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Editor's Corner

Happy New Year! This issue's articles should get your brain in gear for successful classes in 2019.

It’s no secret that health careers are in demand. In fact, health care occupations are projected to grow more than any other occupation category in the coming years, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The first article will help your students prepare for those opportunities with an excerpt from the Florida Literacy Coalition’s Health Careers: Finding Entry-Level Jobs in Health Care. The information from the guide can be broadly applied around the U.S., and we are sure you will find our excerpt from it useful.

With all types of natural disasters happening around the world, one phenomenon that could affect almost any area is flooding. Our article “Preparing for Floods” helps students, particularly lower-level English language learners, better prepare for potential flooding. We also have information in the story about the flooding experience that one program in North Carolina recently faced after Hurricane Florence.

Next up is a professional development article about Irlen syndrome, a lesser known learning problem that can negatively affect reading and learning. Many adults with it are misdiagnosed with ADD, dyslexia, or another learning disorder. Find out what Irlen syndrome is and how you can help students get screened.

Our reading article this issue focuses on the use of a graphic organizer that help students with academic reading and writing. Knowing how to use these organizers is particularly important for students preparing for high school equivalency exams. If you’re not already familiar with the Both Sides Now organizer, check out our article.

Exploring Resources is full of resources from both ProLiteracy and New Readers Press, including information about online learning options from New Readers Press and Education Network.

Finally, our Tutor Profile this issue shares how an Ohio instructor’s love of reading inspired the formation of a beloved book club.

Please stay in touch with your story suggestions. Email us directly at notebookeditor@proliteracy.org.

—The Editor

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Introducing Students to Health Careers

Purpose
To offer instructors and students a resource that introduces health careers.

Rationale
As the U.S. population ages, jobs in health care have become some of the most sought-after positions. In fact, the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics projected employment in health care to grow 18% from 2016 to 2026. There will be more jobs added to health care than any other occupational group.

For some students, a career in health care can be a great opportunity to help others. A new resource from the Florida Literacy Coalition, *Health Careers: A Guide to Finding Entry-Level Jobs in Health Care*, can prepare intermediate and advanced learners for health care jobs. The 32-page guide covers how to prepare for a health care career and provides information about jobs in four categories. The Florida Literacy Coalition has the guide available electronically in black-and-white or color, and it has a Teacher’s Guide (see link in sidebar).

The lesson shared here focuses on the first two pages of the guide. This lesson would work well during a class focused on health or jobs. We encourage readers to review the guide online and find other ways to use it in class. Although the guide has some Florida-specific details, most of the information can be widely applied throughout the U.S.

The Basic Activity
1. **Review the reading on pages 5 and 6 of this issue.** Have enough copies of these pages available for everyone in class.
2. **Ask students to think about the last time they went to the doctor’s office or a hospital for themselves or for a loved one.** Ask them to brainstorm what kinds of jobs were at that doctor’s office/medical center. Make a list on the board. Add to the list by discussing with students other types of health care jobs. Next, ask: “Would you want to have a health care job?” Discuss answers. Encourage students to be as specific as possible.
3. **Let students know they will complete a reading on health care jobs.** State that health care jobs are very popular right now and will continue to be popular in the future. See if students can guess why this is true (for example, there are many people aging who need to see more doctors).
4. **Review the reading in the usual format followed in class.** While

More Information

**Health Careers**
https://floridaliteracy.org/health_literacy_careersguide.html
This page has the link to both the black-and-white and color versions of the guide as well as the Teacher’s Guide.

**Staying Healthy: An English Learner’s Guide to Health Care and Healthy Living**
https://floridaliteracy.org/health_literacy_curriculum.html
The Florida Literacy Coalition also has a guide to help students get and stay healthy. There is a beginner’s version and a version for intermediate/advanced students. Topics include nutrition, chronic diseases, medicines, and staying healthy.

