



Newsletter Issue #15, July 11, 2016

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ALADIN at UNESCO

There are few if any collections in adult education and literacy as comprehensive as that provided by the [UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning](#) (UIL). UIL has for some time operated an extensive lifelong learning research and publications program, including work in adult education (broadly defined as all of the basic skills) and in "literacy" (defined as reading and writing). UIL has a staff of 50 people from some 26 countries and is directed by Arne Carlsen of Denmark. Its 12-member governing board includes Benita Somerfield of the U.S., who currently serves as the vice chair. Ms. Somerfield was a key player in enactment of the National Institute for Literacy and the founding president of the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy.

Through the UIL library, a worldwide variety of research reports, guides, infographics, curricular materials, the NEXUS newsletter, UIL's Journal of Lifelong Learning, and other resources are available. Professionals in the U.S.

and other member countries will benefit from following UIL's work and tapping into its vast collection.

As part of international outreach, UIL maintains an online service called [ALADIN](#) (Adult Learning and Document Information Network). The service began operating in 1997. Its [Alert](#) series, started in November 2014, discusses recent activities and new publications as they become available. (The Online Alert system was just redesigned to improve its mobile, website, and e-mail accessibility.) ALADIN is a network of some 103 documentation centers based in 49 countries around the world. Services are provided to help strengthen the documentation capacity of staff in the participating centers, including materials at the [ALADIN Toolkit website](#). ALADIN's ongoing work is under the coordinating hand of UIL's Head of Documentation, Lisa Krolak.

On July 5th, ALADIN announced Online Alert #10. It features 16 new publications--including materials from OECD, the International Literacy Association, Alumniportal Deutschland, and 13 other European and North American sources. Some are related to the PIAAC Assessment. To illustrate the variety of topics and sources, four of the current items are highlighted below. All 16 resources can be found in their entirety [HERE](#), as can back issues of the Alert.

1. ***EPALE LongReads: What happened when funding for health literacy in Canada dried up?*** – 7/4/2016, Linda Shohet, for the *European Commission*. In this article, the distinguished Ms. Shohet, head of Canada's internationally recognized Centre for Literacy for more than 25 years, writes about one of her specialty areas, health literacy in Canada. Unfortunately, the Canadian government defunded the highly accomplished Centre in mid-2015. Ms. Shohet discusses how health literacy flourished in Canada for so many years as well as the forces that led to its closure. She assesses the momentum lost because of the closure and considers the future of Canadian health literacy. [Note: EPAL=Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe]
2. ***Infographics: Illiteracy Worldwide*** – 4/20/2016, Alumniportal *Deutschland*. This 5-page full-color infographic is filled with statistics on the scope and nature of "functional illiteracy" around the world. It indicates that 781 million adults worldwide lack basic reading and writing skills. Two thirds of these low-literacy adults are women. Ten

countries account for about two-thirds, or 500 million, of those with poor reading and writing skills. About half of them are located in India. Arab states have made the most progress in the past 20 years. And, not surprisingly, the biggest obstacle to addressing the need is lack of funding. The document indicates a financing gap of about 22 billion U.S. dollars every year, for reading and writing alone (i.e., not counting all of the basic skills reported on in PIAAC and embraced by adult education today).

3. ***What does low proficiency in literacy really mean?*** – March 2016, *Adult Skills in Focus #2, from OECD's Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC), A. Grotluschen et al, Working Paper No. 131, OECD Publishing.* This short analytical article asks "what kinds of reading skills do adults who performed at the lowest levels (Level 1 and below) in the (PIAAC) survey possess?" The analysis concludes that adults with lowest proficiency (below Level 1) struggle to understand sentence processing tasks. They complete passage-comprehension tasks correctly only 68% of the time (and take significantly longer to do it) compared to 84% for those scoring at PIAAC Level 1. The U.S. has the lowest percent of correct answers in passage-comprehension tasks in the comparison group of 20 countries, well below the OECD average. The article also looks at variations in proficiency between native and non-native speakers. It concludes that countries should target populations with poor reading skills and take account of their performance differences in designing programs.

