

Annotated Bibliography

Annotated Bibliography by Category

General Assessment	1
Glossaries.	13
National Forces.	14
National Literacy Assessment Results.	17
Standardized Testing.	18
Alternative Assessment.	21
Using Data for Improvement.	24
NRS Materials.	27
Key Research Reports & Studies.	29

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY
ASSESSMENT IN ADULT EDUCATION

GENERAL ITEMS

“Action Research”. Diane Lizotte. *Adventures in Assessment*. Winter, 1998.
<http://www.sabes.org/resources/publications/adventures/vol11/vol11.pdf>

This article describes and analyzes the assessment process of a program which concludes that a standardized test (ESLOA) is suited to its purpose as a bookkeeping, accountability measure, but that authentic assessments need to be used in conjunction with it.

“Adult ESL Learner Assessment: Purposes and Tools”. Burt, Keenan.
<http://www.ericdigests.org/1996-2/tools.html>

This ERIC digest points out cultural difficulties inherent with ESL testing and discusses elements of good practice including: choosing tests that match the demographic and educational backgrounds of learners, interpreting test scores carefully, ensuring that test objectives match the program objectives and curricular content; and using additional instruments to measure learner achievement.

“Adult Literacy Research: Opportunities and Challenges”. John Comings and Lisa Soricone. Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy and National Institute for Literacy, January, 2007.
http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/research/op_opps_challenges.pdf

Research studies are described that conclude that there is no single standardized assessment currently available that adequately assesses the skills of adult literacy and ESL students. Multiple measures including alternative assessments are required.

“Adventure Continues, The”. Janet Kelly. *Adventures in Assessment*, Vol. 13, Spring 2001.
<http://www.sabes.org/resources/publications/adventures/vol13/13kelly.htm>

This article describes one program’s history of developing reading and writing assessment frameworks that are in line with NRS. Assessment instruments that “develop more clarity and purpose within our programs and offer learners and teachers a more understandable path defined by real markers of progress that reflect skills learned and goals met”.

“An Evidence-Based Adult Education Program Model Appropriate for Research”. John Comings, Soricone, Santos. NCSALL, 2006.

http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/research/op_comings4.pdf

John Comings sets up a model of an adult education program based on research, describes its components, and research bases.

“Assessment and Accountability in Programs for Adult English Language Learners: What do we know? What do we have in place? What do we know?”

<http://www.cal.org/caela/accountability>

This article from the Center from Applied Linguistics provides a good overview of assessment issues in ESL. Summarizes the BEST, REEP, CASAS and REEP tests.

“Assessment for Foundation Learning: The importance of purposeful assessment in adult literacy, numeracy and language courses”. New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2006.

http://www.minedi.govt.nz/web/downloadable/dl11359_v1/assessment-study.pdf

This article includes a one page list discussing six principles of good assessment.

“Assessment is More Than a Silent Reading Test.”

http://www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/FT_Compare_Profiles.htm

This site provides a graphic explanation of why identical reading scores on standardized tests may not indicate identical skills for a learner.

“Challenge of Alternative Assessment in Adult Education: A Teacher’s Perspective”. Noemi Aguillar. *Literacy Links*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Sept. 1998.

<http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/newsletr/sep98/sep98h.htm>

The author discusses her experience and how most programs use standardized testing for placement and exit purposes, leaving classroom assessment up to the instructor. However, since “assessment is linked to the way a program operates, (Wrigley 1995) I believe assessment should be tailored to the goals of the program, directly from the goal of the students within that program”. She then discusses the advantages and challenges inherent in different forms of alternative tests and concludes that the student portfolio and teacher judgment end up being the best and most comprehensive.”

“Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education.” Prepared by the Joint Committee on Testing Practices, American Psychological Committee.
<http://www.apa.org/science/fairtestcode.html>

This site includes five pages of guidance, separate for test developers and test users including the following:

- Developing and selecting appropriate tests
- Administering and scoring tests
- Reporting and interpreting test results
- Informing test takers

“Do ESL Students Want to be Tested More Often?” Nguyen. *Adventures in Assessment*, Vol 8, Dec. 1995.

<http://www.sabes.org/resources/publications/adventures/vol8/vol8.pdf>

This article includes one classroom teacher’s account of class responses to questions about testing and the importance of student involvement in decisions and discussions about tests to determine frequency, type, use, and development.

“Documenting Outcomes: A Brief”. Bingham and Bell. NCSALL. Bingham and Bell.

<http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/research/brief20.pdf>

This two page brief is an overview of the study and findings includes an “Inputs to Impacts” grid.

“Documenting Outcomes for Learners and Their Communities: A Report on a NCSALL Action Research Project”, Bingham and Bell. NCSALL Report #20, March 2002.

<http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/research/report20.pdf>

This report describes the results of an action research project which lead to increased understanding of “...how programs might identify and document student outcomes in ways that meet local program needs and how that documentation can support program improvement. (p. ii)...”the idea of documenting learner lives versus test scores...(p. iii)”. “Local programs can develop new ways to measure performance, but integrating these processes into state reporting systems will require changes. The federal NRS system and most state systems require standardized measures of only a few outcomes. Increased flexibility on the part of state and federal policy makers is needed so that locally developed procedures for documenting a wider variety of outcomes can count as measures for program accountability”.

“Draft Principles for Authentic Accountability.” The National Center for Fair and Open Testing.

<http://www.fairtest.org/draft-principles-authentic-accountability>

This article builds the case that research has strongly demonstrated that skilled use of giving feedback to students (formative assessment) is among the most powerful means teachers have for improving learning outcomes. To ensure that accountability methods support accountability goals it is important to use multiple forms of evidence and ensure students have an active role in the assessment process.

“Educational Assessment: Four Principles to Consider”. Michael Kean. McGraw-Hill Publishing Co.

http://www.ctb.com/articles/article_information.jsp;jsessionid=HKzsn0b121xWM3DVrejvcP1SsSEDO6AWbJiqYP2jVL6asfbSXpUT!-1878505452!-1408233562!5008!6008?CONTENT%3C%3Ecnt_id=10134198673246869&FOLDER%3C%3Efolder_id=2534374302066447&bmUID=1204482988802

This statement from the publishing company website discusses the importance of using multiple measures of learning.

“ESL Assessment Conundrum”. Diane Pecararo. *Adventures in Assessment*, Vol 7.

http://faculty.washington.edu/shapis/teaching_resources.shtml

A humorous poem about assessment issues.

“Establishing an Evidence-based Adult Education System”. NCSALL Seminar Guide. Parker, Smith, Bingman. January 2004.

<http://ncsall.net/?id=900>

This article discusses the lack of a universally accepted adult learning theory that constitutes good practice and leads to the argument stated by many that universally accepted assessment goals and tools do not exist.

“Evolution of Educational Assessment: Considering the Past and Imagining the Future”. James Pellegrino. Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ.

<http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/PICANG6.pdf>

Argues that the standards being set at the state and national levels create the need to substantially improve assessment design and implementation., and that assessment must be integrated into the learning environment.

“Fair Assessment Practices: Giving Students Equitable Opportunities to Demonstrate Learning”. Linda Suskie. *Adventures in Assessment*, Vol. 14, Spring, 2002.

<http://www.sabes.org/resources/publications/adventures/vol14/14suskie.htm>

This article, whose audience is classroom teachers, is available both as hard copy and online. It builds the case for authentic and alternative assessment through the “fairness” principles which are enumerated and explained.

“From Minnow to Overachiever”, Loren McGrail. *Adventures in Assessment*. Vol. 6, Spring 1994.

<http://www.sabes.org/resources/publications/adventures/vol6/6mcgrail.htm>

This is a personal story of being assessed and mis-assessed by standardized tests.

“Guide for Effective Assessment, A”. CTB McGraw-Hill.

http://www.ctb.com/articles/article_information.jsp;jsessionid=HK1gRLIZqYvAUSmuncvVwff0Uenst!TD6114JfvGjKvpbD5IOg2Q!-1878505452!-1408233562!5008!6008?CONTENT%3C%3Ecnt_id=10134198673254779&FOLDER%3C%3Efolder_id=1408474395222381&bmUID=1204483552433

The publisher’s perspective on the “basics” of assessment is presented here.

“Guidelines for Intake and Class Placement”. SABES.

www.sabes.org/assessment/placement.htm

This is a one page guideline for intake and class placement which recommends and provides rationale for using a different test for placement and pretest.

“Images of Participatory Assessment in Adult Education”. Cathy Luna. *Adventures in Assessment*, Vol. 16, Spring 1994.

<http://www.sabes.org/resources/publications/adventures/vol6/6luna.htm>

This document suggests new ways of thinking about learners which leads to a participatory definition of assessment and ideas on how to make learners full participants in the assessment process.

“Implications of NCSALL Research for Program Administrators”. NCSALL Seminar Guide, April 2006.

<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=1117>

This is a detailed guide to a 3.5 hour seminar for administrators on how to access research and make it useful in practice. Includes instructions and materials. Also included is a chart of Principles of Best Practices from John Comings “An Evidence-Based Adult Education Program Model Appropriate for Research”. 2006.

“Important Issues in Teaching Adult Learners: Assessment”. Anne Enslle. *Literacy Links*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Sept. 1998.

