



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR ADULTS
WITH SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS**

NAASLN Membership News & Views Issue Twenty-Seven – Winter 2010

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.

Go to www.naasln.org/membership

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President’s Message—

Chasing the Tail

Richard Cooper, PhD, Co-President

I've been around NAASLN since the beginning, the late 1980s.

Originally, we were part of AAACE, the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education. But back in the 80s, a fellow by the name of Bill Langner looked around and noticed that AAACE didn't focus on adults with disabilities, they just focused on "normal" adults. He found it intolerable. Bill and Boris Bogatz from Galladet University set up a separate organization focusing on special learning needs.

NAASLN has evolved into a small organization of people who are still as passionate as Bill and Boris. And I emphasize small. There are lots of people out there who want to reach everyone, but there just aren't that many people out there who want to make sure that they reach those with special learning needs. You see, if you're always worried about everyone, how do you reach the individual with a disability?

State organizations have their priorities. And we understand that. They have to report success. In a way, they're creaming the crop. That leaves those who are the most needy.

So instead of saying, we can't help you, we're that small group of people who want to help adults with special learning needs in their learning environments. We're not looking to set up a special ed department in adult education. Instead of finding a special group, or referring to a special program, we're looking for ways to reach that individual with a special learning need in his or her environment.

That's why we're a small organization.

We used to get together as conferences—small conferences, but ones with big impacts. We often hear people say they attended a conference 10 or 15 years ago in California, or New Orleans, or Columbus. But because of the economy, we don't have the resources to put on conferences. But we still do provide the same exchange of professional insight through webinars.

Why does our membership go up and down? Politics, policies, sometimes people. But people with special learning needs are always there. NAASLN was founded by people who see this special need. But that's not enough. NAASLN says, we're here, we are the organization still pushing to make sure that the system pays attention to every one in adult ed.

What we have now is the new group of members. Currently, NAASLN has evolved to the point where we are looking for new leadership, people who look around and say, we still need to focus on individuals with special learning needs.

New people recognize the need. They are seeing and saying what Bill and Boris saw back in the 80s. You see, in every new generation, there's a group of new educators who look around and say adult education for all learners, not some learners. We need more people to join the movement, not asking where to start, but just continuing the

work that has already been done.

NAASLN is the place. We have the philosophy, the commitment, the community, the history. We have defined the need. We're looking for people to stand up, people who are ready to do it.

I present you with a challenge. We are looking for people who are willing to chase the tail of the dog, and get them to ask, "maybe we need to look at this a different way."

Are you that person?

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**Membership Update—
Why Join NAASLN?**

Fran Holthaus, Vice President and Membership Services and Recruitment Chairperson

Professional people all over the United States join NAASLN each year. Many join to get exceptional training from experienced educators, who are great trainers, using NAASLN's webinars. Others join for the opportunity to get leadership experience and to network with other professionals for the purpose of getting exposure and growing in their careers. Some professionals join for the opportunity of connecting with other professionals who share some of the same interests and concerns in education. Some professional educators join to give and obtain support for the work they do and to share information and learn from their colleagues to better help their adult students. Still others join because they know that if they wish to be successful advocates for adults with special learning needs, there must be numbers to influence policy makers and funders.

At different times in my career, I have joined for all or part of these reasons, but regardless of the reason, I am grateful for having the opportunity to be a part of NAASLN. I have worked with and learned a great deal from my NAASLN colleagues. This knowledge has helped me help students and other professionals over decades. I have met some of the most dedicated, conscientious and caring professionals that I am proud to call my friends. I have also been blessed to have been able to successfully advocate with these same people for quality, but reasonable services for adults. While advocacy never ends, we have seen successes over the years.

As an organization, we need caring, dedicated professionals. As a professional working with adults with special learning needs, you need NAASLN.

Join today and get involved. You will not regret it.

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NAASLN Webinar Series

These internet-based seminars offer high impact, low-cost, professional training in the

comfort of your office or the privacy of your home. You receive one hour of audio and visual professional development in real time, with opportunities for questions and answers. Recorded archives are also available. A certificate of attendance is available for all paid participants. All you need is a computer with a headset or telephone.

Upcoming Webinar—
GED Testing Accommodations and Adaptations

The NAASLN Webinar Series is pleased to present another opportunity to join Connie Leading’s popular session, “GED Testing Accommodations and Adaptations.”

On February 16, from 4 to 5 pm (ET), Connie Leading will tackle how to level the playing field for adults with special learning needs who take the GED.

Adults with special learning needs who take the GED fall into two categories: those with documented ADA disabilities and accommodations (e.g., extended time, supervised breaks, scribes, audiocassettes, etc); and those who need adaptations or modifications (e.g., magnifiers, colored overlays, straight edges, rooms without fluorescent lighting, etc.). This webinar will clarify information concerning accommodations and adaptations and will provide effective ways to prepare your students to use these tools to successfully pass the GED Test.

