

Adult  
Literacy  
Resource  
Institute/  
SABES  
Greater  
Boston  
Regional  
Support  
Center



A project of the  
University of Massachusetts/Boston.  
Sponsored by the Massachusetts  
Department of Education and  
the Boston BRA/EDIC/Office of  
Jobs and Community Services.

all write news

## WHAT'S NEW WITH GED 2002?

by Marie Hassett

*"If my students don't pass before the changes go through, they'll never get their GEDs!"—Anonymous GED Teacher*

Do those words sound familiar to you? Have you heard your colleagues saying similar things in staff meetings? If so, you might want to let them know this: The quote above is from 1987, the year before the "impossible" 1988 version of the test was implemented.

Change is always a little scary in education, especially when people's life plans may be affected. And there is no question that the GED 2002 has made some significant changes. But as you'll see, the changes we're facing are not insurmountable obstacles to success.

It's important to keep in mind with regard to the new GED that the content has not changed significantly. Most of the important information and concepts that we've always taught in math, English, science, and social studies will still be there. What has changed significantly is what students are expected to do with that content. The new test places much more emphasis than the old one on problem-solving strategies and higher order thinking skills, and these are not things that students will acquire without direct instruction, embedded in the context of the different GED subjects. In the paragraphs below, I'll summarize the major changes to the test, and suggest some strategies that will help you and your students transition to GED 2002.

### Language Arts/Writing

- A new element, Organization, is included in both the multiple choice and essay portions of this test. In the multiple-choice section, a test taker might be asked which sentence in a passage should start a new paragraph. In the essay, this element is part of the scoring rubric and addresses both form (paragraphs, topic sentences) and content (thoughts flow logically, details are relevant and on topic, etc.).

*continued on page 2*

## SHOULD WE BUY THE NEW ECONOMY?

A review of: *The Future of Success*, by Robert B. Reich

(Alfred A. Knopf, 2001)

by Derek Kalchbrenner

Since we're living in prosperous times, it may come as a surprise to some that not everyone is doing well in the new economy. Inner-city high-school dropout rates are still high and rising. The number of unskilled workers in the workforce is still large and growing. The income gap between the rich and the poor is still vast and expanding, now to the point where it is the widest it has ever been in over a century. This is the dark underside of our nation's economy, which, until recently, experienced its longest expansion in its history.

Robert B. Reich, Brandeis University professor and Secretary of Labor under President Clinton, shines new light on these and many other issues in his absorbing new book, *The Future of Success*. According to Reich, the encouraging news about the new economy is that American corporations have become more productive and that their goods and services are vastly improved. Technology now gives customers more choices in the market,

*continued on page 4*

Sept./Oct. 2001

Vol. XVIII, No. 2

*Inside...*

Send Us Your Teaching Tips and  
Program News! ..... 2

For Your Information ..... 5  
*(conferences, WGBH shows,  
ESOL field trip)*

Program-Based Staff/Program  
Development ..... 6

News from the A.L.R.I. .... 7  
*(funding, space, library)*

The A.L.R.I. Job Bank ..... 8

Please share this newsletter  
with others at your program.  
The deadline for submitting  
material for the next issue is:

Oct. 15.

## What's New With GED 2002?

*continued from page 1*

- The passages students read in the multiple choice section will be longer—200-300 words, compared to 100-150 now. As there will be only five fewer questions in the same amount of time, this suggests that students will need to read more quickly in order to complete the test.
- The essay will now be scored on a 4-point scale, instead of a 6-point scale. Students need an average score of 2 (average of two readers) to pass this section.
- Students must achieve a passing score on both sections of the Writing Skills test in order to pass. If they do not meet the minimum score requirement for the essay, they will fail Writing Skills.
- The average length of a passing essay is expected to increase from 200 to 250 words in order to meet the criteria of the new scoring rubric.
- Reading passages now include business and how-to documents.