<http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/newsletr/sep98/sep98f.htm>

This article describes how lower level or fact testing assessments are often a detriment to an adult learner. Also discussed are principles of good assessment which include concerns that assessment be continuous and ongoing, a positive learning experience, as well as collaborative, authentic, and self-reflective. Assessment should include initial assessment, goal setting, and ongoing assessment.

“Integrating Goal Setting into Instructional Practice”. Staff at the Center for New Americas. *Adventures in Assessment*, Vol. 16, Spring, 2004.

<http://www.sabes.org/resources/publications/adventures/vol16/16newamericans.htm>

An ESL program describes how they continue refining goals with students into smaller, more measurable goals after they have been in the program two weeks. At the end of each week, the students reflect on their learning in logs and report to the class what they want to focus on the following week. Combined with what the teacher has learned through assessments, this becomes the content of instruction for the following week. The process continues throughout the term. Examples are given of the process in action.

“Involving Learners in Assessment Research”. Kermit Dunkelberg, *Adventures in Assessment*, Vol. 14, Spring 2002.

<http://www.sabes.org/resources/publications/adventures/vol14/14dunkelberg.htm>

A group of teachers, students, and administrators teamed together to find out what each feels are important issues around assessment. The article also includes notes from NRS meetings, team meetings, quotes, questions, and information from other states.

“I’ve Come A Long Way: Learner-Identified Outcomes of Participation in Adult Literacy Programs”. Bingam and Ebert. *NCSALL Report #13*, Feb. 2000.

<http://ncsall.net?id=664>

This article states, “Policyholders should take into account all the reasons people want adult education as they develop systems of performance accountability.” It also explains that existing research has already documented a need for authentic and alternative forms of assessment.

“Knowing Math and Passing the GED”, Sally Spencer, *Adventures in Assessment*, Vol. 4, Spring, 1993.

<http://www.sabes.org/resources/publications/adventures/vol4/4spencer.htm>

The author lists and discusses assessment practices that increase and decrease student attention (applicable to more than GED). Multiple techniques that support authentic and alternative assessment methods are included.

“Learner Assessment”. Wrigley and Guth, *TCALL Literacy Links*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Sept. 1998.

<http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/newsletr/sep98/sep98a.htm>

A good research based discussion of advantages and disadvantages of standardized and program-based or other alternative assessments. Primarily targeted to ESL it lists eight specific disadvantages of standardized tests and four specific advantages of alternative assessments. Detailed lists are included.

“Lessons from NCSALL’s Outcomes and Impacts Study”. Harold Beder. *Focus on Basics*, Vol. 2, Issue D, Dec. 1998.

<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=386>

This article brings credibility to assessing and reporting results beyond GED, employment and postsecondary education. It shows how adult students report and value a variety of outcomes that include, but often go beyond, the GED, better employment, or postsecondary education. Through program participation, they are often able to better their lives and those around them. The report recommends using action research to identify ways to assess and document a variety of outcomes.

“Literacy Education in Adult Basic Education”, John Kruidenier. Vol. 3, Chapter 4, National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy.

<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=567>

Research based views on assessment issues and practices which summarize and discuss the issues for policy and practice. Included is an analysis of standardized, norm-referenced, criterion referenced, specific tests and concludes that until there is a perfect match, multiple assessment measures should be used to measure learning.

“Measuring Adult Literacy and Life Skills: New Frameworks for Assessment”. Murray, Clermont and Binkley. Statistics Canada.

<http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/measlit/cover.htm>

This document attempts to assess literacy at the international level. It discusses the challenges and limitations encountered in ensuring valid, reliable, comparable and interpretable results across time, culture, and other variables.

“Mission Statement from the Transformers”. Massachusetts Participatory Assessment Team. *Adventures in Assessment*, SABES, April 1994.

<http://www.sabes.org/resources/publications/adventures/vol6/6mass.htm>

This article enumerates 6 principles of participatory assessment and 6 strategies for implementation.

“Multiple Assessments for Multiple Intelligences”. Costanzo and Paxton. *Focus on Basics*, Vol 3, March, 1999.

<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=368>

In this article, teachers are encouraged to plan assessments that draw upon students’ 8 Intelligences when trying to demonstrate mastery of material. The 8 Intelligences are: Bodily/kinesthetic, spatial, musical, naturalist, interpersonal, intrapersonal, linguistic, logical/mathematical.

“NCSALL’s Adult Persistence Study”. Comings, Parrella and Soricone. *Show-Me Newsletter*, Missouri Dept. of Education, May 2006.

http://www.dese.mo.gov/divcareered/AEL/Show-Me_Literacy_May_2006

A summary of the study is included along with comments from the researchers regarding implications for practice. The concept that persistence increases as the student measures own progress is examined and a case for portfolio and authentic assessment tools is built. .

“New Accountability Rules Pose Dilemma for Programs”. Steve Reuys. *Adventures in Assessment*, Vol. 13, Spring 2001.

<http://www.sabes.org/resources/publications/adventures/vol13/13reuys.htm>

This is a good discussion of the issue of assessment in response to NRS. Standardized test are discussed as not doing a good job of assessing the reading, writing, and math skills of adult learners or of capturing and reflecting the learning that goes on in adult basic education classes. Issues of alternative assessments, while creating a much fuller picture of a students literacy abilities that is much more meaningful and more useful to teachers and students alike, include that they take much time and energy to create, are difficult to prove validity and reliability to sufficient degree, and are not readily translatable into SPL’s or GLE’s..

“Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning”, American Association for Higher education.

<http://ultibase.rmit.edu.au/Articles/june97/ameri1.htm>

The nine principles discussed are: Assessment based in educational values; integrated; multidimensional and revealed over time; explicitly stated purpose; attention to outcomes and experiences; ongoing; collaborative; results in data that guides continuous improvement; is part of an environment where quality teaching and learning are valued; and supports accountability.

“On Portfolio Assessment”. Hanna Fingeret. *Adventures in Assessment*. Vol. 4, Spring 1993.

http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED359352&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED359352

Fingeret identifies portfolio assessment as a sample measure for showing educational gains (Indicator 1) according to “Model Indicators of Program Quality for Adult Education Programs, released by the US Dept of Education, OAVE (1992). A classic document on portfolio assessment.

“Outcomes and Impacts of Adult Literacy Education in the United States”. Hal Beder. NCSALL Report #6, January 1999.

<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=669>

This project investigated 115 research studies conducted in the area and lists conclusions on page 2 of the summary. The report reveals that generally, participants report positive perceptions of gain, but that generally, there is

insufficient evidence of gain as measured by test gains, job improvement, or reduction in welfare specifically resulting from participation in the programs. It recommends relevant and measurable outcomes standards and a feasible impact reporting system with systematic improvement of state and local outcome studies.

“Passing the Torch: Strategies for Innovation in Community College ESL. Executive Summary. Forrest P. Chisman and JoAnn Crandall. NY: CAAL. Council for the Advancement of Adult Literacy, Rev. Feb. 2007.

<http://caalusa.org/eslpassingtorch226.pdf>

This reports the results of a two year study of ESL services at community colleges by the Council for the Advancement of Adult Literacy. It identifies highly effective strategies for increasing learning gains as high intensity instruction with managed enrollment, extending learning outside the classroom, and adapting curricula to learner needs. It concludes that a major increase in funding is needed to meet the need of developing better assessments built specifically for this population.

“Practitioners Speak: Contributing to an Agenda for Adult Basic Education”. NCSALL Practitioner Dissemination and Research Network, Report #4, July 1998.

<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=671>

Practitioners identified assessment and measurement of performance as one of eight issues of prime concern.

“Process of Component #3: The Alternative Aspect of the GOALS Project”. Lindy Whiton. *Adventures in Assessment*, Vol. 5, Fall, 1993.

<http://www.sabes.org/resources/publications/adventures/vol5/5whiton.htm>

This article reports the results of a statewide project to investigate and develop an accountability system that provides a true reflection of the field. Both process and recommendations are included. A section discusses how to analyze alternative assessments by function and characteristic. Core findings are that learners’ goals are the driving force of the curriculum, therefore teaching and assessment have to be built around those goals (alternative assessment) and that accountability cannot rest on learners’ achievements alone.

“Questions to Ask When Evaluating Tests”. Lawrence M. Rudner. *Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation Online Journal*.

<http://pareonline.net/getvn.asp?v=4&n=2>

This article lists standards established by American Educational Research Assoc., American Psychological Assoc. and the National Council on Measurement in Education. It includes 23 specific questions related to test coverage and use, reliability, validity, administration, reporting, bias, and norming.

“Reflections on On-going Assessment”. Eileen Barry and Pat F. *Adventures in Assessment*, Vol. 5, Fall, 1993.

<http://www.sabes.org/resources/publications/adventures/vol5/vol5.pdf>

A provider experiments with other ways to capture progress when she is unable to show a learner the progress she has made through the traditional assessments and folder contents on hand. This reflection piece demonstrates the need for and examples of measuring progress.

“Research on Factors That Shape Engagement”. Barbara Garner, *Focus on Basics*, March 2005.