Connie Leading brings 30 years of professional and personal experience to her position with the Ohio Department of Education's GED Office. She has been instrumental in the development of curricula that addresses the challenges faced by students with disabling conditions.

Other upcoming NAASLN Webinars—Mark Your Calendars Now!

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|----------|---|
| March 23 | Irlen Syndrome and Light Sensitivity
Helen Irlen |
| April 20 | Tried and True Teaching Strategies for Students With or Without
Disabilities
Sarah Goldamme |
| May TBA | Soft Skills
Robyn Rennick |

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Special discount offer for the 4 videos of Dr. Cooper’s “Teaching Math to Adults Who Have Learning Differences” webinars.

Limited Time Only

The popular four-part series, "Teaching Math to Adults Who Have Learning Differences," by Dr. Richard Cooper, is available for a limited time only for \$80 members, \$100 non-members.

- Math I: Learning Differences, Difficulties and Disabilities that Limit Math Skills
- Math II: Developing Number Sense and Quantitative Concepts with Adults Who Learn Differently
- Math III: Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication and Division
- Math IV: Teaching Fractions to Adults with Learning Differences

Each one-hour webinar demonstrates proven techniques that address problems with auditory processing, attention, right/left discrimination, memory, organization, and sequencing.

Normally priced at \$40 per session, this package is a bargain addition to professional development library.

Offer good until April 30, 2010.

To order go to http://naasln.org/webinars/webinar_archives.htm or leave a message at 888-5NAASLN (888-562-2756)

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Other webinars available as archived videos:

2009 Archives

- Using Games Effectively to Assure Success for a Broad Range of ESOL Learners
- Emotions Impact
 - Learning Part I – The Neurological Underpinnings of Emotions
- The Dyslexic Brain: Why Should Teachers Care? What Should They Know?
- Structured Learning
- Learning Styles
- Dyslexia – Attention Deficit Disorders – Learning Differences: It's Not Just Academics that Keep These Adults from Succeeding
- The Impact of Culture on the ESOL Learner
- Test Anxiety

2008 Archives

- Emotions! Supporting the Critical Prerequisite to Learning
 - Part One - Increase Your Understanding
 - Part Two - Rethink Your Role: Four Interventions
- Asperger's Syndrome and the Adult Education Class
- Managing an Adult ESOL Class with Multiple Skill Levels
- Structured Learning

To purchase an archived webinar, go to www.naasln.org/webinars/webinar_archives.htm. Members \$20; Non-members, \$40 Non-Members.

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Spotlight Topic of the Month

NIFL Training Summary on Learning to Achieve— A Review of Research Literature on Serving Adults with Learning Disabilities

Wendy Sweeney, MA, Licensed Psychologist and Learning Disability Specialist, PANDA (Physical and Neurological Disabilities Assistance)

The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) is a federal agency whose role is to provide leadership to the adult literacy field. The Institute has commissioned an up-to-date literature review of topics related to adults with learning disabilities in order to develop a publication that references the most current information for practitioners in the field. The findings have been made available to the public in *Learning to Achieve: A Review of the Research Literature on Serving Adults with Learning Disabilities* (June 2009).

In conjunction with the publication of *Learning to Achieve*, the NIL has sponsored a professional development initiative, *Learning to Achieve: A Research-Based Training on Serving Adults with Learning Disabilities*, that has been offered in Iowa, California, South Dakota, Georgia, Maryland, and North Carolina. The training consists of nine modules based on the literature review.

I was lucky enough to be invited to attend Part I of the *Learning to Achieve* training by the State of Iowa Adult Literacy program on November 6, 2009. Part I of the training covered the first four modules of *Learning to Achieve* and consisted of up-to-date information on topics taken from the literature review and put into practical terms for those who provide services in ABE settings.

The interactive training format via ICN (Iowa Communications Network) was a combination of lecture, discussion, activities, and suggested instructional interventions. Some of the topics covered included defining learning disabilities as it pertains to adults, identifying self determination strategies to help students achieve goals, discussing federal laws and rights that apply to adult learners with disabilities, and identifying underlying deficits that highly correlate with reading disabilities. I found the information particularly interesting and informative. I would highly recommend Adult Basic Education professionals read the *Learning to Achieve* literature review and participate in the trainings, if possible.

To order a free copy of Learning to Achieve: A Review of the Research Literature on Serving Adults with Learning Disabilities, go to edpubs@inet.ed.gov or call 1-800-288-8813. For more information about Learning to Achieve trainings and to download the publication visit www.nifl.gov.

PANDA is a Supplemental Service Grant funded by the Minnesota State Department of Education.

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**NEW PROGRAM—
TESOL CORE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM**

TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.) has announced a new online certificate program in TESOL's professional development lineup.

