



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR ADULTS WITH SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS

NAASLN Membership News & Views Issue Twenty – March 2008

NAASLN Membership News & Views is an outgrowth of the NAASLN Vision to offer our members a centralized hub of information, professional development, technical assistance, communication on issues and trends, and advocacy initiatives on behalf of adults with special learning needs.

Stay tuned in and connected by renewing your membership. (See below for more.)

Great news for 2008! NAASLN members now have a seat at the table of policymaking as it affects adult education because our association recently joined the **National Coalition For Literacy**. Read the President's Message to learn more.

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President's Message—NAASLN Joins National Coalition for Literacy
Robyn Rennick, M.S., Program Director, Dyslexia Research Institute, Tallahassee, FL
NAASLN President

NAASLN is excited to announce its new membership with the National Coalition for Literacy (NCL), an organization whose purpose is to increase public awareness and understanding of adult literacy and English language development; foster collaboration at the national level among public and private organizations promoting adult literacy and English language development; and promote a comprehensive approach to adult literacy and English language development research and its dissemination and application.

This membership gives NAASLN a seat at the table of policymaking as it affects adult education. NCL also serves as a clearinghouse of information involving key state and federal legislation and legislative activity. Current topics of discussion include health literacy, ESL, GED, adult literacy and changes in employment and earnings, evidence-based practices on reading research, performance assessment, and studies of interest to practitioners in all areas of adult education.

As the only the only association for those who serve adults with special learning needs, NAASLN welcomes this opportunity.

For more information about our newest affiliation, see <http://www.national-coalition-literacy.org/about.html>. To get involved with NAASLN's advocacy, legislative, and policy making activities, contact Anne Murr (anne.murr@drake.edu).

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NAASLN 2008 Webinars – An Internet-Based Seminar Series

Are you looking for a high impact, low cost, pertinent national conference in a convenient, comfortable, cost-effective, and locale venue? Like, *really* local and *really* affordable?

Throughout 2008, NAASLN will present seminars *in your office*, with topics that impact your student or client population, topics like:

- Asperger's Syndrome and the Adult Education Classroom
- Math Strategies for GED Testing
- GED—Accommodations for Documented Disabilities, Adaptations for Non-documented Learning Needs
- TABE—Accommodations for Documented Disabilities, Adaptations for Non-documented Learning Needs
- ESOL—Practical Teaching Strategies for Multi-Level Classrooms
- The Soft Skills Needed for Employment —Why Individuals with Dyslexia/ADD/Related Learning Differences Don't Have Them and How They Can Develop Them
- Emotions—Prerequisites for Learning

All you need is a computer and a telephone. Specific dates and times will be announced soon. To learn more, please call 888-5NAASLN (888-562-2756) and leave a message, we will call you back. Or send an E-mail to newsletter@naasln.org

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Membership Update

Our recent affiliation with NCL is just one more reason to join NAASLN. Continue to be a part of this dynamic e-community. If you have not yet done so, please by send in your

\$35 annual membership fee today. NAASLN is the only national association for those who serve adults with special learning needs. Members are people like you — educators, trainers, employers, human service providers, and adult learners — who are committed to ensuring and expanding opportunities for adults with special learning needs to become successful and productive lifelong learners.

For a complete listing of all of the membership benefits and a 2008 Membership Form, go to www.naasln.org/membership.htm. You may pay with credit card or check, by fax or by mail. Secure online registration will soon be available.

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Spotlight Topic of the Month

Dyslexia: It Affects More Than Reading in Adults

Blace A. Nalavany, LCSW, Ph.D., Assistant Professor School of Social Work, East Carolina University

“There are limitations to having dyslexia. It’s embarrassing and scary.” “I lose my train of thought and start another conversation. I even stay awake and worry about this.” “Early experiences in school had an effect on me and even now as an adult.” “Just because I am not doing my best does not mean that I am not trying my best.” “I am under stress always trying to cover up the dyslexia—this leads to exhaustion.” “I am determined!” “I have an amazing work ethic.”

