch the evening news about the events in Pakistan.

One night, as Lilia sets the table for dinner, she refers to Mr. Pirzada as "the Indian man." Her father corrects her, explaining that because Mr. Pirzada is a Muslim from Dacca, he is "no longer considered Indian." He questions his daughter: "You are aware of the current situation? Aware of East Pakistan's fight for sovereignty?" Lilia knows nothing about the situation. "What exactly do

they teach you at that school?" her father finally asks in frustration. "Do you study history? Geography?"

What Lilia does know about is American history. "That year, and every year, it seemed we began by studying the Revolutionary War. . . . We made dioramas out of colored construction paper depicting George Washington crossing the choppy waters of the Delaware River, and we made puppets of King George wearing white tights and a black bow in his hair." When Lilia is sent to the school library to learn about the surrender of the British at Yorktown, she is scolded for looking instead at a book called *Pakistan: A Land and Its People*.

Although the violence in Pakistan continues, as time goes by, the television reports less and less news about the war. "Some days, many days, only a death toll was announced, prefaced by a reiteration of the general situation. More poets were executed, more villages set ablaze." Meanwhile Lilia memorizes passages from the Declaration of Independence. On Halloween she goes trick-or-treating dressed as a witch. When she returns home, she finds the pumpkin on the front step smashed and India and Pakistan, with the support of the Soviet Union and the United States respectively, about to go to war.

Books as well written as *Interpreter of Maladies* need no excuse for reading. I recommend it especially to family literacy teachers, adult ESL teachers, and ABE teachers who have South Asian students in their classes. Because the stories do not focus on language issues, the reader's attention is focused on the cultural differences and their impact on these immigrants.

In her stories, Lahiri takes the reader beyond differences between U.S. and South Asian culture. The narrator of "The Third and Final Continent" speaks for all immigrants and refugees when he says, "I have remained in this new world for nearly thirty years. I know that my achievement is quite ordinary. I am not the only man to seek his fortune far from home, and certainly I am not the first. Still . . . as ordinary as it all appears, there are times when it is beyond my imagination."

## Assessment and Accountability—continued from page 1

between learner outcomes and the factors that influence those outcomes, which include curriculum, classroom instruction, and factors outside the educational setting (learner personality and learning styles, prior education and life experiences, and opportunities to use English outside the program). The National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS) requires that programs report learner outcomes in terms of “educational functioning levels,” using valid and reliable assessments. This indicates a need for performance assessments, which are not easy to develop, administer, score, or validate. For each test developed, we need to ask,

- Do the test items elicit what learners know and can do?
- Does the test administrator know how to give and score the test?
- Does the interpretation of scores reflect learner knowledge and skills in real-life situations?

### Testing achievement or proficiency

*Achievement testing* measures what students have learned as a result of instruction. Did they learn what was taught? *Proficiency testing* focuses on what students can do in real-life situations, whether or not it was learned in the classroom. The focus in adult ESL education is primarily on proficiency. In a good language performance test, the language tasks replicate the language skills used in the real world.

### Valid and reliable assessments

*Validity* is the degree to which the information gained from an assess-

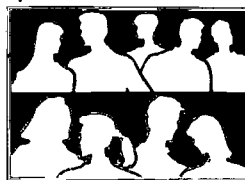
ment matches the inferences or decisions that programs make about learners as a result of that information. An assessment’s validity depends on the uses of the outcomes. In adult ESL education, we need to determine what uses we will make of assessment outcomes. Will they be used only to produce reports for the NRS, or will they also be used to diagnose learner needs, track learner achievement, and improve curriculum and instruction?

*Reliability* is the consistency of the measurement when the testing procedure is repeated on a different population. Reliability depends both on test developers and distributors and on those who create the conditions for testing and who administer and score the test. We need to ensure that the assessments selected by states and local programs in the ways that they were designed to be used.