<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=732>

This NCSALL research brief by Hal Beder discusses the importance of participatory assessment and how it will lead to learner engagement. “The students who persist in ABE show high engagement while in class.”

“Rights and Responsibilities of Test Takers: Guidelines and Expectations”. American Psychological Association.

<http://www.apa.org/science/ttrr.html>

This seven page document outlines the rights and responsibilities of each party, the test taker and test administrator.

“Scenarios for Intake, Placement Testing and Educational Gain Assessment”. SABES.

<http://www.sabes.org/assessment/scenarios1.htm>

The System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES) developed a chart presenting three scenarios for intake, placement and level gains along with their respective advantages and provisos.

“Strategies that Work: What Does the Evidence Tell Us?” Nancy Padak. Research to Practice, Ohio Literacy Center, April 2002.

http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?nfpb=true&&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED476063&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED476063

This report provides information from a panel of experts from a variety of disciplines convened in 2001 to advise a variety of federal offices and agencies about, among other issues, what we know about instructional effectiveness in adult education. It was found that there was not much targeted solely to adult education, but that “valuable information can be drawn from the research findings on reading processes and instructional approaches for children kindergarten through grade 12”.

“Testing, Accountability and Funding-Key to Education Reform”. Kurt Landgraf. *ETS on the Issues*, January 2002, Educational Testing Service.
<http://www.ets.org/portal/site/ets/menuitem.c988ba0e5dd572bada20bc47c3921509/?vgnextoid=69312d3631df4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD&vgnnextchannel=d83d253b164f4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD>

This Report contains the results of an independent survey commissioned by ETS, *A Measured Response: Americans Speak on Education Reform*, which surveyed parents’, educators’, and policymakers’ attitudes on education reform. The results: 83% support standards and testing to determine whether standards are met and 78% want state test results compared using a “nationally standardized test.”

“Testing: Snapshots Should Not Lead to Snap Judgments”. Kurt Landgraf. *ETS on the Issues*, January 1, 2002.
<http://www.ets.org/portal/site/ets/menuitem.c988ba0e5dd572bada20bc47c3921509/?vgnextoid=69012d3631df4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD&vgnnextchannel=d83d253b164f4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD>

This article written by the President of Educational Testing Service (ETS) discusses his views on the appropriate and inappropriate interpretations of standardized scores.

“Testing - Standardized and Otherwise - and the Massachusetts ABE Pilot Test: A Curriculum Unit for ABE Classes”. Utech, Byrne and Prior. March 2005, Massachusetts DOE.
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/abepilottest.doc>

This curriculum includes a unit on purposes, pros and cons, and strategies for taking standardized tests. It is written for ABE/GED level students.

“Two Ways to Assess Literacy Learners in Prison”. Bill Muth. *Focus on Basics*, August 2005.
<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=830>

This is a research-based article written by a practitioner using ARCS test and open ended interviews. The findings highlight the limitations of traditional tests and how they often cannot reveal how the readers use the skill they do or do not have, nor the strategies and risks they do or do not take.

“Unfinished Business: More Measured Approaches in Standards-Based Reform”. Paul Barton, Policy Information Center, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ, 2004.
http://www.ets.org/Media/Education_Topics/pdf/unfinbusiness.pdf

This paper discusses the need for additional measures of progress and better measures to make standards-based and test-based accountability approaches effective and credible. He states that using test scores whether or not the required alignment is complete is not in the best interest of adult learners.

“User’s Guide to Standards-Based Educational Reform: From Theory to Practice”. Regie Stites. *Focus on Basics*, Vol. 3 Sept 1999.

<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=352>

In this article the three types of educational standards are examined: content, performance, and opportunity to learn (or delivery) standards. The article concludes we need to develop new and improved performance-based (not multiple-choice standardized) tests. The standards-based reform movement leads to the need for performance-based alternative assessments.

“Using Adult ESL Content Standards”. Schaetzel and Young. Center for Applied Linguistics, March 2007.

http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/briefs/usingcontstandards.html

TESOL outlines a standards-based instruction and assessment cycle in four steps: Planning, collecting, analyzing, decision-making. “Performance-based assessments often allow students to demonstrate this much better than traditional types of tests” (references Ananda, 2000; Moon and Callahan, 2001)

“Using Assessments in Adult Education Programs”. Assessment Strategies & Reading Profiles Home Page, National Institute for Literacy.

http://www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/MC_Using_Assessments.htm

This one page summary notes the differences between norm-referenced, criterion-referenced, competency-based, curriculum-based, and alternative assessments.

“Valid, Reliable and Appropriate Assessments for Adult English Language Learners”. Dorry Kenyon, Center for Applied Linguistics, Nov 2003.

http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/langassessQA.html

The author discusses the need for assessments to be proficiency based, based on real world application. Language assessment is discussed and it is emphasized that the new goal of language assessment is proficiency, not achievement. It underscores the importance of evaluating criteria, scales, and rubrics for validity and reliability characteristics

“What Are the Strengths of My Current Assessment System?” Cathy Crist, Diane Guill, Patricia Harmes, and Chris Lake.

www.essentialschools.org/cs/resources/view/ces_res/125

This includes a one page checklist for teachers or programs to guide them in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of their current assessment system. Focuses on principles such as “helps me develop meaningful curricula”, “regards assessment and teaching as two sides of the same coin”, “provides information that is useful to the learning process”.

“Why ABE Math Assessment Practices Must Change”. Tricia Donovan.
Adventures in Assessment, Vol 9, Dec. 1996.

<http://www.sabes.org/resources/publications/adventures/vol9/9Donovan.htm>

The author discusses how assessment must be from multiple sources; the importance of using methods appropriate for math purposes; and checking all aspects of math knowledge.

GLOSSARIES OF ASSESSMENT TERMS

“Assessment Strategies and Reading Profiles”. National Institute for Literacy. Cambridge, MA.

www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles

Glossary containing explanations of acronyms and abbreviations, and definitions of words and terms used throughout the field of adult education. Special focus on words used in relationship to assessment. Developed by the National Institute for Literacy.

“Glossary”. National Reporting System. American Institute for Research, Washington, DC

<http://www.nrsonline.org/help/glossary.html>

Glossary developed for adult educators by NRS

“Glossary of Assessment Terms”. Contemporary Book Publishing. New York, NY.

http://www.ctb.com/articles/article_information.jsp;jsessionid=HL2rX7fN2YyG1CMCvulaJwHlbpwI0e0a21Mc6TPUtU3a3qWYKCIL!-1878505452!-1408233562!5008!6008?CONTENT%3C%3Ecnt_id=10134198673250329&FOLDER%3C%3Efolder_id=9852723696535573&bmUID=1204500139063

Glossary developed by commercial test publisher of TABE, one of the major tests of adult basic education. Not customized for adult educators.

“Glossary of Useful Terms”. System for Adult Basic Education Support. Boston, MA.

www.sabes.org/assessment/glossary.htm

Hotlist glossary of terms considered essential for adult educators by SABES. Definitions sometimes slightly revised from conventional ones to fit adult education environment.

NATIONAL FORCES

“Adult Education and Family Literacy Act: A Report to Congress on State Performance”. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2003.

<http://www.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/ovae/2004aela.doc>

The most recent federal evaluation of the performance of programs receiving funding through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Program year 2003-4). The Program received the highest possible rating of “excellent”. This report includes both national and state data.

“America’s Perfect Storm: Three Forces Changing Our Nation’s Future”.

Kirsch, Braun, Yamamoto and Sum. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 2007.

http://www.ets.org/Media/Education_Topics/pdf/AmericasPerfectStorm.pdf

This is a new study just released in 2007. It concludes that divergent skill distributions, economic patterns, and demographic trends are tearing the country apart. Two of the largest forces are tied to adult education: Force #1 is the high dropout rate coupled with the racial and ethnic group disparities in underachievement; and Force #3, the growing Hispanic and other immigrant populations without high school diplomas and with limited English proficiency.

“Contested Ground: Performance Accountability in Adult Basic Education”.

Juliet Merrifield. Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Literacy and Learning, July, 1998.

<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=656>

This is the full report that concludes in part, “Adult education cannot be accountable to learners or to policymakers without the ability to track learning of individuals, to demonstrate what has been learned, to compare learning across programs, and to judge learning against external standards. Yet standardized tests, the most widely used tools for measuring learning, have been criticized both by researchers and practitioners because they do not demonstrate what has been learned....”

“Delusion of Accountability in the Adult Education and Literacy System of the United States, The”. Tom Sticht. Research Note. www.nald.ca, May 21, 2004.

<http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/sticht/may04/may21.htm>

Sticht notes specific problems “in the measurement comparabilities of NRS data (that) renders these data totally meaningless and useless to Congress (or anyone else for that matter)...for holding a state accountable....Teacher and student judgments might prove a much more useful approach than that of the (mis)use of standardized test data for insuring that funds for AELS are meeting student needs for learning.”

“ExpectMore.gov”. U.S. Dept. of Management and Budget and Federal Agencies,
www.expectmore.gov

This is a website developed by the U.S. Department of Management and the Budget and Federal Agencies. Its purpose is to assess, analyze and report the performance of federal agency initiatives to the public. Adult education state grant outcomes, including Illinois’ are reported.

