In this issue:

- Applied Literacy
- Reading
- Project-Based Learning
- Speaking and Writing
- Exploring Resources
- Student Profile
Editor’s Corner

Happy 2020! Do you want 20/20 vision with your classroom plans this year? If so, the activities in this issue of Notebook can help you and your students.

Our lead article, “Preparing for the U.S. Census” focuses on the 2020 census. The U.S. census has an important role in determining funding for a variety of programs in areas all around the U.S. Everyone needs to know about the importance of responding to the census to help obtain this funding. This issue features a reading activity from the U.S. Census Bureau that helps explain the census to English language learners (ELLs).

Our next article, “Reading and Sequencing Using Journey to Success®” practices reading for content with an excerpt from Journey to Success Level 3, published by New Readers Press. The excerpt focuses on the growth of Route 66 in the Midwest and Western U.S. Readers use a graphic organizer to sequence information.

The article “Museum Project Boosts Project Learning and Critical Thinking” profiles an innovative approach used by a program in Chicago where students organized pop-up museums in three communities while also integrating ABE/ASE and ELL content standards. Read the article to see if there are new ideas your program could try this year.

“ Asking the Right Questions: 5 Ws and 1 H” offers both reading and speaking practice using two News for You articles. News for You is a weekly newspaper published by New Readers Press that offers easy-to-read news stories to help students learn to read, write, and speak and understand the English language. The articles encourage better comprehension and news literacy.

Exploring Resources has the usual mix of details on ProLiteracy initiatives and interesting resources for instructors.

Finally, this issue’s Student Profile features LaDelvin Walker. Her persistence and optimism were recognized with the Ruth J. Colvin and Frank C. Laubach Award for Adult Learner Excellence at the ProLiteracy Conference on Adult Education in San Diego this past fall. Please get in touch to tell us what you are doing in the classroom and what kinds of articles you’d like to read in Notebook. We always want to hear from you!

—The Editor
Preparation for the U.S. Census

Purpose
To introduce adult English language learners to basic information about the census.

Rationale
The 2020 U.S. Census will take place in the spring. English language learners who are new or relatively new to the U.S. may not be familiar with the census process and why the government takes a census every 10 years. Using information from the U.S. Census Bureau, this article introduces students to the census.

Before presenting this activity in class, review the reading found on page 5 to make sure it is level-appropriate for your class. You’ll want to have copies of the article available for everyone in your class. Our lesson plan here is a modified version of what appears at the U.S. Census Bureau’s link below.
https://tinyurl.com/y45svocd

Vocabulary Terms Related to the Census
Definitions come from the U.S. Census Bureau and are slightly modified.

- **decennial**: every 10 years
- **statistics**: the practice or science of collecting and analyzing numbers in large amounts
- **population**: all people, male and female, child and adult, living in a given area
- **Census Bureau**: a division of the federal government in the U.S. Department of Commerce
- **questionnaire**: a set of questions to get useful or personal information from people
- **confidentiality**: keeping information private; the U.S. Census Bureau guarantees that personal information given in answers to the census will not be shared with others
- **prohibits**: does not allow
The Basic Activity

1. **Ask students what the word *census* means.** Here’s the definition: the official process of counting the number of people in a country, city, or town and collecting information about them. Ask students if they know how often the U.S. Census happens. (It’s every 10 years.) You also may want to ask why a census is important. Let students know that the U.S. Census is happening in spring 2020.

2. **Have students draw a one-page chart with three columns.** Label the first column with a K, W in the second column, and L in the third column. Let them know this is called a K-W-L chart. Under the K column, ask students to write what they **know** about the U.S. Census. Next, have them write a couple things they **want** to know about the U.S. Census under the W column.

3. **Next, provide students with a copy of the handout on page 5.** Ask students to listen while you read it out loud to them. After each question and answer, check students’ comprehension. Discuss any new vocabulary (there is a vocabulary list with definitions in the sidebar on page 3).