## Mathematics

- The math test will now be divided into Part I: Calculator and Part II: Pencil-and-Paper. Each section is timed and includes 25 questions. Students are not required to use the calculator for all problems on Part I, but it is unlikely that they will complete the whole section if they do not use it for the majority of those problems.
  - The answer sheet will now include two alternate format grids for responses to open ended questions, a five-column bubble grid and a plot for coordinate points. The test will include ten of these alternate format responses (seven bubble columns and one coordinate grid in Part I, one of each format in Part II).
  - In addition to the current content areas tested (Number Sense & Operations, Algebra, Geometry) the new test will include items that address data analysis and probability.
  - There is a significant increase in visual prompts (charts and graphs).
  - The formula page has been revised. Where the area of a
- continued on next page*

## SEND US YOUR TEACHING TIPS & YOUR PROGRAM NEWS!

We'd like to encourage our readers to send us brief items (a paragraph or two would be fine) that you'd like to share with other practitioners. We're especially eager to get: 1) **Hot Tips for Teachers**—information on materials, resources, strategies, ideas, etc. that you'd like to share with your colleagues; and 2) **News from the Field**—news items from your program that you think others in the field would be interested in.

Remember that, although the *All Write News* is published by the A.L.R.I., it is meant to be **your** newsletter. Its purpose is to present news and information dealing with adult literacy/adult basic education and to provide an open forum for materials written **by** and **for** adult literacy/adult basic education practitioners in this area. We also encourage people to send us: • articles that share practitioners' thoughts, experiences, and concerns; that reflect various approaches to adult basic education; that present



ideas about teaching; or that explore important issues facing the field; • reviews of books, instructional materials, curricula, websites, software, audio-visual materials, etc.; • information on resources (financial or otherwise) available to programs; • responses to previously-published articles; • material in other, non-prose formats (such as poetry, cartoons, etc.).

Articles should usually be not more than five or six double-spaced pages in length, though there have been exceptions to this.

You can e-mail all material to me at <steve@alri.org>. Or you can send it to me at the A.L.R.I., 989 Commonwealth Ave., Boston MA 02215, and, if possible, please include a computer disk (Mac or PC) with your material saved as a Word, Works, or "text-only" document. The deadline for submitting material for an upcoming issue is usually about one month after your receipt of the previous issue. Please call me at 782-8956 x14 to ask questions, discuss an idea, or get further encouragement. Thanks.

—Steve Reuys

## What's New With GED 2002?

*continued from previous page*

triangle was formerly written as "1/2 bh," it will now read "1/2 base x height."

- The official calculator for the GED 2002 is the Casio fx260.

### Social Studies

- Behavioral sciences (psychology, sociology) have been eliminated.
- History has been increased to 40% of the total test.
- Students are expected to have prior knowledge of four "key documents": The Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, The Federalist Papers, and landmark Supreme Court cases.
- Single items (one question on a particular prompt) have been increased to 40% of the total items on this test.
- There is a significant increase in the number of visual prompts (charts, graphs, maps, cartoons, pictures).

### Science

- The content of this test has been reorganized into three primary areas: Life Science, Physical Science, and Earth & Space Science. This new organization follows the National Science Education Standards. (See <<http://www.asta.org>> for more information.)
- As in the other tests, there are more problem-solving items and fewer items that test comprehension.
- The new test includes more visual prompts (graphs, charts, maps, diagrams).

### Language Arts/Reading

- The Nonfiction section of this test now includes business and how-to documents.
- Reading passages are longer than in the previous test (200-400 words).

Students will see at least one compare/contrast question on each iteration of the test.

- As in Language Arts, Writing, the overall amount of reading on this test has increased substantially. As a result, students will need to read more quickly than in previous years to complete all items.
- Each iteration of the test will include at least one drama selection and one poetry selection.

### Teaching Strategies

While every teacher will select a variety of tools and strategies for dealing with these changes, I'd like to suggest a few that will be helpful with each component of the new test. These are adapted from Jennifer Cromley's Literacy Leader Fellowship Report, *Learning to Think, Learning to Learn: What the Science of Thinking and Learning Has to Offer Adult Education* (NIFL 2000):

Link new learning to previous learning, and make sure that you present new material in organized ways. Most

teachers try to do this, but it's often hard when students' attendance is sporadic. Think of organizing not according to the material, but according to the students' skill needs and prior learning—in other words, it's not "Well, we do writing on Wednesdays," it's "Susan, last time you were here you were working on U.S. History. Why don't you start to review the Declaration of Independence tonight."