**Healthcare Occupations**
https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/home.htm
This link provides statistics about the demand for health care jobs and lists the various jobs available, including how much education is needed and median pay.
doing this, make sure to discuss any new vocabulary terms. Help with pronunciation as well. Here are some terms that may be new for students:

- **pharmacy technician**: person giving help to people needing medications
- **paramedic**: person giving medical care before a patient goes to a doctor’s office
- **advice**: recommendations on what a person should do
- **home health aide**: person providing basic help for a patient at home to keep him or her healthy and safe

5. **When done with the reading, provide the discussion questions below on the board or a handout.** Discuss the questions as a class or in small groups.

   - Reread the section on page 5 of this issue called “The Facts.” These facts are about Florida. Do you think they are also true about your state? Why or why not?
   - What job do you have right now? Would you like to have a different job or career?
   - What are some skills you need for your job?
   - Would you want to work in a health care job? Why or why not?
   - Do you know anyone who works as a nurse? A home health aide? A pharmacy technician?
   - What other questions do you have about jobs in health care?

6. **Provide students with a copy of the box on this page that prompts them to complete each sentence from the story.** *(Answers: 1. appointments 2. skills 3. training 4. career 5. Skilled jobs)* Discuss answers.

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**Complete the Sentence**

Use the words below to complete each sentence from the story. Check your answers when finished.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>training</th>
<th>skills</th>
<th>career</th>
<th>skilled jobs</th>
<th>appointments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. You can make patient __________________ in a medical office.

2. People with many different __________________ and education levels can find a job in health care.

3. Some of them only require __________________ that lasts a few weeks or months.

4. Most people do more than one job during their ____________________.

5. ____________________ are on the higher part of the career ladder.
Are you looking for a career with a lot of jobs near where you live? Do you want to make your community a happier and healthier place? The health care field might be the right choice for you!

If you are ready for a new career, think about all the jobs that help keep people healthy. You can be a nurse, a pharmacy technician, or a paramedic. You can take X-ray pictures. You can help a dentist fix teeth. You can make patient appointments in a medical office.

There is a career in health care for everyone. People with many different skills and education levels can find a job in health care.

**THE FACTS**

- Health care is the fastest growing job area in Florida (and the U.S.)!
- Did you know that Florida needs more health care workers who speak more than one language?

This guide is about health jobs that require less than two years of training. Some of them only require training lasting a few weeks or months.

It will also give advice about how to choose the best one for you. So what are you waiting for...take the first steps to a health career today!

Training = higher pay and more career opportunities!
Prepare for a Health Career

What is a Career?

A **JOB** is work that a person does regularly to earn money.

A **CAREER** is a profession that someone does for a long time. It usually requires special training.

A **CAREER FIELD** is a group of jobs that use many of the same skills. Most people do more than one job during their career.

What are the Steps?

A career is like moving up a ladder. Every step on the ladder helps you get closer to your **CAREER GOALS**.

A **GOAL** is a plan. A goal can be a job you want to do now. It can also be a future job.

Training helps you to learn new **JOB SKILLS**. The more skills you have, the higher you can move up the ladder.

Climbing the Ladder

This career ladder is an example. It shows how experience and training in nursing may lead to a new job with more pay. People can start their career in different places on the ladder.

- **High-Skilled Jobs** are at the top of the ladder. These jobs may take 1-4 years or more of training.

- **Skilled Jobs** are on the higher part of the ladder. Most jobs in this group take 4-12 months of training.

- **Semi-Skilled Jobs** are the next step on the ladder. You can get here with a short training.

- **Beginning-Level Jobs** are the first step in a career. These may need little or no training.

Source: National Institute for Literacy
Prefering for Floods

Purpose
To help adult students prepare for floods.

Rationale
Natural disasters are occurring more frequently, and they are not limited to any particular part of the U.S. or the globe. Although some disasters are associated with certain regions—for example, earthquakes hit the West Coast more frequently, and hurricanes are more common in the Southeast—one natural disaster that can strike anywhere is flooding. This lesson shares some facts about flooding and provides some tips to help students better prepare. It is best used with beginning and low-intermediate English language learners.