4. **Give students additional time to reread the article.** Continue to answer any questions students might have about the information.

5. **Provide students with the following comprehension questions.** Students could write out their answers and discuss them in small groups, or you could discuss them as a class.
   - a. What is the U.S. Census?
   - b. Why is the census important?
   - c. How can people complete the census?
   - d. How does the U.S. Census Bureau protect information?

6. **Have students fill out the L section of their K-W-L chart.** This represents information they **learned** about the census from the reading. Let them know they don’t need to write everything they learned, just two or three points they found interesting.

7. **Ask students what other information they want to find out about the U.S. Census.** Discuss as a class where they could find answers to those additional questions they may have. For instance, they could look up answers online on the U.S. Census Bureau website or speak with someone working with the census.

8. **For additional practice about the census, check out the links in the sidebar on this page.** The weekly newspaper *News for You* will have a special issue about the 2020 Census in early January. Find out more about *News for You* on page 11 of this issue of *Notebook.*

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**Additional Activities for Census Practice**

The links below are lesson plans from the U.S. Census Bureau. The first three are geared toward adult ELLs but are best for advanced or even pre-high school equivalency (HSE) learners.

**Celebrating Diversity in the Community**
https://tinyurl.com/y4t33kl5

Students will get practice using census data to research immigrant groups that have come to the U.S.

**What’s Next?**
https://tinyurl.com/yxjv7xbh

In this activity, adult students will learn how they can use census statistics to find information about different cities across the country. They will consider such factors as educational opportunities, which cities or states have the best job opportunities for people in particular professions, and the average salaries and median age in those professions, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

**The Census and Apportionment**
https://tinyurl.com/vlc4yl

Adult students will learn how the U.S. government is structured and how seats are allocated within the U.S. House of Representatives. The worksheet in the activity gives special attention to explaining higher-level vocabulary, requirements for redistricting, and the impact of redistricting on voting.

**All Activities for ELLs**
https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sis/2020census/2020-resources/ell-adult-esl.All_Grades.html

This site includes links to all of the activities designed for ELLs, from primary grades to the adult activities mentioned above.
1. Read the following article about the U.S. census with your class.

**What Is the U.S. Census?**

The census is a count of people who live in the United States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Island Areas. It is required by the U.S. Constitution, according to the Census Act of 1790. The census is decennial, which means it happens every 10 years. It can be taken online at [2020census.gov](http://2020census.gov), by phone, or mailed in.

**What information does the census give us?**

The census provides statistics on the numbers and characteristics of the U.S. population, including age and sex, race and origin, education, and housing. This information can be easily viewed at [https://www.census.gov/quickfacts](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts). For example, the population of the United States in 2010 was 308,758,105.

**Why is the census important?**

Census data is used in many ways. It helps the nation decide how and where to spend money. That money goes to new roads and schools. It goes to health care programs. It goes to services for children and seniors.

**How is the census taken?**

The census is taken by having all households in the country complete a form. In the past, people were only able to receive and answer the census by mail. But in 2020, for the first time, people will also be able to answer the census online. This means your family has two ways to participate: online or by mail. If you participate online, one person in each household will fill out the form, which has 10 questions. Once you have answered all the questions, your census form will be submitted automatically.

If you participate by mail, you will receive a census form, sometimes known as a questionnaire, at your house in March 2020. One person in each household will fill out the form, which has 10 questions. You should mail the form back immediately in the postage-paid envelope that comes with the form. Remember, you only need to respond once.

**Who is counted?**

Everyone is counted! All adults in a home are counted. So are children and babies.

**How does the U.S. Census Bureau protect my information?**

Your responses to the U.S. census are strictly confidential. Federal law prohibits the U.S. Census Bureau and its workers from sharing any information they collect from individuals and businesses. It is a crime to share any information collected through the census. Other agencies will not see the facts about you and your household.
Purpose
To give learners practice with reading comprehension and sequencing.