These statements tell only a fraction of the emotional impact, barriers, resources, and triumphs that adults with dyslexia experience. These gripping accounts of dyslexia are from adults who are participants in a new study being carried out by professors in the East Carolina University on how dyslexia impacts their day to day lives. The emotional, behavioral, and social impact of dyslexia on adults has received little attention from both the public and professional communities. The purpose of this study is to address this gap by raising both public and professional awareness of adults with dyslexia. It is anticipated that study outcomes will inform public policy and services to adults with dyslexia.

Phase One of the study will be carried out over the next year. Individuals with dyslexia will be involved in focus groups and in-depth interviews where they will “tell their stories” of how dyslexia is affecting their adult lives. Comments capturing participants’ experiences with dyslexia will be converted onto an index card, with one comment per card. A larger group of adults with dyslexia will then sort each comment into piles in a way that makes sense to them. In other words, each pile will contain comments that represent a unique experience with dyslexia. Participants will also rate the comments according to how relevant the statements are to their lives. The results of the sorting and rating tasks will be used to produce a concept map which is a pictorial representation of the experience of adults with dyslexia.

This research is being conducted by a triad of professionals who are passionate about the lives of adults with dyslexia/learning disability. The principal investigator of this study is Blace A. Nalavany, LCSW, Ph.D., who is an assistant professor in the School of Social Work at East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina. Lena Carawan, Ph.D., is the co-investigator and is also an assistant professor in the School of Social Work at East Carolina University. Robyn Rennick, MA, co-director of the Dyslexia Research Institute of Tallahassee, Florida is the research consultant.

The researchers need the assistance of programs around the country that work with adults with dyslexia. If you are dyslexic or know of an adult with dyslexia that is 24 years old or older and would like to help others understand how dyslexia affect an adult's life, not just reading, the researchers could use your help as a sorter and rater. Volunteers will be mailed a consent form, two short questionnaires, and directions on how to sort and rate the statements. Each volunteer will receive a \$5 gift certificate as a token of their much appreciated time. To become involved or for more information about the study, please contact Dr. Nalavany at 252-737-2053 (nalavanyb@ecu.edu) or Dr. Carawan at 252-328-4381 (carawanl@ecu.edu).

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The Success Corner

Nelson Lauver



American Storyteller Tells Own Success Story

By Jane George, Executive Producer, The American Storyteller Radio Journal

While visiting the NAASLN website recently, I read your latest newsletter which made mention of your request for “success stories.” So, I thought I would drop you a line and introduce you to nationally syndicated journalist, Nelson Lauver.

Nelson is an adult education success story. At age 29, he swallowed his pride and sought help to overcome a lifetime of illiteracy caused by undiagnosed dyslexia. Today at 44, Nelson is syndicated broadcast journalist, motivational speaker, humorist, literacy advocate, and the host/creator of The American Storyteller Radio Journal, a nationally syndicated radio feature broadcast in over 60 markets. His daily short stories of the American experience resonate with listeners from every walk of life.

To meet him today it's hard to imagine he was once an out-of-control kid with a serious learning disability, then an angry young adult who couldn't read and write. But then he went on to do something nobody expected – he succeeded.

With engaging tenacity and a refreshing, humorous approach, Nelson inspires and empowers audiences using examples (including his own) of “ordinary” Americans who've been knocked down – again and again – and find the true grit to get back up and achieve. Nelson fortifies his audience with the motivation and resolve to do it too – and leaves them with a fiery mantra that will stay with them for life.

Nelson has spent nearly 15 years studying, writing and speaking on human potential

and the common denominator that turns “ordinary” Americans into extraordinary achievers. Nelson has authored and recorded over 300 short stories, and his vast library of radio stories is available on his website – free – for anyone to listen/download. Besides the casual listener, Nelson’s stories have found a dedicated audience with educators and recently individuals learning English as a second language. That’s just the quick version. Nelson’s website offers much more detail as well as audio and video where he speaks candidly about his learning disability and his struggle. To learn more about Nelson, visit www.theamericanstoryteller.com. To read how The American Storyteller Radio Journal has become a resource for individuals learning English as a second language, visit www.theamericanstoryteller.com/downloads/ESL.pdf

*****Calling All Success Stories!***

*Are you a success story? An adult who overcame a special learning need? If so, **NAASLN Membership News and Views** is looking for you? **Send us your stories.** A look back in your life can be an inspiration for others to look ahead.*

Throughout our 2008 newsletters we will be featuring stories of individuals, who not only have triumphed over a disability or other learning problem, but who have gone on to become successful role models who are sharing that success with others.