4. ***What does age have to do with skills proficiency?*** – April 2016, *Adult Skills in Focus #3, from the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC), M. Paccagnella, OECD Working Paper No. 132, OECD Publishing.* This document reports three major findings: (1) Adults aged 55 to 65 are less proficient in literacy and numeracy than adults aged 25–34 (and proficiency often declines with age); (2) Differences in age-related skills proficiency vary widely across countries; and (3) Older adults who are less proficient than younger adults do no worse, and often do better, in labor market outcomes. This study reinforces findings of other recent research, that older adults need to use their skills or risk losing them. One figure in the report shows comparatively by country how each year of retirement affects literacy proficiency, presumably because people in retirement have fewer opportunities or incentives to practice their skills. The article proposes two measures to counter this phenomenon, all the

more important in our information-processing age: (1) make sure that students leave their initial schooling with a basic set of skills they can build on as they age; and (2) provide more work and job-retraining opportunities for older adults so that they can stay in the workforce longer, retain their skills, and acquire new ones. This can only benefit the economies of member nations.

We urge our readers to visit the [UIL website](#) to explore its programs, activities, and goals and to access its vast accumulation of reports and guides. It should be noted that ALADIN also operates an e-mail listserv to foster international discussion and information sharing. To join the listserv, send your email addressed to Lisa Krolak at the [UIL Library](#). To post a message to the Listserv membership send your email [HERE](#).

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NEWS IN BRIEF



The **American Correction Association's 146th Congress** will be held in Boston from August 5–6. A wide variety of workshops are scheduled that will interest adult educators and planners, including ***College in Prison: New Opportunities Made Possible Through the Second Chance Pell Pilot Program*** ([of the U.S. Department of Education](#)). Lul Tesfai, Director of Policy at OCTAE, will be one of the conference speakers. Stephen Steurer, former executive director of the Correctional Education Association and now Reentry/Education Advocate for [CURE](#), will present a paper at the conference discussing reentry correctional education and in particular the importance of Pell grants to the short-term incarcerated. The report will be publicly available in late August through [ASCA](#) (the Association of State Correctional Administrators). For more information about the agenda and to register, go [HERE](#).



Wiggio provides a new base for the AAACE–NLA Discussion List. The LINC discussion lists were created by the National Institute for Literacy back in 1995, under the direction of Jaleh Soloui, now director of the PIAAC program based at the American Institutes for Research. In 2010, the lists were shifted over to OVAE (now OCTAE) at the Department of Education. The Department was prohibited at the time from operating a listserv focused on advocacy, but it promoted the National Literacy Advocacy (NLA) list established and moderated by David Rosen. (For readers interested in NIFL's archived material, click [HERE](#).) The NLA listserv could accommodate active public policy and advocacy discussions. In 2003, the American Association of Adult and Continuing Education assumed the role of hosting the NLA listserv. From then until June 30, 2016, it continued under the excellent voluntary moderation of David Collings. **On July 1st the list migrated over to a new base at Wiggio** due to the closure of AAACE's literacy.tent platform. Its voluntary moderator, at least for a time, will again be literacy advocate David Rosen. The AAACE continues to sponsor the group and cover its nominal operating costs. AAACE–NLA subscribers and others interested in joining the Wiggio group (AAACE–NLA Wiggio) are urged to send the following information to djrosen1@comcast.net: *full name, job title, agency/organization/or program, state, and preferred email address for Wiggio posts*. Subscribers who are members of the AAACE are asked to indicate that, although this is not a requirement for AAACE–NLA Wiggio group membership. Once this information is submitted and verified, Mr. Rosen will extend a

formal invitation to join and provide basic tips on how to navigate and interact in the new Wiggio environment. This online group offers many services: e.g., posting information, holding threaded discussions, storing certain kinds of documents, and listing group events.



On the federal legislative front: (1) passage of the **Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act** (to reauthorize the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act) is pending in the House (H.R.5587). On June 28th, the House Education and Workforce Committee issued a Fact Sheet on CTE, available [HERE](#), which provides a link to a detailed summary of the bill. Level funding is recommended for Adult Education for 2017, at the 2016 levels of \$581,955,000 for State Grants and \$13,712,000 for National Leadership activities. Letters were submitted to the HEWC Committee leaders by both [CLASP](#) and the [National Skills Coalition](#). CLASP expressed concern about the proposed rollback in state accountability and a reduction in required state Maintenance of Effort funding, largely because of the impact these steps would have on low-income students. NSC's letter offers more than a dozen recommendations on ways to strengthen the alignment between the Act and other federal, state, and local skills programs. Concerns in both letters had to do with substantive provisions in Perkins rather than funding per se. (2) Also pending in Congress is the **FY2017 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill**. The Senate version was approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee on June 9th, with WIOA reductions of about \$73.8 million. Level funding was recommended for Adult Education for 2017, at the 2016 levels. House consideration of its own appropriations bill could begin as early as July 13. See [analysis of the House bill and its provisions](#) by the National Skills Coalition. Also, to see the letter issued by the Campaign to Invest in America's Workforce (being posted as this newsletter goes to press, go [HERE](#). The Senate version sets the maximum Pell award at \$5,935 for 2017–2018 and restores Pell to a year-round program. As of now, it is unclear what the final House provisions will be.