Rationale
There are a variety of reading skills important in adult education classrooms. One of these skills is sequencing, where readers place information in the correct chronological order. The following activity shares an excerpt from Journey to Success, Level 3, from New Readers Press. Journey to Success can be used both with ELLs and those who are preparing for pre-HSE level work. This level of Journey to Success is best suited for high intermediate ELLs or those who are NRS level 2.

Before beginning the activity, have enough copies available of the handout on pages 7 and 8 from this issue of Notebook.

The Basic Activity
1. Ask students if they have ever heard of Route 66 in the Western part of the U.S. Let students know they will read an article about Route 66 and the growth of American roads.
2. Pass out the handout on pages 7 and 8. Have students answer the questions under “Practice the Skills” at the top of page 8.
3. Give students a chance to read the article. Encourage the class to answer the questions in the margin as they read the article. Go over any comprehension or vocabulary questions.
4. Have students answer the comprehension questions on page 8.
5. Before students go over “Practice Understanding Sequence,” ask students if they have ever used graphic organizers before. For instance, they may have used a Venn diagram, K-W-L chart for reading, or another similar organizer. Let them know they will use a graphic organizer when completing the next section.
6. Give students time to complete the sequencing activity. Encourage them to reread the article to determine the correct sequencing order. Check answers together when finished. For part 1, the correct sequence is: 1. Ford and other car manufacturers sold millions of cars. / 2. The country needed more and better roads to drive on. / 3. Route 66 was finished in 1938. For part 2, the correct sequence is: 1. John Steinbeck wrote the book The Grapes of Wrath. / 2. Bobby Troup wrote the song Route 66. / 3. There was a popular TV show called Route 66. / 4. The government began to replace much of Route 66 with four-lane highways.
The Mother Road
A Need for Highways

After Ford and other car manufacturers sold so many new cars, the country needed more and better roads to drive on. Route 66 was built to connect Chicago, Illinois, to Los Angeles, California. The paved two-lane road was finished in 1938. It was the first major highway in the United States to connect small towns.

In 1926, the United States government said yes to the plan for Route 66. It became one of the most traveled roads in the United States. The highway was over 2,400 miles. It went from Illinois, through Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona before ending in California.

More than 2,000 Miles All the Way

John Steinbeck was the first to make Route 66 famous by writing about it in his book The Grapes of Wrath (1939). Steinbeck’s story is about people and families who lost their farms and homes during the Great Depression and drove on Route 66 to start a new and better life in California. He named Route 66 “the mother road.” His book won the Pulitzer Prize.

Seven years later in 1946, Bobby Troup wrote the song Route 66. He sang that the highway goes “. . . from Chicago to L.A., more than 2,000 miles all the way” and he named cities that the road ran through. The song was a big hit.

Then from 1960 to 1964, there was a popular TV show called Route 66. It was about two young men who drove across the country on Route 66.

What’s Next for Route 66

In 1956, the government began to replace much of Route 66 with four-lane highways. By that time, Route 66 had become a symbol for the American road. Route 66 groups started up to try to save parts of the original road and some of the motels, cafés, and gas stations that were built along it.
Check Your Comprehension

Answer these questions about the article.

1. What is Route 66? __________________________________________
2. What was *The Grapes of Wrath* about? ______________________________________
3. Look at the map. How many states does Route 66 connect? ______________________________________

Practice Understanding Sequence

A graphic organizer can help you understand sequence. In a passage that doesn’t use time order words or other clues, think about the beginning, the middle, and the ending to help you figure out the sequence.

Read each list. Write the sentences in the correct boxes to show sequence.

- The country needed more and better roads to drive cars on.
- Ford and other car manufacturers sold millions of cars.
- Route 66 was finished in 1938.

