



CALPROGRESS

CALIFORNIA ADULT LITERACY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Message from the Director



This has been a year of change for CALPRO as it considers the delivery of professional development (PD) services to California's adult educators. In keeping with current research on characteristics of effective PD, CALPRO has expanded its services to include site-based efforts that complement the regional opportunities offered through the ten Professional Development Centers (PDCs) across the state. The PDCs offer a menu of two- and three-part workshops on a variety of topics (e.g., *Teaching Critical Thinking*; *Using Questioning Strategies*; *Designing Programs for Adults with Learning Disabilities*; *Differentiating Instruction*; *Just-in-Time Leadership*). They also offer networking meetings for specific audiences—opportunities for teachers or administrators to come together, share ideas, discuss specific challenges, and brainstorm effective ways to address these challenges. These all have been highly successful activities.

Research indicates that one of the most effective forms of professional development occurs when teachers have opportunities to work together and to learn from each other. According to the National Staff Development Council (NSDC), collaborative, school-wide forms of professional development have more power to change the school/agency culture and to enhance teachers' skills to help students learn than do professional development activities engaged in by individual teachers.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF CALPRO ACTIVITIES FOR SPRING 2006

This column lists the many and varied activities that CALPRO has recently accomplished as well as those that are in progress.

Learning Community for Site-based Professional Development

Eight programs are participating in a new CALPRO initiative: the Learning Community for Site-based Professional Development. The purpose of the initiative is to provide tools for local agencies to develop learning communities among their staff members and create an agency professional development (PD) plan to address a specific need. An administrator and a lead teacher attended the kick-off meeting in January at which they discussed principles of effective PD, strategies for building a learning community among staff, various models of PD, and tools for assessing needs as well as for building the agency PD plan. The challenges that programs selected to address include new teacher support, effective lesson planning, learner goal setting, and enhancing learner persistence. Programs will create their agency plans, share them at a follow-up meeting in May, and put the plans into practice for the 2006-2007 school year. Participating teams are

Central Learning Adult School Site: Luba Kobzeff and Fran Bergman;
 Glenn County Office of Education: Susan Domenighini and Coleen Parker;
 Harbor Community Adult School: Bill Annand and Penny Kunitani;
 Oakland Adult Education: La Randa Marr, Sally Ianiro, and Jacques LaCour;
 Palm Springs Adult School: Starley Dullien and Barbara Delaughter;
 Poway Adult School: Mary Perez and Kathleen Porter;
 San Diego Community College: Nancy Hampson and Jim Vincent; and
 Santa Ana College School of Continuing Education: Rob Jenkins and Nancy Brooks.

Field-based Research Initiative on Learner Persistence

A new CALPRO effort is designed to support teachers who engage in classroom-based research, also known as practitioner inquiry. Eight teachers are participating in this initiative, which has as its focus learner persistence. Dr. Alisa Belzer from Rutgers University met with the teachers and their supervisors in January and again with the teachers in March. She explained the process of conducting practitioner inquiry and helped participants select their research questions. Teachers are conducting their research and collecting data during the spring of 2006; they will meet again in May to review their findings and write their research reports. In the fall, CALPRO will publish a booklet of their research on learner persistence. Participating teachers are

Justina Bacon, Home Help for Hispanic Mothers;
 Mihaela Ghiuzeli, Compton Adult Basic School;
 Joan Guerra, Fremont Adult School;
 Quinn Harmon-Kelley, Venice Community Adult School;
 Nicola McBreen, Culver City Adult School;
 Angelyn Redstone, Watsonville/Aptos Adult School;
 Martha Robles, Cerritos College; and
 Judith Solovieff, Vallejo Adult School.

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To ensure that teachers transfer the learning from workshops and networking groups to classroom practice, CALPRO has piloted two new programs this year: the Field-based Research Initiative and the Learning Community for Site-based Professional Development. In addition, CALPRO continues to offer training for facilitators of study circles on learner persistence, in which facilitators conduct site-based discussion groups, and CALPRO provides support to administrators of Project STAR pilot sites in helping them consider systemic changes to ensure the success of project STAR. Look for details about each of these programs under the Highlights column of this newsletter.

CALPRO will evaluate the success of these efforts during 2006, revise the design as needed, and expand these programs during 2007. Watch the CALPRO Web site, www.calpro-online.org, for announcements of opportunities to participate in one or more of the site-based PD activities.