A new study (June 2016) by the **Center for Education Policy Analysis at Stanford University** assesses the long-term investment benefits of California's merit grant aid programs designed to increase college degree enrollment and completion. Four researchers from Stanford, Dartmouth, and

the U.S. Department of Treasury wrote the paper, titled [*The Long Run Impacts of Merit Aid: Evidence from California's Cal Grant*](#). (The California Cal Grant program is one of the nation's largest and most highly funded state merit aid programs.) The report notes that the U.S. "has gone from being the world leader in the percentage of high school students that go on to graduate with a B.A. or other four-year-college degree to ranking 19th in the world." Yet, it points out, "the Obama Administration, state governments, and policymakers at all levels have prioritized increasing college enrollment and completion to improve U.S. competitiveness and to reduce income inequalities." Need- and merit-based financial aid programs are one way to increase college enrollment and success, and this research from Stanford is among the first to be carried out with respect to long-term ROI. The study tracked students for more than 15 years after college enrollment and uses a broader set of outcomes than has been possible before. It places a special focus on students "at the income discontinuity," those with low and/or irregular incomes whose opportunities for education are limited. The findings show many important benefits for students "at the income discontinuity." For this group, the study found that: attendance at four-year private institutions increased 5.7 percent; graduation rates improved 4.6 percent; and students aged 28-32 were more likely to live in California as a result of being eligible for Cal Grant support. The probability of "discontinuity" students earning a Bachelor's or graduate degree increased significantly, and earnings increased by 4.7 percent for the 28-32 age group.



[**Business Leaders United for Workforce Partnership**](#) (BLU) is a collaboration involving the National Skills Coalition (NSC), National Workforce Solutions, and Skills to Americas Future (with Joyce and Lumina Foundation funding). It is directed by Scott Ellsworth of NSC. BLU recently reported in "***The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act***" of its new [Policies that Work](#) series a mismatch of supply and demand in middle-skill jobs. These jobs account for about 54% of the U.S. labor market, but, according to BLU, only 44 percent of American workers are trained to a level adequate for middle-skill jobs, with the result that businesses and state and local economies are adversely affected. High skilled jobs draw on a highly-skilled labor pool slightly larger than it needs, and so do low-skilled jobs. BLU views WIOA as a major new avenue of opportunity for employers and those who "understand that smart workforce investment decisions can only be made when businesses themselves are deeply engaged." The group advocates for

expanding and building effective sector partnerships through increased local and state support. It favors more credentialing and accountability. And it calls for "upskilling" both incumbent and new workers. Go to the link above to access the two [Policies that Work](#) publications issued to date, the one cited here and another having to do with making Pell Grants work better for workers and businesses.



A new report from the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), by Elizabeth Lower-Basch and Stephanie Schmit, analyzes the affect of poverty and related variables on children and their subsequent welfare and learning outcomes. [TANF and the First Year of Life: Making a Difference at a Pivotal Moment](#) concludes that intergenerational interventions and programs are needed to effectively address this problem. The report considers WIOA to be an opportunity to advance such programming through TANF. TANF workforce development programs should be rethought, it says, in light of labor market conditions and best practices, and TANF should provide for services in adult basic education to parents with low literacy and basic skills.



In 1966, the Coleman report, "***Equality of Educational Opportunity***," was issued to Congress, prompting all kinds of corrective action. This comprehensive highly influential report analyzed in great detail disparities between white and black students in public schools across America. Staff at **Education Week** recently revisited the report to compare the results of 50 years ago with what is currently known about the variables reported on: school segregation, student testing, motivation and mindset (what students believe they can achieve), college enrollment, and composition of the teaching force. The findings show both progress and persistent gaps. One of the more positive findings is that college enrollment for blacks has increased substantially. To view all of the findings, click [HERE](#).



