



literacy chronicle

WINTER 2008

NEWS AND BEST PRACTICES FROM THE LITERACY COOPERATIVE OF GREATER CLEVELAND

This issue coincides with a time of year synonymous with reflection, planning, acknowledgement and appreciation. It only seems fitting that The Literacy Cooperative acknowledges community partners that helped us learn, challenged us and supported us along the way, both financially and by giving time and feedback.

The Cuyahoga County Board of Commissioners is steadfast in its support of literacy. Many literacy programs shared their knowledge and expertise with us (and sometimes jointly designed response programs) through participation in our workforce resource, workplace simulation planning and volunteer planning groups as well as our ILN steering group. We are grateful to all of you.

One highlight of 2007 was opportunities we had to understand some of our clients better. Each was invaluable to help us appreciate the realities providers face; in some instances, we got a glimpse of life through the “lenses” of learners. We learned from these experiences that while challenges abound, so do opportunities.

In this issue of *Literacy Chronicle*, we address outcome measurement and ways providers can collect concrete data to gauge their strengths and improve their programs.

We also highlight a Euclid program that crafted an innovative solution for at-risk students and examine startling statistics on Ohio high school dropouts.

As always, we welcome your feedback and invite you to share some of your innovative and promising practices.

Happy New Year!



In this issue:

- Euclid Program offers alternative for struggling students
- Alliance researches link between education, income in Ohio
- Instructors Learning Network examines workforce issues
- Program director discusses ways to measure outcomes
- Cooperative welcomes executive director
- Upcoming events

the **literacy**
cooperative

Euclid program offers option for struggling students

Euclid City Schools are bringing coursework to at-risk high school students through an innovative program developed in partnership with the Euclid Adult Basic Education Program, or ABLE.

The High School Credit Recovery program allows eligible Euclid students to fulfill requirements for high school diplomas online at Shore Cultural Centre on East 222 Street. It was designed as an alternative for students a few credits shy of their diplomas who either dropped out of high school, or are at risk of dropping out if they remain in traditional classrooms or instructional settings.

"This is a chance for high school kids who are having trouble adapting to the high school structure," Program Director Monica Nagle said.

"This is a pioneering program for us. We're going about this slowly. We want to bring in students who are serious about making up their credits."

Launched in 2006, the Credit Recovery program since has expanded to include two sessions with seven students each. In addition to high school credit recovery, the center offers GED classes and English for Speakers of Other Languages.

Nagle already sees dramatic improvements in students enrolled in Credit Recovery, including an 80 percent attendance rate and a 2.8 cumulative grade point average.

"We have three mothers in the program," Nagle said. "They didn't feel right going back to the high school. This works out better for them. These are students who probably wouldn't have graduated."

David Van Leer, director of pupil personnel services, said students participating in the program wouldn't progress in a typical high school setting.

"This has afforded them the opportunity to be in a non-traditional high school setting and be successful," Van Leer said.

Students enrolled in the program typically need individualized attention, posing a challenge to Nagle and her staff to determine the best way to meet students' needs while maintaining the quality of other programs. The program could not afford to hire additional staff, so beginning in August Nagle enlisted the help of volunteers to support GED and English classes.

Volunteers completed a six-hour orientation program, and nine currently assist students. Euclid ABLE has been invited to the 2008 International TESOL Conference in New York to make a presentation on its volunteer program.

"It has been a lot of work getting the Credit Recovery Program on its way," Nagle said, "but now it is coming together and paying off for our students."

Information on Euclid City Schools ABLE, including GED and ESOL class listings and volunteer information, is available on the Euclid City Schools Web site at <http://www.euclid.k12.oh.us/fordyce/GED.html>.

A tutor works with a student enrolled in the High School Credit Recovery program, an alternative for students a few credits shy of earning diplomas who either dropped out or are at risk of dropping out. The program was developed by Euclid City Schools in partnership with the Euclid Adult Basic Education Program (ABLE).



