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Adult Learning Network

The Adult Learning Network is a quarterly publication of the AALRC.

The Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center provides equal access to all programs and activities.

Third Annual Arkansas Literary Festival Continues Tradition of Celebrating Literacy, Language, and the Written Word

www.arkansasliteraryfestival.org - Please bookmark this web page for the latest information on the 2006 Arkansas Literary Festival, coming April 22nd and 23rd in Little Rock's River Market District.



The literary festival was started in 2004 as a fundraiser for Arkansas Literacy Councils, Inc. and the state's local literacy councils. It is the only festival of its kind in the country where proceeds benefit non-profit volunteer adult literacy programs. Authors who attend the festival do not charge for their appearances. Sponsors make it possible for author travel and lodging and other festival expenses to be less – which results in more proceeds available for adult literacy.

The literary festival is free and open to the public. Authors scheduled to appear as of March 15 include Dr. John Hope Franklin, Tom Piazza, Joe Kleine, Emily Auerbach and Suzanne Marrs, "Dr. BBQ" Ray Lampe, Robert Hicks, Beth Ann Fennelly, Deborah Mathis, Speer Morgan, and many more. Author sessions begin at 11:00 a.m. Saturday and 1:00 p.m. Sunday, lasting until 5:00 – 5:30 p.m. both days.

There are numerous other events taking place in conjunction with the festival. At 1:30 p.m. Thursday, April 20, the annual "Celebrate Literacy Month" event will take place at the Arkansas State Capitol honoring achievers in adult education, volunteer literacy, and K-12 education. That night, at the Main Library's Darragh Center will be a return appearance by Allan Stypeck and Mike Cuthbert, public radio's "Book Guys," who had so much fun last year they asked to come back!

On Friday, Little Rock celebrities will be reading excerpts of *The Great Gatsby* as part of the Arkansas Center for the Book's THE BIG READ project. At noon Dr. Ray Lampe will demonstrate his extraordinary knowledge of barbeque in the River Market's East Pavilion. At 6:00 p.m. will be "Chapter and Verse," a festival fundraiser for people to have a chance to meet authors and buy their books – autographed, of course – and enjoy great food, drink, and entertainment.

The festival opens on Saturday – check the Web site for the schedule! At 9:00 a.m. will be a Children's Breakfast hosted by the Clinton Presidential Center. Because it is Earth Day, the breakfast will have an environmental theme and will feature Melissa Stewart, author of *A Place for Butterflies*; Terri Luneau, and Trevor Bennett, author and illustrator of *Big Woods Bird – An Ivory-bill Story*.

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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**.

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 Little Rock
Dr. Charlotte Robertson
(501) 569-8933

University of Arkansas
at Fayetteville
Dr. Barbara Hinton
(479) 575-5119 or
(479) 575-4578

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



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.

When a workshop has a waiting list, participants may not send substitutes from their center to attend in their place. Registrations are held for participants and not for centers.

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TRAVEL Reimbursement



It is important to remember the guidelines when making travel plans to attend meetings/workshops at the AALRC. Programs must follow state travel guidelines and the policy written below. We have had to disallow many travel requests because the guidelines are not being followed. The AALRC would appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Local programs funded with state or federal adult education funds must adhere to Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration guidelines when requesting travel reimbursement.

Professional Development Registration Process

The registration process for Professional Development will change starting July 1, 2006. The AALRC will connect through Southeast Arkansas Education Service Cooperative to the ESC-Works program that many school districts are already using. The website is www.escweb.net/ar_esc.

Each person will be required to create a "Shoebox." One requirement for creating a shoebox is having a valid email address. Initial training for this process will take place at the Administrators' Meeting in May. The local program directors will then train their staff. Additional training will be scheduled as needed.

Online Professional Development

With time counting down to June 30, 2006, some teachers still need additional Professional Development hours in order to get the sixty hours required by the Department of Education. One easy and effective way for many teachers to get professional development is to use the internet. Many sites offer free professional development. Listed below are a number of websites that fit into that category. Also included is one that requires a fee. As teachers, most are used to Professional Development being provided at no charge; however, paying a minimal fee in order to get the required hours may be worthwhile for some.