The Basic Activity
1. Ask students what flooding is. (A formal definition from Ready.gov is: an overflow of water to land that is usually dry.) Ask if they have ever experienced flooding. What happened? Was there any damage? Ask students if they know of any recent flooding experiences around the U.S. Some students may recall flooding from Hurricanes Harvey and/or Florence.

2. Ask the class: What should you do if there is a flood warning? Generate discussion. Let students know they will read about this topic—and some facts about flooding—in the article.

3. Provide students with copies of the reading on page 8. Point out the graphic on the page, and have students discuss what the graphic shows.

4. Give students time to read the article on their own. Be prepared to discuss any new words or answer any comprehension questions.

5. When finished reading, work as a class or in small groups to list other ways to prepare in case of a flood warning.

For additional practice, work with the class to make a list of Ways to Prepare Now for a Flood, Ways to Prepare When There Is a Flood Warning, and What to Do During a Flood. Use ideas from the reading and additional ideas shared by students.

More Information
The first three links here may be too difficult for students, but they can provide you as the instructor with additional facts and information.

Floods
https://www.ready.gov/floods
Discover how to prepare and act before, during, and after a flood, as shared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). You’ll also find links to other resources related to flooding.

Be Informed
https://www.ready.gov/be-informed
This FEMA page has links to a variety of information regarding natural disasters and emergencies.

How to Prepare for a Flood
https://tinyurl.com/km3lk72
This is FEMA’s 12-page guide with more detailed information on flood preparation.
Prepare Now for a Flood

Facts About Flooding

1. A flash flood can happen in all 50 states of the U.S.
2. A car can be taken away in two feet of water.
3. Flooding is more common in low-lying areas and areas near water.
4. After wildfires, floods are the most common natural disaster in the U.S.
5. Flash floods can cause water that is 10 to 20 feet high.


Preparing for a Flood

- Know the flood risk in your area.
- Know the evacuation routes and shelters in your area.
- Have supplies ready in case you need to leave your home quickly. This can include a first aid kid, extra medicine, and items for your pets.
- Floods can cause a lot of damage. Find out if your home needs flood insurance.
- If a flood is coming, move items in your home to a higher floor.
- Never drive through flooded water.

*Information source: Ready.gov, the website for the Federal Emergency Management Agency
Flooding: One Program’s Story

Cape Fear Literacy Council in Wilmington, North Carolina, was hit by Hurricane Florence this past September. One of the two buildings on campus sustained water damage. The program had to postpone classes until late October to recover from the hurricane.

“Our students, volunteers, and staff have all experienced different levels of challenge,” says Yasmin Tomkinson, executive director of the program. “This storm was such that damage varied greatly from house to house, even in the same neighborhood.”

After Florence, the program reached out to students to see how they fared and to try and help them connect with resources. The program also was able to help the community with one-on-one assistance to fill out forms and understand paperwork. Program staff also reassured English language learners that groups like the Red Cross were available to help all in the community, regardless of their immigration status.

One challenge Tomkinson observed was residents—including those not struggling with literacy—who did not understand the process of filing an insurance claim or documenting damage. Tomkinson shares the following:

We have a student who evacuated during the storm and since it took a long time for her power to be restored, she stayed out of town. Now their house has mold in it and her child has asthma. She didn’t know which step should come first, what was her responsibility, etc., and our program director helped guide her in that process. The bigger challenge in our community is that there was already an affordable housing crisis, and after Florence it’s only exacerbated. People are being evicted from unsafe homes, but there is nowhere for them to go.

More Information

(continued from page 7)

11 Facts About Floods
https://www.dosomething.org/facts/11-facts-about-floods
DoSomething.org shares facts about floods, including flood preparation tips.

Natural Disasters
https://tinyurl.com/ycxdhqup
Heads Up English shares a variety of discussion questions related to natural disasters. The questions are best suited for high-intermediate and advanced English language learners.

Preparing for Storms in Florida
https://floridaliteracy.org/preparingforstorms.html
Although this guide from the Florida Literacy Coalition focuses on the Sunshine State, it has helpful information for anyone. Digital copies are free. There also is a facilitator’s guide.
What Is Irlen Syndrome?