Model strategies that build understanding, and don't be afraid to use the magic words "I don't know." Help your students to see the skills and strategies you use when you want to learn a new skill or concept.

Deliberately ask questions that have more than one right answer. Help students to recognize what a "best" answer looks like, and why. It's also helpful (particularly in math) to ask questions for which students have insufficient information to answer. This can lead to a discussion of the kinds of information necessary to solve different kinds of problems, and the clues to look for when a problem seems to be unsolvable.

Change is unnerving, and it's certain that we will experience some challenges as we transition to GED 2002. However, it's important to remember that we've seen similarly significant change before, and after some initial difficulty, we managed not just to survive, but to thrive and deliver excellent instruction that helped our students to earn their credentials. We will continue to do so in the future.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Marie Hassett is a curriculum, program, and staff development consultant specializing in adult education. If you have further questions about GED 2002, please feel free to email them to her at <[AskMarie@MarieCentral.com](mailto:AskMarie@MarieCentral.com)>.*

The *All Write News* is published every two months by the Adult Literacy Resource Institute/SABES Greater Boston Regional Support Center, which is primarily funded by the Massachusetts Department of Education, the Boston BRA/EDIC/Jobs and Community Services Department, and the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. All signed articles represent the opinions of the individual authors and not necessarily those of the A.L.R.I. or its staff, nor does material included here necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Massachusetts Department of Education or the federal government.

Please send all material for the newsletter to the editor, Steve Reuys, at the A.L.R.I. (E-mail address: [steve@alri.org](mailto:steve@alri.org); regular mail address: see last page of this issue. If sending by regular mail, please include, if possible, a computer disk (Mac or PC) with material saved as a "text only" document.) For more information or for permission to reprint articles, please call Steve at 617-782-8956 x14. Complete issues of this newsletter published since March, 1998, can be found in PDF format in the "Publications" section of our web page at: <<http://www.alri.org>>. Individual articles published since May, 1996, can also be found there in HTML format.

## Should We Buy the New Economy?

*continued from page 1*

causing greater competition among corporations that must deliver better, faster, and cheaper goods and services. But the improved commodities come at a price for the average worker. With increased competition, the demand for overtime is tremendous, resulting in employees working more overtime hours, taking fewer vacations, and generally having much less time for their families and communities. All jobs and earnings have also become less secure, with the wages and benefits of the unskilled suffering the most.

Reich has been an authority on labor issues for years and when he was a member of the Clinton administration was a strong supporter of education and job training for all workers, particularly the unskilled. In *The Future of Success*, Reich shares a conversation with an employee of his neighborhood laundromat that highlights many of the issues of the new economy. The employee makes minimum wage and has never had a raise, but explains that she can't demand even one penny more from her employer because the employer could easily replace her with another worker. Incredibly, Reich argues that the problem here is not that the employer is unwilling to give its unskilled workers higher wages. The problem is us. "We're not aware," he writes, "that we're demanding wage cuts [for employees] and fighting unions but that's often the effect we have when we choose the cheapest product or service. Companies can't pass on to us [customers]...wage increases in the form of higher prices as easily as they could in the old industrial economy. We have more choices now, and don't have to pay the higher wages embedded in what we buy." When a business raises its prices or does something that displeases its customers, it is now more than ever easy for the customers to take their business elsewhere. And most customers are doing just that, forcing companies to aggressively cut costs to stay competitive. Reich himself acknowledges that he would probably seek a new laundromat if his current one raised its prices.

Unlike the highly skilled, creative workers that companies pursue relentlessly, unskilled workers such as the laundress are not in high demand. In fact, unskilled workers are suffering because of the competition for skilled workers.