FREE:

<http://www.congressclass.org/>

<http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/>

<http://www.vluonline.org/course/index.asp>

<http://www.floridatechnet.org/pdc.asp>

<http://www.learner.org/>

<http://tappedin.org/tappedin/>

<http://www.pbs.org/teachersource/>

<http://www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/>

<http://www.maisplace.org/profdev.htm>

This link gives many other links to Professional Development.

FEE REQUIRED

<http://www.ableacademy.org/>

Calendar

All events are at the AALRC unless otherwise noted.

Professional Development Training

April

4 – Computer Security Technology

5 – PowerPoint

10 – Multi-Sensory Approach to Phonological Processing (MAPP)

11 – ESL CAELA Participants

11 – Woodcock Johnson Training

12-13 – ESL Basics

20-21 – Literacy Strategies – Session 3

May

9 – Beginning Excel

10 – Intermediate Excel

11-12 – Literacy Strategies – Session 4

Meetings

April

18-19 – Visit from Federal Office (OVAE)

May

4-5 – Administrators' Meeting – Mt. Harbor Resort

9 – Disabilities Advisory Committee

16 – AALRC Advisory Committee

18-19 – Adult Education Advisory Council – Hot Springs

News from the Disabilities Project Manager

*LD Training
Available Online*



The Ohio ABLEResource Center has published new video workshops about adults with learning disabilities at http://able-ohiou.org/ld_training_vids. There are two sets of videos; one for administrators and one for support staff and instructors. Both sets include eight videos that teach the following subject areas: Definition, Laws, Screening, Goal-Setting, Lesson Planning, Adaptations & Accommodations, Instruction, ESOL, and Learner Perspective.

Each video takes about 15 minutes to view, and is displayed side-by-side with the PowerPoint slides used during the presentation. The site also allows users to view the slides without the video.

If you have not been able to attend one or more of the learning disabilities workshops at the AALRC, please take advantage of this free training opportunity to learn about effective and appropriate instruction for adult students who have learning disabilities.

LD Screening Tool for Spanish-Speaking Students "Reaching for the Stars"



The Learning Disabilities Association of Western New York has completed a validation study on the *Empire State Screening for Spanish-Speaking Students (ESS)*. The screening tool is available for free at <http://www.ldaofwny.org/ESS%20form.htm>.

The ESS (Abwender, 2005) is a brief assessment tool designed to help identify Spanish speaking adults with certain developmental cognitive disabilities that could be expected to interfere with a person's ability to, for example, obtain or hold a job. It consists of a series of questions, mostly about personal and educational history, that can be asked by anyone who is fluent in Spanish. Most of the questions can be answered with "yes" or "no."

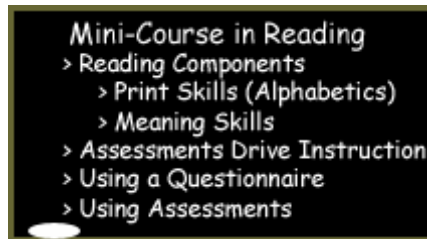
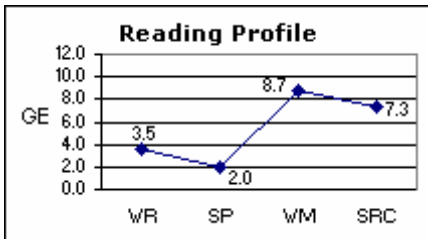
The ESS is not, by itself, a full diagnostic test of any disorder, and the results of the test should never be used by themselves to make a diagnosis. The ESS yields a numerical score; if the examinee's score is above a specified cut-off level, then that examinee would likely benefit from a thorough diagnostic evaluation, usually conducted by a licensed psychologist, to determine the presence and nature of a cognitive disorder. Again, the ESS itself does not diagnose these conditions.

The problem with screening Spanish-speaking adult education students in Arkansas is the lack of diagnosticians who can follow up with a complete diagnostic evaluation for learning disabilities. A worst-case scenario would be that all of the ESOL instructors start using this screen, only to find out there's nowhere to go for a diagnosis. So the road from getting a screening tool to following up with a diagnosis and then requesting/receiving accommodations on the GED may be a long and winding road, but the ESS is at least a start.

That said, the ESS may still have value as a way to gather important information about the student's learning needs. Typically, ESOL classrooms already incorporate many of the instructional strategies that are helpful for students with learning disabilities, such as rhyme and repetition, experiential learning, and the use of manipulatives and role-play. However, there may be learning needs that are not so easily addressed, and the ESS may provide important background or processing information that will help the instructor determine some more specific strategies for that individual student.