Purpose
To describe Irlen syndrome, a perceptual awareness problem that affects reading.

What Is Irlen Syndrome?
Identifying students with learning disabilities in the adult education classroom is usually difficult. Adult students may or may not be aware of their specific learning troubles, and teachers often are not equipped to seek additional help or formally screen students.

That said, many teachers are aware of the signs of some of the well-known learning disabilities, including dyslexia and ADD/ADHD. Another learning challenge that is lesser known but gaining more attention is called Irlen syndrome. The syndrome was identified in the early 1980s by educator, therapist, and researcher Helen Irlen. Since then, hundreds of educational studies have focused on Irlen Syndrome. Adult education instructors will want to put Irlen syndrome on their radar because it is thought to affect a somewhat large group of learners, and intervention is fairly simple, says Mary Conway, an Irlen screener/diagnostician with Breaking Barriers to Learning, Bradenton, Florida.

Here is how the Long Beach, California-based Irlen organization describes Irlen syndrome:

Irlen syndrome is a perceptual problem that can affect achievement, learning, and performance for struggling readers. For good readers, it can limit the time an individual can read with comfort and comprehension. Irlen syndrome is not detected by standard educational, visual, or medical tests.

Irlen Syndrome Symptoms
The symptoms of Irlen syndrome include:

- light sensitivity
- strain, fatigue, or headaches when reading
- poor depth perception
- a slow reading rate
- attention deficit problems
- when reading, the page of words looks blurry or like rivers or see-saws of text
- also when reading, the person frequently skips lines of text, misreads words, and repeats lines
- the person finds it harder to read when there are fluorescent lights
Bright lights, glare, and bright colors all can make Irlen symptoms worse, Conway says.

Irlen is often hereditary, but it also can be caused by a head injury such as a concussion. In fact, 70% of people with a concussion or whiplash develop Irlen, according to the Irlen Institute. Irlen also is more common in people living with autism and those with attention disorders. Irlen is even found in almost 15% of the general population characterized as good readers.

**Irlen Intervention**

If you suspect that a student has Irlen syndrome, a relatively easy first step is the 14-question online self-test for Irlen (see link in sidebar on page 10). If the person frequently answers questions to indicate he or she may have Irlen, the next step is to get in touch with a local screener, using the list at “Find an Irlen Test Center” (https://irlen.com/find-an-irlen-test-center/). There are Irlen screeners around the U.S. and globally.

Irlen screeners also will ask if the person has had their vision checked recently, just in case visual problems may be affecting how things are seen, Conway says.

Once a person is diagnosed with Irlen, he or she may need colored plastic overlays to be able to help with reading. Overlays will make reading easier but will not lessen physical symptoms such as headaches. The color used will vary by each person, and that is what a screener can help determine. However, the symptoms for some will be severe enough to require colored filters in glasses or even special Irlen filter hard contact lenses. The glasses or contacts can help users drive or see a classroom whiteboard without use of the overlays.

“The correct color filters adjust the timing of visual information reaching the brain, allowing the brain to accurately receive and process visual information,” according to the Irlen organization. In turn, reading is completed with better comprehension, less fatigue, and with improved speed and accuracy.

Irlen diagnosticians recommend a filter recheck every year, as the colors that help someone may change over time.

With the prevalence of Irlen after brain injury, Irlen and the Semper Fi Fund have collaborated to cover the cost of Irlen filters for military veterans with combat-related head or brain injury and “medically resistant” headaches. Find more details at https://irlen.com/military-and-veterans/. The Irlen Foundation (see link in sidebar) also raises money to help those in need among the general population pay for Irlen screening and treatment.

**More Information**

(continued from page 10)

**Irlen Syndrome: A Teen’s Summary**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9N5qbMfftKQ4

David Accola made an 8-minute video describing what it is like to have Irlen as a teen and interjects humor into his information.

**Breaking Barriers to Learning**

https://breakingbarriertolearning.com/

This is the webpage for Mary Conway, who is quoted in the article.