In closing, I encourage you to save the dates, November 30-December 2, 2006, for the Meeting of the Minds II, the Practitioner-Researcher Symposium, to be held in Sacramento. This is an opportunity to meet with adult education researchers and share ideas concerning implications of research for practice.

May you enjoy a successful and rewarding conclusion to this semester and may you have a summer of rest and renewal. We hope to see you at one or more CALPRO events in the fall.



Visit the CALPRO Web site www.calpro-online.org for professional development materials that link research to practice, including publications, information about CALPRO moderated discussion lists, and links to other online resources.

New Workshops under Development for Fall 2006

CALPRO is in the process of developing three new workshop modules to be offered during the 2006-2007 school year. These are (1) *Understanding the Adult Learner*; (2) *Creating an Agency Professional Development Plan*; and (3) *Research-based Reading Instruction*. Look for these new workshops on the CALPRO online calendar, www.calpro-online.org, beginning in September.

Study Circles on Research-based Reading Instruction

On June 23, 2006, CALPRO will offer a one-day workshop designed to train facilitators to lead study circles on research-based reading instruction. During these study circles, participants will discuss readings, engage in interactive exercises, and work together to identify ways to improve their own practice. The organizing structure of the training will be a study circle guide titled *Research-based Adult Reading Instruction*, developed by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL). The training will include both a review of research findings and practical suggestions. Because it draws on a wide array of research studies, this study circle is appropriate for teachers working with ABE, ASE, and ESL students. Following the facilitator training, CALPRO will work with local programs to initiate and support the study circles. Adult education administrators who are interested in establishing a study circle for their staff on research-based reading instruction should contact Erik Jacobson at ejacobson@air.org, or at 916-286-8805.

Study Circles on Learner Persistence Yield Systemic Change Efforts

CALPRO continues to support the creation of study circles on the topic of learner persistence. As part of this effort, CALPRO held its fourth facilitator training workshop in March at the South Coast PDC. To date, CALPRO has trained 60 facilitators to lead study circles on learner persistence, and 35 agencies have conducted study circles with staff members. As part of the study circle process, participants work together to identify changes that their own programs can make to increase learner persistence. Many agencies have begun to act on ideas generated in study circles. CALPRO is working with participants and programs to collect and share information about the role that study circles can play in systemic change. The following resources are available on the CALPRO Web site:

A Summary of Suggested Strategies to Improve Learner Persistence
http://www.calpro-online.org/announce/Collected_Strategies.pdf

Draft Action Plans for Responding to Ideas Generated in Study Circles
http://www.calpro-online.org/announce/StudyCircles_Planning_FollowUp.pdf

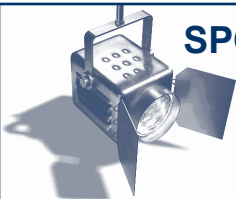
Steps Programs Have Taken
<http://www.calpro-online.org/announce/ActionsProgramsTook.pdf>

For information about the study circles on learner persistence, contact Erik Jacobson at ejacobson@air.org, or at 916-286-8805.

Online Courses

During January and February 2006, CALPRO conducted three online courses: (1) *Designing Programs for Adults with Learning Disabilities, Session One, Awareness for Adult Educators*; (2) *Managing the ESL Multilevel Class*; and (3) *Effective Lesson Planning*. CALPRO is also in the process of developing three new online courses: (1) *Organizing and Monitoring Instruction to Improve Learning Gains*; (2) *Designing Programs for Adults with Learning Disabilities, Session Two, Effective Instructional Strategies*; and (3) *Just-in-Time Leadership: Guide to Smart Fiscal Management*. Participants who complete an online course may be eligible to earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs) from California State University - Sacramento. For updated information about these courses, please consult the CALPRO Web site at www.calpro-online.org.

SPOTLIGHT ON CALPRO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTERS



Sacramento PDC

The Sacramento Professional Development Center has been in operation since October 1992. Counties currently served by the Sacramento PDC include Alpine, Colusa, El Dorado, Napa, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Sierra, Solano, Sonoma, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba. Literacy providers throughout the region can access the services of the PDC by attending workshops, checking out library materials, attending network meetings, setting up site visitations, or calling with specific requests.