“How Are We Doing? An Inquiry Guide for Adult Education Programs”.

Beth Bigham with Olga Ebert. Cambridge, MA: NCSALL, 2001.
http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/inquiry_guide.pdf

A six session inquiry guide for programs developed by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. It contains excellent workshop-ready materials including a facilitator’s manual, activities, readings, worksheets on performance accountability and program improvement.

“Living With It: Federal Policy Implementation in Adult Basic Education”.

Alice Belzer. Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, 2003.

<http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/research/report24.pdf>

A 65 page report and analysis of Title II WIA: content; state context, stance and actions; programs and responses; and implications for policy and practice.

“Nationwide Accountability: The National Reporting System”. Barbara

Garner. “Focus on Basics”, Vol. 3, Issue B, June, 1999.

<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=361>

Provides an overview of the impetus for NRS: pressures to document positive outcomes of federally funded programs, program accountability for outcomes; intensive high quality services rather than serving large numbers; emphasis on outcomes puts greater emphasis on accurate assessment and reporting.

“NRS Website”. National Reporting System Home page.

www.nrsweb.org

Official NRS home page. This site is full of information from NRS for states. Includes Assessment policy guidance, Tips on goal setting, Proposed changes, Assessment database, Implementation guidelines, State Report Cards, complete Workshop Manuals and materials, Training courses, and more. See separate listing under NRS Materials below.

“Performance Accountability in Adult Basic Education”. National Center for the Study of Adult Literacy and Learning. “Study Circle Guide”. Cambridge, MA: NCSALL, January 2000

<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=898>

A manual with detailed materials for three 3 hour study circle sessions. Includes readings and materials. Excellent resource.

“Performance Accountability: For What? To Whom? And How?” Juliet Merrifield. Cambridge, MA: “Focus on Basics”, Vol. 3 Issue B, Cambridge, MA: June 1999.

<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=362>

This article is based on the outcomes of the NCSALL report, “Contested Ground: Performance Accountability in Adult Education by Juliet Merrifield. This article is more directly related to assessment issues than the full report above.

“Performance Assessments for Adult Education: Exploring the Measurement Issues: Report of a Workshop”. Board on Testing and Assessment, Center for Education. Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences, 2002.

http://books.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=10366&page=R1

Workshop on Alternatives for Assessing Adult Education and Literacy Programs commissioned to consider using performance assessments to measure and report learning gains for adult education

“Tough Choices or Tough Times, The report of the new commission on the skills of the American workforce”. National Center on Testing and the Economy. Washington, DC: NCEE, 2007.

<http://www.skillscommission.org/executive.htm>

A newly released national report. Concludes that world trends require a new educational system to develop an adequate workforce. The workforce of today and tomorrow needs to be much more highly literate and qualified than today's.

“Trends in Adult and Family Literacy”. David Rosen. Florida Literacy Conference Keynote address, May 2004.

<http://www.floridaliteracy.org/2004/pdf.does/keynote05-07-04.pdf>

Rosen addresses the issue of programs teaching more, and students learning more, than the measures are capturing. He couples that with the additional cost of the new requirements in many states coming out of what were once resources for teaching time, leading to more measuring and less instruction.

“Workforce Investment Act: A Brief Introduction”. Mary Beth Bingman. From “How Are We Doing?” Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Literacy and Learning, 2001.

http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/inquiry_guide.pdf

A summary of the components of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Includes a discussion of its core indicators and measures.

“Workforce Investment Act Offers Opportunities for Adult and Family Literacy”. National Institute for Literacy Policy Update. Washington, DC: NIFL, Sept. 1998.

<http://nifl.gov/policy/98-9-23.htm>

A summary of the Workforce Investment Act. Includes a checklist for programs seeking federal adult education and literacy grants under the new Act.

NATIONAL LITERACY ASSESSMENT RESULTS

“Adult Education in America: A First Look at Results from the Adult Education Program and Learner Surveys”. Irwin Kirsch, Marylou Lennon, Kentaro Yamamoto and Claudia Tamassia. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 2007.

<http://www.ets.org/adulteducationinamerica>

Reports survey results from more than 6000 adult learners from 1200 programs nationwide. This study is the first to be done in both English and Spanish and compares the literacy and numeracy skills of enrolled adult education students to the general population. It found overall that participants in classes were in the lowest proficiency scales, and the majority of instruction was ESL.

“ETS Study Reports on U.S. Adult Education Activities”. Tom Ewing. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 2007.

<http://www.ets.org/portal/site/ets/menuitem.c988ba0e5dd572bada20bc47c3921509/?vgnextoid=5528c0c18d301110VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD&vgnnextchannel=dd2d253b164f4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD>

This report provides a comprehensive picture of federally supported adult education activities in the United States. It concludes that a large percentage have literacy and numeracy skills in the lowest level on the proficiency scales. It discusses implications for policy and practice in today's economic landscape and global economy.

“First Look at the Literacy of America's Adults in the 21st Century: National Assessment of Adult Literacy”. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2006.

<http://www.nces.ed.gov/NAAL/PDF/2006470.PDF>

Reports the 2003 national assessment of adult literacy results. Average prose and document literacy did not differ significantly since the last national assessment 10 years earlier; quantitative literacy rose 8 points. Includes description of the procedures, samples of questions, and breakouts of results by demographics. Lists additional reports that are forthcoming.

“Highlights from the 2003 International Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey”. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, May, 2005.

http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED485371&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED485371

Reports results of a comparative study of literacy and numeracy skills of 16-65 year old nationally representative populations. The United States was outperformed by all participating countries except Italy. (Norway, Bermuda, Switzerland, and Canada outperformed the U.S.)

“Key Concepts and Features of the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy”. White and Dillow. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, Dec. 2005.

<http://nces.ed.gov/Pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006471>

This report provides a context to help understand the results of the 2003 NAAL. It describes how the assessment was designed to follow research-based principles; how new performance levels and score ratings were developed; and how to interpret levels. Results reinforce the drive for continued economic and skills based outcomes for adult education programs.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

“A Basic Primer for Understanding Standardized Tests and Using Test Scores”. Zenisky, A. Keller, L, and Sireci, S. *Adventures in Assessment*, Volume 16, Spring, 2004.

This article defines and discusses reliability, validity, scales and error in test scores as they relate to a realistic interpretation of test scores by adult education practitioners. Guidelines are provided to help the teacher or administrator check to see how much confidence they should have in test scores based on the validity and reliability of a particular test.

“ABE Scale Score Correlations”.

www.sabes.org/assessment/scalescores.htm

A chart developed by SABES to make data comparable across tests and programs. It provides correlations for TABE (forms 7/8) scale scores, GLE scores and NRS levels; BEST PLUS scale scores, rubric scores, SPL, and NRS levels; and Benchmark to student goal, assessment, and minimum score to show gain.

“BEST PLUS – A New Way to Assess Oral English Skills, The”. Carol Van Duzer. *Adventures in Assessment*, Vol. 15, Boston, MA: Spring 2003.

www.sabes.org/resources/publications/adventures/vol15/15vanduzer.htm

Overview of the intended changes from BEST to BEST PLUS by the Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator of the National Center for ESL. The Best PLUS is the first computer-adaptive oral language assessment for English language learners (there is also a print-based version). It links learner progress to accountability purposes, provides diagnostic information, is quick to administer, easy to score and generates a new version of test questions each time it is administered (in computer version).

“Basic Primer for Understanding Standardized Tests and Using Test Scores”. Zenisky. *Adventures in Assessment*. SABES, Vol. 16.

www.sabes.org/resources/publications/adventures/vol16/16zenisky.htm

Primer covering basic principles and terms: validity, reliability, scale scores, standard error of measurement. Terms are defined and explained. Provides good information for professional development.

“CTB’s Position Regarding Use of Test-Related Instructional Materials”.

Contemporary Book Publishing.

http://www.ctb.com/articles/article_information.jsp?CONTENT%3C%3Ecnt_id=10134198673250331&FOLDER%3C%3Efolder_id=2534374302066447&bmUID=1204503214433

Test publisher’s stance on the difference between the appropriate use of pretest materials for test readiness and inappropriate coaching. Discusses the value of targeted instruction versus the disservice of teaching to the test. It also discusses the appropriate use of practice tests to gain experience in taking tests, not to practice content.

“Debunking Myths About Standardized Testing”. Kurt Landgraf. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, April 10, 2002.

<http://www.ets.org/portal/site/ets/menuitem.c988ba0e5dd572bada20bc47c3921509/?vgnextoid=6d312d3631df4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD&vgnnextchannel=d83d253b164f4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD>

The President of ETS responds to 4 often-cited criticisms of standardized tests. His responses: Multiple choice tests do not only measure rote memorization, they require critical thinking; Testing for accountability is not only popular to trendy politicians and test publishers but is demanded by the public at large; Increased testing and higher academic standards does not cause excess stress to most students; and the increased emphasis will not lead to instructors teaching to the test. Source for his opinion is a poll commissioned by ETC.

“Definition of Performance Assessment”. Chicago Public Schools. Instructional Intranet,

www.intranet.cps.k12.il.us

Discusses performance assessments by use of rubrics. Includes: How to develop rubrics; types of rubrics; where to find rubrics; how to select and evaluate them; how to use them.