**Do I Have Dyslexia or Irlen Syndrome?**


The Irlen Institute explains the different between dyslexia and Irlen.

**Published Research**

https://irlen.com/published-research/

Find links, listings, and summaries of published research about Irlen.

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**Helping Your Irlen and Light-Sensitive Students**

There are some simple things that can be done in the classroom to help your Irlen learners and other light-sensitive students:

1. Try to avoid use of a red or yellow marker on a whiteboard. This color combination can be hard to read for someone with Irlen.
2. Provide students with natural lighting and less fluorescent lighting.
3. Avoid patterned clothing like stripes, polka dots, or plaid.
4. Use recycled, off-white, non-glare paper.
5. Encourage students with Irlen to use a wide-brimmed hat or visor.
6. Once students have been screened for Irlen, encourage them to use their colored overlays or color-filtered glasses.
Using Graphic Organizers While Reading

Purpose

To state the purpose of graphic organizers and to present a graphic organizer that can be used while reading certain types of articles.

Rationale

Graphic organizers provide a visual display to show the relationships between sets of information. One common graphic organizer you may already know is the Venn diagram, which allows students to compare how two things are the same and different.

Graphic organizers can help students organize their thoughts visually, retain information, and sequence facts. These organizers also build analytical and creative thinking skills. Students must be able to use some graphic organizers to complete high-school equivalency tests, including the GED® test. On these tests, graphic organizers are commonly used for a range of topics, including reading/language arts, science, math, and social studies. This article presents one of many types of graphic organizers available.

Prepping for The Basic Activity

The graphic organizer in this article on page 13 is called “Both Sides Now,” although you also may find it online called “Pros and Cons” or “Both Sides.” Per the name, it is commonly used for students to organize different arguments for or against a topic covered in an article they have read. The graphic organizer appears in New Readers Press Writing for the GED® Test series (see sidebar); “Both Sides Now” can be found online at the following link: https://www.newreaderspress.com/filebin/pdf/WritingForGED/GEDExtendedResponseGraphicOrganizer.pdf

Take a few minutes to look at the blank graphic organizer on page 13 and think about how it may be used in your class. The version of the graphic organizer that we show in this issue is likely too small to use with students, but the PDF version from New Readers Press at the link above is appropriate for class use.

To give you an idea of how this kind of graphic organizer may be used, you can review the following links from the GED Testing Service:

“Taxation and Revenue”

The readings on pages 6 and 7 at this link provide the material for the completed graphic organizer at the link below.

Sample Completed Organizer
At the GED link, find on page 13 a completed “Both Sides Now” organizer based on the reading “Taxation and Revenue.” On page 12 of this link, you’ll also find another blank version of the graphic organizer.

Decide on an article that students will read while using the graphic organizer “Both Sides Now.” Make sure to select an article that has evidence to both support and oppose the main topic. Have enough copies of the article and a blank copy of the organizer for all students.

The Basic Activity

1. **Ask students some questions about the article topic.** What is something they already know about this topic? What is something they would like to learn?

2. **Give students a copy of the article and the graphic organizer.** Have students read the article per normal class routine. Answer any vocabulary or comprehension questions.

3. **When you feel students understand the article sufficiently, discuss the graphic organizer.** Have students work in pairs to talk about what they think is the purpose of the organizer, what are its different parts, and how they might use it. (Note: If you feel your students need more support to understand graphic organizers, you could go through the article and provide them with a filled-out version of the organizer for initial exposure.)

4. **Next, have students reread the article and work with a partner to fill it out.**

5. **Check answers with the class when finished.** Answers will vary depending on the article. For extra practice, you could have students add some of their ideas for/against the topic instead of using only what is in the article. You also could follow up with a debate on the topic.

