

Adult Learning Network

The Adult Learning Network is a quarterly publication of the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center.

AALRC Welcomes its New Employees



Nancy Loftis, Professional Develop-

Nancy Loftis joined AALRC on March 1, 2004, as the Professional Development Coordinator. With over twenty years experience in adult education with the Pulaski County Special School District, she is looking forward to this new endeavor in the adult education realm. Foremost, Nancy wants to meet the professional development needs of the adult educators and literacy providers of Arkansas. Her immediate goals are to develop a new needs assessment tool and begin updating the Arkansas Adult Learning Professional Development Plan.

“Resource Center, Toccara speaking, how may I help you?”, will be what you hear when you call the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center. These words are said many times a day by the helpful, friendly voice of Toccara Handy, the new Receptionist. She graduated from Central High School and attended both Remington College and a Wage Class before being employed here. She said, “I really like working at AALRC and my co-workers are the best anyone can ever have.”



Toccara Handy, Receptionist/Secretary

Virtual Book Fair at AALRC

The AALRC is giving away books which are no longer “up-to-date”. Starting on April 1st, please check our web site at www.aalrc.org and look for the “Virtual Book Fair” link. Your program is allowed to choose ten items on a first-come, first-serve basis. Please send an email with your request to Klaus at klaus@aalrc.org to receive the available materials.

Learning Disabilities Referral Directory Now Online

The AALRC has added a learning disabilities referral directory to the website at <http://aalrc.org/html/ld/AALRC%20Referral%20Directory1.htm> Or just go to <http://aalrc.org>, click on “Disabilities,” then click on “AALRC Referral Directory.” The directory of local, state-wide, and national resources includes twenty different content areas related to learning disabilities and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. This site was designed for programs, staff, and students, and will be periodically updated and reviewed.

Professional Development News



Tuition Reimbursement Program

Contact your Program Advisor at the Adult Education Section or Marsha Taylor at the AALRC for more information on this program. Reimbursement is applicable to courses taken for Adult Education Licensure ONLY! This form is available on the AALRC website (www.aalrc.org).

Remember: (1) The application form must be submitted to the AALRC **10 working days before class begins**. (2) Your class grade and receipt of payment must be received **within 30 days of class ending**.

NOTICE:

If you are unable to attend a workshop you have registered for, please contact the AALRC as soon as possible. Participants are often placed on waiting lists because workshops fill up. If you find that you cannot attend a workshop and you call ahead, this gives us time to notify wait-listed participants that they can attend.

There is a new requirement: Applicants must provide documentation that the class will count for adult education licensure.

For a list of courses available in adult education, please contact:

Arkansas State University
Jonesboro
Dr. David Agnew
(870) 972-3943

University of Arkansas
at Fayetteville
Dr. Buddy Lyle
(479) 575-5119 or
(479) 575-4578

University of Arkansas
at Little Rock
Dr. Charlotte Robertson
(501) 569-8933

University of Central Arkansas
Conway
Dr. Sherry Roberts
(501) 450-5431

AALRC Staff

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Tocara Handy

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Wanda Johnson

Professional Development Coordinator
Nancy Loftis

Media Coordinator
Klaus Neu

Information Technology Specialist
Rob Pollan

Disabilities Project Manager
Patti White

Upcoming Training Events:

Arkansas Numeracy Campaign

Session 2 – March 9-10
Session 3 – April 6-7

Literacy Strategies

Session 3 – April 1-2
Session 4 – May 6-7

ESL Basics

Session 3 – April 22-23

Payne/Jordan

Session 2 – April 13-15
Session 3 – May 17-18
Session 4 – October 4
Session 5 – December 6

Learning Disabilities Training & Dissemination

Session 1 – March 22-23
Session 2 – April 19-20

Committee Meetings

Advisory Council –
March 25-26, NWACC, Rogers

WAGE Advisory Board –
April 29, 9:30, AALRC

Advisory Council –
May 27-28, Lincoln County
Adult Education, Star City

LDTD Advisory Committee,
May 24, 10:00, AALRC



*Developing Policy to Better Serve Adults with Learning Disabilities
The Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) Regional Meetings*