“Developing Performance Assessments for Adult Literacy Learners”. Larry Condelli and Holly Baker. Eric Digest 480441.

<http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Detail?accno=ED480441>

Provides a solid guide to developing performance assessments that will meet the guidelines and requirements of NRS. Larry Condelli, one of the authors, is the head researcher for data and assessment for NRS.

“Guidelines for Providing Accommodations Using CASAS Assessment for Learners with Disabilities”. CASAS test publishers.

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/download/pdf/CASASAccomm.pdf>

Official test publisher guidelines. Includes very general suggestions for specific disabilities. CASAS has large print forms available. Computer forms are available with some of their tests.

“Guidelines for Inclusive Test Administration”. TABE test publishers

http://www.ctb.com/media/articles/pdfs/general/guidelines_inclusive.pdf

Official TABE test publisher guidelines. Provides a “framework for reconciling standardization and accommodation in support of inclusive testing practice”.

“Inclusiveness and accommodations are equally important and non-conflicting characteristics of modern assessment practices”. Classifies accommodations into three categories for appropriate interpretation and reporting of test results.

“How to Do Your Best on Standardized Tests”. Hambleton, R. and Jirka, S. *Adventures in Assessment.*, Volume 16, Spring, 2004.

<http://www.sabes.org/resources/publications/adventures/vol16/16hambleton.htm>

This article answers the questions: What are standardized tests? Why are they so often used? And How can we help our students do better on them? It includes practical suggestions to teachers for helping adult learners acquire the skills they need to “demonstrate what they are truly capable of”.

“Most Frequently Unasked Questions About Standardized Testing”.

Stephen G. Sirec. *Testing-Standardized and Otherwise*, University of Massachusetts, March, 2005.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/abepilottest.doc>

Provides good clarification about the terms and definitions surrounding standardized testing. Explains topics such as norm-referenced and criterion referenced tests, how passing scores are set, standardized test does not equal multiple choice test, how to get more information about any test. Article is found within the document “Testing-Standardized and Otherwise: A curriculum Unit”.

“Nature of Assessment: A Guide to Standardized Testing”. The Center for Public Education.

http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/site/c.kjJXJ5MP1wE/b.1501925/k.C980/The_nature_of_assessment_A_guide_to_standardized_testing.htm

Nine page guide explaining the differences between the various kinds of standardized tests, their formats, other large scale assessments such as the SAT, and high stakes testing. Discusses the basic issues of validity, reliability. Provides references for further information.

“Standardized Assessment”. National Reporting System.

www.nrsweb.org

In NRS Implementation Guidelines. Provides the NRS definition and views on standardized assessment. Standardized assessment is a standardized test or a standardized performance-based assessment with a standardized scoring rubric. Discusses validity in terms of tests being used only to measure what they were intended to measure

“Test Bank”. National Institute for Literacy.

http://www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/MC_Test_Bank.htm

A rubric of 24 assessments used in adult education. Includes the name of test, what is measured, reporting metric, brief description, and ordering information. Developed by the National Institute for Literacy.

ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT

“Adult Reading Components Study”. National Institute of Literacy.

www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/

This study was conducted to provide a picture of the groups of ABE and ESL readers enrolled in basic education across the US. Alternative reading assessments were created by NIFL and are available online for use by adult educators. Learners are matched with one of 11 research-based reading profiles that provide information about their skill strengths, gaps, and special needs.

“Creating Authentic Materials and Activities for the Literacy Classroom: A Handbook for Practitioners”. Erik Jacobson, Sopic Degener, Victoria Purcell-Gates. Cambridge, MA: NCSALL, 2003.

<http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/jacobson.pdf>

125 page handbook provides reader-friendly background theory and practical application to the classroom. Topics covered include learning literacy in context, getting to know students through processes, using authentic materials and activities in the classroom, alternative assessment.

“Developing Classroom Performance Assessments and Scoring Rubrics”. Barbara Moskal. 2003. ERIC Digest ED481714.

<http://www.ericdigests.org/2005-2/rubrics.html>

Discusses the link between goals, objectives, measurable student outcomes, the selection of the assessment activity, and the development of the scoring rubric. 4 pages.

“Difference Between Rubrics and Benchmarks”.

http://www.essentialschools.org/cs/resources/view/ces_res/164

List some specific differences between rubrics and benchmarks. Benchmark http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED359352&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED359352s can exist within rubrics. Rubrics help assess and guide work toward benchmarks.

“Impact of Use of Authentic Materials and Activities”. *“Focus on Basics”*, Vol. 6 Issue C, Cambridge, MA: NCSALL, Sept 2003.

<http://www.ncsall.net/index.php?id=191>

Discusses results of the Literacy Practices of Adult Learners Study sponsored by NCSALL. Provides empirical evidence “that bringing the lives, needs and interest of the students into the classroom is an integral part of best practice”. Brings research-based support for the use of authentic materials and assessment.

“It Belongs to Me: A Guide to Portfolio Assessment in Adult Education Programs”. Hanna Fingeret. Washington DC: U.S.Department of Education, 1993.

http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED359352&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED359352

This guidebook was commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education to provide an introduction to portfolio assessment to adult literacy providers. It includes information on choosing, planning, implementing, evaluating, and revising portfolio assessments. It is a detailed guide with samples.

“Overview of Alternative Assessment Approaches”.

www.essentialschools.org/cs/resources/view/ces_res/127

This is a list of over 150 kinds of things that can be used to assess student knowledge such as demonstrations, discussions, learning logs, concept mapping, debates, interviews. Also discusses projects and how to assess them.

“Rubrics for Web Learners”. Webquest.

<http://webquest.sdsu.edu>

A guide to the advantages of using rubrics in the classroom, how to develop them, and use them. It also provides links to internet resources for learning more about rubrics, examples of rubric types, guidelines, exercises, and further exploration.

“Sampler of On-Going Assessment Tools and Processes”. Equipped for the Future. Center for Literacy Studies, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN.

http://eff.cls.utk.edu/toolkit/support_ongoing_assessment.htm

Lists and describes 18 categories of common and less well known alternative assessments such as performance assessments, portfolios, simulations, information gap activities. Includes lists of resources for tools and techniques. Online at EFF website at toolkit support.

“So What is a BROVI, Anyway? And how can it change your assessing life?” Betty Stone and Vicki Halal. *“Adventures in Assessment”*, Vol 14, Boston, MA: SABES, Spring 2002.

<http://www.sabes.org/resources/publications/adventures/vol14/14stone.htm>

This article describes one program’s successful and motivating experience with its first attempt at developing an alternative assessment. Part time staff with different perspectives and ideas about what should be assessed and how, successfully developed their own assessment and scoring rubric.

“Solutions to Accountability”. Illinois Literacy Resource Development Center. Champaign, IL: ILRDC, 2004

<http://www.ilrdc.org>

An alternative assessment package developed by a coalition of Chicago area funders and programs. Assesses progress in nine areas: reading, writing, math, computer skills, family, communication, employment, community involvement, self-realization. To be used in conjunction with standardized tests and an assessment package. Comes with a database that generates data reports to be used for program improvement.

“Taking Ownership for Learning: Self-Assessment through Portfolios”.

Wendy Hubenthal. *“Exploring Adult Literacy”*, Volume 3, College Reading Association, 2000.

<http://literacy.kent.edu/cra/sel.html>

This article posits that assessment should enhance learning and accurately reflect a person’s ability and knowledge. Grades and test scores often do not; alternative assessments more often do because instruction and assessment are directly intertwined.

“Uniform Portfolio Model”. Ohio Department of Education.

<http://literacy.kent.edu/opas/portfoliomodel.html>

Describes the purpose of the model and its basic principles. Discusses the advantages to using the portfolio model. Defines the role of the instructor and the activities he or she will be engaged in. Outlines the content and format of the portfolio.

“Using a Learner Questionnaire”. National Institute for Literacy. “Assessment Strategies & Reading Profiles”

www.nifl.gov/readingprofiles/MC_Questionnaire.htm

Fact sheet on questionnaires: Research demonstrates the significance of demographics and past experiences to literacy level of students entering programs. The more programs know about a student’s background, the more effective it can be at targeting instruction. A sample questionnaire is given. Developed by NIFL.

USING DATA FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

“Adult Education State Director’s Going to Scale Guide for Planning, Implementing and Evaluating State Program Improvement Initiatives.”

Lennox McLendon and Kathi Polis. Washington, DC: National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium, 2001.

<http://www.naepdc.org/GTS/GTS.pdf>

A resource guide for identifying and guiding program improvement. Sixteen tasks are outlined for work groups to: identify systems that need improvement, select alternatives, try them out, measure impact, make decisions, and make change. Workbook based, Designed for state adult education directors, but could be adapted for use by local program directors.

“By the Numbers: Using Data for Program Improvement.” Megan Swiderski. *Literacy Update*, Vol 12, No 2, October, 2002.

<http://www.lacnyc.org/resources/publications/update/Update2002-03/Update02-10.pdf>

This article discusses the power that data can bring to an organization: “the potential of data to prove hunches, make points, improve learning, entice funders”, improve services, and operate more efficiently....Provides examples of how good data can drive good decisions.

