In Community, Strength

Changing Our Minds
about U.S. Adult Foundational Education

Vision

Volume 2, Number 1 Spring, 1990 LITERACY SOUTH

Courtesy Sun Herald, Biloxi, MS. Herb Welch, photographer

Inside:

2 Director's Column

3 Janirve Foundation Supports Literacy

5 Literacy South Evaluates LVNYC

6 New Staff Name Change

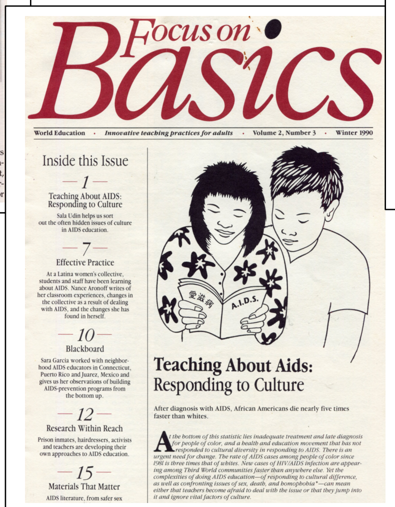
7 Staying in Touch

Jearlean Osborne, right, a tutor and recruiter for Literacy Volunteers of Biloxi, MS, responds to Alice Brown's life story entitled "The Struggle of My Education." Ms. Osborne signs up many new students from her own community. She sees her roots in the community as a plus for talking with and recruiting students into the program.

Creating a Community of Learners

Literacy Tutors in Biloxi, Mississippi Use Student Centered Materials

What's going on in Biloxi, Mississippi? Well there's the beautiful gulf coast, lots of sunshine and good seafood on one hand and on the other there's an economy that's not doing so good, high unemployment and underemployment, a host of environmental concerns and not many resources. And then there's a literacy program trying to make sense out of this reality and really make a difference for



Focus on Basics

World Education · *Innovative teaching practices for adults* · Volume 2, Number 3 · Winter 1990

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Teaching About AIDS: Responding to Culture
Sala Udin helps us sort out the often hidden issues of culture in AIDS education.

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Effective Practice
At a Latina women's collective, students and staff have been learning about AIDS. Nance Aronoff writes of her classroom experiences, changes in the collective as a result of dealing with AIDS, and the changes she has found in herself.

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Blackboard
Sara Garcia worked with neighborhood AIDS educators in Connecticut, Puerto Rico and Juarez, Mexico and gives us her observations of building AIDS-prevention programs from the bottom up.

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Prison inmates, hairdressers, activists and teachers are developing their own approaches to AIDS education.

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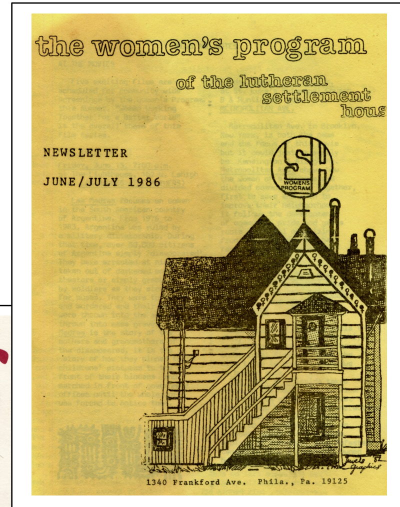
Materials That Matter
AIDS literature, from safer sex

Teaching About Aids:
Responding to Culture

After diagnosis with AIDS, African Americans die nearly five times faster than whites.

At the bottom of this statistic lies inadequate treatment and late diagnosis for people of color, and a health and education movement that has not responded to cultural diversity in responding to AIDS. There is an urgent need for change. The rate of AIDS cases among people of color since 1981 is three times that of whites. New cases of HIV/AIDS infection are appearing among Third World communities faster than anywhere else. Yet the complexities of doing AIDS education—of responding to cultural difference, as well as confronting issues of sex, death, and homophobia—can mean either that teachers become afraid to deal with the issue or that they jump into it and ignore vital factors of culture.*



the women's program
of the lutheran settlement hous

NEWSLETTER
JUNE/JULY 1986

1340 Frankford Ave. Phila., Pa. 19125

Book 4
Community-Oriented AFE at the Local Level

A Resource Book Series

by Paul Jurmo
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Illustrations: Publications of Literacy South, World Education & Lutheran Settlement House

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Summary of Book 4

Book 4 presents:

- actions that those wishing to create, implement, continuously strengthen, and sustain community-oriented adult foundational education (AFE)[1] might use to get started.

  STAGE 1: Conduct a Community Learning Needs Assessment.
  STAGE 2: Introduce the idea of "community-oriented AFE" to forward-thinking AFE colleagues.
  STAGE 3: Create a "Community-Oriented AFE Project Team" to identify project options.
  STAGE 4: Prepare for one or more initial pilot projects.
  STAGE 5: Implement one or more initial pilot projects.
  STAGE 6: Evaluate, reflect on project(s) & decide next steps.

- 44 examples of community-oriented AFE projects that might be adapted in ways that are relevant, do-able, and helpful to the stakeholders and contexts involved. Each project serves a particular community of learners; helps learners deal with relevant life issues; uses participatory, contextualized instructional practices; collaborates with relevant community stakeholders; and is planned and implemented by professionals equipped with appropriate instructional and other tools. Twelve categories are presented:
  - AFE for Problem Solving in Work and Life
  - AFE Partnerships for Health
  - AFE Partnerships for Environmental Sustainability
  - AFE Partnerships for Managing Financial and In-Kind Resources
  - Adult Numeracy Partnerships
  - AFE Partnerships for Families
  - AFE Partnerships for Incarcerated & Formerly Incarcerated Individuals
  - AFE for Women
  - Writing for Reflection, Expression, and Action
  - Digital Literacy for a Digitized World
  - AFE for New Careers
  - Learner-Centered Assessment and Evaluation

Readers are encouraged to adapt these strategies in ways that are relevant, do-able, and helpful to the stakeholders and contexts involved.

[1] See the Glossary in the Appendix for definitions of *adult foundational education (AFE)* and *community-oriented.* The term *AFE* is also explained in Part 2.a.

PART 4.a

Planning and Implementing Community-Oriented AFE Projects

How Stakeholders Can Get Started

Parts 3.a, 3.b., and 3.c. presented a vision and arguments for community-oriented AFE. Part 4.a. outlines actions that those wishing to create, implement, continuously strengthen, and sustain community-oriented AFE might use to get started. (Such actions might be undertaken within a single AFE program or by a coalition/network of several AFE organizations.) Readers are encouraged to adapt these strategies in ways that are relevant, do-able, and helpful to the stakeholders and contexts involved. The actions are broken into five stages:

STAGE 1: Conduct a Community Learning Needs Assessment.

STAGE 2: Introduce the idea of "community-oriented AFE" to forward-thinking AFE colleagues.

STAGE 3: Create a "Community-Oriented AFE Project Team" to identify project options.

STAGE 4: Prepare for one or more initial pilot projects.

STAGE 5: Implement one or more initial pilot projects.

STAGE 6: Evaluate, reflect on the pilot project(s) and decide next steps.

The actions described in Book 4 are adapted from other AFE innovators who have described collaborative ways for introducing new concepts and practices into AFE: Auerbach, 1992; Belzer et al., July 2020; Belzer et al., 2022; Boutwell, 1989; Fingeret, 1993; Folinsbee & Jurmo, 1994.a; Merrifield, White, & Bingman, 1994; Proctor & Hannah, 2023; Soifer, Irwin, & Young, 1989; Sperazi & Jurmo, June 1994, among others.

STAGE 1
Conduct a Community Learning Needs Assessment.

Before embarking on creating "community-oriented AFE" projects in the area where your AFE program is based, it is important to have a solid understanding of the current state of AFE in the area or institution that you serve. (Your area might be a surrounding neighborhood, municipality, county, or multi-county region. An institution could include a network of employers, a network of labor unions, a healthcare system, a group of correctional or re-entry institutions, or organizations serving refugees and/or immigrants.) You should know:

- Who are the various populations (communities) of adults (including young adults that might include out-of-school youth) who have limitations to their foundational skills and related assets (e.g., high school credentials, social-emotional strengths like self-efficacy and teamwork, educational and career plans) they need to succeed in work, family, civic, and lifelong learning roles?
- What AFE supports already exist in the area or institution and what services do they provide, to whom, with what results? What are the strengths of those existing services and how might they be improved and expanded?
- How do the various AFE services interact with each other?
- What other stakeholders (e.g., funders, policy makers, government agencies, other individuals and groups) currently provide supports to AFE efforts or might do so?
- What are gaps in current AFE services and supports they receive?
- What actions might be taken – and by whom – to strengthen and expand AFE services in your area or institution?

You might already have generated such information through a formal or less-formal assessment of local learning needs and resources. This is something that your funder(s) might require. You might have done this as a single AFE program or as part of a coalition (network, collective) composed of AFE providers and possibly other stakeholders (e.g., county workforce investment board, mayor's adult education commission, a county prisoner-re-entry task force, or a county public health network).

Such a community learning needs assessment can provide you with useful basic information to build a "community-oriented AFE" initiative on.

(See Doughty & Hart, 2005; Fingeret, 1993; Folinsbee & Jurmo, 1994b; Jurmo, March 2008; Jurmo, December 6, 2009; Jurmo, March 2021; and Merrifield, White, & Bingman, 1994 for related discussions on collaborative needs assessments within particular "communities.")

STAGE 2
Introduce the idea of "community-oriented AFE" to forward-thinking AFE colleagues.

With key leaders (e.g., staff, learners, board members) and partners (other stakeholders you work with or might want to work with) of your AFE organization or coalition, consider whether and how you might introduce or reinforce a "community-oriented approach" within your organization or coalition.

- Explain that you are considering introducing new activities and resources within your organization or coalition to strengthen and expand what you are currently doing. More specifically, you would like to explore moving your program or coalition to a more "community-oriented" model and/or reinforce and expand on current community-oriented practices you already are using.