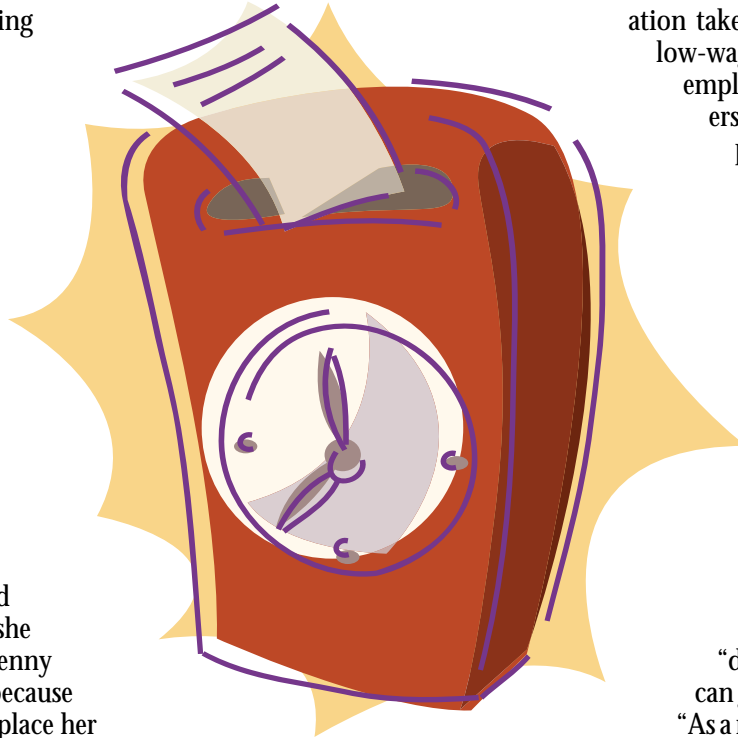
Governors and mayors work hard to attract and retain citizens with high skills because employers need skilled employees. Employers raise salaries and boost benefit packages to attract and retain these skilled workers. At the same time, government officials are ignoring the needs of its uneducated citizens while employers are lowering their wages and eliminating their benefits. The reason, Reich explains, is the large supply of unskilled workers, primarily in urban areas. On average, only 1.6% of high school dropouts move to another state each year. This means that most states have a ready supply of unskilled workers for minimum wage jobs. This situation takes away any bargaining power low-wage workers may have with their employers, and the result is the workers are forced to keep their low-paying jobs and tolerate years of service without raises.

There is another damaging component of the new economy that Reich calls "the sorting component." Reich explains that individuals and communities, like employers, also compete for the best deals for themselves. Individuals try to get into communities that are affordable, have the best schools, and are largely crime-free. Communities compete to attract "desirable members," or ones who can give the most and take the least. "As a result," Reich writes, "the most desirable end up clustering together....

And with ever greater efficiency, they exclude those who are less valuable or more needy." The sorting mechanism is particularly hard on poor children and children with special needs. "As a result of all this sorting, poorer children who require a lot of attention from good teachers are increasingly bunched together with other poorer children who also need a lot, within schools that have relatively few resources to begin with." Gradually, low-income families are forced to live in communities with ineffective schools, few public recreation areas, unsafe streets, and many other social problems. The end result of all of this sorting, for youths and adults, often leads to not finishing high school, extreme poverty, juvenile detention centers, prison, or the streets.

The issues are different for skilled workers. While their earnings are certainly much higher (Reich states that the typical chief executive takes home 419 times the annual earnings of typical workers), they are devoting most of their time for work, leaving little time for family, friends, commu-

*continued on next page*



## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### Fall Conferences

Mark your calendars! Network '01, MCAE's annual adult basic education conference, will take place this year on October 24 and 25 at the Best Western Royal Plaza in Marlborough. For information call 1-800-339-2498. And MATSOL's annual conference will be October 12 and 13 at the Sturbridge Host Hotel and Conference Center. For information go to <www.matsol.org>.

### WGBH ABE/GED Courses

The WGBH Diploma Connection offers televised programs for adult learners to gain basic skills and to prepare for the GED test. These programs can be used for independent study or as part of a classroom-based course. Several programs, all shown on Channel 44, will be aired this year:

- *GED Connection*—This new series prepares students for the revised GED exam that will be introduced in 2002. It offers a multi-media approach with video programs, workbooks, and online activities. For more information and to order books contact Kentucky Educational Television at 1-800-354-9067. Will be shown Saturdays, October 13 to February 23, from 6:00 to 7:00 am.