6. **When finished, ask students about other ways they could use the graphic organizer.** You could also ask if they found the organizer helpful for the reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence that Supports</th>
<th>Question or statement</th>
<th>Evidence that Opposes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which position is better supported?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision (Claim)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons (Analysis/Evaluation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Adapted from Guzman & Pitman, 2016
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More Information

(continued from page 11)

**Vocabulary Graphic Organizer**
Kentucky Skills provides a link to a Vocabulary Graphic Organizer that prompts users to define a word, use it in a sentence, and provide the prefix, root, suffix, synonyms, antonyms, and part of speech.

**Using Graphic Organizers to Assess Reading Comprehension**
http://mnliteracy.org/blogs/2013/02/18574
The Minnesota Literacy Council presents a lesson on how students can use a graphic organizer while reading to boost and measure comprehension.

**Using Graphic Organizer to Develop Academic Writing**
https://community.lincs.ed.gov/group/english-language-acquisition
The LINCS English Language Acquisition online discussion group hosted a webinar in the fall on using graphic organizers with adult learners to develop academic writing. Search for the name of the webinar (as seen above) at the link provided, and find slides from the webinar and a discussion. The webinar was led by Joy Kreeft Peyton, of the Center for Applied Linguistics.

**“Agree or Disagree? Using Class Debates Effectively”**
https://tinyurl.com/z4z6pjy
The Spring 2016 issue of Notebook has an article on classroom debate activities, which could be a nice accompaniment to use of the “Both Sides Now” graphic organizer.
Exploring Resources

Explore New Readers Press Online Learning

http://www.newreaderspress.org

New Readers Press Online Learning is LIVE! Accelerate your students to high school equivalency level work with our new pre-HSE courses in social studies, science, mathematics, and reading and writing. The easy-to-use courses are personalized, flexible, and available 24/7 online and on tablets or smartphones. The pre-HSE course is aligned to the College & Career Readiness Standards, and each subject features a diagnostic pretest and posttest.

Online Learning courses also include:

- Adaptive flashcards to build vocabulary
- Games and achievement badges to engage learners
- Guided practice to facilitate critical thinking skills
- Online note taking, bookmarking, and highlighting tools to enhance learning

As an instructor, you will appreciate the easy onboarding process and comprehensive reports. Visit newreaderspress.com to request a FREE 30-day trial. And look for GED® and HiSET® prep courses coming this spring from New Readers Press.

The Member Toolkit: A Marketing Resource for Organizational Members

Organizations and programs that provide adult literacy, English language learning, citizenship, and workforce readiness instruction need to operate as efficiently as possible. To help them accomplish their goals and create a real impact on a limited budget, ProLiteracy has developed the Member Toolkit. The toolkit is a comprehensive selection of tools to help programs better market themselves and raise awareness. Each tool contains a variety of best practices for various marketing and professional development initiatives, including social media, fundraising, email marketing, and more. These tools are all stored in one place on Education Network (see below). A sample of tools is available to everyone; the entire kit is available exclusively to Organizational Members.

How to Access ProLiteracy’s Education Network

If you have yet to establish an account on Education Network, ProLiteracy’s learning management system, now is a good time to do so. You can create an account for free to access a wide variety of useful resources. To access the resources restricted to members, you will need to create an account using the custom members form or update an existing account by adding your member number to your preferences. Some resources are available to both Individual and Organizational Members while some are only available to Organizational Members.

- Education Network Custom Members Account Form
- Education Network Login
- Education Network Account Preferences
  https://proliteracy.csod.com/catalog/Prefs.aspx
ProLiteracy Research Journal

ProLiteracy is pleased to announce its new journal, *Adult Literacy Education: The International Journal of Literacy, Language, and Numeracy*. This online, peer-reviewed, themed research journal will be published by ProLiteracy twice a year in partnership with Rutgers University, and in collaboration with journal editors Alisa Belzer, Amy D. Rose, and Heather Brown. The journal’s mission is to publish research on adult basic and secondary education and transitions to college and career programs. It will inform practitioners, researchers, policy makers, and funders about best practices in adult literacy, numeracy, and English language education in publicly funded, community- and volunteer-based programs in a wide range of contexts. Each issue will consist of research articles plus other content of interest to readers in the adult education field (e.g., resource reviews, opinion pieces, and debates and discussions on timely topics). *Adult Literacy Education* invites authors to submit research papers for peer review. Upcoming themes include improving instructional outcomes and integrating technology into instruction. For information about submissions, please contact the journal editors at ALEJournal@proliteracy.org. The first issue will be released this spring.