“Data and ESOL Students.” National Institute for Literacy Assessment Online Discussion. April 16-20, 2007.

http://www.wiki.literacytent.org/index.php/Data_and_ESOL_Students

Larry Condelli, head researcher for NRS, comments on a study he conducted on ESL literacy students. He found that the proportion of time attended has a positive effect on oral English learning gain, all other factors being held equal, regardless of numbers of actual hours attended. He concluded that this is a measure of motivation and thus builds a case for managed enrollment vs open enrollment. The conversation continues with another researcher and practitioner adding supporting data.

“Data Detective Training Quotes.” National Reporting System. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Education.

<http://www.nrsweb.org/docs/trainings/summer2006/5%20sides/NRS%20Quotes%20tabloid%207-6-06%20532pm.pdf>

Quotes to be used during workshops, presentations, or trainings about using data for program improvement.

“From Action to Impact: A Handbook for using Purpose, Principles, and Performance Indicators to Improve Programs.” Debbie White. From Washington State Adult Education Policy Manual, (Attachment), 2006.

www.literacynet.org/nevada/pphbk.pdf

This attachment to the manual includes a section on measuring “progress towards purpose” (gathering data). Is it progress? How do you know? Discusses the importance of having a shared vision, purpose, and performance indicators, before you try to make sense of any data.

“Identifying Program Areas in Need of Support.” National Institute for Literacy Assessment List Online Discussion. April 16-20, 2007.

http://www.wiki.literacytent.org/index.php/Data_and_ESOL_Students

Discusses guidance on how to use NRS Tables 4 and 4b to help identify strengths and areas needing additional support. Analyze by program and by class. Three patterns will emerge: Students aren’t staying long enough to post test (look at retention issues); students are staying long enough but aren’t being post-tested (look at staff or systems problems), or students are being post tested but not making level gains (look at instructional strategies and curriculum).

“Introduction to the Many Uses of Data.” Larry Condelli and Mary Ann Corley. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research, April 2007.

<http://www.nrsweb.org>

Power point presentation of the NRS perspective of the value of data for programs. How it can be used to answer questions; what kinds of questions to ask. ;Basic overview of how to plan for using and presenting the data you collect and analyze.

“Management Competencies Assessment Instrument.” PRO-NET2000. “Building Professional Development Partnerships for Adult Educators Project,” Sherman, Dobbins, Tibbetts, Crocker, and Diott. Washington, DC: U.S.Department of Education, March 2002.

http://www.calpro-online.org/pubs/mgmt_comp_asst_inst_71.pdf

This self-assessment instrument was designed to help administrators plan and implement strategies that enhance the overall quality of their programs. Competencies were based on SCANS research. Lists specific competencies related to assessment and data use.

“Over What Period of Time Should We Measure Gains?” National Literacy Advocacy Online Discussion. Oct. 11-17, 2006.

<http://www.wiki.literacytent.org>

Literacy professionals discuss the arbitrary fiscal year time limit in which to measure learner gains and the limitations it imposes. Research suggests that longitudinal data is needed to capture true change, and that intensity of instruction, not just hours of instruction affect gains.

“Planning for Program Improvement: A Manual for Adult Basic Education Programs.” SABES (A System for Adult Basic Education Support). Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Department of Education, July 2002, revised Sept. 2006.
<http://www.sabes.org/resources/planningmanualept2006.pdf>

A comprehensive manual to lead programs through a systematic process to program improvement. Step by step instruction for a planning group to go through the process; includes materials, scenarios and additional resources. Relies on data to inform the process.

“Planning for Program Improvement: A Manual for ABE Programs.” National Reporting System, 2002.

<http://www.nrsweb.org>

How to handle and use data for program improvement. Contains NRS definitions and views on assessment and data.

“Program Improvement: Using the Equipped for the Future approach to quality.” Jereann King and Beth Bingman. Washington, DC: National Urban League and National Institute for Literacy, 2004.

http://pli.cls.utk.edu/PDF/EFF_Program_improvement5.pdf

Detailed facilitator’s manual. Step by step directions for sessions and activities. Handouts included. Uses materials adapted from NCSALL training materials; provides more materials for discussion/workshops on assessment topics. Sessions 4 and 5, and Phase 3 and 4 most applicable. Note: Available at “An EFF Handbook for Program Improvement Using the Equipped for the Future Approach to Quality” at the EFF products web page.

“Story of Improvement, A.” Jane Cody, James Ford, and Kathleen Howard. *Focus on Basics*. Vol. 2, Issue C, Cambridge, MA: NCSALL, Sept 1998.

<http://www.ncsall.net/index.php?id=393>

Describes how a literacy program used assessment and other program data for program improvement. Told by the program itself in a frank and practical manner. The program discovered it lacked clearly defined standards and tools to measure progress; discovered a process to identify program gaps and narrow them.

“Tracking Learner Outcomes: One-Year versus Multi-Year Reporting Periods.” A National Institute for Literacy Online Discussion. April 16-20, 2007.

http://www.literacytent.org/index.php/Tracking_Learner_Outcomes

Discussion about how a one year time frame may not be optimal for capturing learner gains. Steve Reder responds with data from his Longitudinal Study of Adult Learning that learners often take multiple years with episodes of “stop outs” to make gains. Larry Condelli of NRS recommends that states track multi-year data. If they can prove that would make a difference, NRS might be open to changing policy on the reporting period

“Using Student Goals as Data.” National Institute for Literacy Online Discussion. April 16-20, 2007.

http://www.literacytent.org/index.php/Using_Student_Goals_as_Data

Examples of how programs use assessment data both for student and classroom use and for the good of the program. Provides a detailed example of an ESL class collecting student goals, using them instructionally, collecting ongoing data and assessing progress towards goals, discussing progress with students, seeing it help retention, using goals met for end of year student recognition, and to demonstrate program impact to funders.

NRS MATERIALS
Resources available at <http://www.nrsweb.org>
Relating to assessment

Online Training

<http://www.nrsweb.org/trainings/>

- **Data Quality Guide Training Course**
Sessions based on content of “Guide for Improving NRS Data Quality”
- **Using NRS Data** (estimated 15 minute completion time)
- **Scenarios for Local Administrators**
- **Data Use Guide Training Course** (8 lessons)
 - A model for using data for program management and improvement
 - Identifying issues and problems
 - Developing measurable outcomes
 - Developing an analysis plan
 - Analyzing and interpreting data
 - Developing a plan for change
 - Implementing change

Training manuals

<http://www.nrsweb.org/trainings/>

Guide for Improving NRS Quality: Procedures for Data Collection and Training, 2002

Excellent source of information on the federal perspective regarding policies and practices related to assessment.

Learning to be an NRS Data Detective: The Five Sides of NRS.

Focuses on the use of NRS data to improve local program performance.

NRS Data Monitoring for Program Improvement, 2004.

Use of data in program monitoring and improvement. 77 pages. Was the NRS summer 2004 training for state directors

Using NRS Data for Program Management and Improvement, 2003.

Complete training manual for workshop on concepts and methods for data-driven decision making with NRS data. Basic data analysis instruction. Was the NRS Spring 2003 training for state directors. Includes an accompanying professional development manual.

Using Data Effectively. NRS ABE Directors Meeting, 2002.

Slides from NRS Fall 2002 Directors meeting. Overview of a model for using data for program improvement.

Using NRS Data for Program Management and Improvement, Revised May 2003. NRS perspective on data and its many uses; how it can be used for program improvement.

OTHER INFORMATION

Assessment Database

<http://www.nrsweb.org/docs/Assessment%20policy%20guidance%20revised%20final%20May%202006a.doc>

Information page on standardized tests as furnished by the test publisher to NRS; Updated frequently

Assessment Policy Guidance

<http://www.nrsweb.org/docs/pubs/AssessmentPolicyGuidance.doc>

8 page guidance to states; Includes policy on alternative assessment use

Goal Setting

<http://www.nrsweb.org/pubs/documents/NRSTips-GoalSetting.pdf>

2 page tip sheet on effective learner goal setting, policies, and guidelines

History of NRS and overview

<http://www.nrsweb.org/about/history.aspx>

narrative version

<http://www.nrsonline.org/reference/index.html>

searchable online version

Implementation Guidelines

<http://www.nrsweb.org/docs/ImplementationGuidelines.pdf>

Full implementation guidelines available online; assessment guidelines

Learning to be an NRS Data Detective

<http://www.nrsweb.org/reports/StateDataDetectives.aspx>

Summarizes the training and state examples

State models: Data Detectives At Work

<http://www.nrsweb.org/reports/StateDataDetectives.aspx>

Maryland, Tennessee, South Dakota report

Using Data for Program improvement

http://www.nrsweb.org/NRSwork/data_use.aspx

KEY RESEARCH REPORTS & STUDIES

Notes

Following are notes on key research studies conducted during the past ten years that have findings applicable to adult education assessment policy and practice which have informed this report. Reports are available for review; on file in the CALL office.

ASSESSMENT IN ADULT EDUCATION

“Adult Literacy Research: Opportunities and Challenges”. John Comings and Lisa Soricone. Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy and National Institute for Literacy, January, 2007.