Monica Nagle, director of the Euclid Adult Basic Education Program (ABLE)

Photo by Janet Century

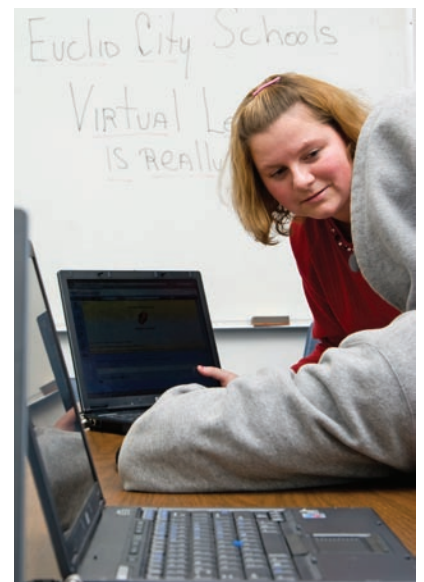


Photo by Janet Century

Learning network focused on building skilled workforce



On October 5, the Instructors Learning Network convened to share best practices and discuss the importance of supporting workforce development and promoting career readiness among adult learners.

Meeting presenters were Raymond Hart, president and chief executive officer of RS Hart and Partners; Maria Phillips, adult education coordinator for Polaris Career Center; and Laurie Atkins, deputy director of the Cuyahoga County Department of Workforce Development.

In his presentation, "Greater Cleveland's Economy and the Need for a Skilled Workforce," Hart highlighted regional economic growth indicators that show the effects education, adult basic skills, high school graduation rates and higher education degree completion have on lifelong income.

Phillips of Polaris introduced WorkKeys career-readiness credentials, a job skills assessment that measures real-world skills employers believe are critical to job success. The job profiling system can assess candidates' or employees' skill levels and their ability to perform particular jobs effectively and with success.

Atkins of Cuyahoga County's Department of Workforce Development highlighted regional workforce opportunities and challenges in her presentation "Bridging Literacy and Workforce Development." Her recommendations included more

communication between schools and employers, more workplace literacy programs and a better connection between career pathways and adult education.

ILN will meet February 1 and March 9. Topics are "Authentic Teaching Materials" and "Teaching Writing by Writing," respectively.

Formed in May 2007, ILN is an organized community of literacy instructors dedicated to identifying and implementing best practices in literacy education. The group is modeled after the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy's study circles.



Photo by Janet Century

At the Oct. 5 meeting of ILN, meeting participants – including employers, practitioners, students and college representatives – met in small groups to discuss how they could creatively integrate career-readiness content into their lesson plans and help adult learners find available career resources in our community.

Recommended reading

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WORKFORCE LITERACY, OUTCOMES MEASUREMENT AND ADULT EDUCATION, CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWING LINKS:

- Good Stories Aren't Enough: Becoming Outcomes Driven in Workforce Development - www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/203_publication.pdf
- Demystifying Outcomes Measurement in Community Development – www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/communitydevelopment/w07-5.pdf
- Sectoral Strategies for Low-Income Workers: Lessons from the Field – www.aspenwsi.org/publications/07-014.pdf
- Policies to Promote Adult Education and Post Secondary Alignment – www.nationalcommissiononadultliteracy.org/content/strawnpolicybrief.pdf

Measuring outcomes requires more than anecdotes

By Omobola Lana, Program Director, The Literacy Cooperative

The report “Good Stories Aren’t Enough: Becoming Outcomes-Driven in Workforce Development,” released last year by nonprofit Public/Private Ventures, rightly captures the environment that literacy providers and many other nonprofits now face.

With leaner resources and tighter competition, many agencies are grappling with growing demand to produce more than “feel good” and anecdotal accounts of program outcomes to justify continued funding. Number of clients served, events and activities hosted, and numbers of volunteer hours are among favorite reporting items by which programs have tried to measure performance. As important as these are, they provide little information for the program and other constituencies to understand clients and how well they are being served.