Join us in September for the ProLiteracy Conference on Adult Education

[https://www.proliteracy.org/Professional-Development/ProLiteracy-Conference](https://www.proliteracy.org/Professional-Development/ProLiteracy-Conference)

The ProLiteracy Conference on Adult Education will take place on Sept. 25–28, 2019, in sunny San Diego, California. Join hundreds of your peers for four days of workshops, networking, and learning opportunities. Attendees will gain perspective on new technologies, innovative instruction tools and strategies, and leadership skills to take back to their programs. This year, ProLiteracy is featuring several new strands including corrections education, adult education/literacy in libraries, and an enhanced technology and digital literacy strand. Check out the link above for more information as it becomes available and to sign up for our 2019 conference updates. Registration opens in the spring.

Scholarships available for ProLiteracy’s 2019 Conference on Adult Education

[https://www.proliteracy.org/Professional-Development/ProLiteracy-Conference/Conference-Scholarships](https://www.proliteracy.org/Professional-Development/ProLiteracy-Conference/Conference-Scholarships)

Back by popular demand! ProLiteracy will have scholarships available for our 2019 conference. Applications will be accepted online from April 1–30, 2019. Please check out the link above for more information as it becomes available and to sign up for our 2019 conference updates.

ProLiteracy’s Education Network Offers New Online Courses

Education Network has new courses for ProLiteracy members. As always, these courses are free. All you need is an Education Network account. Here is some information about the courses:

- **Working with Adult Literacy Learners:** This is an introductory course for anyone tutoring adult literacy or English language learners students. In the course, participants identify common characteristics of adult learners, find out how adults learn best, and identify the challenges adults face and how to overcome them.

- **Volunteering in a Literacy Program:** This is an orientation course for new volunteers. It shows them what it’s like to volunteer in a literacy or English language learning classroom, as well as other types of volunteer opportunities that may exist in a literacy program. Program staff may also find the content useful.
Kara Krawiec, site coordinator at Seeds of Literacy East in Cleveland, Ohio, wants her students who are studying for their high school equivalency exams to be as passionate about reading as she is. Some of the program’s students read at a fourth-grade level, and most have had little exposure or experience with classic literature or poetry. “A lot of them couldn’t relate to the GED® test passages,” Krawiec says.

A book club participant herself, Krawiec had the idea to start a similar group with her students once a week outside of class. After she led her students through a reading challenge, she decided to give the book club idea a try.

Krawiec worked with students to select something of interest that was also easy to follow. This led to an initial selection of short stories, including “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson. At first, Krawiec did all of the reading aloud and modeled how to analyze the reading.

“I tried to make it more of a conversation,” Krawiec says. She also brought snacks, which always helps to lure in students.

Although students were initially skeptical about the book club idea, Krawiec says she was “floored” by how much students got into it. Next, the class chose to read plays by award-winning Cleveland playwright Eric Coble. Doing plays allowed more people to participate in reading it aloud, and students recognized the local places mentioned in Coble’s plays. Book club members were even treated to a visit by Coble one day.

Since then, the book club members have gone on to read short stories and poetry. The club continues to meet once a week with 8 to 12 students in attendance. “It’s been kind of amazing how it’s blossomed,” Krawiec says. Reading levels have increased an average of 33% since the book club began, and class attendance also has increased. Some of the original members have graduated but return to Seeds for the Wednesday book club.

The connections made through the book club have even gone beyond better reading abilities and comprehension skills. Students sometimes get in touch outside of class to ask each other for help with challenging subjects. They also take turns bringing snacks to the book club. With the success of the book club, Seeds now has other clubs that meet every week, including math, computer, and creative writing clubs. The Seeds of Literacy program and Krawiec recently won the first ProLiteracy Hero award.