NAASLN is committed to ensuring and expanding opportunities for adults with special learning needs so that they can become successful and productive lifelong learners. Join in NAASLN’s commitment by sharing your own story or one about someone else.

Send your stories to newsletter@naasln.org or info@naasln.org.

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Website of the Month

<http://www.onestoptoolkit.org>

One-Stop Toolkit for Serving People with Disabilities

The One-Stop Toolkit is a gem of a website that provides accessible and comprehensive information primarily to state and local One-Stop service providers, but is useful to a broader audience as well. Individuals with disabilities, advocates, parents, counselors, and other professionals will find a rich source of resources that help individuals with disabilities find and keep good jobs.

Developed by DTI Associates, Inc. on behalf of Disability Program Navigator Grantees, it is an easily navigable site detailing

- Tools & Resources
- Glossary of Terms
- State & Local Efforts
- State & Local Resources By Topic
- Profiles
- Resources of the Week
- Disability Program Navigator
- Grantee Resources

The Resources of the Week, for example, is a weekly listserv of the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workforce Investment and Employment Policy for People with Disabilities (RRTC) at the Law, Health Policy & Disability Center, University of Iowa College of Law.

State and Local Resources by Topic includes reports, checklists, guides, tools and other resources produced by state and local agencies and organizations. These are linked by categories, such as Access and Accommodation, Assessment Tools, Employer Resources, Marketing and Outreach, and Program Coordination.

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NAASLN at COABE 2008 - Helping you meet the needs of your special needs students and clients!

April 28-May 1, 2008

COABE and MAACCE

Commission on Adult Basic Education and Missouri Association for Adult, Continuing, and Community Education

Adam's Mark Hotel, St. Louis, Mo.

<http://www.coabe.org>

NAASLN will be presenting a full-day pre-conference session and a strand of workshops on disabilities issues for adult learners. See below for details on the pre-conference and two of strand sessions. Watch the [NAASLN Website Calendar](#) for more details.

As a bonus, all session attendees will receive a 2008 NAASLN membership at no cost. Take advantage of early-bird registration fees until March 31. Register at <http://www.coabe.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=conferences>.

In addition we will be hosting a NAASLN **reunion!** Details will follow via email, on the NAASLN Website and at the conference.

NAASLN's Pre-Conference at COABE – April 28: *Special Learning Needs: What Can Adult Education and Literacy Programs Do? From Identification to Interventions to Systemic Changes*

This all-day session will target the special learning needs of participants in basic and literacy education, focusing on LD and other special learning needs that, if not addressed, will also affect transitions and employability, as well as families and children.

Topics will include:

- Defining, establishing a set of values, and exploring the incidence of special learning needs
- Best practices for engaging learners
- What is really going on? Peeling back layers to get to the heart of why is learner is struggling.
- Interventions—What? Who? And the Basics of How?
- Systemic Change—Aligning programs that practice what they preach
- Tutor-Training for Special Learning Needs
- Test Accommodations—TABE, GED, and CASAS

- Professional Development—Who is doing what, and the impact of PD on systemic improvements

Not only will the presenters share national data, but more importantly, they will share program specifics that have demonstrated more than 200% increases in persistence and in post-test gains. ESOL and corrections professionals will also be available for dialogue and dissemination of implementation strategies leading to tremendous participant and program outcomes.

Presenters include Barbara Arguedas, Director of Adult Basic Education, and Susan Rathjen, Instructor, Santa Fe Community College; Kaye Cockrum, Director of Adult Education and Literacy, Houston, Mo.; Bevin Gibson, Director, Southern Illinois Professional Development Center; Karen Hibbert, Director of Adult Basic Education, West Central Community Corrections; Joan Hudson Miller, Low Vision Consultant, Los Angeles, Ca; Peg Kennedy, Developmental Support Specialist, Olney Central College, Ill.; Robin Schwarz, ESOL and Special Learning Needs Consultant; and Laura Weisel, Clinical Services, The TLP Group, Columbus, Oh.