According to Independent Sector’s report “Outcomes Measurement in Nonprofit Organizations: Current Practices & Recommendations,” detailed measurement involves several items: identification of outcomes, development of appropriate outcome indicators and data collection procedures, data analysis to better understand organizations’ achievements, and user-friendly, regular reporting of the findings. While such undertakings sound like a lot of work, it is safe to say benefits really do outweigh effort and costs. Clear benefits

are enhanced planning (strategic and management), good information in real time, better communication and community relations, and better positioning with respect to competition for funding.

As with any new initiative, introducing outcomes measurement systems and making it meaningful and effective for an organization involves a learning curve and, sometimes, organizational culture change. Despite challenges and frustrations, the process becomes easier with experience if the organization is committed to the effort. We see this playing out in our LACES project, launched in 2006 to support local outcomes measurement efforts by equipping programs with technology and technical assistance.

Outcomes measurement should be embraced, firstly, for program improvement purposes. As the Public/Private Ventures report states: “The desire to know how we are really doing, if we are making any difference, what differences we are making, and where and how to make adjustments” should be the primary motivator for outcomes measurement.

Yet good stories do have their place; they can be used to illustrate program outcomes and to put a human face to the work we do. May we have many good outcomes and many good stories to share in 2008.

The Literacy Cooperative welcomes executive director



Robert (Bob) Paponetti has become executive director of The Literacy Cooperative of Greater Cleveland.

In this newly created role, Paponetti will oversee the Cooperative’s efforts to improve literacy levels among children, youth and adults in Greater Cleveland. He will collaborate with Program Director Omobola Lana and other Cooperative staff.

“We are facing a critical workforce shortage in the coming years due to the retirement of baby boomers and higher skills requirements for future workers,” Paponetti said. “Jobs of the future will require post-secondary training and education. Substandard reading, English and math skills are significant barriers to achieving success in high school, college and employer-sponsored training programs.

“I look forward to working with the community to improve literacy levels and enhance the quality of life for our citizens.”

Paponetti joins the Cooperative from Cuyahoga Community College, where he was executive director II of Workforce Solutions, an organization working to enhance the economic growth and

quality of life for Northeast Ohio by providing residents and employers with workforce education programs and lifelong learning opportunities. Paponetti previously served as the college’s vice president for workforce and economic development.

Prior to joining Tri-C, he was director of the Cuyahoga County Department of Workforce Development and director of workforce development for consulting firms CGI Information Systems & Management Consultants Inc. and IMR Global (formerly Orion Consulting). He holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Cleveland State University.

The Literacy Cooperative of Greater Cleveland works on behalf of the community to improve literacy levels among children, youth and adults in Greater Cleveland. In partnership with literacy providers and community stakeholders, the Cooperative aims to raise literacy levels across the region by providing an information clearinghouse for the community; establishing evaluation and quality assurance standards; ensuring that training, curriculum development and technical assistance are available to providers; identifying and securing public and private funding for literacy; and launching a public awareness campaign on literacy. The Cooperative is a joint initiative of the Cleveland, George Gund and Martha Holden Jennings foundations.

Alliance researches link between education and income in Ohio

Approximately one-third of students who enter ninth grade each year drop out of school; that's over a million each year. Another third of students graduate without the knowledge and skills necessary for success in college or the workplace. These individuals are likely to face serious economic challenges throughout their lives, but the country's low graduation rate also has a negative economic impact on communities, states and the nation.

To help policymakers and the public understand the extent of the economic costs to society of an educational system that is serving two-thirds of its students poorly, the Alliance for Excellent Education conducted national and state-level analyses of some of the economic and social benefits of increasing high school graduation rates. The Alliance's analyses are based on a number of national research studies and the methodology, along with figures for all fifty states and the District of Columbia, are detailed in a series of briefs available at http://www.all4ed.org/publication_material/issue_policy_briefs. The data and assumptions are not necessarily consistent across different research studies so the figures should not be added together. The "total" economic impact is not a sum of the numbers presented here.