- To help your colleagues understand what you mean by a "community-oriented AFE" model, you might give them a few examples like these:
    - Health-related AFE activities that equip adults and youth to support healthy behaviors for themselves and their families and communities.
    - A financial literacy program for workers in a particular company or union, to help them manage their incomes and benefits.
    - A workforce prep academy for returning inmates who want to develop job readiness skills, career awareness, computer skills, and strategies for dealing with housing, transportation, clothing, health, and lifelong learning issues.
    - Basic English and other skills (e.g., digital literacy, understanding of how U.S. institutions/systems work) for

immigrants and refugees, to help them understand and navigate challenges and opportunities they are encountering.
  - An "AFE for a Healthy Environment" project that brings together various types of learners to work on one or more environmental projects (e.g., community clean up, community garden, preparation for green jobs, access to environmental services for one's home, etc.). Learners get to know other community members and develop various useful skills and knowledge they might use in their homes and in "green jobs" while also helping to protect the natural environment.
  - A family history/scrapbooking program for seniors and/or individuals with disabilities that integrates various kinds of basic skills (e.g., research, writing, use of computers, oral presentation) activities as well as helping them connect to health, family, and financial services.
  - A "How to Set Up Your Home as a Learning Center" workshop series that shows adult learners of diverse backgrounds how they and their family members can engage in relevant learning activities in their homes.
  - A library-based program that includes digital literacy, ESOL, and family literacy activities for recently arrived refugees, done in coordination with a refugee support network.

- Explain:
  - Such collaborative projects (between AFE and other stakeholders) can help learners strengthen various kinds of foundational/basic skills while also developing their ability to deal with particular personal and community challenges and opportunities. Learners can learn how to mitigate/reduce negative impacts of particular problems, navigate around (avoid) those problems, work with others to eliminate those problems (through advocacy), or create alternative systems that are more supportive of learners.
  - In this case, "community" is more than just the people living in a particular geographic area such as a neighborhood, town, or county. Rather, we should see "community" as a social group whose members have similar interests, activities, and backgrounds. Such social communities might include a particular population such as refugees, older adults, out-of-

school youth, individuals with disabilities, incarcerated or formerly incarcerated individuals, mothers and other family caregivers, people working in a particular job or workplace or interested in doing so; or people operating in particular social contexts like workplaces, labor unions, public housing complexes, or correctional facilities).

- Typically such projects involve one or more types of collaborations between AFE providers and other stakeholders. For example, in a "community-oriented AFE health initiative," AFE providers might work with health-related stakeholders (e.g., healthcare providers, health insurance companies, public health researchers, exercise and nutrition organizations, etc.) to:
  - provide health literacy education (through various types of co-teaching) to help learners maintain their health and that of their families, communities, and workplaces;
  - provide healthcare industry job preparation;
  - provide direct healthcare services (e.g., eye exams, dental care, diabetes screening) to learners;
  - build the capacities of health partners to better serve adults with basic skills challenges (e.g., how to communicate with refugees from a particular country or language group);
  - provide health-friendly adult education facilities (e.g., with health-supporting food options, a walking club, etc.);
  - provide public health-related service learning (e.g., adult learners operate a community garden, do a community clean-up, participate in an annual breast cancer awareness walk);
  - conduct joint advocacy, planning, fundraising on behalf of public health supports for learners' communities;
  - collaborate to do health-related research that helps learners, their communities, and the education and health agencies that serve them;
  - provide joint professional development for staff of both AFE and health organizations, to help them better understand what each stakeholder does and how they

can collaborate to better serve adult learners (Open Door Collective, September 30, 2019b).

- Explain: a "community-oriented AFE innovations" project would take time, study, and new thinking of those involved, at various levels of your organization or coalition and possibly with other stakeholders that you might collaborate with. Confirm that those doing this work would need to be adequately supported (with additional compensation, by allowing them to devote some of their current paid time to this work, or by their donating their own time as volunteers).

- Explain that, as appropriate, you would try to secure necessary funding and in-kind supports that would allow you to cover costs entailed by this work. You might either secure a new planning grant and/or talk with your current funders and partners about how you might use existing funding and/or in-kind resources to support planning and piloting of new activities.

- Ask those interested in moving forward to read this resource book series (and other documents cited in these pages) and jot down questions, ideas, and comments that emerge as they do so. To help them organize their study, ask them to complete the following questions as they go through this resource book series:

    - In your own words, what do you understand to be features (purposes, practices, partners, principles) of a "community-oriented" model of AFE?
    - In what ways does this approach resemble or differ from what our program and/or coalition currently does and/or has done in the past?
    - If our program has already been doing something that resembles a "community-oriented approach," what were the results? What worked? What didn't?
    - Moving forward, how might community-oriented activities be do-able within our current organization and/or coalition? (Who are the communities of learners who might be best served? What staff might be involved? What other current partners might also be involved? What community and learner needs might be focused on?)

- What existing and/or new resources (project funding, facilities, partnerships, etc.) might we use to try out some new ideas?

- After your leadership team has read this resource book series and considered the above questions, reconvene your team and go through the responses that group members have recorded to the above questions.

- Prepare a summary of the above discussions and the potential why's, what's, and how's of piloting a community-oriented AFE system reform/improvement project. Decide who might be involved in the subsequent actions outlined below.

STAGE 3
Create a "Community-Oriented AFE Project Team" to identify project options.

With other interested staff, clients, and supporters of your AFE organization or coalition, create an initial version of a "Community-Oriented AFE Project Team" to clarify how you might pilot one or more pilot projects.

- Depending on the type of pilot project(s) identified in the above initial discussions, pull together a "Community-Oriented AFE Project Team" composed of individuals with an interest and expertise in the type of possible project(s) you've identified. Note that the team might like to carry out more than one project, to respond to a reasonable number of local needs. (You might, for example, conduct a health-related project for one learner population and a financial literacy project for another group of learners. Or you might do several projects that all focus on some aspect of "health" as a common theme. Or maybe you'd like to offer the above-described "How to Set Up Your Home as a Learning Center" workshop series.) To prepare for any of these scenarios, the new planning team should dig deeper to develop one or more plans that clarify:

  - What has already been done – and is being done – within your program, town, state, or elsewhere to provide the kinds of integrated services you want to develop? (Do some "homework" – through reading of the kinds of documents

described in these resource books or by talking directly with subject matter experts –to learn how others have carried out similar projects that are in line with the community-oriented model.)
    - What have been the results of those previous efforts in terms of outcomes and lessons learned (about useful practices, materials, resource persons and materials, funding)? What, on the other hand, do those efforts tell you about what to avoid?
    - Should the new project(s) be added onto existing project(s)? Or should the new one(s) be developed as stand-alone projects and from scratch?

- Provide an overview of how other AFE programs have interpreted the kind of "community-oriented AFE" project(s) your group is interested in. Do this by going through some "case study" examples provided in Parts 3.b., 4.b., and 5.c. of this series that might be relevant to the learners, communities, and other stakeholders you work.

- Go through the following planning questions one-by-one, to brainstorm ideas and information to incorporate into a plan(s) for one or more pilot projects. See these projects as a form of "project-based learning" for the participating partner agencies, as they will allow representatives of those partners to not only provide a service to learners but to develop the capacities (e.g., expertise, instructional materials, etc.) for the partners to continue doing this work over time.
    - For the project(s) we are proposing . . .
        - Who are the communities of learners who might be best served?
        - What staff might be involved and what would be their roles?
        - What other current or new partners might benefit from, participate in, and contribute to the project(s)?
        - What might the project(s) accomplish for those learners and other partners?
        - What services might the project(s) provide to the learners and other stakeholders?

   - What existing and/or new resources (project models, funding, facilities, partnerships, etc.) might we use to support the proposed project(s)? And who might provide such supports?

- Explain: You will now work with current funders and partners and possibly with new ones to secure financial and in-kind resources to support this systems-improvement work. You might use existing funding, secure new funding (from, say, a foundation or corporation that has an interest in the project you have in mind), and/or rely on volunteer time that participants would contribute. Explore whether participation might be rewarded with some kind of professional certification or promotion (Business Council for Effective Literacy, January 1989a; Waite, March 2019).

STAGE 4
Prepare for one or more initial pilot projects.

- Reach out to funders and partners to secure new financial and/or in-kind resources for your project(s) or clarify whether and how you might adapt existing resources for the project(s). You might suggest that funders support a series of projects like the one you are proposing, as part of a national, state, county, or municipal AFE systems reform project. Supports might take the form of funding (e.g., seed funding, a planning grant, fellowships for particular staff not covered under traditional funding) and/or in-kind assistance (e.g., meeting, office, and instructional space; computers; transportation; subject-matter experts. . .) Don't rely solely on traditional AFE funders. If, for example, you want to provide services customized to recently-released prison inmates, consider ask parole boards, correctional facilities, or other organizations and foundations that support prisoner re-entry services whether they could provide funding to your proposed project.

- When adequate financial and in-kind resources are secured for an initial round of project(s), identify and put in place necessary administrative supports (e.g., staffing, equipment, facilities, documentation, and reporting procedures) for the project(s).

- Create job descriptions for project staff and hire new staff or assign existing staff for the project(s). Provide necessary professional development, mentoring, and supervision for the staff, to create and support effective project teams. You might:

    - establish peer-support relationships with other programs that have carried out – or want to carry out – projects like the one(s) you are proposing, to share ideas and resources, give and receive technical guidance and moral support, share lessons learned, jointly advocate for more support.
    - engage those who will work in the project in joint preparatory work that builds both technical expertise and positive working relationships among them. They might work together to:
    - create project frameworks that specify objectives they hope to achieve in the project(s) and how activities and results will be monitored, measured, used to inform program improvements and future planning, and reported to appropriate audiences;
    - create templates of curricula, assessments, partnerships, recruitment strategies, professional development, and other tools that can be adapted to various projects (to maximize efficiencies);
    - expand access to and use of digital and other technologies for learning and other program functions;
    - expand the venues for learning (including job centers, public libraries, community centers, correctional facilities, workplaces, union halls, healthcare facilities, re-purposed buildings, mobile learning labs, and learner homes);
    - adapt "problem-identification/problem-solving," "project-based learning," and "leadership development" strategies for planning committee members to use to continuously monitor and strengthen current services and plan and implement additional projects for current learners and possibly other "communities."

- Build partnerships with existing or new stakeholders, to ensure they understand and take ownership for the project(s) and carry out the roles they need to play.

- With partners and project staff, put in place procedures for effective communication, collaboration, and continuous improvement of the project(s).