For more information, please contact Patti White at prwhite@madisoncounty.net or call 800.569.3539.

NCSALL's Reading Instruction Aids and Profiles



The National Institute for Literacy has posted an interactive website for adult education and literacy practitioners at <http://www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/>. The website is based on the *Adult Reading Components Study (ARCS)* by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL). Researchers tested 955 adult participants individually on eleven skills (components) that contribute to reading ability. A list of scores for each learner became that individual's reading profile, illustrating his or her strengths and instructional needs.

On this website, 569 Adult Basic Education (ABE) learners from the ARCS are grouped into 11 profiles. Each profile group shows a distinctive pattern and/or level of reading component skills.

There are two website tracks:

[Match a Profile](#)

On the "Match a Profile" track, you can enter scores for your learner and be matched to one of the 11 ARCS-based profiles. You will find suggestions for instruction as well as information about the ARCS learners in this group that may relate to your learner.

[Take the Mini-Course](#)

Although you will find enough information on the "Match A Profile" track to understand your learner's reading profile, the "Mini-Course" offers an opportunity to learn more about reading. You will find extensive information on the major reading components and assessment as well as sections containing references and downloadable resources.

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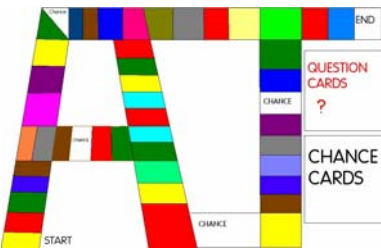
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Assistive Technology for Students with Learning Disabilities



You just can't believe the amount of stuff out there anymore. You would think the tidal wave of technology as it applies to people with disabilities is surely cresting, but it may be only the first slight swell. The AALRC is trying desperately to keep up with all the latest news about what's available to help students with disabilities in adult education and literacy programs – what's there for free, what's there for buying, what's cheap and works well, what's cheap and doesn't work well – lots to look at in the sea of assistive technology (AT).

This is the first of a series of articles to link programs with AT resources. Some are available for check-out from the AALRC library for use with students in programs. Others are available for AALRC demonstration purposes only to help programs decide what they would like to purchase. Still others are out there in the market, and we can only hope to give enough information that it helps programs narrow the choices a bit.

For the kick-off, it seems appropriate to remind programs what's already available for check-out at the AALRC library. These have been demonstrated and promoted in various workshops and conferences over the last few years. A few programs have taken advantage of this incredible opportunity for AT on loan to help their students with learning and other disabilities, but there should be more. It must be a lack of communication that keeps these items stashed away in a closet instead of sitting on someone's desk. So, what's in that closet, anyway?

Well, quite a lot. If you haven't stopped by the AALRC library to peruse the possibilities, please do so as soon as possible. For now, there are two items that might be a big help to more students than you realize.



One is the FM Loop Hearing Aid System. This is basically a microphone for the speaker and a headset for the listener. Everything the speaker says goes directly to the listener's ears, thereby cutting out all the distracting background noise, increasing hearing volume (if needed), and clarifying the spoken words.

This is not only a great tool for students who have hearing impairments, but also is extremely helpful for students who have Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD). For students with AD/HD, the FM Loop does a great job of helping the student focus on what the teacher is saying, even when you're sitting right next to them. Anyone who is AD/HD and has tried this tool understands completely how much this helps.

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Tech

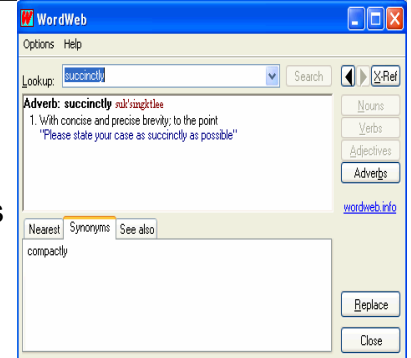


Talk

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.

Dictionary and Pronunciation Computer Combination (say that 3 times fast!)