1. ▼
2. ▼
3. ▼

- The government began to replace much of Route 66 with four-lane highways.
- John Steinbeck wrote the book *The Grapes of Wrath*.
- There was a popular TV show called *Route 66*.
- Bobby Troup wrote the song *Route 66*.

1. ▼
2. ▼
3. ▼
4. ▼

**HINT**

Reread the article to understand what happened first, second, next.

**Fluency IMPROVE YOUR READING**

Read along silently as your teacher reads paragraph 2 of “The Mother Road.” As you read, pay attention to the punctuation and to your teacher’s voice. Then read the paragraph back to your teacher.
Museum Project Boosts Project Learning and Critical Thinking

Purpose
To present information from a Chicago-based family literacy program in which students created three pop-up museums around the city and explored what it means to survive and thrive in a changing city.

Rationale
Project-based learning often provides students with a variety of important skills, including reading, writing, speaking, and critical thinking. If there is a community component, then the project also can introduce students to important community connections. This article presents information on pop-up museums designed by students at the University of Illinois (UIC) at Chicago’s Center for Literacy. The pop-up museum activities also were able to integrate ABE/ASE and ESL content standards.

Description of the Pop-Up Museum Project
About 75 students took part in the grant-funded museum project called “Our City, Our Museum” in 2018 at the UIC’s Center for Literacy Family Start (FAST) program, says Megan Wells, bilingual literacy and adult diploma program manager for adult education and career transition.

The unit of inquiry asked the questions: "Who gets to tell the story of our neighborhoods and our blocks?" and "What's the role of a museum or the job of a curator? To get started, students were asked to bring in an object, heirloom, or artifact that was important to them and that told a story about themselves or their family. Students shared their stories in class, and those objects were represented or used as inspiration in each individual student’s creation. “We developed the artistic replication part of the project because the objects themselves were too sentimental to risk losing in a public exhibit,” Wells says.

To help prepare students for displaying their creations as part of a “museum,” classes either visited a museum in person or virtually. Several museums offer virtual tours that include 360-degree views of their collections. “Students considered how museums function and observed authentic museum plaques, which were considered as mentor texts for the writing part of the project,” Wells says.

Students used a variety of artistic materials and techniques to create their displays. Some examples of the exhibits include:

- Anna, a student who recently earned her HSE, designed a future community that would provide a better and brighter future for her children. To help with her design, she researched current community resources available, including parks and libraries.

More Information
Here are additional resources related to project-based learning.

Project-Based Learning for Adult English Language Learners
https://www.ericdigests.org/1999-4/project.htm
This ERIC digest gives an overview of the rationale, process, and assessment for project-based learning with ELLs and includes a few tips to help instructors.

Project-Based Learning Resources
https://atlasabe.org/resources/project-based-learning/
The ABE Teaching and Learning Advancement System shares some specific project-based learning ideas and resources from Minnesota-based instructors. Featured topics include designing a school garden and creating a memory quilt.

The Key Ingredients for Successful Project-Based Learning
https://blog.neolms.com/key-elements-project-based-learning/
The learning-management system NEO shares a blog article about project-based learning.
Fantazia shredded newspaper articles about gun violence in Chicago and placed them together with images of city buildings. Her goal was to show that everything that happens in the community, good or bad, impacts all of those who live there.

Esmeralda used clay and multimedia to produce her rendition of a mariachi orchestra. She chose this because the musical style is from her hometown of Guadalajara, Mexico, and because her two children participate in a Chicago-based mariachi program.

All three exhibitions were designed, curated, and displayed at pop-up partner locations, including local park districts and libraries. Each museum had an opening reception where students could talk about their creations and share their stories. The culminating city-wide event for the exhibits was hosted by the UIC Richard J. Daley Library on the UIC campus.

In addition to correlating the project with content standards, students earned digital badges for their participation. The digital badges, offered through a partnership with LRNG (https://www.lrng.org/), included a Community Curator digital badge by demonstrating competencies in language arts and social studies for HSE learners. English language learners earned their Community Curator digital badge by demonstrating competencies in speaking, listening, and writing. A total of 44 students—17 ELLs and 27 HSE students—completed and earned the Community Curator badge.