- Recruit learners, assess their interests and needs, and agree on their roles and responsibilities in the project(s) and supports they will receive to persist and succeed.

STAGE 5
Implement one or more initial pilot projects.

- Launch and support the proposed project(s), using the plans and resources you have put in place.
- Coordinate the new project(s) with either each other and/or with other existing activities within your organization or coalition.
- Provide the previously-identified administrative and other supports to your staff, learners, and partners.
- Continuously monitor, document, and improve the project(s) as you proceed. Use the "vision statement" you developed in Stage 2 to guide your work together, checking in from time to time to see "how are we doing?" and "do we need to update our vision statement?"
- Keep partners, funders, and other stakeholders informed about what the project(s) are doing and accomplishing.

STAGE 6
Evaluate, reflect on the pilot project(s) & decide next steps.

- In addition to ongoing, formative evaluation, conduct an end-of-project/cycle summative evaluation. (You might reach out to researchers in a university or other institution for evaluation support and build evaluation costs into your fundraising plan.)
- Review the results internally within your team, to clarify what you've accomplished related to the intended goals and objectives as well as other unanticipated outcomes. Reflect on lessons you've learned about factors that contribute to or inhibit success of such projects. Decide whether and how to proceed with the same project activities and/or with others that might adapt resources (e.g., programming and

administrative procedures, experienced staff, relationships with other stakeholders) you developed in these initial pilots.

- Share your evaluation findings with learners, funders, policy makers, other stakeholders, to help build their awareness of and interest and investment in such work.
- Use the evaluation to inform planning and preparations (e.g., fundraising, staff development, partnership building, etc.) for similar projects in the future.

Part 4.a. Wrap-Up
General Comments about "Collaboration"

"Collaboration" will be key to successful community-oriented AFE efforts. Collaboration can take a number of forms, occur at multiple levels (in the planning team, in the relationships between the AFE provider and other stakeholders, between various AFE programs, between learners and service providers, within the classroom [between learners and instructors and among learners] and among administrative staff.)

Collaborations can also involve various types of stakeholders who see the potential benefits of AFE. Stakeholders might include AFE service providers, adult learners, learners' families, policy makers and funders, and other individuals and groups like employers, labor unions, healthcare providers, criminal justice agencies, and environmental groups. Each participating stakeholder might have specific interests, strengths, and limitations and play particular roles in various types of collaborations.

As one experienced AFE leader said when reviewing this section: "Each program or coalition will have a different way of establishing collaborations, building consensus, and planning. This individuality needs to be respected."

Collaboration is not always easy, for many reasons. Some stakeholders have never previously worked with an adult education program (and vice versa). To avoid trying to do too much too quickly and without first laying a groundwork, start small. Focus on partners you are comfortable working with

and who have strengths (time, values, motivation, expertise, financial and in-kind resources) to contribute. Focus on a small number of real needs, using effective practices, guided by SMART goals.[1]

You also need to be diplomatic, patient, and positive in how you present these ideas. Propose them as positive alternatives that can expand and strengthen AFE services to meet a wider range of needs for more learners and other stakeholders, while also building an infrastructure for more effective AFE systems over the long term.

In the event that you encounter a potential partner with whom you feel – for practical or ethical reasons -- you cannot work, be willing and able to diplomatically not pursue collaborating with that individual or organization. (See Kazemek, November 1988, p. 479.) Try to avoid unnecessarily burning bridges as you do so, but avoid getting into a situation which might have more costs than benefits.

> Trying to do something that goes against the culture or tradition (of the parties involved) can result in more damage than good. We have to be cautious when introducing an initiative for which there may be little or no support or organizational readiness. That means that we have to do our homework through effective needs assessment. It means careful negotiation among all interest groups to make sure that everyone's needs will be met, and that those without power will be secure.
>
> Finally, in being true to our own principles, we must decide how much we can compromise, and at what point we might need to withdraw from involvement. This will be a personal choice (Folinsbee & Jurmo, 1994.a., page titled "Planning a Workplace Development Initiative.")

[1] The concept of "SMART goals" has been promoted in AFE programs for decades. See how California community colleges interpreted this idea here: https://caladulted.org/DownloadFile/433

PART 4.b.

Examples of Community-Oriented AFE at the Local-Level

Part 4.b. provides examples of actual AFE projects – both recent and past – that in various ways fit the criteria for community-oriented adult foundational education described in Book 3. The projects are organized into these categories:

- AFE for Problem Solving in Work and Life
- AFE Partnerships for Health
- AFE Partnerships for Environmental Sustainability
- AFE Partnerships for Managing Financial and In-Kind Resources
- Adult Numeracy Partnerships
- AFE Partnerships for Families
- AFE Partnerships for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Individuals
- AFE for Women
- Writing for Reflection, Expression, and Action
- Digital Literacy for a Digitized World
- AFE for New Careers
- Learner-Centered Assessment and Evaluation

Each project serves a particular community of learners; helps learners deal with relevant life issues; uses participatory, contextualized instructional practices; collaborates with relevant community stakeholders; and is planned and implemented by professionals equipped with appropriate instructional and other tools.

Readers are encouraged to review these examples as well as other related information cited in this document. Readers can then decide whether and how they might incorporate elements of these examples into their own efforts to create community-oriented AFE. They might also use the references and links provided to learn more about these examples and others like them.

From Vision to Reality

Book 3 presented a possible vision for community-oriented AFE. But what – in concrete terms – might a community-oriented AFE system look like at a local level? Part 4.b. presents a sampling of actual AFE projects – both recent and past ones – that in various ways fit the criteria described in Book 3.

That is, each project:

- provides a particular community of foundational-skills-challenged learners with customized supports for basic/foundational skills and/or other assets the learners need to participate effectively as empowered problem-solvers in personally meaningful work, family, civic, and lifelong learning roles; ("Other assets" include educational and occupational credentials, background knowledge, social-emotional strengths, support networks, life and career plans, and digital and other tools);
- involves other non-AFE stakeholders in some way as partners in the effort, to support the AFE effort while also helping those other stakeholders fulfill their missions;
- is planned and implemented by professionals who are equipped with expertise and other necessary resources to use evidence-informed strategies for serving learners and managing and supporting services.

Those interested in developing community-oriented AFE projects and more comprehensive systems for implementing, sustaining, and expanding such projects can learn from the models below – and others like them[2] -- and adapt them to their own situations. (See Part 4.a. for strategies that you might use to plan, implement, learn from, and build on relevant community-oriented AFE projects in your locality and institutional partners.)

[2] *Focus on Basics (*a publication of World Education) had many examples of projects that reflect the vision for community-oriented AFE presented in Books 3 and 4. Access *Focus on Basics* at https://www.ncsall.net/index.php@id=31.html .

Things to Keep in Mind When Exploring these Sample Projects

The following 44 projects represent a sampling of types of AFE providers, learners, stakeholder partners, locations, contextualized uses of foundational skills, and program goals. These multi-faceted examples underscore the need for AFE programs and other stakeholders to be equipped to understand and respond creatively and efficiently to diverse learning needs and opportunities in their communities.

For good reason, AFE is often described as helping learners more effectively participate in work, family, civic, and lifelong learning roles. However, those four categories are not so clear-cut or reflective of the many life functions that learners might need help with. For example, "health" is an issue that many adult learners might be concerned about. But are we talking about "family-related" health (e.g., taking care of the health of the family's children or elders)? Or are we referring to "work-related" health (i.e., ensuring that a worker avoids and deals with health hazards at work)? The first scenario is both a "health" and "family" issue. The second is both a "health" and "work" issue.

Similarly, while a learner might initially want to learn how to use a spreadsheet to track expenses related to their small business, the learner might also later want to be able to apply those same skills to managing a family budget and calculating costs of a family vacation, a home repair project, or commuting to and from various job options.

The point here is that skills taught for one group of learners, a particular life role, and a specific context might be adapted to other learners, life roles, and contexts as well. Instructional and other support activities might thus be designed as flexible templates that practitioners can use to help learners transfer what they learn to multiple contexts and purposes. This will help practitioners maximize the impact of particular learning activities while also helping learners practice using their new skills in various ways (e.g., with their families, on the job, in a personally-enriching hobby), so that they are more likely to master and retain those skills.

In other words, review these project model options with an open, creative mind. How might they be adapted in various ways to the learners, other stakeholders, and contexts you work with?

The following examples are presented in a condensed form. To see the more information about these examples, see the accompanying references.

AFE for Problem Solving in Work and Life

Learner Leadership Through Project-Based Learning

With support from ProLiteracy, the national adult learner leadership organization VALUEUSA developed a guide for an 8-hour training that shows adult educators how to develop student leadership through project-based learning (Jurmo, March 2023, pp. 37-38). This guide grew out of leadership trainings that VALUEUSA had provided over two decades to staff and learners in programs around the United States. In that training, participants learned how to identify a problem within the program and then plan and implement a learner-led project to resolve that problem. In the process, learners both strengthened the program while they developed leadership- related skills they could carry over to their lives outside the program. In one project, learners analyzed and proposed solutions for the problem of long waiting lists at their AFE program. In another, learners wanted to help the community understand who they were as new immigrants to the U.S. A third learner group organized a garage sale to generate funds for their program (Hunt, Rasor, & Patterson, Fall 2019; Patterson, March 2016; Patterson, September 2016; Patterson, December 2016; Patterson, February 2017; Paulson & Patterson, January 2017).

Understanding Workers' Rights

Make the Road New Jersey (https://maketheroadnj.org) provides various supports to immigrants, including education and other activities related to worker rights. In its ESOL education program, learners read and discuss statements on themes like "Respect and Dignity" for workers, integrate those related themes and vocabulary into practicing of subject/verb agreement, and listen to and then role-play a dialogue in which one learner asks another to sign a petition. Learners also practice writing a letter to their elected representatives.

Collaborative Learning for Continuous Improvement

Collaborative Learning for Continuous Improvement (CLCI) was a three-year demonstration project of the National Workplace Literacy Program funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Coordinated by adult education staff of the New York State Education Department with a team of workplace education consultants, the project was carried out in 1994 to 1997 in seven manufacturing companies spread across upstate New York. At each site, a Planning and Evaluation Team was established, composed of outside educators, company representatives (from training, human resources, and production departments), and (in some cases) workers and union representatives. Each team carried out an initial Workplace Needs Assessment (Folinsbee & Jurmo, 1994b) in which they identified one or more organizational problems to remediate with a workplace basic skills program. (Other examples of CLCI sites can be found below under "Adult Numeracy Partnerships" and "Writing for Reflection, Expression, and Action.")