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*The complete symposium proceedings will be available Fall 2003 on NCLE’s Web site at [www.cal.org/NCLE/whatsnew](http://www.cal.org/NCLE/whatsnew) and will include information about the NAAL (Mark Kutner, AIR); how Massachusetts is addressing assessment issues (Bob Bickerton, Adult Education, MA); assessment issues for adult English language learners (Carol Van Duzer, NCLE); the CASAS assessment system (Linda Taylor, CASAS); the EFF Framework (Regie Stites, SRI International); the REEP Writing Assessment (Suzanne Grant, REEP); and the BEST Plus (Dorry Kenyon, CAL)*

## Teaching English Is Much More Than Speaking the Language



*T*ired of responding to friends and acquaintances who think that all you need to know to teach ESL is to speak English? Try a quote from TESOL!

In July 2003 the TESOL Board of Directors announced its position on teacher quality in the field:

“Qualified ESL and EFL educators not only should demonstrate a high level of written and oral proficiency in the English language (regardless of native language), but should also demonstrate teaching competency... Educators should be aware of current trends and research and their instructional implications in the field of linguistics, applied linguistics, second language acquisition, sociolinguistics, language pedagogy and methodology, literacy development, curriculum and materials development, assessment, and cross-cultural communication.”

In the succinct words of TESOL President Amy Schlessman, “English language teaching is a distinct academic discipline, and qualified English language educators know and do much more than simply speak the language.”

With more than 14,000 members in over 120 countries, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) is the premier organization for English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) practitioners.

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## **Her NCLE's Worth—continued from page 1**

In 1975 Inaam reentered the workforce, after the youngest of her three children started preschool. This was the same year that thousands of Vietnamese refugees were fleeing Saigon and entering the United States. “I wanted to get a job where I’d use my political science and behavioral research degrees. Instead, a friend who was directing the Right-to-Read Literacy Program convinced me to help her serve the Vietnamese refugees who were settling in Arlington. Little did I know that my life would be changed forever by that move.” Within 6 years, Inaam advanced from volunteer to paid teacher to cofounder and director of REEP, which at that time was the Refugee Education and Employment Program.

Inaam knows what it is like to be an immigrant in a new country. When she was 2 years old, her family emigrated from Iraq to the United States. “We came here because my younger brother was born deaf, and my parents were seeking medical treatment for him, and short of that, an education that would enable him to be a successful, self-sufficient adult. While my parents did not flee Iraq because of political persecution, they shared the same hopes and dreams of most immigrants—a better life and a world of opportunities for their children.

“We settled in Detroit and joined a small community of Iraqi immigrants. I experienced the same process of pride and pain that all immigrant children go through. Despite my foreign name, I was never asked, ‘Where are you from?’ until I moved to Washing-

ton, DC. I was startled by the question and answered, ‘Michigan.’ As I grew older and began to work with immigrants and refugees, I took pride in answering ‘Iraq.’ Despite the pain and turmoil that Iraq has endured, I know that I have come from a rich and wonderful culture, and I have added that richness to my life and work in the United States.”

*“My parents shared the same hopes and dreams of most immigrants—a better life and a world of opportunities for their children.”*

REEP’s original mission in 1975 was to teach English as a second language and job development skills to adult Indo-Chinese refugees. Under Inaam’s leadership, REEP has grown into a program that serves over 9,000 students each year from Southeast Asia, Central and South America, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and Eastern Europe.

Today, in addition to offering nine levels of ESL instruction, REEP provides computer-assisted learning and workforce and family literacy programs. Teaching is not limited to the classroom but accommodates students at different sites throughout the city; for example, classes are held for residents in apartment buildings and for inmates at a county detention facility. REEP also offers customized workplace programs for local businesses such as grocery stores, nursing homes, and hotels.

REEP has developed various materials including a workplace video and textbook, an online curriculum, and most recently, the REEP Writing Assessment, a performance-based test that has gained popularity among practitioners because it links curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The REEP Writing Assessment is currently one of the standardized assessments used with ESL students in Massachusetts. “I am proud to see that much of what we have produced in Arlington is now used around the country,” Inaam wrote recently in a farewell article to her colleagues (May 21, 2003).

Inaam and REEP have grown together. “It’s hard to believe that it has been more than 2½ decades since I entered my first ESL class,” she says. Now, 27 years later, when asked what advice she has to offer the incoming REEP director, Inaam responds with counsel we can all take to heart:

“Maintain REEP as a learning organization for staff and students. Keep focused on the students’ changing needs while still responding to external demands. Don’t be afraid to ask staff to do more. Professionals provide excellence, not just time on task. Above all, be fair, be flexible, be creative, and keep moving REEP forward: Keep that pulse beating and have fun!”