The project also provided students with communication and media skills as they promoted their exhibitions on community radio, in print publications, and on social media.

This project emerged from the UIC Center for Literacy’s efforts to recognize learning through community-based projects, in part inspired by the January 2018 legislation in Illinois that amended the school code. The legislation opened up possibilities beyond the standardized test for adult HSE. The next project will explore students’ historical connection to social innovation while providing the tools and pathways to help them to start and strengthen their own social businesses community projects.

**TIPS FOR OTHER PROGRAMS**

1. **Plan for more time.** Program leaders originally planned for a six-week project, but once it was integrated with ESL and HSE academic content, they needed to extend the project by a few weeks. This required teacher collaboration and support across program sites, Wells says.

2. **Appoint a coordinator.** Because the project was ongoing at more than one site/region, one team member was designated to help keep instructors and classes on track and share resources on what was working. “For example, one teacher created a progress tracker that other teachers found useful,” Wells says.

3. **Let students know the goals of the project.** “Going from traditional book and computer learning to project-based learning can throw some learners for a curve,” Wells says. “At first, teachers had to make explicit the critical thinking and workplace skills the students were using and how they related to their educational goals. Once students got invested in the project, they were all in.”
Asking the Right Questions: 5Ws and 1H

Purpose
To give ELLs and literacy students practice reading a news article and answering questions about it with a partner.

Rationale
News literacy has always been an important skill, but it’s an especially crucial skill nowadays. When reporters write a story, they typically aim to answer the basic questions of who, what, when, where, why, and how. This activity gives students practice answering those particular questions after they read one of two articles from the News for You newspaper (see sidebar). After reading the article, students will answer questions about what they read and then ask their partner questions about their article.

Before starting this activity, you’ll need internet access. You can have students read the articles online while completing the activity, or you can access each article yourself online and make copies before class. You can access this activity’s two articles at the following links. When prompted, enter the password: notebook

Strangers Visit to Cheer Up Sick Child Who Couldn’t Leave His House

Man in “Blinking Guy” GIF Goes Public for Good Cause

The Basic Activity

1. Ask learners where they get their news. Do they read news articles online? From what sources? Do they read a newspaper? Do they listen to news on the radio or watch news on TV? Discuss students’ news sources briefly.

2. Let students know that news articles should always answer six basic questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how. Let them know they will practice finding answers to these questions with the following activity.

3. Give each student a copy of the handout on page 13. Go over the 5 Ws and 1H. If you have an easy article you’ve read before with the class, you can use that as an example to help students better understand how to answer each question.

More Information
News for You provides adult ELLs and struggling readers with news and human interest stories that are easy to read and understand. These engaging, timely stories will help students build language, reading comprehension, vocabulary, writing, listening, and speaking skills. News for You is available in print and online.

News for You includes seven weekly stories that cover a wide range of topics of interest to adults, including world and national news, politics, health, sports, arts, environment, science, and human-interest stories. The newspaper’s simple sentence structure and phrasing help ELLs and struggling students read about current events. Stories are written at both the high-beginning (RL 3-4) and intermediate (RL 4-6) reading levels, making the paper ideal for use in a multilevel classroom.

(Continued on page 12)
4. **Divide the class in half.** Give half of the class the article called “Strangers Visit to Cheer Up Sick Child Who Couldn’t Leave His House” and the other half of the class the article called “Man in ‘Blinking Eye’ GIF Goes Public for a Good Cause.” Or, if students are reading the articles online, provide article access in the same manner. Let students know they will read their article and complete the 5 Ws and 1 H handout and share the results with a partner.