Key reading

- *In the section, Lack of Valid and Reliable tests:*
- “Researchers who conducted the What Works Study for Adult ESL Students concluded that the “assessments available for these students for instruction, research and accountability purposes range from non-existent to inadequate” (Condelli, 2002)
- “As part of their effort to capture literacy gains among low-level learners, researchers used a combination of standardized tests, including the Adult Language Assessment Scale, the CASAS Functional Writing Assessment, and alternative assessments. The alternative assessments the team developed included a reading demonstration assessment, used to “measure students’ ability to read and understand authentic materials they encounter in everyday life....Researchers concluded that such an approach is promising and might serve as the basis for future development of more suitable assessments....” (p.24)
- As part of their study of persistence, Porter et. al.(2005) included an assessment of literacy skill development. “Since no single test was available to measure the multiple aspects of literacy development – decoding, vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension- the study used a series of standardized assessments, which researchers felt were suitable for the study, and relied on different procedures for different students, thereby making the standardized assessment more appropriate for each individual, and thus more meaningful and valid.” (p. 25)
- Alamprese et al. (2003) employed multiple standardized reading tests to measure the development of reading skills among study participants....
- “The examples described here reflect the need for the development of an approach to assessment that comprises a multiplicity of measures” (p. 26)

http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/research/op_opps_challenges.pdf

“Adult Reading Components Study (ARCS)”. Strucker and Davidson, NCSALL Research Brief. 2003

- Resulted in ARCS alternative reading assessment system
- available in full online at NIFL website
- assesses students and matches them with research-based profiles of reading strengths and weaknesses; provides suggestions for teaching

http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/research/brief_strucker2.pdf

“Assessing Mathematical Knowledge of Adult Learners: Are We Looking At What Counts?”, NCAL Technical Report, National Center on Adult Literacy for the US Department of Education.

- *****key reading**
- “one type of assessment alone, i.e. use of standardized tests, will not be sufficient to inform all placement and instructional decisions and program evaluation requirements” NCAL Technical Report
- “Convenient and apparently simple assessments such as standardized tests may not be appropriate or informative, and may do a disservice to students, teachers, and a program” NCAL Technical Report
- “Assessments should inform students in a systematic way of their progress and achievement in a program” NCAL Technical Report
- “These reporting requirements support the continued use of assessment techniques (standardized testing) that do not reflect the current pedagogy in mathematics education, and do not provide meaningful information to students, teachers, programs, or agencies.” NCAL Technical Report

www.literacyonline.org/PDFs/TR9805.pdf

“Contested Ground: Performance Accountability in Adult Basic Education”. Juliet Merrifield, NCSALL, July 1998.

- Concludes that the changing demand to hold adult education accountable for specified results is problematic because “the capacity to perform – to achieve desired goals-is linked with the capacity to be accountable-to document achievements and measure results....”
- “Adult education cannot be accountable to learners or to policymakers without the ability to track learning of individuals, to demonstrate what has been learned, to compare learning across programs, and to judge learning against external standards.”
- “Yet standardized tests, the most widely used tools for measuring learning, have been criticized both by researchers and practitioners because they do not demonstrate what has been learned....”
(Merrifield, 1998)

<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=656>

Contested Ground: “Performance Accountability: For What? To Whom? And How?” Juliet Merrifield. FOCUS ON BASICS, Vol. 3 Issue B, June 1999.

- Article written by the researcher of Contested Ground
- “Where does the balance lie between providing services and delivering results?”
- “Until recently, the focus has been on delivering services, with little emphasis on the results or the impact on those services...(recently) shift the emphasis to delivering results, with services seen as the means to an end. But what the “end” should be is by no means clear.”
- “What is counted becomes what counts”
- Key questions:
 - What does good performance mean?
 - Do programs have the capacity to be accountable?
 - Are the tools commonly used for measuring and documenting performance adequate and useful?
 - Are accountability relationships in place to link ABE into a coherent system?

<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=362>

“Documenting Outcomes for Learners and Their Communities: A Report on a NCSALL Action Research Project, Bingham and Bell, March 2002.

- “On the state and federal levels, resources should be committed to designing outcome measurement and reporting systems flexible enough to include a variety of goals and rigorous enough to measure performance.”
- An unintended consequence of this action research project: led to increased understanding of “...how programs might identify and document student outcomes in ways that meet local program needs and how that documentation can support program improvement. (p. ii)...
- The idea of documenting learner lives versus test scores...(p. iii”). Bingham and Bell (2002)
- “Local programs can develop new ways to measure performance, but integrating these processes into state reporting systems will require changes. The federal NRS system and most state systems require standardized measures of only a few outcomes. Increased flexibility on the part of state had federal policy makers is needed so that locally developed procedures for documenting a wider variety of outcomes can count as measures for program accountability” (page 52).
- NCSALL Report #20.

<http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/research/report20.pdf>

“Documenting Lessons from NCSALL’s Outcomes and Impacts Study”, Hal Beder, NCSALL, 1998

- Brings credibility to assessing and reporting results beyond GED, employment and postsecondary education.
- “Adult students report and value a variety of outcomes that include but often go well beyond the GED, better employment, or postsecondary education. Through program participation, they are often able tobetter their lives...and those around them...”
- The report recommends using action research to identify ways to assess and document a variety of outcomes.
- “The most serious problem may lie in the test themselves. To be valid, tests must reflect the content of instruction and the extent to which the TABE or CASAS reflect the instruction of the programs they are used to assess is an unanswered question. Similarly, it may be that the tests are not sensitive enough to register learning gains that adult learners consider to be important. “
- “If data are to be collected from programs, staff must have the capacity to test and keep accurate records. This will require more program resources and staff development....Bad outcomes studies simply waste money,” (and are misleading and cause legislators to think adult education programs are ineffective).

<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=386>

“ Evidence-Based Adult Education Program Model Appropriate for Research”, Comings, Soricone, and Santos.

and “Establishing an Evidence-based Adult Education System”, Seminar Guide, Parker, Smith, Bingam, January 2004.

- Studies conclude that there is no universally accepted adult learning theory that constitutes good practice. Leads to the argument stated by many in the field that universally accepted assessment goals and tools do not exist either
- Practitioners and policymakers should base decisions on the findings of scientific research
- Research builds models; programs test models; practitioner knowledge improves implementation.
- Values the insights of both researchers and practitioners in determining how best to provide educational services

http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/research/op_comings4.pdf

http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/ebae_seminar.pdf

“The Evolution of Educational Assessment: Considering the Past and Imagining the Future”, James Pellegrino, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ, 1999

- Concludes that standards being set at the state and national levels create the need to substantially improve assessment design and implementation.
- Assessment must be integrated into the learning environment.
- When it is, assessment can directly support the enhanced outcomes for students and become part of the solution rather than be part of the problem.(Pellegrino, 1999)
- “We need to shift things so that the focus of the assessment information is more on the level of the learner and the teacher.”

<http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/PICANG6.pdf>

“Impact of Use of Authentic Materials and Activities” Focus on Basics, Issue C, Sept 2003.

- Results of the 2003 Literacy Practices of Adult Learners Study by NCSALL
- Provides empirical evidence “that bringing the lives, needs and interest of the students into the classroom is an integral part of best practice”
- Supports the need for authentic assessment.

<http://www.ncsall.net/index.php?id=191>www.ncsall.net/index.php?id=153

“Implications of NCSALL Research for Program Administrators”. Seminar Guide, April 2006.

- Includes chart of Principles of Best Practices from John Comings “An Evidence-Based Adult Education Program Model Appropriate for Research”
- Best practice is “a comprehensive approach for assessing and placing students, evaluating their progress, and determining their achievement, with this information clearly explained and shared with students to the extent possible.”

<http://www.ncsall.net/index.php?id=1117>

“I’ve Come A Long Way: Learner-Identified Outcomes of Participation in Adult Literacy Programs”. Bingam and Ebert. NCSALL Report #13, Feb. 2000.

- “This research implies that policy makers should take into account all the reasons people want adult basic education as they develop systems of performance accountability.”
- “Many of the approaches now being developed do not measure the primary outcomes reported by the participants in this study: new literacy practices and more positive sense of self. To assess these outcomes may require developing performance-based measures that allow for the interaction of skill, task, and context that seem to define outcomes in real life.” (Bingam and Ebert, 2000)
- “Policyholders should take into account all the reasons people want adult education as they develop systems of performance accountability”.
- Establishes a research based need for authentic and alternative forms of assessment
- Available on NCSALL website

<http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/research/report13.pdf>

“Learner Assessment”, Wrigley and Guth, TCALL Literacy Links, Vol 3, No. 1, Sept. 1998.

- Practitioner conducted research on the advantages and disadvantages of standardized and program-based or other alternative assessments.
- The article is primarily targeted to ESL.
- It contains 8 detailed lists of specific disadvantages of standardized tests and 4 specific advantages of alternative assessments.