In 1996, the Sacramento PDC began its first network meeting for English as a Second Language (ESL) program coordinators in the region. Network participants have since expanded to coordinators of Community-based English Tutoring (CBET), EL Civics, and Adult Basic Education/ Adult Secondary Education programs. There have also been meetings for TOPSpro Users. The networking meetings have allowed regional agencies to discuss issues of common concern, gain insight from each other's successful practices and processes, and receive the latest information on issues relevant to the successful implementation of their own

programs. Most importantly, the relationships established during the meetings have provided many opportunities for future productive collaborations.

Because of its location in the state capital, it is not unusual for the PDC to receive requests from the California Department of Education (CDE) to participate in new projects. During the summer of 2005, such a request led to the PDC's hosting several literacy providers from Afghanistan. They were in the United States to gain a better understanding of curriculum and instructional strategies to better serve women in their country for whom literacy services had been withheld for so many years. Although the organizational structure of their literacy programs varied greatly, their needs for good materials and professional development opportunities were similar to the needs of many of our regional agencies.

For additional information, please contact us at 916.264.3746 or visit our Web site at www.calpro-online.org.

Submitted by Trish Kerns



*Trish Kerns
and visitors from Afghanistan*

San Diego/Imperial County PDC

The San Diego/Imperial Counties Professional Development Center is run through a collaborative effort between the San Diego Community College District, the San Diego County Office of Education, and the Sweetwater Union High School District. Our goal is to provide a variety of professional development opportunities, as well as offer technical assistance and deliver instructional materials through our resource library located at 9315 Hillery Drive, Suite 204, San Diego, CA. This calendar year, we have scheduled more than 30 workshops for teachers and administrators and a variety of network groups to help adult educators hone their skills. These workshops are held in a variety of locations throughout San Diego and Imperial Counties. Refer to the CALPRO calendar at www.calpro-online.org to see the full complement of offerings and to obtain complete workshop information.

In keeping with the California Department of Education's vision for adult education, one of our priorities this year has been to provide professional development that focuses on increasing learner persistence. We have held the *Enhancing Learner Persistence* workshop three times with growing attendance, and we have received excellent feedback from workshop attendees.

Please feel free to contact us if we can be of service to you by calling 858-569-5417, or by e-mailing steve.niemeyer@suhsd.k12.ca.us, or syamate@sdcoe.net.

Submitted by Steve Niemeyer



Steve Niemeyer and workshop participants

The CALPRO and Professional Development Center Master Calendar

The Master Calendar provides up-to-date details about all of the professional development opportunities offered at the PDCs. To access the calendar from the CALPRO home page (www.calpro-online.org), go to the left menu and click on the "Calendar" tab. To get more information or to register for an event, simply click on the event listing on the calendar.

Developing Learning Communities

by Erik Jacobson

Site-Based Professional Development

Although workshops and conferences can be good opportunities for teachers and administrators to share their experiences and be exposed to new ideas, many adult educators have expressed a desire for ongoing professional development that takes place where they work (Smith, Hofer, et al., 2003). Site-based professional development is often associated with what are called *learning communities*—workplaces in which staff have an openness to change and a sustained commitment to collaborative inquiry and dialogue. Although site-based professional development is often focused on teachers, for true learning communities to develop in agencies and schools, the dialogue and inquiry must also include administrators and adult learners.

The Role of Teachers

Teachers often engage in informal site-based professional development (e.g., collegial sharing or mentoring). These activities are valuable because they foster the kind of inquiry and reflection that helps practitioners move from theory to practice (Joyce & Showers, 2002). Teachers can also work together in more formal ways. Formats such as study circles help teachers to identify the implications of research and theory for their own programs and classrooms. Other formats, such as collaborative classroom inquiry projects, provide teachers with opportunities to develop their knowledge and expertise with colleagues. Teachers that are members of learning communities are not passive participants in their own professional development; rather, they make a conscious decision to actively seek out and work with others to conduct the type of inquiry that will help improve practice.

The Role of Administrators

Research into efforts to implement change in education programs or schools makes it clear that administrators cannot simply dictate that change must occur but must themselves actively participate in the process of change. In other words, administrators must do more than "sign off on" site-based professional development activities or projects that staff undertake—they need to communicate what they see as the value of these efforts. Indeed, research has found that administrators who are successful in helping change the culture of a school actively model their values in a highly visible manner through consistent daily routines and concrete actions (Deal & Peterson, 1990). For example, administrators should be open about their own need for professional development. Through site-based professional development, administrators can participate in trainings, study circles, or efforts to undertake action research and inquiry projects. Researchers have found that, as principals and teachers inquire together, they create communities in which the focus is on helping all participants to contribute, regardless of their place in the program's hierarchy (Sergiovanni, 1994).