In a General Motors factory, workers analyzed a complex, long-standing manufacturing problem. This process produced several outcomes: (a) well-thought-out solutions to persistent problems; (b) team-problem-solving skills that workers could continue using, and (c) a problem-solving course for future use. (See the Collaborative Learning for Continuous Improvement series: Jurmo (19944a, 1994b, 1994c, 1994d, 1994e, 1994f, 1994g, August 1998).

Partnership Learning for Change

In *Partnership for Change,* Marilyn Boutwell (1989) wrote about how Literacy Volunteers of New York City (LVNYC)[3] moved from fairly traditional one-to-one tutoring to a participatory approach to learning and leadership development. In a new "Intensive Program," eight carefully-prepared tutors led four learning groups with six learners in each. Though many of the learners initially resisted giving up their individual tutors. gradually the learners saw the benefit of being able to talk with other learners about literacy and learning, and life more generally. "The more they acknowledged themselves as

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[3] Literacy Volunteers of New York City is now known as *Literacy Partners* (https://literacypartners.org).

learners, the more they read, wrote, and shared their struggles. The tutors and staffed learned to listen to what learners wanted to learn and do with their improved skills and self-confidence" (p. 44-45).

These learning groups led to additional activities in which learners took on new responsibilities while gaining new skills. A student was hired to serve on staff as a liaison to other learners and to represent students in meetings with funders, new tutors, and the news media. This student in turn formed a student committee composed of two learners from each LVNYC site. The group went through a process of growth which included conflict and confusion about roles, responsibilities, and relationships of student leaders. Out of these efforts came new topics to be covered in the curriculum, including Black history, voter registration and education, and accuracy of AIDS-related information (pp. 46-47). For more information, read Boutwell (1989) and the case study of Literacy Volunteers of New York City in Jurmo (1987, p. 195).

Community-Based Education in the Workplace

In *Community-Based Literacy Educators: Experts and Catalysts for Change,* Raul Añorve (1989, pp. 38-39) described how he developed workplace literacy programs in Southern California in the early 1980s. He worked with company managers to implement a "learner-centered" curriculum based on the knowledge participants already possessed, to strengthen workers' oral, reading, writing, analytical, and teamwork skills through active study of issues of direct concern to them. These included discrimination, labor laws, wages, union contracts, maternity leave, and promotions.

Añorve used ethnographic methods (e.g., photographing the workplace environment, talking with supervisors, reviewing company documents) to identify work processes and language uses. In class, workers analyzed themes and problems represented in the photos, developing critical thinking and communication skills while discussing both technical and social (e.g., racism, sexism) issues. He explained to managers that such discussions help clear the air about issues that can impact employee morale and performance. Añorve found that both managers and unions generally agreed on the value of this approach.

Problem-Posing at Work

In *ESL for Action: Problem-Posing at Work*, Elsa Roberts Auerbach and Nina Wallerstein (1987) adapted Paul Freire's problem-posing approach to AFE to create a participatory workplace English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) curriculum. Learners developed communication skills, positive attitudes, cultural sensitivity, and the ability to analyze and solve workplace problems. The curriculum was organized around work-related themes such as rules and responsibilities, health and safety, pay, overtime, stress, discrimination, communication with co-workers and supervisors, and worker rights. Resources related to legal and historical information and workplace stores are provided for teachers and students. This book was later updated and republished as *Problem-Posing at Work: Popular Educator's Guide* (Wallerstein & Auerbach, 2004).

AFE Partnerships for Health

Community Health Partnerships in Lowell, MA

The Frederic Abisi Adult Education Center in Lowell, Massachusetts has partnered with Lowell Community Health Center, Lowell General Hospital, and the Greater Lowell Health Alliance to provide health-related services to adult education students. Activities include workshops on various health topics (e.g., nutrition, stress and depression, oral health, health insurance, chronic disease self-management, and exercise) and health clinics conducted at the Adult Education Center. Center staff also receive training in mental health issues, to support learners in culturally appropriate ways and discuss mental health concepts in classes. Abisi Center also became a trusted hub for getting COVID-19 information and services (e.g., vaccinations provided by healthcare professionals) to learners. For more information, visit https://www.lowell.k12.ma.us/adulted and see Open Door Collective (March-May 2021).

Florida Health Literacy Initiative

The Florida Literacy Coalition (FLC) works with more than 300 health partners to provide health-related services to adult learners across the state. This Florida Health Literacy Initiative (a) provides health-related grants, training, educational materials, and technical supports to Florida AFE providers; (b) has

served more than 21,700 students over 11 years; and (c) uses community partnerships and a contextualized, project-based learning approach.

Partners include the Florida Blue Foundation (of Blue Cross, Blue Shield), a food bank, the American Diabetes Association, American Lung Association, several hospitals, a substance abuse program, and many other health-related organizations. Activities include tours of health facilities, mock clinics at community health centers, exercise classes, counseling by health insurance navigators, and presentations.

Student-run project-based learning activities include a health fair, first aid classes, a community garden, presentations by a sheriff's department about pedestrian safety, a "Biggest Loser" nutrition and weight loss contest, a fundraising walk for cancer research, and a health resources guide for immigrants. FLC also offers a free, multi-volume "Staying Healthy" curriculum and an Online Health Literacy Training Course for Teachers and Tutors.

A FLC report shows the positive impacts of this program on both the foundational skills and health-related behaviors of participating learners. For more information, visit https://floridaliteracy.org/literacy_resources___teacher_tutor___health_literacy.html and see Open Door Collective (March-May 2021).

Mental Health in the AFE Classroom

In *Yes, I Can: A Mental Health Guide for Adult Literacy Facilitators,* Jennifer Hewitt (2017) provides a solid introduction to mental health conditions and how AFE programs can support learners who have such problems. Topics include mood conditions and disorders, anxiety, substance abuse, psychotic disorders. attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum, developmental disorders, behavioral disorders, personality disorders, physical illness and brain injury, and learning disabilities.

Take Charge of Your Health

Philadelphia's Center for Literacy and the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine co-wrote a health literacy curriculum for adult learners that helped learners Improve their basic skills as they increased their healthcare knowledge. Various versions of the program were piloted, with some programs provided just to new mothers who had not been enrolled in adult literacy

classes and another version for women CFL students who were not mothers of babies.

The program moved from focusing on literacy skills to a focus on healthcare navigation skills and behaviors. For the new mothers, a home visit model was piloted (as opposed to more traditional classes held in learning centers). The home-based instruction was more successful in terms of learner participation and persistence. Home visits also helped educators better understand the challenges that low-income, new mothers faced. Home-based learners were able to identify specific goals and develop and carry out plans to reach those goals. Learners, for example, were able to move to a new healthcare provider, change insurance plans, confidently access information to care for their child, organize health records, and avoid using emergency rooms (Bennett, Pinder, Szesniak, & Culhane, September 2008).

Empowerment Health Education

In a report for the National Institute for Literacy, Marcia Drew Hohn (1997) described an "empowerment health education" model developed by adult educators and learners in Massachusetts. A Student Action Health Team, composed of adult immigrant students, used participatory action research to identify three health-related problems of lower-skilled immigrants: poor readability of health materials, the need for educational activities in addition to reading materials, and inability of health educators to communicate with basic-skills-limited adults. The team then identified health topics relevant to learners (e.g., cancer, HIV/AIDS, smoking, nutrition, substance abuse, violence), developed a safe learning environment where learners' ideas and questions were respected, implemented a participatory curriculum, and analyzed workshop evaluations. This project-based learning helped both team members and other students to develop health-related knowledge and other skills (e.g., teamwork, facilitation, research, oral and written English).

AFE Partnerships for Environmental Sustainability

Clean Energy Ambassadors

ABE Clean Energy Ambassadors Curriculum Resource Guide (Goodman & Schroeder, 2013) provides resources for helping AFE students to pursue clean energy-related jobs while also building clean energy awareness. The guide

was funded in part by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center and developed with diverse energy and environmental organizations and adult education programs. It shows how online, multi-media, and teacher-made clean energy materials might be integrated into career exploration; math, science, and language arts; GED preparation; and activities related to home and work for various learner populations. Visit https://worlded.org/resource/abe-clean-energy-ambassadors-curriculum-resource-guide/

Roots of Success

Roots of Success is an "empowering environmental literacy and job training program that prepares youth and adults who have been failed by the education system to access jobs and career pathways in environmental fields and improve environmental and social conditions in their communities." It is used across the U.S. in diverse educational and job training programs, including incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals. Topics include many commonly found in AFE: environmental literacy, critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, collaboration, advocacy, civic engagement, career options, financial literacy, social entrepreneurship, leadership, information literacy, and public speaking. Visit https://rootsofsuccess.org .

Moving into Green Jobs and Economic Security in Philadelphia

Two Philadelphia AFE organizations went through a process to merge and reorganize themselves to better support equitable opportunities for adult learners and their families and communities. Leaders of this new organization, "Beyond Literacy" ("BeLit"), identified green energy jobs as potentially rewarding pathways for learners who face educational and other barriers (e.g., gender and racial discrimination, minimal work records, low incomes, and criminal records). BeLit partnered with Pennsylvania's largest electrical and natural gas utilities to help 21 individuals become green job pre-apprentices. This was done through test-prep, career readiness, conflict resolution, and financial literacy workshops. Participants passed a pre-training aptitude test, established financial accounts, and were placed in a paid trainee program earning a starting wage of $35 per hour. One graduate, remarked how he never imagined how he as a 24-year-old could be earning more than his mother ever had in her life. Read Proctor & Hannah (2023) and visit **https://beyondliteracy.org** **.**

Community Health and Environmental Partnerships in Chelsea, MA

The Chelsea (Massachusetts) Intergenerational Literacy Program (ILP) has had a long-term interest in health and health literacy. Students go to a health center operated by Massachusetts General Hospital, and ILP is also a member of the Healthy Chelsea Coalition. ILP particularly understands the importance of environmental health to guard against environment-related diseases such as childhood diabetes, asthma, and cancer. The organization is active in green space and community garden projects. Key components of this AFE/health initiative are (a) long-term, trusting relationships and collaborations with local community health centers; (b) efficient cross-referral procedures between the education and healthcare partners; (c) adult learner participation in focus groups; (d) learner-driven topics for health literacy activities; (e) relevant and engaging presentations to learners by community health center professionals; and (f) a strong community-wide response team when COVID-19 arrived. Visit https://www.chelseaschools.com/ILP and see Open Door Collective (March-May 2021).