NCLE asked some of the people who have worked with Inaam to comment on their experiences. Following are their responses—

*Continued on page 12*

# New Publications

## From NCLE

Learning to read in English is difficult for adult English language learners. Teachers know that their learners come from diverse backgrounds, have different experiences with literacy in their first languages, and have various reasons for learning English.

Two new publications from NCLE provide insight into this essential area of learning:

- **Reading and Adult English Language Learners: A Review of the Research**

by Miriam Burt, Joy Kreeft Peyton, & Rebecca Adams

This 46-page report summarizes the research on adult English language learners reading English, offers ESL teachers and administrators suggestions for instruction, and points to areas where further research is needed.

- **Reading and Adult English Language Learners: The Role of the First Language**

by Miriam Burt & Joy Kreeft Peyton

Excerpted from the book, this 4-page brief focuses on how literacy in the first language affects the acquisition of reading skills in English and the ways instruction should be delivered.

- **Video-Based Distance Education for Adult English Language Learners**

by Sylvia Ramirez & K. Lynn Savage

To meet the demands of a growing population, adult ESL programs are turning to distance education as a learning option. This four-page brief identifies the advantages and challenges of using video-based distance education with adult English language learners and provides practical strategies for implementing a distance education program.

- **Working With Literacy-Level Adult ESL Learners**

by MaryAnn Cunningham Florez & Lynda Terrill

This Q&A identifies literacy-level learners, examines what skills they need to develop, and discusses the scope of literacy-level classes along with appropriate activities and techniques on lesson planning and classroom management.

- **English Language Instruction for Incarcerated Youth**

by Margo Delli Carpini

This digest discusses the specific issues and challenges of teaching English to linguistically and culturally diverse incarcerated youth. It suggests best practices and models to provide this intervention in correctional settings.

**ORDER FORM for  
FREE NCLE publications**

- Video-Based Distance Education for Adult English Language Learners**
- Working With Literacy-Level Adult ESL Learners**
- English Language Instruction for Incarcerated Youth**
- Reading and Adult English Language Learners: The Role of the First Language**
  
- Reading and Adult English Language Learners: A Review of the Research** (46-page report)

NCLE digests, briefs, and Q&As are also available on NCLE's Web site at [www.cal.org/ncle](http://www.cal.org/ncle).

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## **Her NCLE's Worth—continued from page 10**



REEP staff serve over 9,000 students  
each year.

*Inaam created opportunities for us to be on the cutting edge of issues like learner-centered instruction, technology, workplace ESL, and assessment.*

L. Terrill, NCLE (former REEP instructor)

*Inaam loved REEP and always wanted it to be the best, and she put as much energy into the program as she expected others to put into it.*

D. Moss, NCLE (former REEP instructor)

*Under Inaam's tutelage, REEP has grown into one of the premier adult education programs in the country. She is a marvelous administrator but still has the heart of a teacher who knows what she is doing and why.*

A. Grognet, CAL, Florida

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*Inaam has always been at the forefront of developments in the field of adult education and ESL and has never flinched from sharing her wealth of information, her expertise, and her honest opinions.*

D. Pecoraro, Minnesota Department of  
Children, Families and Learning

*It is Inaam's professional leadership over the years, her commitment and dedication to excellence in everything she does, to quality, and to program improvement that will have a lasting impact on our field.*

A. Keltner, CASAS

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REEP staff teach adult English language learners from Southeast Asia, Central and South America, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and Eastern Europe.

*Inaam has been a hands-on administrator who raised money for special projects and fought to get the resources that allowed her staff to do important work. She spent countless unpaid hours explaining to policy makers what immigrant education was and should be all about. Inaam was very soft spoken in her approach but did not back down on important issues.*

H. Wrigley, Aquirre International

*Inaam lived and worked by this motto: "No one rises to low expectations." She expected a lot of herself, her staff, and REEP students. And we rose to her expectations.*

S. Grant, REEP Director, July 2003





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