<http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/newsletr/sep98/sep98a.htm>

“Literacy Education in Adult Basic Education,” John Kruideneier, Vol.3, Chapter 4, NCSALL

- “Many within and outside the field of adult literacy have described the possible negative effects of assessment, particularly when standardized tests are used.”
- “Students, for example, may be anxious about testing, and negative results from test may lead to a loss of self-esteem and motivation.” (Ehringhaus, 1991.
- “When used professionally and carefully to minimize possible negative side effects, however, assessment can be beneficial”.
- “The most common uses of assessment in adult literacy include
 - Screening to place students in appropriate programs
 - Diagnosis of individual strengths and weaknesses in literacy to help plan for instruction
 - Measurement of individual growth
 - Self-evaluation and personal growth

- Program evaluation and accountability”
(Askov, et a. 1997 and 2000)
- “Few carefully controlled studies of the direct effects of assessment in education exist, and there may be non in the field of adult literacy.”
- “A comprehensive review in 1999 revealed 11 studies in the entire field of education overall.”
- “No national survey or observational studies of local programs’ use of assessment for instruction exist”

<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=567>

“Major Findings and Implications in the Study Titled: Literacy in the Labor Force: Results from the National Adult Literacy Survey” Source: USDOE.

- Bullet point summary of findings and implications to the labor force of findings of NALS report
- Nearly all subgroups of employees, including frontline workers, receive positive economic payoffs from higher literacy proficiencies
- Recent study suggests that participation in workplace literacy programs has a positive impact on wages
- Substantial share of the labor force had limited literacy proficiencies
- On each of the literacy scales, only 3-5% of adults active in the labor force scored in the highest level
- We are not a nation of readers who can readily synthesize information, master multi-step quantitative tasks, or analyze graphics
- Results reinforce the drive for continued economic and skills based outcomes

<http://www.skillscommission.org/executive.htm>

“NCSALL’s Adult Persistence Study”, Comings, Parrella and Soricone, May 2006 issue of the Show-Me newsletter, Missouri Dept. of Education.

- Summarizes the study
- Includes comments from the researchers regarding implications for practice
- Persistence increases as the student measures his/her own progress
- Builds a case for portfolio and authentic assessment tools

http://www.dese.mo.gov/divcareerad/AEL/Show.Me_Literacy_May_2006.pdf

“The Outcomes and Impacts of Adult Literacy Education in the United States”, Hal Beder, NCSALL Report #6, January 1999

- Study examined the 115 research studies conducted in the area since the 1960s.
- Conclusions are listed on page 2 of the summary.
- Generally, participants report positive perceptions of gain.
- Generally, there is insufficient evidence of gain as measured by test gains, job improvement, or reduction in welfare specifically resulting from participation in the programs
- Recommends relevant and measurable outcomes standards and feasible impact reporting system
- Systematic improvement of state and local outcome studies

<http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/research/report6.pdf>

(See also Lessons from NCSALL’s Outcomes and Impacts Study)

“Passing the Torch: Strategies for Innovation in Community College ESL. Executive Summary”. Forrest P. Chisman and JoAnn Crandall, rev. Feb. 20, 2007. NY: CAAL. Council for the Advancement of Adult Literacy.

- Reports results of a two year study of ESL services at community colleges by the Council for the Advancement of Adult Literacy.
- Highly effective strategies for increasing learning gains were:
 - High intensity instruction with managed enrollment
 - Extending learning outside the classroom
 - Adapting curricula to learner needs
- “Both the design and implementation of these practices are handicapped by lack of affordable assessment measures that indicate the full range of English ability of adults....This is a major structural problem”
- A major increase in funding is needed to meet the need and to develop better assessments built specifically for this population and need

<http://www.caalusa.org/eslpassingtorch226.pdf>

“Practitioners Speak: Contributing to a Research Agenda for Adult Basic Education.” NCSALL Practitioner Dissemination and Research Network, Report #4, July 1998

- Practitioners Survey, NCSALL, 1998
- Research study brief: Practitioners identified assessment and measurement of performance as one of 8 issues of prime concern

<http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/research/rep4.pdf>

“Research-Based Principles for Adult Basic Education Reading Instruction.” John Kruikenier, RMC Research Corp., Portsmouth, NH, 2002

- Search of research studies yielded solid support for specific reading and corresponding assessment techniques for readers with different profiles of strengths and weaknesses
- Profiles described
- Matched with specific reading and assessment techniques supported by research; detailed information
- Differentiates by those supported strongly and those with marginal support
http://novel.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/html/adult_ed_1.html

“Research on Factors That Shape Engagement.” Barbara Garner, Focus on Basics, March 2005.

- NCSALL research by Hal Beder
- “You can’t learn unless you engage”
- “the students who persist in ABE show high engagement while in class”
(participatory assessment leads to high engagement)

<http://www.ncsall.net/?id=732>

“Unfinished Business: More Measured Approaches in Standards-Based Reform.” Paul Barton, Policy Information Center, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ, 2004

- Report concludes that more and better measures are needed to make standards-based and test-based accountability approached effective and credible.
- If we think of accountability as a structure, then the foundation of that structure consists of four walls: the content standards, performance standards defining expected levels of attainment, the curriculum and the teaching of that curriculum, and the test.
- When the test is not aligned with the other 3 walls, the foundation is too weak to support the structure and the assignment is failure, sanctions.
- “The tendency to cut to the chase and use test scores whether or not the required alignment is accomplished needs to be overcome.”- results in negative unintended consequences to the learner and the program.

http://www.ets.org/Media/Education_Topics/pdf/unfinbusiness.pdf

NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS / REPORTS

“Adult Education in America: A First Look at Results from the Adult Education Program and Learner Surveys”. Kirsch, Lennon, Yamamoto and Tamassia, ETS, Princeton, NJ, 2007.

- National study funded by Office of Vocational and Adult Education, USDOE released Feb 27, 2007
- Survey results from more than 6000 adult learners from 1200 programs nationwide.
- First study done in both English and Spanish.
- Compares literacy and numeracy skills of adults in adult ed. classes to those in the general population
- Findings: Overall literacy levels of participants in classes were in the lowest proficiency scales and majority of instruction was ESL

<http://www.ets.org/portal/site/ets/menuitem.c988ba0e5dd572bada20bc47c3921509/?vgnextoid=f52a51bf36dd0110VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD&vgnnextchannel=6773e3b5f64f4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD>

“Adult Literacy in the United States: A Compendium of Quantitative Data with Interpretative Comments”, Tom Sticht, available online.

- History of literacy and standardized testing in the U.S, and mass literacy tests.
- Presents data from several periods in time; includes longitudinal growth curves for some programs.
- Available through the Ohio Literacy Center

<http://www.nald.ca/FULLTEXT/adlitUS/cover.htm>

“America’s Perfect Storm: Three Forces Changing our Nation’s Future.” Kirsch, Braun, Yamamoto, and Sum. Princeton, NJ: ETS, 2007.

- New study released this year.
- Concludes that widely divergent skill distributions, economic patterns and demographic trends are tearing the country apart.
- Two of the largest forces are tied to adult education: high dropout rate coupled with racial and ethnic disparities in underachievement; and growing Hispanic and immigrant populations with limited literacy skills.

http://www.ets.org/Media/Education_Topics/pdf/AmericasPerfectStorm.pdf

“First Look at the Literacy of America’s Adults in the 21st Century: National Assessment of Adult Literacy”. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2006.

- Reports the 2003 national assessment of adult literacy results.
- Average prose and document literacy did not differ significantly since last national assessment 10 years earlier; quantitative literacy rose 8 points.
- Includes description of the procedures, samples of questions, and breakouts of results by demographics.
- Lists additional reports that are available or forthcoming.
- Many reports available broken out by subgroup.

<http://nces.ed.gov/Pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006470>

“Highlights from the 2003 International Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey.” Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, May, 2005.

- Comparative study of literacy and numeracy skills of 16-65 year olds in nationally representative populations.
- The United States was outperformed by all participating countries except Italy. (Norway, Bermuda, Switzerland, and Canada outperformed the U.S.)

<http://nces.ed.gov/Pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005117>

“Key Concepts and Features of the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy”. White and Dillow, Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, Dec. 2005.

- This report provides a context to help understand the results of the 2003 NAAL.
- It describes how the assessment was designed to follow research-based principles; how new performance levels and score ratings were developed; and how to interpret levels.
- Results reinforce the drive for continued economic and skills based outcomes for adult education programs.

<http://nces.ed.gov/Pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006471>

“Major Findings and Implications in the Study Titled: Literacy in the Labor Force: Results from the National Adult Literacy Survey”. U.S.Department of Education.

- Bullet point summary of findings and implications to the labor force of findings of NALS report
- Nearly all subgroups of employees, including frontline workers, receive positive economic payoffs from higher literacy proficiencies
- Recent study suggests that participation in workplace literacy programs has a positive impact on wages
- Substantial share of the labor force had limited literacy proficiencies

- On each of the literacy scales, only 3-5% of adults active in the labor force scored in the highest level
- We are not a nation of readers who easily synthesize information, master multi-step quantitative tasks, or analyze graphics

“Tough Choices or Tough Times: The Report of the new commission on the skills of the American workforce”. Washington, DC: National Center on Education and the Economy, 2007.

- Newly released national report
- Concludes that world trends require a new educational system to develop an adequate workforce
- The workforce of today and tomorrow needs to be much more highly literate and qualified than today’s

<http://www.skillscommission.org/executive.htm>