5. **Give students time to read their respective article.** Provide support as needed. Ask students to write their answers to the questions on the handout regarding the article they read. Circulate around the room to make sure students are on the right track with their answers (see possible answers at the end of this article).

6. **Pair students with a partner.** Each student should ask who, what, when, where, why, and how about their partner’s article. When answering questions, students can use their handout to help provide these answers. Those asking questions don’t need to write down what their partner says unless you want them to have that extra practice. Once pairs have talked about one article, they can go over the second article in a similar way.

7. **For additional practice, ask for volunteers to report on what they learned about their partner’s article.**

8. **Encourage students to look for answers to the 5 Ws and 1 H whenever they read a news article.**

For a variation on this activity, you can have all students read the same article and complete the 5 Ws and 1 H handout. Students could then work in pairs or as a whole class to check their answers. Then they could do the same thing with the second article.

**Answers**

**“Strangers Visit to Cheer Up Sick Child Who Couldn’t Leave His House”**

Who: Quinn Waters  
What: Quinn had cancer and couldn’t leave his house. People came to his house to visit and to entertain him from outside his window.  
When: Last year  
Where: Massachusetts  
Why: Quinn couldn’t go outside. People wanted to help him.  
How: Some people drove by the house. Some were on bikes. Some sang songs or played the guitar.

**“Man in ‘Blinking Eye’ GIF Goes Public for a Good Cause”**

Who: Glenn Scanlon  
What: Scanlon is in a GIF online. He is letting people know he’s in the GIF to help raise money for MS.  
When: Last year  
Where: Online (you may want to let students know in advance the story doesn’t say where Scanlon lives)  
Why: Scanlon wants to help raise money for a good cause.  
How: He put a message online. He asked people using the GIF to give money for MS.
The 5 Ws and 1 H

Fill in the information below from the article you read in *News for You*.

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<th><strong>WHO</strong></th>
<th>Who is the article about?</th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>WHAT</strong></th>
<th>What is the main thing that happened in the article?</th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>WHEN</strong></th>
<th>When did the events in the article take place (day, date, time, year)?</th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>WHERE</strong></th>
<th>Where did the events in the article take place (city, state, country)?</th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>WHY</strong></th>
<th>What caused the events in the article? Why did the main characters do what they did?</th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>HOW</strong></th>
<th>How did the main people in the article do things?</th>
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TABE® Mastery: A New Series from New Readers Press

https://www.newreaderspress.com/

TABE® Mastery is a new four-level core series from New Readers Press that will help students to succeed on the TABE® 11/12 test (TABE is short for Test of Adult Basic Education). TABE® Mastery covers reading, language, and math at levels E, M, D, and A. Student books use real-world scenarios to teach TABE- and CCR-aligned standards. Diagnostic pretests and posttests identify students’ strengths and weaknesses. Teacher Guides add lesson strategies and support for multilevel classes and ELLs.

Workforce Atlas

https://www.workforceatlas.org/

ProLiteracy and Pearson, founding partner of Project Literacy, have partnered to launch Workforce Atlas, an engaging and user-friendly online career pathways platform that adult learners can use to assess their literacy, numeracy, and career skills and interests. Assessment-based recommendations are provided through hundreds of unique occupations informed by the open-source data from O*Net, a constantly-updated source of occupations from the Department of Labor. Adult literacy organizations and programs of all sizes and types can greatly benefit from having adult learners use Workforce Atlas for a variety of purposes. It can be accessed on an individual level in workforce training or within local service providers with basic literacy or ESL programming.

The Workforce Atlas platform allows learners to create an online account to take and manage assessments that measure literacy and numeracy levels and job skills and interests. The platform then offers assessment-based career pathways recommendations that include occupations, online resources, and local providers. Resources available include information about popular jobs, interview tips, advice on how to reach personal goals, and more.