Community in the Classroom in Appalachia

A "Community in the Classroom" project was operated in the early 1990s by the Center for Literacy Studies at the University of Tennessee (Merrifield, White, & Bingman,1994). Project facilitators worked with ten Appalachian community–based organizations (CBOs) to explore "ways in which literacy education can build communities. But it has become clear that to contribute to the building of community, education must not only be in communities and by communities, but also for communities and educational methodologies and approaches must be different from dominant (traditional) forms." Project staff reported that though "firmly rooted in their communities," they were seen as "to varying degrees trapped in dominant educational methods which make it hard to integrate education with community development. We knew we had to work together to design something new that must be rooted in the particular contexts in which we work" (p. 300). The authors identified several barriers to developing such a contextualized, community-focused approach including (a) funding and policy focused on individuals rather than communities and (b) lack of support for a professional adult education workforce or contextualized learning relevant to learners (pp. 304-305).

To develop an alternative, community-focused model, each CBO was led through a three-part process to (a) prepare local teams; (b) carry out special projects focused on a particular need identified by the CBO; and (c) evaluate and reflect on what they achieved and learned in the project. One CBO, called "Concerned Citizens Against Toxic Waste," worked "to stop well water pollution from a nearby industrial site. As they have tried to organize their community, group members have found any people who lack the basic literacy skills to gain information about the environmental problem, and to be active in attempts to clean it up" (p.307). The article identifies lessons learned in the ten projects, including "relationships are critical to the process," "changes come slowly, and learning is incremental," and "the 'schooling model' is hard to escape." The article concludes:

> If we believe that it is not enough to educate people to compete for the same limited number of not-very-good jobs, then we must pay attention to what else education can do for our society. If we believe that diverse peoples can learn to live together, accept each other and work together toward common goals, then we must create opportunities for people to learn about each other, share common experiences and recognize commonalities as well as differences. If we want to hold on to our rural roots, then we must focus attention on building and rebuilding communities (p. 312).

AFE Partnerships for Managing Financial & In-Kind Resources

An Investment Club for Adult Learners

In Washington, DC, the Academy of Hope (public charter school for adults) and Literacy Volunteers of America provided numeracy and financial planning lessons to participants in a workplace education program for District Department of Transportation road crews (Jackson, November 2004). In addition to learning how to calculate amounts of materials needed for paving jobs, participants learned how to manage personal budgets (including saving for retirement), compare life insurance plans, and track their investments' performance. This led the learners to create an Investment Club.

The program's responsiveness to learning goals relevant to learners was in keeping with the adult educators' learner-centered philosophy and was

supported by the employer. In the first class, the instructor asked the learners what they wanted to learn. The learners said they wanted to be able to manage math tasks they faced in their current jobs, in possible future jobs, and in their personal lives (e.g., buying a home, planning for retirement, making informed decisions about insurance and investments.) The program received support from a financial literacy course offered by a local bank and from the Literacy Advocate Institute (the State Education Agency's professional development program for adult educators.)

Understanding Company Benefits

In the federally-funded "Collaborative Learning for Continuous Improvement" project of the New York State Education Department, learners in an Albany-area manufacturing plant developed the literacy, numeracy, and other skills required to understand and manage the company's benefits package. The human resource department had – like their counterparts in many U.S. companies – recently instituted a new employee benefits system. While introduced with the hope that employees could tailor their benefits to their particular interests, the new system required more active involvement of employees in selecting and calculating benefit options (for health insurance, investments of retirement funds, vacation and leave). The company was concerned that many employees didn't understand how these benefits worked and were overwhelming HR department staff with questions about issues that the employees, with some extra training, could manage themselves. The instructor (provided by a local community college) studied the benefits package and prepared a curriculum to help workers develop relevant skills and knowledge. Read the "Albany International/Menands" sections of Jurmo (1994g and August 1998).

Adult Numeracy Partnerships

Numeracy Downtown

Avril DeJusus (May 2008) described a church-based AFE program in Brooklyn that was created in response to church members' request to follow services in their Bibles. It gradually expanded to include ABE, GED test preparation, ESOL, SAT test preparation, and classes related to business, parenting, decorative arts, ad leadership. Staff grew from a few unpaid volunteers to four full-time staff and about 100 active volunteers. Learners expanded from

the members of the original church to a broad mix of religious faiths and ethnic/racial backgrounds.

Numeracy became a key focus of the curricula, and staff initially struggled to develop a useful way to assess learner math skills. Staff learned that math anxiety was a problem for some learners, which made it difficult to assess learners' actual numeracy abilities. While some learners had their own construction or sewing businesses, they froze when confronted with a math test containing decontextualized math problems. Staff developed a more learner-friendly assessment process in which learners begin by reflecting on their prior experience with math. Learners were also assured that "guesstimates" and partial answers to problems were okay. Participants were encouraged to use calculators, rulers, play money, and scrap paper that was provided on tables. Questions were posed to them that were taken from five general math categories found on the GED exam. At the end of the assessment, learners were given the opportunity to debrief about their experience with this new form of assessment. Staff noted the learners' feedback and adjusted the assessment process accordingly. Staff placed the results of the assessments in students' folders and placed learners in groups composed of learners with similar skill levels.

The curriculum was divided into four units: geometry; fractions, decimals, and percentages; introduction to algebra; and measurement and data analysis. Learners are expected to work both in their learning groups and at home and to take care of their learning materials (which they pay a small fee for). Learners reported that they liked knowing what they would be learning. Instructors were also free to focus on particular sections of the curricula that were of particular interest to participants rather than teach them in a proscribed order.

Learners keep track of their work and conduct a final project and present it at four numeracy fairs held each year. (Projects have included a Christmas quilt showing the percentages of different colors used in the quilt; a survey of students about their ethnicities; a "math rap;" and carpentry projects demonstrating math concepts covered in the classes.) Learners also write reflections on the learning process in a journal, make a portfolio presentation at the end of the course, and receive a certificate of completion signed by the program coordinator or director.

Numeracy tutors are trained in the use of learner-centered, participatory methods, which include manipulatives, real life examples, and student involvement. Teachers need to be willing and able to use these activities in ways that are comfortable for both learners and instructors.

Math and Communications for Statistical Process Control in an Auto Plant

In 1995-1997, at the General Motors Delphi fuel injection systems plant in Rochester, New York, a union-management team identified training and other improvements needed to transition to new products and corresponding work processes and equipment. The team identified Statistical Process Control (SPC) as an area to focus on. Some workers were having difficulty understanding, reporting, and acting on the data their new computerized equipment was generating. An adult education math instructor worked with the planning team to:

- Get input from managers, a quality analyst, engineers, and others on the shop floor on math and communications functions were of concern.
- Understand how the machines (i.e., precision machines that create fuel injection system parts) worked; concepts related to "quality" that were embedded in this technology; terminology and data the technology generated (i.e., names and numbers of parts produced and measures of product quality), how information was displayed (i.e., in graphs), and what workers needed to understand and do with the information (i.e., understand the mean, medium, mode, and range of the data and make accurate, corresponding decisions about, for example, why parts might not be meeting quality standards and whether the machinery needed to be adjusted).
- Create, pilot, and continuously improve a math and problem-solving curriculum (called "SPC Training") that used effective adult education methods to help Delphi workers better perform the above SPC-related math functions. Workers participated in a workshop and then worked in groups to practice how they would review data, make corresponding decisions, and communicate with supervisors and engineers. Learners also developed self-esteem and personal motivation, oral communications, and information-finding skills. These were all seen as important for ISO 9000 certification as well as for day-to-day quality operations and preparation for further training.

The instructor learned that it was vital for higher-level managers to buy into, practice, and model the team problem solving approach if they expected shop-floor workers to use it. She also saw that the team problem-solving activities focused on real-world, relevant workplace problems were very popular with the learners. Read the "Delphi" sections of Jurmo (1994g and August 1998).

AFE Partnerships for Families

Making Meaning, Making Change

Elsa Auerbach (1992) advocated for an alternative kind of family/parent literacy different from the common version that focused on helping parents use school-based educational practices with their children. Her proposed participatory and collaborative model helped learners build on family strengths and investigate how they view and use literacy for positive change within the contexts they live in. In language experience activities, English language learners wrote about how they collaborated with their children to practice English and why (i.e., many household tasks) they didn't have time to do their homework. They developed family trees, described significant objects and photos, and mapped their neighborhoods to identify contexts where they needed English.

The Mothers Reading Program

In New York City in the 1980s, the American Reading Council's Mothers Reading Program began with the hope it would provide literacy services to mothers of young children. However, because young mothers tended to have childcare and other life problems (e.g., marital separations, disruptive family lives, and relationships with substance abusers), it became clear that it would be difficult to recruit and retain enough such learners. "There was also a prevailing notion that women don't have a right to help themselves until their children are grown." For these reasons, the program was opened to women of any age, from any part of the city, and regardless of whether they were mothers (Jurmo, 1987, pp. 277-278).

The coordinator began the classes in the rectory of an East Harlem Catholic parish. The classes initially focused on the broad issues of "motherhood and womanhood." As these themes were discussed, new themes emerged. The coordinator observed that such learner-generated themes "are inexhaustible because there is always something going on in their lives and in their inner lives.' Class members might be asked to describe their views or their

experience of a particular issue. The coordinator would record key phrases on the blackboard and review the written language with the students. Students alternated individual work with group discussions, helping each other out when working on individual reading or writing. Students particularly enjoyed writing their own autobiographies because, as one student put it, "It's something we want so badly to write down" (p. 279).

