



Newsletter Issue #4, July 6, 2015

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Huntington Foliage VI - 2013
Rebirth in Brooklyn
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BACK TO THE FUTURE: Voices from the Field On XPRIZE

The last issue of the NCAL E-News carried a [feature article about the Barbara Bush Foundation XPRIZE in Adult Literacy Award](#), including a timetable of activities between the June 2015 start date and project completion in June 2019. Subsequent to that issue, NCAL invited a small group of state and national leaders to share with the field their hopes for and concerns about the XPRIZE and to give any advice they'd care to offer to the initiative planners.

Their views are given in NCAL's first Blog, *XPRIZE: BACK TO THE FUTURE*. The Blog can be accessed at <http://www.ncalamerica.org/blog>. Readers who are passionate about service to the lowest-skilled adult learners will find the Blog of interest.



PIAAC KEEPS ON GIVING

[Adults, Computers and Problem Solving: What's the Problem?](#) was released on June 23rd (192 pp.) by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development as part of its PIAAC-related OECD Skills Series. The study digs deeper into an analysis of the PIAAC's assessment of "problem solving in a technology rich environment." It addresses the increasing, indeed already essential, importance of computers and ICT (information and communications technology) for problem-solving in the 21st century. It focuses on adults' capacity to manage and solve problems at work and in everyday life using ICT devices for email, spreadsheets, and other applications. Among the findings reported are that only one in three adults is highly proficient in ICT, that younger adults aged 16–24 and people with higher levels of education are more likely to have some computer skills (although experience with computers is unrelated to literacy proficiency), that adults scoring at highest levels of proficiency in technology-rich environments are more likely to be in the labor force and to earn more than their less skilled peers, and that the capacity to navigate and the extent of ICT use varies across countries surveyed.

Among the report's recommendations is that governments should develop policies and programs that will improve access to and use of ICT. OECD also urges governments to "consider their population's proficiency in solving problems using ICT" when they provide services via email and the internet; they ask them to make their websites for the general public more user-

friendly. The report is loaded with figures, tables, and country-by-country comparisons, including rankings for the U.S.

Also new from OECD is [OECD Skills Outlook 2015: Youth, Skills and Employability](#) (May 2015). This report presents findings that reveal an "unacceptable waste of human potential" among OECD member countries. OECD recommends numerous corrective measures, including adopting programs and policies that ensure that people will leave school with relevant skills, that help school leavers enter the labor market, and that break down barriers to youth employment.

Finally, the PIAAC website operated by the American Institutes for Research has posted several PIAAC-related conferences through October 2015. AIR is also now offering a PIAAC Distance Learning Dataset Training service. This and other information can be accessed at www.piaacgateway.com.



NEWS IN BRIEF



LINCS Discussion of Online Portfolios and Micro-Credentials.

The LINCS Technology and Learning listserv, moderated by David Rosen, will host a weeklong discussion of this topic beginning July 13th. Examples of digital badges for both will be given. Among the guest discussants will be Jeff Carter (formerly of Digital Promise, now Executive Director of NCSDAE), Branka Marceta (Coordinator of OTAN's Technology Projects), and CLASP's Judy Mortrude (former Minnesota state ABE program administrator). Sharon Ram (ESL and distance learning digital badges in California) and Jen Vanek of Minnesota Literacy Council (digital badges for the Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment) will also take part. To join the listserv and this discussion, go to <http://lincs.ed.gov>, select Join the Community, select Log In/Register, choose Register for a New Account, and follow the instructions given. Once notified

of your registration approval (usually a couple of days), go to <https://community.lincs.ed.gov> and access the "Technology and Learning" group by logging in with your email address and password.



Local Programs As Advocates for Adult Education. A discussion on the [AAACE adult education policy-oriented listserv](#) this past week focused on the desire for local service providers to take a more active role in advancing the priorities and funding for Adult Education across the country. NCAL suggested that interested local leaders should be sure to connect to their state planning organizations so that a common message is conveyed to their legislators. We also suggested that for an understanding of national context, new advocates might want to revisit (1) the still relevant and influential report of the National Commission on Adult Literacy; (2) two update reports to the data in the Commission's report by Andrew Sum and his associates at the Center for Labor Market Studies; and (3) the Adult Education & Economic Growth Act (AEEGA) for its comprehensive approach to addressing the challenges of adult education and workforce skills development. Many of the AEEGA's provisions are now imbedded in WIOA, others are still being worked on. The documents are (1) [Reach Higher, America](#); (2) [Net Annual Fiscal Contributions of US Adults Aged 18-64 by Education Attainment, 2009-2012](#) (January 2014), and [Labor Market Experiences, Earnings, Income Inadequacy Problems, and Civic Behavior of U.S. Adults by Educational Attainment: Consequences for Adult Education Programs](#) (February 2014); and (3) [AEEGA HR.3697](#).



More Setbacks in Congressional Funding. Adult Education and Workforce Skills Development will both be damaged by recent Congressional action, a by-product of sequestering. Two excellent but sobering new articles from the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) speak in detail about the harm that will be done to programs serving low-income students and at-risk Americans as a result of regressive House and Senate bills to fund the U.S. Departments of Labor, HHS, and Education in FY2016. Among the programs that will be severely affected are WIOA, Federal Work-Study, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, and the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. The two CLASP articles are (1) [Senate Appropriations Bill Reduces Funding for Education and Training Programs Critical for Low-Income Students](#), and (2) [A House Labor/HHS Funding Bill That Fails to Meet the Nation's Needs](#). Strong advocacy to reverse the gross Congressional

underfunding of these essential programs has never been more important.



OTHER REPORTS & RESOURCES



From JOBS FOR THE FUTURE – [Lessons Learned from Accelerating Opportunity](#) highlights lessons learned by Jobs for the Future and its partners in its ground-breaking Accelerating Opportunity program. A related evaluation report was also released recently by the Urban and Aspen Institutes: [The Second Year of Accelerating Opportunity: Implementation Findings from the States and Colleges](#).



From PEW RESEARCH CENTER – [Americans' Internet Access 2000–2015](#), by Andrew Perrin and Maeve Duggan, June 26. Among its findings are that 84% of American adults use the internet...young adults are most likely to use the internet, but seniors show faster adoption rates...and less-educated, lower income, and rural adults have a lower internet usage rate than higher level earners, college graduates, and urban/suburban dwellers. Pew began studying internet adoption in 2000 and has since conducted dozens of national surveys on this topic.



From US DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES – [Emerging Instructional Models and Strategies for Adult Basic Learners – Archived Webinar](#) (May 2015) showcases innovative approaches to adult basic skills education generally (Meredith Larson and Heidi Silver-Pacuilla) as well as innovative basic skills strategies for healthcare training programs (Julie Strawn). Also check out the [HPOG Blog: Supporting Struggling Students with Emerging Models of Basic Skills Instruction](#), by Heidi Silver-Pacuilla (June 11, 2015).



From KRATOS LEARNING – Kratos Learning Career Pathways Exchange maintains a Digest of activities and publications in adult education and training. To subscribe to the Digest, email your request to info@kratoslearning.com.

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