On June 24th, the **U.S. Department of Education announced the participants in its Second Chance Pell pilot program**. This program is part of a larger Department effort "to promote alternatives to incarceration and eliminate unnecessary barriers to reentry." Some 27 colleges and universities will enroll 12,000 incarcerated students in postsecondary education and training programs. Eligible students are those likely to be in

relatively short-term confinement. The pilot program aims to see whether participation in high quality education programs will increase for this population group as a result of expanded access to financial aid. For more information, click [HERE](#).



The **Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers** recently reported that students who took the 2014-15 common core PARCC exams tended to score lower when the tests were taken online by computer rather than by paper and pencil. The outcome has large implications for the validity of the test results and for state planning. More than 80% of about 5 million students assessed in the first round testing took the exams by computer. Various steps are being considered across the states to remedy the problem. To access the article at [Education Week](#), click [HERE](#). Otherwise, google the title for other coverage.



On June 23rd, the **U.S. Department of Labor** announced the second phase of its \$90 million **program to expand registered apprenticeship programs**. In this program, workers from all backgrounds can acquire skills and knowledge needed to qualify for good jobs. Some 33 grants ranging from \$700,000 to \$3.2 million will be made for a total of \$50.5 million. States are the eligible applicants; applications are due by Sept. 7, 2016. Adult education programs may wish to reach out to be included in their states' applications. Eligibility criteria and other application information can be reviewed [HERE](#).



[***Realizing Innovation and Opportunity in WIOA: Implementing the Playbook for Creating Effective State Plans***](#) (July 2016) has just been issued by the **National Skills Coalition** (NSC). Following up on its April 2015 recommendations for creating state plans under WIOA (see [HERE](#)), this new NSC brief by Brooke DeRenzis and Bryan Wilson discusses how the states have implemented their various recommended state plan elements--i.e., broad stakeholder involvement, strategies to address the needs of middle-skill workers, sector partnerships, adult education, career pathways, use of industry-recognized credentials, comprehensive and coordinated data systems, and investing in training and education connected to jobs. All 50 states plans (submitted to the federal government by April 2016) were

reviewed by NSC. Among the findings are that 14 include TANF, nine include SNAP E&T, and six include the Perkins Career and Technical Education program. Fourteen states are profiled in depth to illustrate the range and depth of state planning: AR, CA, CO, GA, MA, MD, MN, MO, MS, NJ, OH, PA, RI, and WA.



The **Center for Adult Literacy at Georgia State University**, under the direction of Daphne Greenberg, maintains a **large collection of materials at 3rd to 8th–grade reading levels**, assessed by CAL according to various criteria including readability. The collection is organized into three sections, for adult learners, teachers, and researchers. For more information and to access the materials, go [HERE](#).

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OTHER RESOURCES & EVENTS



Webinars, Conferences, Other Events

- **The National College Transition Network at World Education** – The 10th annual national conference on *Effective Transitions in Adult Education* will be held November 14–16, 2016 in Providence, RI. Workshop themes include foundational skills, acceleration strategies, career pathways and workforce development, collaborations and partnerships, college and career readiness standards, ESL, correctional education, advising and other

support services, and technology integration. For more information and to sign up, go [HERE](#).

- **Workforce GPS – WIOA at Year Two: Continuing the Conversation** is a webinar scheduled for July 19th at 3pm EST, lasting about an hour. The event will celebrate the two-year anniversary of WIOA's enactment, answer questions about "the public workforce and education systems on the final rule (questions may be submitted until July 12), and give an overview of what training and technical assistance will soon be available. The webinar will be moderated by Gerri Fiala, Deputy Assistant Secretary of ETA at the Department of Labor. It will feature five top officials from the Departments of HHS, Education, and Labor, including Johan Uvin of Education. Go [HERE](#) for more information and to register.
- **National Skills Coalition** – Three webinars are scheduled between July 12 and August 9: (1) *Unpacking the WIOA Final Rules* (July 12), (2) *Federal Workforce Policy: Mid-Year Update*, a sharing of updates on FY2017 appropriations, apprenticeship, and other federal investments (July 26), and (3) *What WIOA Regulations Mean for Immigrants: A Practical Overview* (Aug. 9). Go [HERE](#) for information and to register.
- **CLASP** – This webinar focuses on *Credit Where Credit's Due: How Credly is helping build a digital credential economy*, July 13th. Go [HERE](#).
- **Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL)** – (1) Several CAL Summer Institutes in professional development are scheduled for July, August, and beyond. Go [HERE](#) for the schedule and to register. (2) In cooperation with WIDA, CAL will carry out the second of two collaborative symposia (from August 18–19 in Madison, WI) to promote *Spanish language development for emergent bilinguals*. Go [HERE](#).