AFE Partnerships for Incarcerated & Formerly Incarcerated Individuals

College Behind Bars

The four-part PBS video series *College Behind Bars* describes the Bard Prison Initiative, a collaboration of Bard College and prisons for men and women in New York State. Inmates take college-credit courses taught by college professors, to earn college degrees and build better lives for themselves, their families, and society. The film shows inmates reading and discussing classic literature, learning algebra and Chinese, and discussing how the program has impacted their lives. Embedded throughout is the issue of how education – and foundational skills – have played roles in the lives of the over two million Americans who live behind bars. Visit the PBS *College Behind Bars* website at https://www.pbs.org/show/college-behind-bars/

College Prep for Women Inmates

The Bedford Hills (NY) Correctional Facility has offered college-prep (writing and math) and degree programs to women inmates, through a partnership with Marymount Manhattan College. Students have access to books, supplies, a computer lab, library, and study area. Reflecting the College's commitment to providing a rich college experience, Bedford students are offered multiple academic and extracurricular activities, including guest speakers, skills enhancement workshops, Read Arounds (where they share creative work), poetry slams, exhibits of students' art, and a student-written newsletter distributed to all inmates. Visit https://www.mmm.edu/prison-education/ .

A County Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative

In 2007, staff of Union County (NJ) College's non-credit Division of Continuing Education and Workforce Development secured a foundation grant to create a prisoner re-entry initiative. Called "RISE" (for "Return, Improve, Serve, Excel"). The project was a collaboration of UCC, the Nicholson Foundation,

local partners (e.g., a non-profit re-entry services provider, a state-funded day reporting center, county human services, and families of formerly-incarcerated individuals), and state-level organizations (e.g., NJ parole board, a community college prisoner re-entry network).

UCC took the lead in (a) creating and facilitating a county re-entry task force (where stakeholders met monthly to share information and strategies); (b) creation of a classroom at the day reporting center equipped with refurbished computers donated by the college; (c) providing work-readiness basic skills and computer classes, job counseling, and social-emotional supports for clients of the day reporting center (where recently-released clients were already required to report for other re-entry services); (d) enrolling returnees in GED and credit courses at the college; (e) training partner staff in re-entry issues; (f) awareness-raising activities (e.g., a day-long county re-entry conference, a video, pamphlets); and (g) writing of funding proposals for re-entry services. College staff also participate in state-level meetings in which re-entry strategies were shared, with special emphasis on community college roles. Visit https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/4b259097-f77f-4c70-813c-4cff11dc6161/downloads/RISE%20PPT%208-25-09.pdf?ver=1688858580561

The Fortune Society

The Fortune Society is a New York City non-profit founded in 1967 that provides multiple services to nearly 7000 incarcerated and formerly-incarcerated individuals per year. In addition to job development, healthcare, housing, nutrition, and family services, Fortune's education program uses a participatory approach to help returnees achieve personal and professional goals. Topics include basic literacy and math, computer skills, preparation for the high school equivalency exam, transition to higher education, and job skills and career exploration.

In one innovative example of project-based learning, participants in a computer animation class learned how to make short films around personally-relevant issues (and thereby achieve several learning objectives at once.) Classes are taught by professional teachers and volunteers (including undergraduate students participating in a service-learning course at nearby New York University). Visit https://fortunesociety.org/category/education/

AFE for Women

Women Writers for Justice and Health

Rhode Island-based WE LEARN (Women Expanding Literacy Education Action Resource Network) is . . .

> . . . a community promoting women's literacy as a tool that fosters empowerment and equity. WE LEARN seeks to build a just society and healthy communities. Therefore, we focus on education, specifically the basic literacies women need to gain access to systems of power and to achieve personal and community empowerment. Women's pursuit of multiple literacies gives visibility to our experiences as women, sustains our on-going desire to learn, encourages critical thinking, and provides the support and information necessary for reflection, understanding, and action to change our current situations. WE LEARN engages a diverse community of adult basic education and literacy learners and alumni, educators, researchers and professional women, community activists and anyone dedicated to moving our mission forward.

WE LEARN'S *Women's Perspectives: A Journal of Writing and Art by Adult Learners* "has been published annually since 2006. Each theme-based issue showcases original writings and artwork by adult literacy/basic education students across all levels. The WP Committee prepares pre-writing activities and lesson plans to guide student writers and their teachers to develop and submit quality writing. . . Student writers have also become teachers and inspiration to other students." Learners serve on the WE LEARN board and make presentations at conferences (e.g., sharing "how to use writing props and editing tools to perfect their writing." Visit the WE LEARN website at https://www.welearnwomen.org and a "WE LEARN History and Future" podcast at https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/ctlfpodcast/episodes/WE-LEARN---History-and-Future-e1vk8k2

The Open Book

As described by John Gordon and Dianne Ramdeholl (2010), the Open Book was a community adult literacy program housed in a Catholic school in Brooklyn from the mid-1980s to early 2000s. It began with a vision of helping

people to "transform their lives and engage with others to bring about social change (p.28). It was the students who consistently articulated the idea of the school as community and its centrality in the Open Book's mission. And it was the students, through their actions, who made that community real. As Maria, one of those early students said:

> What community means to me – to be there for others and to try to lift each other when we're down. Life is a community of caring and love and hope. My class is like that. It's a place where you can have friendship; you can feel warm and express who you are without being afraid to be you. There's an energy among each other, whatever we talk about. It could be family, kids, jobs, homeless also teachers, doctors, and sickness (p.29).

Students gave input related to class structure, attendance, and policies.

> We tried to talk them out as best we could, aiming for some kind of informal consensus (p. 29).

> We began to have regular meetings of the school community. . . these meetings covered a wide range of issues, from the mundane to the far-reaching . . . keeping the space clean . . . ideas for new initiatives or applications for funding, a plan for students to evaluate teachers" (p. 30).

> Most of the students who played key leadership roles were women . . . many women in abusive relationships came to the Open Book. Many of them wrote and talked about their experiences with domestic violence and the importance of the school as a source of support for them. In time, the school gained a reputation as a safe space and a resource for women struggling for autonomy and freedom in their lives (p.33).

Lutheran Settlement House Women's Program

In Philadelphia in the 1980s and 1990s, Lutheran Settlement House (LSH) operated a Women's Program that focused on the literacy and other needs of women learners. Staff developed a participatory model that drew on Paulo Freire and other sources. Staff wanted to enhance learners' self-esteem, empower learners, involve the surrounding community, and promote social justice. The LSH board supported this approach, not just philosophically but because they saw that it worked (i.e., preparing learners for the GED exam

and for jobs). Staff wanted to "enable learners to analyze and get involved in issues which affect their lives and in the process to teach them the skills needed to deal with those issues. A staff member asked a question which is central to the program's mission: 'Are we developing community leaders – people who go from here to become active in their churches, communities, and community agencies, with better skills perhaps than before they came in?'" (Jurmo, 1987, pp. 265-266)

To involve learners in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of their own learning, staff developed a series of "curriculum manuals" shaped with input from learners and instructors (Luttrell, 1982; Luttrell, n.d.). The manuals presented learning activities that students found useful and engaging. Learners developed basic skills by identifying and critically analyzing issues of personal importance. In one example, learners created a manual around the theme of "women in the world of work" (Ellowitch, 1983). They photographed former LSH students in various jobs they were now working in. The photographs were then incorporated into the manual, along with explanatory texts. Learners also created a similar manual focusing on their own personal oral histories (Hawkins, C., n.d.). This latter manual in turn identified other themes of interest to learners (e.g., domestic violence) that became the focus of other classes (Jurmo, pp. 266-268).

Writing for Reflection, Expression, and Action

"Many Literacies" in Springfield, Massachusetts

In *Many Literacies: Modules for Training Adult Beginning Readers and Tutors,* Marilyn Gillespie (1990) described a participatory adult reading and writing curriculum developed in a community library in Springfield, Massachusetts. Readers learn about creating a community of learners, developing a learning plan around learner goals, introducing reading (in which learners explore their personal history with reading, what good readers do, strategies for reading, language experience, sustained silent reading, and how to talk about books), writing and publishing (e.g., the writing process, choosing a topic, coping with spelling, revising and editing drafts, dialogue journals, writing your life story, and collective writing and publishing).

Paperwork for Textile Workers

In 1994-1997, at the Albany International textile plant in Homer, New York, an outside adult educator was brought in to plan and implement a project to help workers develop the "paperwork" skills they needed. Key elements included:

- The educator worked with a company representative to create a "model portfolio" of samples of correctly-completed paperwork.
- Workers reviewed that portfolio to familiarize themselves with what the company wanted in terms of paperwork. Thirty workers then brought in fourteen samples of their own paperwork and, over several weeks, met with the educator to go through their samples to clarify what they were doing right and what they needed to improve. (In a way that ensured the confidentiality of the workers, the company representative also gave feedback to the educator about the learners' work, to ensure that the learners were getting correct information about what the company needed.)
- Workers stored their work in "working portfolios." The educator met with each worker individually to review the portfolio, both to ensure confidentiality and to accommodate their varied schedules. Sometimes the educator also met with groups of learners to discuss commonly-performed forms of paperwork (e.g., filling out accident reports).
- The working portfolio was thus seen as a focal point for learning activities, rather than merely as an "assessment" tool tacked onto instruction. Learners stored their best work in a "mastery" portfolio. Those with special expertise in particular forms of paperwork were invited to serve as "experts" who helped in the instructional process or as mentors.
- This mix of one-to-one instruction with short, focused workshops was seen as a departure from more-common workplace education approaches which try to "fit" busy companies and workers to traditional classroom formats and schedules. This process also created an atmosphere for ongoing career development and learning within the company culture. See the Albany International (Homer) sections of Jurmo (1994g and August 1998).

Literacy South Writing Programs

For about 14 years starting in 1987, non-profit Literacy South provided various supports to adult literacy programs in southern states that wanted to build their participatory education capacities. Its mission statement read (Literacy South, 1993, p.10):

> Literacy South believes that people have the right to read, write and express themselves and to learn in ways that show respect for diversity and honor wisdom, history and culture. We work to support those people and organizations in the South who are committed to a shared discovery of democratic community and personal growth. Through a process of training, consultation, research, organizing, advocacy and publication, we help learners and teachers realize their own power and the power they have to change the world around them (p.2).
>
> We advocate a participatory approach to literacy work from the personal to the policy making level. A participatory approach to literacy respects the experience and skills of everyone involved in creating the program – students, teachers and administrators. Literacy South advocates for practices and policies that support mutual respect, critical analysis and shared decision making in literacy programs.