(Article by Rochelle Kenyon, Ph.D., in the Florida Bridges to Practice Newsletter at <http://www.floridatechnet.org/bridges>)

With few exceptions, policy to consistently identify and address learning disabilities in the adult population does not currently exist in the United States and its territories. The Office of Vocational and Adult Education, Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) coordinated with the U.S. Department of Education/ Office of Special Education & Rehabilitative Services, the U.S. Department of Labor/ Office of Disability & Employment Policy, and the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) to sponsor a series of regional forums on the topic of developing policy to better serve adults with learning disabilities. The forums had the following objectives:

1. To provide participants with an understanding of the USDOE's goals and objectives related to adults with learning disabilities.
2. To promote an understanding of Federal laws related to adults with LD and the impact of these efforts on state policy.
3. To improve the literacy and employment skills of adults with LD through the development of coordinated state policies.
4. To facilitate the creation of new and innovative partnerships between adult education providers and other state partners to make literacy services more widely available and promote smooth transitions to employment.
5. To facilitate the development of adult learning disability policy based on high-quality research-based models that equip adults with tools to succeed in the next steps of their education and employment.

Regional forums were held during October 2003. All states and territories were invited to bring team members. [Note from AALRC: The Arkansas team consisted of Jim Case, Director, Arkansas Workforce Centers; Dr. Susan Holt, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services; and Patti White, Disabilities Project Manager, AALRC.] The teams were professionally facilitated with topical experts for presentations and technical assistance.

Issues covered discussion of policy development steps, clarification of federal expectations, and interpretation of disability laws and rules. Content experts focused primarily on strategies and concerns for meeting the needs of adults with LD. Participants brought copies of their state legislation, policy manuals, and procedures related to serving adults with learning disabilities.

DAEL regional teams will be providing technical assistance to help state and territorial teams develop cross-agency policy to better serve adults with LD. States will also be provided with a list of possible screening and assessment tools for review. A draft policy that distinguishes between policies, procedures, and their directives will be distributed as a sample for states to review and consider.

Disability News

Irlen Filters, Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome, and Developmental Vision

By Patti White, AALRC Disabilities Project Manager

The AALRC and the Arkansas Optometric Association continue to support and promote the use of the Vision Therapy Assessment (VTA) software screening for adult education and literacy students who report vision problems or significant problems with reading. While some programs report an increase in reading performance for students who use Irlen filters (colored overlays), the American Optometric Association 1998 position statement on “the use of tinted lenses for the treatment of dyslexia and other related reading and learning disorders” states that there is currently no scientific research to support the ‘scotopic sensitivity syndrome’ hypothesis. The current focus on accountability and research-based practices by the US Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, further supports the AALRC position to affirm its support of methods that have proven to be effective by valid research.

There have been a number of studies over the years that have attempted to replicate the results of the initial research by Helen Irlen, who refers to her abstract presented in 1983, but has never published the details of her research. The problems with the literature that have been the focus of subsequent studies include:

- A lack of improvement in reading skills with use of tinted lenses, despite reports of subjective improvement by subjects;
- No quantitative demonstration of visual resolution after use of tinted lenses—the only study showed no significant effect; and
- The question of a placebo effect has not been well controlled in most studies (Scheiman et al, *Journal of the American Optometric Association*, August 1990).



One 1990 pilot study showed that while vision therapy resulted in statistical improvement in vision functioning, Irlen filters did not result in significant gains in reading rate, word recognition in context, or comprehension (Blaskey, et al, *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, December 1990). A cohort study about dyslexic children in 1993 reported that, “...there was no reliable correlation between subjective lens preference and objective reading performance. These findings challenge not only the potential efficacy of tinted lenses in treating dyslexia, but also the subjective method on which this treatment is primarily based” (Monacker, et al, *Arch Ophthalmology*, February 1993). A study of the placebo effect in Australia found that, “The failure to find significantly greater improvement for the experimental groups over the control group for the total period, despite subjects' reports of improved print clarity, may be partly related to the lack of effective letter-sound analysis and synthesis skills and to the use of a word-identification strategy of guessing based on partial visual analysis” (Robinson, *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, February 1999). Several of the studies' conclusions echo those of Mitchell Scheiman, O.D., whose 1989 study concluded that “...underlying vision problems are responsible for the symptoms of individuals who feel they are candidates for Irlen Filters....these should be treated using conventional optometric therapy including lenses, prisms, and vision therapy” (Scheiman et al, 1990).