I have found two computer tools that work well together and will benefit teachers and students alike. The first one is WordWeb <http://wordweb.info/free/> version 4.01. This is a free dictionary program that installs to your taskbar (it uses only a small amount of system resources) and is ready to be used when you need it. For example, if you are reading a column on the Internet and run across a word that you don't know, like "succinctly", you can highlight the word and then left-click on the red WordWeb 'W' in your taskbar (near the clock in the lower right-hand corner) and it will automatically look it up. When I say it looks it up automatically, I mean that you don't have to open a dictionary program and type the word into it and look it up, you only have to highlight the word and click on the 'W'. This makes for a quick lookup, and eliminates the possibility of a typing error. Also, many programs don't have a built in dictionary function, so you can lookup spellings that you're not sure about. This is a great program that you can install on all your computers, and it does not require an Internet connection.



Now that you know the meaning of the word "succinctly", how do you pronounce it? That's where the AT&T Labs Text-To-Speech (TTS) program comes in. This one is accessed through the Internet by going to <http://public.research.att.com/~ttsweb/tts/demo.php>. You can copy and paste the word "succinctly" into the text box and press speak, and it will speak the word aloud for you (speakers or headphones required). You can even copy and paste whole sentences, or just type in whatever you want the program to say. There is an option to change the voice to something different, but I've found that the default is as good as any of the rest. This is a great resource for people that need to hear the words, including ESL students.

USB Flash Memory

They're called memory sticks, jump drives, thumb drives, or those little USB memory thingies; but the name that seems to stick is flash memory. Whatever you call them, they are very handy to have around.



What makes them so neat is that you can insert one into a USB port in your computer, and it works just like a floppy disk but with much more capacity. A floppy disk can hold 1.4 megabytes, and a 1Gig flash memory drive will hold 1000 megabytes, which is 714 times as much as a floppy. Floppy disks are fairly delicate and fail quite frequently, but the flash drives are tough and I've yet to have one fail. So moving a program or a bunch of files from one computer to the other is a cinch. Windows 2000 and XP will automatically install the drives and assign it a drive letter like drive "e:", so you can drag and drop files, or copy and paste just like it was an a: drive, but significantly faster. They also work great for backup. You can put all your documents from the My Documents folder and all your email on the flash drive, and then insert it into another computer and copy those files to it. If your computer fails (and they do), you have a backup on another computer.

Third Annual Arkansas Literary Festival

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Following the breakfast, the entire day will be filled with activities for children and teens along with the author sessions for "grown-ups." Saturday night will feature "A Novel Affair," a reception for authors and festival sponsors (tickets must be purchased) and "Pub or Perish – A Reading on the Hoof," which is open to the public and to anyone who wants to share their own literary works at Mallard's Bar in the Peabody Hotel.

The weekend ends on Sunday with author sessions and a special presentation promoting the upcoming Delta Classic 4 Literacy in the East Pavilion of the River Market.

Throughout the festival, there will be a Tutor-Student Recruitment Tent to reinforce awareness of adult literacy programs throughout the festival. Adult education and literacy council providers are welcome to volunteer in this booth – or anywhere else! See the "Volunteer" links on the festival Web page for information on how to participate. We'd love to have you!

Please contact Arkansas Literacy Councils if there are any questions about the festival. In addition to good weather, there is one other necessary ingredient to make the festival a great event – Arkansas hospitality! We hope you can join us for this exciting weekend!

*Luther H. Black Memorial Scholarship-
GED Graduates Are Encouraged to Apply*



The Luther H. Black Memorial Scholarship was set up to recognize an Arkansas High School Diploma (GED) graduate who demonstrates outstanding leadership, citizenship, and professional promise. The scholarship was established to honor Dr. Luther H. Black, the "father of adult education" for his years of dedicated and committed service to Arkansas Adult Education.

For more information about this scholarship and to download the application form, please go to <http://www.aalrc.org/resources/ged/lhb.aspx>.

Assistive Technology for Students with Learning Disabilities

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The other item worth mentioning again is not really an item. It's the contract the AALRC has with the Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic (RFB&D) organization. This contract allows local adult education and literacy programs to check out books on tape through the AALRC library. RFB&D has most of the ABE/GED textbooks you have in your classrooms already available on audiocassette. The AALRC also has the 4-track recorders needed to play the tapes, so AT NO COST TO YOUR PROGRAM, your students with learning disabilities who may need to take the GED tests on audiocassette can get their instructional materials on tape, too! Just contact Klaus Neu at klaus@aalrc.org and he can tell you what to do to choose the books you need him to order for you.



Stay tuned for the next newsletter, when there will be more information about the AT that is available for your students.