Join this lively all-day session and participate with leading professionals on how to provide services that actually change peoples' lives and that can demonstrate dramatic gains in persistence and learning outcomes.

NAASLN Special Needs Strand

NAASLN Special Needs Strand sessions will be held throughout the entire COABE Conference.

Two sessions not to be missed are "Structured Learning" and "Memory Techniques for Adults," by Richard Cooper, PhD, Director of the Center for Alternative Learning, Dr. Cooper's lively, information-packed, and quickly-paced presentations always draw standing-room-only crowds, so get there early. A NAASLN board member, Dr. Cooper is also the owner of Learning disAbilities Resources, a firm which produces and distributes educational and motivational materials for individuals with learning differences.

Watch the [NAASLN Website Calendar](#) for more details about all the other strand sessions.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NAASLN Road Trip Tracks

Watch the [NAASLN Website Calendar](#) for more information on other upcoming events.

If your state organization wants to feature a NAASLN on the Road track, please contact Bevan Gibson at bgibson@siue.edu or Laura P. Weisel at powerpath@aol.com. It's a great way to add a national angle to your local professional development conferences.

April 23-26, 2008

MPAEA Conference

Mountain Plains Adult Education Association
Downtown Radisson, Salt Lake City, UT
www.mpaea.org

NAASLN's President, Robyn A Rennick, will be a keynote speaker and will be presenting workshops concerning how to teach students to use multisensorial techniques to enhance their study skills and long term memory, as well as a workshop discussing the way dyslexia and ADD affect adult in the areas of health, emotions, social interactions, and employment

April 28-May 1, 2008

COABE and MAACCE

Commission on Adult Basic Education and Missouri Association for Adult, Continuing, and Community Education
Adam's Mark Hotel, St. Louis, Mo.
<http://www.coabe.org>

See preceding article for details on NAASLN's pre-conference and special needs strand.

63rd Annual CEA Conference

(Correctional Education Association)
July 13-16, 2008
Adam's Mark, Denver, Co.
<http://www.ceanational.org/events/denver08.htm>

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Support NAASLN while you are shopping online at www.giveline.org

Giveline.com is an online store created for the community-minded shopper. Every transaction generates a financial contribution to your favorite charity, which we hope will be **NAASLN**. Giveline.com contributes between 7 and 33 percent of product sales, with a store-wide average of nearly 16 percent per transaction. The amount to be donated to **NAASLN** varies by product. Their "open book" policy includes displaying the exact amount on every product page, as well as throughout the checkout process.

So click on www.giveline.org and go directly the NAASLN page and for every item you order NAASLN receives a financial contribution.

This is the first time our association has worked with Giveline.org, so we would appreciate your feedback on your experience using this site, the quality of their products and service. Let us know at info@naasln.org. Thank you!

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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

NAASLN is devoted to enhancing the opportunities for life-long learning for adults with special learning needs by improving the efforts of adult educators working with these

individuals in the full range of life-long learning programs, i.e., ABE, ESL, GED,

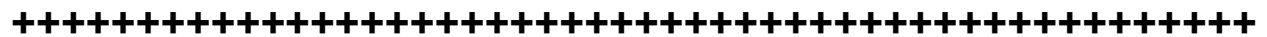
Future Newsletter Submissions

Help us meet your needs. Recommend or submit an article, event announcements, book reviews, and web sites links. Either E-mail newsletter@naasln.org or send to: Joan Hudson-Miller, 3849 Albright Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90066 or Fax to 310-390-4641.

All submissions will be reviewed for appropriateness for our readership and will be selected at the discretion of the newsletter editors.

Sharing information

Do you have ideas on how you would like to better network with other members? Are there other features you would like to see in this Newsletter and on our website? E-mail newsletter@naasln.org or leave a message on at 888-5NAASLN (888-562-2756).



Help Spread the Word

Please forward this newsletter to other educators and interested parties. If this newsletter was forwarded to you and you would like to become a member of NAASLN and a regular subscriber, send an email to info@naasln.org for membership information or visit our web site: www.naasln.org/membership.

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Send comments or questions about this newsletter by email to newsletter@naasln.org.

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