The AALRC encourages further research to investigate the effect of Irlen lenses and filters on reading, but until the research is documented, supports the use of the VTA software screening as a scientifically-based, effective, and appropriate tool for vision screening—and supports vision therapy as a scientifically-based, effective, and appropriate tool for addressing many vision problems that impact reading skills.

Tech*Talk*

Note: To link to any web address (URL) in this newsletter, go the AALRC's home page at <http://aalrc.org>, look up this newsletter, and then just click on the appropriate link.

Your LCD Projector/Laptop Connection

Are you having problems hooking a projector to your laptop? It is best to hook the projector into your laptop, turn on the projector and turn on your computer last. Your computer should recognize that there is video equipment attached. If it does not, and you already tried to switch it on using the function keys on your laptop, try the steps below:

1. Right click on a blank spot on your desktop. Select properties, then the settings tab.
2. Make sure that the Extend My Desktop Settings to Monitor box is not checked.
3. Click on the advanced button.
4. Click on the Twin Views tab.
5. Choose clone, and press OK.

Spyware/Adware

Is your computer running slower these days? Has your home page mysteriously changed, then after changing it back, it changes again? Do you get pop-up ads even though you are not surfing a site that has advertising, or worse yet when you're not even on the Internet? If you answered yes to any of these, chances are you have spyware/adware on your computer.

What is spyware and how did I get it?

Spyware is any software that employs a user's Internet connection in the background (the so-called 'backchannel') without their knowledge or explicit permission.

Many adware applications install separate advertising components on your system, that run--downloading ads and wasting system resources--even if you're not using the software that installed them. Often, these components remain installed and continue to perform their unsightly duties *even after the associated application has been uninstalled!* Some adware companies have even gone so far as to create "Advertising Trojan Horses", virus-like software programs that stealthily install themselves on your computer to perform unwanted advertising functions and violate your privacy *whether you've installed the advertising-supported software or not.* Advertising trojans make clandestine connections to adservers behind your back, consume precious network bandwidth and may compromise the security of your data. The latest versions of these "ad-viruses" operate in full stealth and are nearly impossible to detect without advanced knowledge of the system environment. These include the TimeSink/Conducent TSADBOT and the Aureate advertising trojans. One spyware module has been known to spoof a Windows system process so that it cannot be terminated and does not appear on Windows' End Task (Ctrl-Alt-Del) dialogue.

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Tech



Talk

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Spyware modules have been implicated in computer problems including system slowdown, illegal operation errors, browser crashes, and even the "Blue Screen Of Death". While normal system stability usually returns when the interfering spyware modules are deleted, WebHancer in particular will *disable your Internet access if you try to delete it!*

Spyware can be obnoxious in that it performs "drive-by downloads". Drive-by downloads are accomplished by providing a misleading dialogue box or other methods of stealth installation. Many times users have no idea they have installed the application. Often adware creators make their application difficult to uninstall.

How do I get rid of it?

The best way to get spyware off your computer is to use a program like Spybot Search & Destroy or Ad-aware. Sometimes you have to use both programs to get all of the bugs out of your system. You may have to reboot and run the utility again to get rid of some of the nastier pests.

<http://www.safer-networking.org/> Spybot Search & Destroy is currently one of the best programs out there for removing spyware, and it's free. Be sure to read the 'Big Fake Warning'.

<http://www.lavasoft.de> Ad-aware is another good program, it is free also.

<http://www.pchell.com/support/spyware.shtml> Good manual removal instructions.

<http://pestpatrol.com/pestinfo> Comprehensive list of spyware.