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From the American Youth Policy Forum – (1) [Can Employer Investment Narrow the Soft Skills Gap?](#), by Carinne Deeds, Policy Associate, May 2016. This short article considers whether employer investments in skills upgrading are worthwhile and concludes that in the opinion of many industry leaders they are, even though they require more focus on long-term learning and improvement. (2) A recent **Forum for Thought Blog** by Betsy Brand and

Jenny Tomasell discusses [Ways CBE Supports At-Risk Youth](#), the target population being some 2.6 million young people aged 16–24.



From Civic Enterprises and Hart Research Associates – [Hidden in Plain Sight: Homeless Students in America's Public Schools](#), by Erin Ingram, John Bridgeland, Bruce Reed, and Matthew Atwell, examines the phenomenon of student homelessness, a still "invisible and extremely disruptive problem" in America. The report, part of the Grad Nation campaign, indicates that the number of homeless students in our nation's public schools has risen since 2006, to over 1.3 million in 2013–14. It challenges states, schools, and community institutions and agencies across the nation to identify and reach out to these students with school completion programs and further education opportunities that will put them on a path to college, good jobs, and successful futures.



From the OECD Library – [The Effects of Vocational Education on Adult Skills and Wages: What Can We Learn from PIAAC?](#) This highly statistical working paper (102 pp.), by Gioraio Brunello and Lorenzo Rocco, is part of OECD's Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) work.



From the American Institutes for Research (PIAAC) -- (1) Seven new reports have been issued in 2016 relating to PIAAC. Among these are *Adults with Low Proficiency in Literacy or Numeracy* (an OECD working paper) and *Examining Associations between Health Information Seeking Behavior and Adult Education Status in the U.S.: An Analysis of the 2012 PIAAC Data*. For these and other PIAAC reports, go [HERE](#) (also see feature article above). (2) PIAAC has presentations scheduled in seven different conference settings from August 1st through the end of 2016 (go [HERE](#) to see Upcoming PIAAC Events). (3) **The Buzz**, AIR's periodic newsletter update, provides news about domestic and international activities in PIAAC. To access the June 17th and earlier issues and/or to subscribe, go [HERE](#).



From the National Center for Families Learning – A recent issue of the NCFL newsletter cites three reports related to dual language learning and teaching, and how programming for refugees, who come from a diversity of cultures and educational backgrounds, should not follow the patterns used for

mainstream students. To access the publications, click on the following titles:

(1) [Report: Early childhood education programs key to success of dual language learners](#); (2) [How students from non-English-speaking backgrounds learn to read and write in different ways](#); and (3) [The benefits of teaching in two languages](#).



From the **Annie E. Casey Foundation** – [The 2016 KIDS COUNT Data Book](#) (June 21, 2016) reports on key trends in child well-being across the states, with national and comparative state rankings provided in terms of economic well-being, education, health, and family and community. Individual state profiles can be downloaded. The report is chock full of easy-to-navigate graphs and tables. Although Casey calls for stronger government action to address significant challenges across the country, it finds, among many other positive trends, that a record number of teens are making positive life and education choices.



From the **National Skills Coalition** -- [Upskilling the New American Workforce: Demand-Driven Programs that Foster Immigrant Worker Success & Policies that Can Take Them to Scale](#), by Amanda Bergson-Shilcock (June 2016) is the result of a project funded by the Annie E. Casey and Ford Foundations. The report's key aim is to "shine a spotlight on parts of the immigrant integration and adult education/workforce development systems that are working well." Another aim is to provide information about key federal and state policies "that can be used to sustain (exemplary) programs, replicate them, and take them to scale." The paper discusses in detail seven programs in Seattle, NYC, California, and Minnesota to illustrate the possibilities.



From **Various Health Literacy Sources** – (1) [Why Healthy Communities Need Adult Basic Education](#), Open Door Collective, July 2016; (2) [Various Plain Language tutorials and how-to tools in health literacy](#) are available from the Center for Disease Control; (3) [Easy-to-read print materials and videos for new mothers](#), March of Dimes; (4) [Diabetes patient education materials in video format for low-skilled adults](#), Healthy Roads Media; (5) Six Spanish readability formulas in [Readability Studio 2015](#), by Oleander Solutions; and (6) [Plain Language videos for patients and caregivers](#) (about 3 minutes each) on a variety of complex topics (e.g., hospice, community care, dementia, caregiver stress, DNR orders), Princeton

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