It developed a series of participatory curriculum resources that serve as models that could be adapted for community-oriented AFE programs, including:

- a quarterly *Vision* newsletter;
- *Not by Myself,* a journal of adult learner writings organized around the theme of "Creating Communities of New Writers in the South;"
- *Home Project Writing Curriculum Guide*, presenting a participatory approach to "teaching and learning through oral history, photographs, and writing;"
- a guide to portfolio assessment. (See "Learner-Centered Assessment and Evaluation" below.)

Digital Literacy for a Digitized World

Distance Learning and Connecting During a Pandemic

COVID-19 Rapid Response Report from the Field (Belzer et al., July 2020) described how AFE specialists scrambled to use distance learning to deal with the impacts of COVID-19 on AFE programs, their students, and learners' communities. Some programs set up real-time Zoom or Google Hangout meetings in which learners could continue their learning and also stay connected with fellow students and program staff. Other programs used various asynchronous learning tools which learners could use at times convenient to them. One program sent learning materials to learners via a community food drop off system established by local schools. For learners who lacked access to more advanced learning technologies, some programs had learners send photos of their written assignments via text messages. Some teachers created videos that learners could watch on-line. These strategies showed how technologies can be used to keep learners involved in learning of both literacy and language skills and technology skills, while also reinforcing the social benefits of AFE. (Also see Belzer et al., 2022).

PowerPoint for Empowerment

From 2005 to 2010, Union County (NJ) College's non-credit division adapted the Equipped for the Future learner-centered AFE model to help diverse learner populations (e.g., immigrants, former inmates) integrate into their communities (Jurmo & Panesso, October 23, 2000). In contextualized, participatory learning activities students developed a range of oral and written communication and basic digital literacy skills. Learners also strengthened self-efficacy and moral and practical supports from peers and other service providers. Among other activities, learners learned how to prepare PowerPoints to present information about their families and home countries (for immigrant learners) and job-search plans (for the recently-released former inmates). (See Quann & Satin, December 2000, for a description of a similar approach to ESOL used in Boston.)

AFE for New Careers

English for Eldercare

In 2008, the non-credit Division of Economic Development and Continuing Education at Union County (NJ) College obtained a grant from the Met Life

Foundation. The Foundation was funding a national network of pilot projects managed by the International Longevity Center designed to strengthen and expand the workforce needed for home health aides and possibly other similar patient-care careers. This project was in recognition of the growing need for workers to serve an aging U.S. population. College AFE staff developed a multi-component project that drew on research in integrated workplace basic skills training. Components included:

- Hiring of consultants with expertise in both home care and ESOL.
- Interviewing representatives of eldercare agencies to (a) clarify the skill demands of eldercare aides and challenges eldercare providers faced in finding qualified workers; (b) clarify whether those agencies would be willing and able to hire graduates of the new program.
- Creating a curriculum focused on key strengths that limited-English-proficient candidates would need to perform eldercare jobs. Those strengths were (a) English to communicate job-related information, requests, and questions with patients, patients' families, and eldercare agencies; (b) social-emotional abilities (e.g., self-efficacy to take on a new job in a new culture); and (c) basic computer skills needed to search for and pursue eldercare employment. (Among other things, learners prepared professional-quality resumes that highlighted relevant strengths.)
- Setting up appropriately-equipped classrooms at a training center donated by a shopping mall, using refurbished computers provided by the college.
- Recruiting learners from various sources, including students already enrolled in the college's ESOL programs, other local educational and workforce providers, and informal immigrant community networks. (Because the training center served communities with large populations of Spanish speakers, many of whom were already working in healthcare jobs or interested in doing so, special outreach was made to those populations.
- "Dress for success" activities to help learners dress professionally for their interactions with employers, families, and patients.
- A graduation ceremony with food and speeches made by learners, all of whom came dressed in a newly-purchased black pants suit and white blouse which they would wear to job interviews and initial meetings with patients and their families.

- A certificate of completion which successful graduates could incorporate into their portfolios, which also held their new resumes and other relevant items.
- A job fair in which graduates met with potential employers.
- Learning about other available ESOL courses and training.
- Building of an informal support network with class participants, program staff, eldercare employers, and other resource persons. (See Jurmo, December 6, 2009).

Responding to a Changing Public Transit Industry

In the first few years of the 2000s, Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 and the New York City Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) established a $10 million Training and Upgrading Fund (TUF) to provide training opportunities for the 35,000 unionized workers who worked in the city's public bus and subway system (Jurmo, March 2021). To get this initiative underway, a small team of TUF representatives conducted a study to determine the priority educational needs of workers at a time when the hundred-year-old subway system was being modernized with new technologies. It found that new electronic technologies were impacting virtually all unionized jobs (transforming some, eliminating others, and creating new ones). Such impacts would require many workers to be trained in the installation, use, and maintenance of those technologies. (Electronics were used in communications equipment, security devices, sale and use of "MetroCards," and many features of trains [e.g., sensors in doors] and buses.) Other workers who might want to move into non-electronics-related positions could also benefit from education that helped them pass the competitive civil service exams that all job candidates – union members and others --- were required to take.

To respond to these two inter-related sets of worker training needs, TUF staff planned and implemented two programs:

- A Civil Service Test Prep Program: This program consisted of customized courses that helped union members to prepare for civil service tests that required particular types of reading (e.g., skimming technical texts for key information required to answer a question) and general test taking skills (e.g., how to answer multiple choice questions, time management, coming relaxed/confident and prepared on exam day). Such tests were being given to candidates for jobs such as train operator (driver), conductor, track repair technician, and others. Curriculum specialists

analyzed the types of skills and background knowledge required for these exams and designed activities that used participatory activities that exposed learners to authentic replicas of the tests. In individual and group activities, learners practiced answering questions, analyzing results, and clarifying effective strategies they would need to succeed on the exams. In the process they also built self-confidence (self-efficacy) and a team spirit to support success on exam day. Using city-wide networks of adult educators, the curriculum team recruited and hired instructors who had relevant expertise in participatory practices, worker education, and test preparation.

- A Technical English and Math Program: This program was designed to help current union members transition into jobs as electronics installation and repair specialists. TUF staff worked with City University of New York faculty to create and implement technical English and math courses. These courses were customized to the particular uses of English (e.g., reading and writing strategies to use with technical information found in lists, directories, instructions) and math required for success in college-level electronics courses and in MTA electronics specialist jobs. Technical English and math instructors were hired and trained in the use of participatory instructional practices to make learning relevant and engaging for transit workers who may or may not have had prior experience with electronics jobs or education.

Moving into TLD Careers

In 2009-2010, with funding from the U.S Department of Labor's WIRED (Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development) Initiative), Union County (NJ) College created a career pathway program for the transportation/logistics/ distribution (TLD) industry. TLD is one of the fastest growing employers in the U.S. and particularly relevant in northern New Jersey, a center for marine, rail, and truck transportation. College staff created a series of courses that adapted the Equipped for the Future AFE model developed by the National Institute for Literacy. Participatory activities provided opportunities for job seekers to understand TLD job options while also building various kinds of basic skills (including digital literacy, written and oral English, numeracy, research, and planning) they could use to perform communication, problem-solving, and other tasks (e.g., staying healthy, protecting the environment) in common TLD jobs. This curriculum was seen

as a template that could be adapted for similar courses for other jobs and industries (Jurmo & Syed, October 4, 2009a and October 4, 2009b; Jurmo, October 2, 2009).

Participatory Learning for Success in Work, Education, and Life

Learner-centered adult educators have created career exploration and job readiness curricula that adapt participatory principles and practices. These models aim at helping learners assess their own life and career goals, build on their personal strengths and support systems, and develop strategies for attaining and succeeding in rewarding employment and otherwise succeeding in life. Two such models are summarized below:

> *Getting There: A Curriculum for People Moving into Employment* was designed in 1996 by staff of the Center for Literacy Studies at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville to help adult learners transition from welfare to work or to further education. It was organized around four questions: "Who am I?", "What's out there?", "What is the work world like?", and "How do I get from here to there?" To answer those questions for themselves, learners engaged in individual reflection, group discussion and projects, participatory research, writing of documents, and role plays. They compiled their work in personal portfolios they could show to potential employers and educational institutions. See Colette, Woliver, Bingman, & Merrifield (1996) and visit https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED413477 .
>
> *Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE & ESOL Classroom is a curriculum developed by World Education, organized in four sections:* The Cultural Context for Career Awareness, The Self-Exploration Process, Occupational Exploration, and Career Planning Skills. Learners developed skills, knowledge, and support systems through participatory, collaborative exploration of topics like learning about your classmates: who did which job, how people get jobs, things I have done, things I am good at, career exploration on the Internet, workers' rights, labor unions, SMART goals, college vocabulary, proprietary schools, the college admissions process and college placement tests, and monthly expenses (Oesch and Bower, 2009).

Education and Hope for Workers Displaced by the 9/11 Attacks

On the day after the September 11th attacks in New York City in 2001, the Consortium for Worker Education (CWE, a citywide coalition of over 30 labor unions) began pulling together a worker education and job placement program for thousands of workers whose jobs disappeared after the destruction and closing down of Lower Manhattan. (Support came from the September 11th Fund, a special United Way initiative created with donations from individuals and organizations from all over the U.S. and the world.) In subsequent months, former workers in hospitality, garment, and other industries came to the CWE's mid-town Manhattan office to get job search assistance and training in job-interviewing, resume-writing, and computer skills and in English as a Second Language. (Because of the closing of so many garment factories in Lower Manhattan, many immigrant garment workers were confronting the need to find jobs in other industries like healthcare) (Jurmo, Fall 2002).

CWE staff adapted the Equipped for the Future model to create participatory ESOL activities (e.g., role plays, games, stories written by learners around photos of events and people taken by the learners) that helped participants develop strategies and related oral English skills that they could adapt to many types of work situations and other social contexts (e.g., personal introductions, dealing with health and safety issues, identifying and locating objects, giving and getting directions to and from locations, responding to emergencies) (Jurmo, November 2002; Jurmo & Love, March 2003).

In one class, learners made a site visit to a Whole Foods Market across the street from the union education center, working in teams to interview store employees about their jobs and then return to class to report their findings. In another activity, learners used disposable cameras to make photo stories about their neighborhoods, families, festivals, and other personally-relevant themes. They printed the photos, mounted them on paper, wrote brief descriptions of the photos, and then made presentations of their finished products to fellow class members and teachers.