Preventive Steps

Spybot Search & Destroy also prevents many pests from ever getting on your machine. Although they can't keep up with all the new bugs that come out on a daily basis, it is a good start.

Don't download any program that advertises itself, then proclaims that it is free. It will almost certainly contain spyware attached to the advertised program. This includes but is not limited to Internet Explorer toolbars, emoticons, Internet speed boosters, weather bugs, time synchronization programs, and many, many more.

Don't visit websites that install adware just by visiting. How do you recognize these sites? Frequent pop-ups are a good sign, but a sure way to tell is by disinfecting your system with a spybot removal utility, then go to the questionable website and run the utility again. If you have new spyware after visiting just that one site, then you know who the offending party is.

Other measures include using virus protection software and a firewall. If you are using a firewall, and it asks if you want to grant Internet access permission to say, TSADBOT, you should say no. But more importantly you know the site you just visited, or the software that you just downloaded, contains spyware, because TSADBOT will try to connect to the Internet immediately after installation.

For a list of FREE fire walls, anti-virus programs, and spyware protection go to <http://www.siruis-freeware.com/virus.html>

Adult Education Advisory Council

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TABE Audiocassette Validation Study Complete

The TABE Audiocassette validation study is complete and the results of the study are available at <http://aalrc.org> under the "What's New" section. Dr. Larry Evans of UAMS completed the study, which did show the TABE audiocassette to be a valid format of testing. The best predictor of benefit from the audiocassette was a significantly higher score on the TABE Reading test when using the audiocassette.



What Does This Study Mean For Adult Education/Literacy Intake?

The study's final report recommended that students taking the TABE for the first time always use the audiocassette for the TABE Locator test. After the Locator test, students should be given both forms of the TABE Reading test. Students should use the audiocassette for the first form, and no audiocassette for the second form. The reading scores should then be compared before completing the TABE. If the score from using the audiocassette is a specific number of points higher, then the student can complete the remaining TABE tests using the audiocassette. Adult education programs are given some latitude in selecting a specific number difference for students to use the audiocassette for the entire TABE. This latitude is based on whether a program wants to offer the modification to students with mild, moderate, or only severe reading problems. Specific number differences for these levels of reading problems are contained in the final report.

If you would like a copy of the complete report, please contact Patti White at prwhite@madisoncounty.net or call her at 800.569.3539.

Form L-15: Requesting Accommodations on the GED for LD and/or AD/HD



There is a detailed explanation of the L-15 form and what must be done to complete it at <http://home.gwu.edu/%7Ekkid/f15.html>.

For additional information on requesting accommodations with the L-15 in Arkansas, go to http://aalrc.org/html/ld/ged_accomm2.htm

LINCS Special Collections

The following is an excerpt from the NIFL AALPD discussion list - posted by Jo Maralit.