These figures help illustrate the potential economic benefits to individuals and the state of investing in an improved high school system that better prepares all high school students for graduation.

- Nearly 41,000 students did not graduate from Ohio's high schools in 2007; the lost lifetime earnings in Ohio for that class of dropouts alone totals more than \$10.5 billion.
- Ohio would save more than \$502 million in health care costs over the course of the lifetimes of each class of dropouts had they earned their diplomas.
- Ohio households would have over \$2.7 billion more in accumulated wealth if all heads of households had graduated from high school.
- More than \$2.6 billion would be added to Ohio's economy by 2020 if students of color graduated at the same rate as white students.
- If Ohio's high schools graduated all students ready for college, the state would save more than \$132 million a year in community college remediation costs and lost earnings.
- Ohio's economy would see a combination of savings and revenue of almost \$233 million in reduced crime spending and increased earnings each year if the male high school graduation rate increased by just 5 percent.

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LOST INCOME

Estimated additional lifetime income if high school dropouts graduated with their classes in 2006-2007

States	Ninth graders (2003-2004)	Estimated graduation rates (2006-2007)	Estimated number of dropouts, class of 2007	Total lifetime additional income if dropouts graduated
Ohio	160,873	74.7%	40,701	\$10,582,225
USA	4,190,237	69.9%	1,265,016	\$328,904,058,340

Source: Alliance for Excellent Education

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

To register for these programs, contact Erika Mason at (216) 393-4549 or emason@literacycooperative.org

January

"Make It/Take It"

January 18

9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Northeast Able Center, 23131 Lake Shore Blvd., Euclid

Presenter: Christina Theurling, coordinator, Northeast ABE Resource Center

This is an opportunity to create, assemble and reproduce materials for your classroom and students. Assemble manipulatives, create lesson plans and gather resources from the Internet and our resource library. Laminator, supplies and copy machine will be available. This can be a half day (2.5 hours) or full-day (5 hours) session. You may arrive and complete activities between 9:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

Space is limited. Register by January 8.

Numeric Literacy: Practical Ways to Design Mathematics Instruction for Adult Learners

January 25

9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Cuyahoga Community College Metro Campus, Unified Technologies Center, Room 202

Presenter: Carmine Burkette, coordinator, ABE Program, Cuyahoga County Community College

Attend this interactive workshop to review current adult learning theory and acquire new methods to teach numerics in the classroom.

Attendees will leave the workshop with sample lessons plans and activities that can immediately be implemented with students.

Space is limited to 20 participants.

Register by January 11.

February

Instructional Strategies to Increase Motivation and Persistence in Adult Education Programs

February 8

9:00 a.m. to Noon

Northeast ABE Center, 23131 Lake Shore Blvd., Euclid

Presenter: Christina Theurling, coordinator, Northeast ABE Resource Center

This workshop is designed for literacy service providers and instructors who work with English-speaking clients in adult education or GED programs. Participants will gain interactive and instructional tools for motivating students and increasing their retention.

Space is limited to 15 participants.

Register by Jan. 25.

Strengthening Intergenerational Literacy: Practical Ways to Increase Family Literacy Rates Through Classroom Instruction and Family Engagement Activities

February 15

9:00 a.m. to Noon

Steven A. Minter Conference Center, 1422 Euclid Avenue, 12th floor, Cleveland

Presenter: Annie Lopez-Chapman, Ph.D., principal consultant, Limitless Learning

Designed for adult literacy service providers and early-childhood teachers, this workshop aims to help both groups increase family literacy rates through innovative, hands-on and cost-effective classroom instruction techniques that can impact the entire family at home. Learn how to address difficult family situations that affect attendance and to increase students' retention rates. Attendees will receive instructional tools and resources.

Space is limited to 25 participants.

Register by February 8.