Adult Literacy Management and Leadership Training Courses Now Available

https://proliteracyednet.org/leadership

ProLiteracy has launched the first two topics in its new Adult Literacy Management and Leadership Training. The Adult Literacy Management and Leadership Training prepares recently appointed executive directors for meeting the diverse challenges of their new role. The online courses help develop knowledge, skills, and decision-making abilities in financial management, administration, human resources, board governance, and marketing. The cost for each course is $45 for ProLiteracy members and $150 for nonmembers. You will need to create a free Education Network account to access the courses. The programs are made possible through the generous support of Lynn Reed.

LESLLA Organization for Literacy-Level Learners Updates Website

https://www.leslla.org/
https://www.leslla.org/teacher-resources

Literacy Education and Second Language Learning for Adults (LESLLA), an organization geared toward educators and researchers helping immigrant and refugee adults learning to read and write in a new language, has updated its website. Discover helpful resources for working with this population group at the second link above.
Write Her Future

https://www.proliteracy.org/write-her-future

Lancôme USA and ProLiteracy have partnered to create the Write Her Future Institute, an initiative to decrease low literacy rates among women and raise awareness of the critical issue of low adult literacy that affects 43 million adults in the U.S., two-thirds of whom are women. Through this program, adult basic education organizations have the opportunity to transform the lives of thousands of women across the country. The Lancôme grant to ProLiteracy will provide free access to Voxy®, a personalized language learning platform that pairs authentic content with personalized live instruction—all delivered in a fully mobile experience. Voxy’s methodology is based on the latest research in second language acquisition and allows learners to accomplish their goals more efficiently.

STAY WARM and Explore Education Network

When you’ve finished this issue of Notebook, explore Education Network and expand on the strategies you’ve learned. Check out these resources:

• Free online course and other resources about graphic organizers
• New videos that demonstrate teaching activities with a newspaper
• The archive of past Notebook issues

Get started today by visiting proliteracyednet.org/login or proliteracyednet.org/member_account to create an account.
After 26 years of working to accomplish her goal of high school completion, LaDelvin Walker of Flint, Michigan, earned her GED® credential in the spring of 2019. Yet just like any other adult learner, her story is so much richer than that fact alone.

Walker had dropped out of high school due to persistent struggles with math and tragic family events. She stayed busy after that caring for a foster brother and two sons, but when she found herself struggling to support her sons with school work, she joined a family literacy program. For years, Walker juggled parenting and full-time work while receiving intensive math tutoring through the Flint & Genesee Literacy Network's Adult Learning Center partner, St. Luke N.E.W. Life Center. After several attempts, Walker finally realized her goal of achieving a passing math score on the GED® test.

Walker wants to help and inspire other adult learners going forward. She is currently part of the Flint Recovery Corps AmeriCorps program as a 2Gen family advocate, where she connects Flint families affected by the water crisis with resources and tools to access services and early education programs. Her work plays a crucial role in an area that lacks sufficient access to adult learning resources, says Jessica Kitchner, operations manager at the Flint and Genesee Literacy Network.

Walker also leads various other efforts to help the community, and she is planning to go to college and become a social worker.

“LaDelvin has become a community advocate,” says Kitchner, who describes Walker as “our sunshine.”

Walker regularly meets adults who are struggling to finish high school, learn English, or better help their children with school work. “My story belongs to so many other adults out there,” she says, acknowledging the challenges that come with learning and improving while also facing life’s daily responsibilities.

Better literacy and learning can improve everything in a person’s life, from health to crime prevention to raising children, she says.

“It all trickles down [to literacy],” she says.

For adults who want to earn their high-school equivalency but are hesitant to do it, Walker offers some inspiration: “Let go of the mistakes you made in the past. Move forward and just keep learning and moving … All you have to do is step in that door.”

Walker has shared her story at national meetings. She gave a keynote speech at the National Center for Families Learning and attended the ProLiteracy Conference on Adult Education this past fall, where she spoke after receiving the Ruth J. Colvin and Frank C. Laubach Award for Adult Learner Excellence.