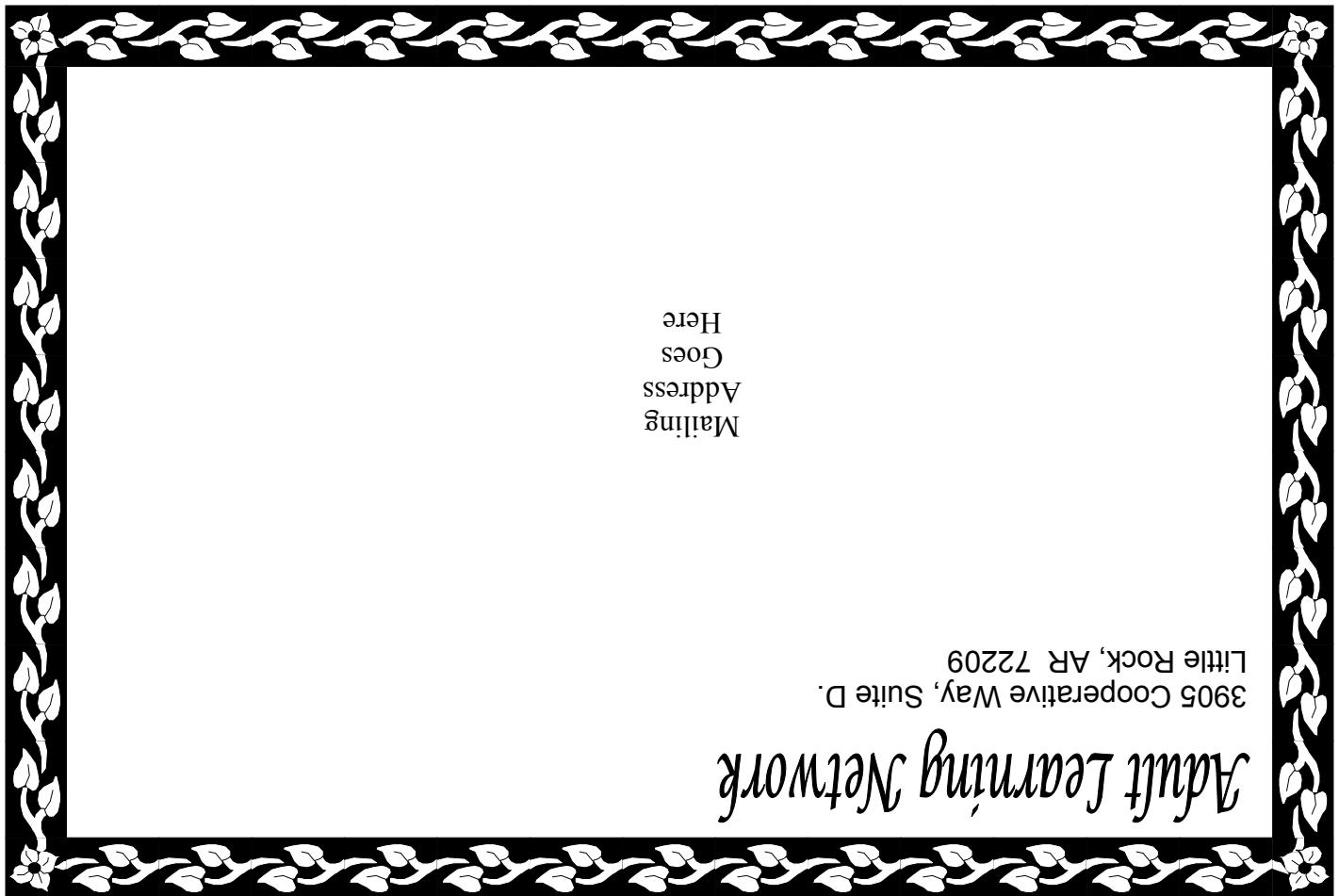
Are you looking for curriculum or classroom activities to use in your adult or family literacy practice? Are you researching professional development topics or seeking information on current policies or events?



The LINCS Special Collections are one-stop electronic gateways to specialized information on high-quality literacy practices and materials for use in adult education and literacy programs. LINCS Special Collections are built around specific content areas and professional development topics:

- Assessment
- Correctional Education
- English as a Second Language and Civic Participation
- Equipped for the Future

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ADULT LEARNING NETWORK

LINCS Special Collections

Family Literacy
 Health and Literacy
 Learning Disabilities
 Policy and Legislation
 Program Leadership and Improvement
 Science and Numeracy
 Technology Training and
 Workforce Education.

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Each of the LINCS special collections offers a comprehensive assortment of materials, resources, and web links for instructors, tutors, program administrators, and adult learners. Many of the resources are downloadable for use by tutors and teachers. Visitors will also be able to find links to relevant adult and family literacy research, policy issues, articles about practice, and project updates.

The LINCS Special Collections, a service of the National Institute for Literacy, are made available through the work of individuals and organizations from around the country. Each item selected for inclusion in a special collection has been peer-reviewed by a Core Knowledge Group of recognized experts in the field.

Go to <http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/collections.html> to learn more about the LINCS special collections or contact Jaleh Behroozi (jbehroozi@nifl.gov) or Jo Maralit (mmaralit@nifl.gov) at the National Institute for Literacy 1775 I Street, Suite 730 Washington, DC. 20006.