TESOL Core Certificate Program is a 130-hour online training program providing a foundation in the theory and practice of English language teaching (ELT). It is designed for current or prospective teachers or administrators worldwide with limited formal training in ELT, with specialty courses on teaching adults in ESL (English as a second language) and EFL (English as a foreign language) environments or young learners in EFL environments.

For complete details, see TESOL's website: www.tesol.org/corecertificate

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Website of the Month

TESOL's mission is to develop and maintain professional expertise in English language teaching and learning for speakers of other languages worldwide. Its website offers resources for teachers of primary, secondary, higher, and adult education, as well as emerging teachers and researchers. Visit www.tesol.org.

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**Advocacy Update—
WIA Reauthorization Tops Advocacy Concerns**

Because of the high volume of information pertaining to the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), *NAASLN Membership News & Views* will publish a special issue on this topic. Watch for it in the next two weeks.

It will cover:

- WIA Reauthorization Tops Advocacy Concerns
- New Approaches to Job Training
- Studies Look at Special Learning Needs of Individuals in ABE, Literacy, At-Risk

- Youth Programs and One-Stop Centers
- President's Proposed Budget Includes Increase in State Grants

Here's a preview...

WIA Reauthorization Takes Priority in Congress

Anne Murr, NAASLN Board Member

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) is now a priority issue in Congress. Congressional leadership expects to focus on WIA reauthorization early this year. NAASLN members have the opportunity to make special learning needs a part of this new legislation.

The price for not speaking out at this time is that WIA may be allowed to drift on in its current form, leaving us with an outmoded program of the past that falls far short of the fundamental reform analysts know is needed and that so many of us have worked so hard this past year to bring about. We cannot afford to miss this opportunity. A great deal is at stake for millions of adults in need of adult education and workforce skills services and for our nation.

Contact legislative aides to ask your Senators and Representatives to cosponsor the House and Senate AEEG bills (HR 3238 and S 1468).

President's Proposed Budget Includes Increase in State Grants to Local Programs

The world's largest organization of adult literacy and basic education programs today praised President Obama's proposed FY2011 budget as "a down payment on improving our ability to serve the lowest-level learner."

David C. Harvey, president and CEO of ProLiteracy, applauded a number of items in the Administration's proposed spending plan, including a significant increase in the state grants to local adult literacy and basic education programs; its support of a reform of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the largest source of federal funding for adult literacy; and creation of an innovation fund to support promising approaches to job training.

To read the article in its entirety, go to www.proliteracy.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=785

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California Programs Hit by Economy

Cathay Reta, ProLiteracy California Initiative

As I began to look into what is happening for adult education and literacy programs statewide a few months ago, I was really sad and shocked to find out about the drastic budget cuts that have taken place in California:

- **The California Department of Education (CDE)** received a 20 percent budget cut for 2009-10. To help offset the impact, the legislature authorized local K-12 districts to use funding however they wished within their districts; they were no longer required to fund adult education programs. Some programs have severely reduced their class offerings for adults, some have eliminated adult education altogether, others are still making their decisions.

- **The California Chancellor of Community Colleges Office** oversees 110 community colleges, which provide 49 percent of the state’s adult education and literacy services. In 2009-10 they experienced a budget reduction of \$840 million. Further, State Stabilization Stimulus funds, originally anticipated at \$130 million turned out to be \$37 million for community colleges. As with CDE funding, discretion has been given to local districts to determine how to distribute the funds across programs, seriously jeopardizing adult education classes.

- **The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation** 2009-10 budget was cut by more than a third—\$250 million—for rehabilitative programs, including adult education. The 33 prison facilities in the state will lay off about half of their teaching staff.

These cuts will have dramatic long term impact on the state’s economy. They come at a time when the need for services is greater than ever.

How is the economy affecting adults with special learning needs in your state or program? Share your stories with NAASLN.

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An “ABLE” Testimonial

My name is Robert Glover I am 51 years old. I was born premature and my eyes were severely damaged at birth. I am legally blind and have an eye disease called retinopathy of prematurity (ROP). Life is challenging and school was nearly impossible. In grade school I used large print text books that were so big and so heavy I could only

carry one book at a time. The resources for students with disabilities were very limited. After repeating the second grade and the seventh grade, I began to get frustrated. By ninth-grade I felt defeated and dropped out of school at the age of 16. For the next 32 years I went through life working at close-ended minimum-wage jobs, or collecting disability Social Security. I always longed for an education, and admired people that could open a book and read it without holding it 2 inches from their face.

After giving my son a long-winded lecture about higher education he looked up and said, "Dad, what about you?"

I was outraged and said, "You know it's not possible for me to go to school with my vision problem."

Once again my son challenged me and said, "Dad, I know how important education is to you. Why don't you just make a phone call and see what's available?"