English on the Border

In the mid-1990s, Levi-Strauss worked with El Paso Community College (with funding from the National Workplace Literacy Program of the U.S. Department of Education) to offer English classes at its plants in Texas and New Mexico. The initial phase of classes used a series of videos created by EPCC staff that depicted scenarios from the company's

garment factories, to help workers better understand workplace equipment and concepts while also improving their English.

This approach supported the company's interest in the Total Quality Management approach which emphasizes active worker involvement in decision-making and workplace improvements. (Videos were also made for teacher training and math instruction.) In addition to these innovative videos, special emphasis was also put on creating portfolio assessments (to monitor learner skill development and use of those skills on the job) and staff development (to ensure ongoing learning and improvement by staff involved).

When the plants received word that they had to downsize the workforce and phase out some local operations, the focus of the program shifted to helping workers strengthen English skills they would need to transition to new jobs.

An evaluation report described the above activities, their successes and challenges that arose. Like many other National Workplace Literacy Program projects, this partnership between a community college and local industries not only provided services to participating workers and companies but served as a Petri dish for field-testing new ideas in real workplace "social-technical systems" undergoing changes. It pointed to what adult educators need to do to prepare to productively work with employers and workers (Jurmo, 1995).

Learner-Centered Assessment and Evaluation

Adventures in Assessment

Adventures in Assessment was a journal of the System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES), a comprehensive training and technical assistance initiative for adult literacy educators and programs. Operated by the Massachusetts Bureau of Adult Education Massachusetts, SABES provided staff and program development workshops, consultations, mini-courses, mentoring, peer coaching, and other activities provided by five Regional Support Centers located at community colleges throughout the state. SABES created a compendium of the first eleven issues of the journal for the years 1991 to 1998 (McGrail, Purdom, Schwartz, & Simmons, 1998). Articles written by AFE teachers and administrators describe how they used learner-centered

assessment strategies in various types of AFE settings, when learners first arrive at the program, during the program, and at the end. Articles also discuss how programs can help their staff transition to using these kinds of practices.

Portfolio Assessment

In *It Belongs to Me: A Guide to Portfolio Assessment in Adult Education Programs,* Hanna Arlene Fingeret (April 1993) explained what portfolio assessment is and how it might be incorporated into an AFE program. Portfolio assessment is a learner-centered, participatory process in which learners and instructors work together to select samples of learners' work, analyze those samples, and make decisions to guide future actions for learners. Selected samples can also be presented to other audiences – employers, educational institutions – that the learner hopes to work with, to demonstrate the learner's strengths. Teachers must decide whether portfolio assessment is consistent with their approach to instruction and assessment, plan and pilot the use of portfolios, and then evaluate that process and whether and how to continue using it. The author also discusses the potential benefits of and needed supports for this approach to learner assessment.

Moving from Standardized Tests to Learner-Centered Assessment

In *Learner-Centered Literacy Assessment: An Evolving Process*, Susan Lytle, Alisa Belzer, Katherine Schultz, and Marie Vannozzi (1989) describe two drawbacks of traditional assessment procedures ("standardized tests and other outside-in methods that make adults the objects of someone's scrutiny"): "They fail to capture the richness and complexity of adult learning, and they reinforce a view of literacy as a set of autonomous, technical skills divorced from meaningful context. Moreover, the diagnosis of reading ability as grade levels is misleading, and it often confuses and discourages adults." They cite "cross-cultural research on literacy" showing . . .

> . . . interesting and important differences within and across communities. When literacy is understood as playing many different roles in the lives of individuals and communities, one must further acknowledge that there is a plurality of literacies, culturally organized and learned in specific settings . . . A learner-centered or participatory approach to assessment is therefore built of several assumptions, among them that adults come to programs with particular goals, with

> previous experiences with literacy, and with perceptions of reading, writing, and learning that all affect what and how they learn. . . In learner-centered assessment, adults are very actively involved. They structure the process and join with staff and other students to investigate their own literacy practices in ways that link directly to instruction and that may in turn be integrated with instruction (pp. 54-55).

The authors describe the Adult Literacy Evaluation Project (ALEP), a collaboration with the Center for Literacy, a large AFE center in Philadelphia. The project aimed at developing an alternative approach to assessment. The authors conclude that, at a minimum, the "project has helped spread participatory learning throughout one literacy program . . . It has forced the whole agency to examine and compare its underlying assumptions and beliefs . . . (and) information has been gathered that supports a radical revision of tutor orientation and training and increased opportunity for adults both to tutor others and to structure their own learning. . . Thus, participatory assessment becomes not just a way of measuring individual achievement but rather an opportunity to identify, with others, themes of importance in learners' lives and thus a catalyst to action that can alter the fundamental circumstances in which learners live" (pp. 63-64).

AFE Assessment in an Auto Factory

In *The Academy: A Learner-Centered Workplace Literacy Program*, Rena Soifer, Martha Irwin, and Deborah Young (1989) said that, for many workplace education students, "years of working in a very directed, repetitive situation have only reinforced their low self-esteem and sense of powerlessness." To shift to a more positive frame of mind, learners must confront and eliminate that negativity. "We use the learners' language to initiate a process . . . to reconceptualize their views of themselves" (p.66). The authors describe The Academy, "a learner-centered workplace literacy program that engages in collaborative learning" at a Ford auto manufacturing plant in Michigan. "Three principles are basic to the Academy's approach: Learners' strengths are recognized and built on, teachers and learners collaborate as equal partners, and the environment has a significant impact on the quality of learning and teaching" (p. 66). "Learners meet in groups in which ideas can be shared and each group member, including the teacher, is a resource and support for every other person. The teaching must be both challenging and nonthreatening to stimulate interaction within the group and

assist learners in overcoming self-doubts about their ability to learn . . . learners discuss, read, and write about situations and provocative issues related to their personal and work lives . . . Open-ended questioning, justifying, clarifying, and examining issues from personal and collective perspective engage learners in problem solving" (pp. 66-67).

Recognizing that "standardized tests cannot satisfactorily assess the affective and cognitive results from the Academy's instructional approach," Academy staff saw evaluation as "an ongoing process that uses a number of indicators and involves both teachers and learners. A portfolio of measurements is a much more comprehensive way of assessing learning than a test score. The primary purpose of evaluation – to enable learners and teachers to be aware of progress – must be constantly kept in mind . . . learners monitor their own progress . . . They graph their spelling successes, list the books they have read, record and date their writings, and track their attendance. . . and regularly write anecdotal records of incidents that are related to the Academy classes. In addition, learners complete pre- and post- writing assessments (consisting) of actual writings that are evaluated for authenticity, organization, and mechanics. These somewhat more formal measures are reviewed together by learner and teacher. Affective factors are extremely important, but they can only be assessed informally. . . .The best way of assessing significant affective changes is through observations by the teacher and, more important, through learners' growing feelings of confidence and power" (p. 70).

Part 4.b. Wrap-Up

The AFE field has – for decades – produced many great program models that can be adapted to create new community-oriented AFE systems. The above 44 examples are just a few of them. Readers are encouraged to learn about these and others that can be found in the publications of the organizations cited in this resource book series. We can thereby be better equipped to adapt ideas embedded in these programs to create new models relevant to current and emerging challenges and opportunities.

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APPENDIX

Glossary

Adult Foundational Education (AFE)

This term was introduced by the Open Door Collective (ODC) in 2022, to provide a name that more fully captured the diverse types of services provided in adult literacy/basic skills, English for Speakers of Other Languages, high school equivalency ("GED"), and other related programs (e.g., workplace/workforce basic skills, citizenship preparation, health and family literacy programs). For more about how the ODC defined this term, visit https://nationalcoalitionforliteracy.org/2022/05/adult-foundational-education/ and https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BTroPf5NCwcQIy_drWO5pzd44GE2fbmWNp71VyrqZCc/edit

Because I have long agreed that our multi-dimensional field needs a more comprehensive and accurate way of describing itself, I have adopted this term "adult foundational education" ("AFE ") and use it throughout this resource book series, adding my own interpretations of the term. (See a more detailed description of "AFE in the U.S." in Part 2.a.)

I also recognize that others in the field might not want to use this term and use other terms like "adult literacy education," "adult basic education," "English for Speakers of Other languages education," "high school equivalency education," or simply "adult education." I hope that this discussion of "What do we call ourselves?" is not a source of confusion, distraction, and division. I hope that this discussion instead helps us better understand the learners and communities we serve, what we can do to better serve them, and how talk about our field internally and externally.

In Part 2.a. of this series, I present my own interpretation of this term, based on my years of study and work in AFE and related fields. Though it does not use the exact wording used by ODC, I believe that how I describe AFE is in keeping with the general sense and spirit of ODC's definition. ODC itself has also encouraged the field to help to further develop this term.

In a nutshell, I'm saying that *adult foundational education (AFE)* refers to the diverse types of instructional and other services that help U.S. adults and out-of-school youth to (a) strengthen their "foundational skills" (e.g., oral and written language, numeracy, digital literacy, problem-solving, collaboration, and others); (b) build social-emotional strengths; (c) develop content knowledge; and (c) develop credentials, personal plans, support systems, and other tools they need to perform work, family, civic, and academic roles. AFE services are based in multiple institutions and communities, serve diverse populations of adults and out-of-school youth, and often involve other stakeholder partners.

Community-oriented adult foundational education

This is an approach that focuses AFE services on helping learners participate effectively in the various *communities* (social contexts) they operate in. *Communities* are not limited to geographic neighborhoods but can include settings like workplaces, families, healthcare facilities, prisons, clubs, religious institutions, social services, and other social contexts where learners use foundational skills to communicate and solve problems with others. The term *community-oriented* is borrowed from Hanna Arlene Fingeret (1992)[4] who used it in a 1992 ERIC monograph and from the *community-based* adult literacy movement of the 1980s and 1990s. As used in this document, *community-oriented* AFE programs often work with other stakeholders who provide supports that help learners manage particular life issues they are concerned about. Such an integrated, collaborative, community-oriented approach can, in turn, also help those other stakeholders be better able to work with basic-skills-challenged adults and the AFE programs that serve them. In these ways, *community* is both a venue and resource for, and a product of, adult foundational education.

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[4] Fingeret, H.A. (1992). *Adult literacy education: Current and future directions: An update.* ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED354391