The Role of Adult Learners

The act of inquiring also serves to bring teachers and students together in a learning community. Site-based professional development, geared towards changing program practice and increasing student learning gains, needs to include students as part of the dialogue. Fullan (1991) notes that, "If the school improvement creates conditions where students become actively engaged, it is more likely that increased student success will occur as a result of the effort." In addition to supporting student learning gains, site-based professional development activities can also help students meet their goal of being "contributing member(s) of the community, where they are giving as well as receiving" (Rosen, 2006). Learner involvement in the professional development of teachers can take many forms. Students can lead discussions between students and teachers, help structure and facilitate workshops, or help generate examples of student work for teachers to read and respond to. Student participation in site-based professional development activities should never be solely for the benefit of teachers or administrators. Students themselves should experience these activities as a chance for growth and learning and should feel like equal partners in the inquiry and dialogue. Including students as members of the learning community means recognizing their strengths and validating the resources they bring with them into adult education programs.

By drawing on the experiences and skills of adult learners, teachers, and administrators, agencies can create site-based professional development plans that speak to local needs and strengths. Just as important, however, is the way that site-based professional development can expand the nature and membership of the learning community itself. Indeed, the ongoing dialogue of all stakeholders has been found to be essential for changing school cultures and teacher practice (Sabatini, 2000).

References

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WHAT'S THE WORD?

The Field Speaks

This column features articles from our readers who share their experiences, ideas, and success stories related to professional development. CALPROgress invites readers' comments and suggestions. You are invited to send your articles by mail to CALPRO, 2880 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite #220, Sacramento, CA 95833, by fax to 916-286-8840, or by e-mail to ejacobson@air.org.

The STAR Project: Assessment and Instruction

Vallejo Adult School is a pilot site for the Student Achievement in Reading (STAR) project, sponsored by the United States Office of Vocational and Adult Education and the California Department of Education. As part of the STAR project, students are assessed in alphabets, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Teachers then review assessment results to group students and plan instruction. Assessments are reviewed and instructional strategies are adjusted on an ongoing basis. By connecting instructional strategies to assessments, instructors are better able to assist and motivate students. This accelerates the learning process and improves overall test scores.

At our school, assessments indicated that the majority of our adult population did not need further assistance with phonemic recognition. We also found that students within single classrooms had different levels of comprehension, and we decided that differentiated instruction was necessary to meet individual students' needs. Differentiation within a classroom can be achieved several ways. One way is to provide all students with the same instructional materials while using a variety of instructional strategies for individual students. Another way is to use one instructional strategy with all students while providing each student with instructional materials that best match their skill level. Our experience indicates that, when we teach one strategy using different curricular materials, students participate more than they do in the traditional classroom. Assessments help us choose appropriate materials for each student.

We also restructured classes by creating new groups. Two days each week for a one-hour time block, intermediate ABE students work in three groups: those with CASAS scores in the 196 to 222 range; those with CASAS scores in the 223 to 235 range; and those with scores above 236. Learners in the highest group meet with the GED instructor for intensive writing instruction.

We are committed to the concept of differentiated instruction and believe that the STAR Project will allow us to facilitate student success and increase student desire for lifelong learning through the use of ongoing assessment coupled with effective teaching strategies.

*Michelle Winnett
Shawn Geise
Vallejo Adult Education*

Field-based Research Project

As a participant in CALPRO's Field-based Research Initiative on Learner Persistence, I have learned how to frame research questions and how to match those questions with appropriate data collection methods (e.g., interviewing techniques and observational methods). This training gave me a good framework with which to try out an idea that had been percolating for quite some time. As the counselor at our adult school, it is my job to do the initial intake and placement of students into the high school diploma and GED program. The coordinator of our learning lab and I have always talked about the 'black hole' into which many of our students seem to disappear after they have signed up for class. I often wondered what would happen if we required new students to take an introduction to the high school program class before they began their studies. This became the focus of my research project on learner persistence.

I used to see students individually and then place them immediately into either a credit class or sign them up for a GED placement test. I now see them briefly for an initial meeting to determine their needs, and then refer them to a six-hour orientation class. The content of the class covers topics such as practical information about the school, goal setting, time management, personal strengths evaluations, stress reduction techniques, test taking, note taking, and study skills. Because our high school program is set in an individualized learning environment, providing students the opportunity to get to know each other in a small, informal setting is also an important component of the class. In setting up the schedule, I tried not to make anyone wait more than two weeks to get started in the program, so I schedule orientation either two mornings a week or two evenings a week for three hours at a time, alternating day and evening classes every other week.