After pondering our conversation for about two weeks, I finally mustered up enough courage to call Kent State at Ashtabula and ask for their adult education department. Before long I heard someone say, "Hello, ABLE." I replied by saying, "Hi, Able. My name is Robert Glover, and I would like some information about getting a GED. "

The person on the other end of the phone chuckled and said, "My name is not 'ABLE'! My name is Doug. ABLE is the name of a program. It stands for 'Adult Basic Literacy Education.'"

After I got the name straight, Doug invited me to an orientation. I told Doug I would love to come to the orientation, but I'm legally blind. Doug said, "We can make accommodations." I told Doug I am missing my right leg, and you are on the upper floor. Doug said, "We have an elevator." I told him that I don't drive. Once again Doug had an answer! He said, "We have public transportation that comes to the campus every hour."

After realizing Doug had an answer for anything I could throw at him, I agreed to go to the orientation. Doug tested me and said, "If you work hard you will have a GED in no time." I went to class four days a week for about six months, and finally it was time to take the test. Doug assured me that I was ready, and ABLE would make all the necessary accommodations. I passed the test and received a GED!

Doug asked me to be a guest speaker at the graduation, and I humbly accepted his offer. From that day forward, my life has not been the same. ABLE gave me the confidence and foundation I needed to move forward in a positive direction toward higher education.

By trial and error I discovered some software that would accommodate my special needs. It is speech recognition software called, "Dragon NaturallySpeaking." I simply talk to the computer and the software types for me. I use some other software called "Read Please." It is a screen reader. I can copy and paste any text into the text box and

it will read it to me.

Armed with everything I learned from ABLE, college would finally become a reality. The first semester I took two classes and received a 3.6 GPA. I am now a full-time student, and I'm currently on the dean's list. I do not determine success by GPA, dean's list, or even a diploma. I define my success by how I can inspire other people.

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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.

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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NAASLN at COABE/ProLiteracy 2010 Conference

NAASLN will be presenting a Pre-conference and Special Needs Track

Pre-conference

Transition Success!

Building Learners Who Will Succeed in Postsecondary and Employment

Complimentary NAASLN membership for pre-conference attendees

March 15, 2010

Join this highly interactive session to hear from experts in the field and share information with programs that are already initiating transition courses.

1. Learn about research on the incidence of students with special learning needs in transition programs.
2. Share practical strategies that transition programs are implementing as they move to build students that persist, demonstrate learning gains, and can self-advocate for accommodations and adaptations to address their special learning needs.

3. Model participatory learning techniques that can provide transition students with the experiences they need to learn and practice the non-cognitive skills needed to successfully transition to postsecondary or employment.

Presenters:

Dr. Laura Weisel

Meryl Becker-Prezosi

Robyn Rennick

NAASLN Special Needs Track at COABE 2010

March 16-19, 2010

- Persistence Research in ABE, Transitions, and Developmental Education: Why Findings Support Students with Special Learning Needs to Succeed!
Dr. Laura Weisel
- It Didn't Just Go Away Because They Grew Older: Dyslexia/ADD/SLD Affects Adults in Many Different Ways
Robyn Rennick
- Special Learning Needs – Incidence and Service Delivery Changes that Drive Incredible Outcomes
Dr. Laura Weisel
- Correction's Dilemma—
Re-Entry and the Ex-Offender with Disabilities
Joe Kelnhofer
- Accommodations for Special Learning Needs on the GED, TABE, CASAS, and WorkKeys
Connie Leading
- What Adults with Disabilities Wish All Teachers Knew
Lori Leininger
- Vision and Special Learning Needs—Empowering Students
Fran Holthaus
- Special Needs in ABE - A National Conversation: Where Have We Been and Where Are We Going?
Sharon Reynolds

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Upcoming Events

2010

Learning Disabilities Association of America Annual Conference

Feb. 17–20

Baltimore, MD

<http://www.lidaamerica.org/conference/index.asp>

COABE / ProLiteracy Joint Conference 2010

March 16–19, 2010

Chicago, IL

www.coabeproliteracy2010.org

Annual TESOL Convention and Exhibit

March 24–27

Boston Convention and Exhibition Center

http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/convention2010/

NAASLN Road Trip Tracks

Watch the NAASLN Website Calendar for more information on events where NAASLN will be presenting special tracks, pre-conferences, or sessions. As they are confirmed, they will be posted on our website: www.naasln.org/calendar.htm.

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

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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Did you enjoy this issue? Continue to be a part of NAASLN's dynamic e-community. If you have not yet done so, please by send in your \$35 annual membership fee today.

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 310-354-2601.

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).

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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.htm.

We practice Permission Marketing. Go to our website to read our Privacy newsletter@naasln.org.

If you ever want to stop receiving this e-newsletter, reply to newsletter@naasln.org and type 'Unsubscribe' in the body of the email.

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

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