I am at the early stages of this study, and so far the results have been mixed. The students who attend the orientation classes are providing positive reviews of the content and experience. In the first two orientations, approximately 50 percent of students who attended the first three-hour class returned to take the final three-hour class. As with the general adult school population, life just sometimes gets in the way: some students have reported either work or medical issues as the reason for not finishing the orientation. I will interview a sampling of students after they have been in the program for five weeks and, based on the information they provide, will make changes in the format and/or content of the orientation to meet the needs of our ever-changing student population.

*Nicki McBreen
Culver City Adult School*



Research-to-Practice

Bridging the Gap Between Research and Classroom Practice for Adult Learners and Educators

The CALPRO Research-to-Practice Initiative is designed to help practitioners access, analyze, and use promising research in adult education. In addition to CALPRO-sponsored activities such as the Field-based Research Initiative (see p. 1) and study circles on learner persistence (see p. 2), CALPRO also participates in several collaborative projects.

Working with the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL), CALPRO supported two California teachers' participation in the Northwest Practitioner Knowledge Institute (NWPKI). One goal of this project was to have teachers conduct classroom inquiry projects based on the results of research conducted at NCSALL's ESOL Lab School at Portland State University. NCSALL has made the results of this work available on its Web site (*Practitioner Research, Practitioner Knowledge*, <http://www.ncsall.net/?id=967>). In addition, CALPRO has published *The Northwest Practitioner Knowledge Institute: Reports and Resources*. This publication is available at local PDCs and online.

CALPRO also is supporting California programs that are pilot sites for the federally sponsored Student Achievement in Reading (STAR) Project. More information about this project is available at the STAR Project Web site:

<http://www.startoolkit.org/index.html>

LPRP CONNECTIONS

Join the CALPRO-hosted Literacy Practice, Research, and Policy Connections electronic discussion list.

To subscribe, send an email message to

join-lprpconnections@lists.scoe.net.

Leave the body of the email message blank.

CALPRO Research-to-Practice Publications

CALPRO publishes a series of research-to-practice publications in three different formats: Research Digests, Research Summaries, and Research Bibliographies. CALPRO has also developed a discussion guide to support focused conversations on the topics that the publications cover. Look for the two newest CALPRO research-to-practice publications:

- *Distance Education and E-Learning: New Options for Adult Basic and English Language Education* (Research Digest)
- *Research on Adult Numeracy Practice* (Research Bibliography)

All CALPRO publications are available at local Professional Development Centers and online at <http://www.calpro-online.org/pubs.asp>.



Calendar of Upcoming Events



- May 4 - 6** CCAE Conference (<http://www.ccaestate.org>)
- June 13 - 15** CASAS Summer Institute (<http://www.casas.org>)
- Sept. 27 - 29** ACSA Adult Education Training (<http://www.acsa.org>)
- Nov. 30 - Dec. 2** Meeting of the Minds Symposium II (<http://www.calpro-online.org> or <http://www.researchtopractice.org>)

RESOURCE CORNER

The Adult Literacy Education Wiki

A Web site Devoted to Sharing Research and Practitioner Wisdom
http://wiki.literacytent.org/index.php/Main_Page

Goals and Self-Efficacy in Persistence

A National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy Seminar Guide
http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/self-efficacy_role.pdf

Practitioner Research, Practitioner Knowledge

A Collection of Reports from Practitioner Research Projects
<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=967>

Teaching Adults to Read

The World Education Approach to Adult Literacy Program Design
http://www.worlded.org/docs/publications/teaching_adults_to_read.pdf

Teaching Reading to Adult English Language Learners:

A Reading Instruction Staff Development Program
Developed by the Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools Adult ESOL Program and the Center for Applied Linguistics
<http://www.valrc.org/publications/pdf/teachingreading.pdf>

This newsletter is published twice a year by CALPRO. We welcome comments and submissions of noteworthy items related to professional development in adult education and literacy.

Contact Erik Jacobson at ejacobson@air.org, or call 916-286-8805.



CALPRO Director thanks Nancy Brooks for her years of service to CALPRO's Professional Advisory Board