- *TV411*—This series combines situation comedy, documentary, sports, entertainment and talk show formats with an instructional focus designed to enhance reading, writing and math skills for adults at the pre-GED level. To order books call 1-800-304-1922. Will be shown Sundays, October 7 to February 17, from 6:30 to 7:00 am.

- *Workplace Essential Skills*—Learn how to use basic skills to find a job and in realistic workplace settings. The series was created for pre-GED adult learners and helps them move to GED-level work. To order books call 1-800-354-9067. Will be shown Saturdays and Sundays, August 25 to October 6, from 6:00 to 7:00 am and rebroadcast on Sundays, October 7 to March 24, from 6:00 to 6:30 am.

- *Math Basics*—These programs show how adults use math in real life, at home and on the job. Students can improve their basic math skills on a pre-GED level. To order books call 1-800-354-9067. Will be shown Sundays, February 24 to May 5, from 6:30 to 7:00 am.

(Also, the Massachusetts Department of Education/ACLS has purchased state licenses for *TV411* and *Workplace Essential Skills*. Copies of these programs will be available to programs and introductory workshops on using them are being presented this fall through SABES.)

### ESOL Field Trip

The Spellman Museum of Stamps and Postal History in Weston has a new 90-minute program for ESOL students. Developed with the assistance of ESOL instructors, the program helps students build vocabulary, practice group discussion skills, and find information for the museum's exhibits. Students have the opportunity to learn about

innovations in world-wide communications and discuss how stamps represent their countries' history, geography, and culture. The program is available Tuesday through Sunday, 9:00am to 4:00pm. The cost is \$3 per student, with instructors free. For more information or to make a reservation, call Laura Rundell, Director of Education and Community Outreach, at 781-768-7343.

### Laubach to Award Book Grants

Laubach Literacy is seeking grant applications for this year's National Book Scholarship Fund, which distributes books and other educational materials to qualified adult literacy providers in the U.S. First priority is given to family literacy programs, but grants are also awarded to ESOL and ABE programs. For more information or to apply, visit their website at <www.nbsf.org>. The grant application will be available online from September 4 to November 30. The deadline for applications is December 6, 2001.

### Should We Buy the New Economy?

*continued from previous page*

nity service, and personal pursuits. "The rewards of the new economy are coming at a price of lives that are more frenzied, less secure, more economically divergent, and more socially stratified." Businesses must strive continuously to improve their services to retain customers. This means that workers are under more pressure and are working longer hours. The typical American now works 350 more hours a year than the typical European, more hours even than the typical Japanese worker.

What then, is the future of success? Reich attempts to push the debate beyond considerations of wealth and maintaining balance between work and family to include individual choices and community responsibility. As he says repeatedly, no person(s) or group(s) are alone responsible for the unfortunate situations described in the book. Rather, the situation developed from millions of individual decisions over many decades, many of them perfectly rational individually, aimed at improving lives, but "what's rational for individuals is not necessarily rational for society as a whole." His analysis provokes some tough questions. Would we work as many hours as we do if we understood the consequences for our personal lives and communities? Would we be willing to pay more for some goods and services if it meant workers would receive decent wages and benefits? Would we be willing to invest more in education and training for unskilled workers? Reich's account of the trends that are shaping our economy and society is engrossing, and while it probably raises more questions than it answers, it is an important and startling analysis of the new economy.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Derek Kalchbrenner is a Program Manager at Jobs for Youth in Boston.*

# SABES GREATER BOSTON REGION PROGRAM-BASED STAFF & PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

## Program-Tailored Activities

Is there a topic on which you'd like to see a staff/program development workshop or series of workshops happen on-site at your program? As we have done for the past several years, the A.L.R.I. will later this month be sending out to program coordinators at all DOE-funded programs in the SABES Greater Boston region (that is, Boston, Cambridge, Somerville, Watertown, Brookline, and Belmont) information on how program staff can request these sorts of "program-tailored activities." (This year, we're again including a "menu" of some particular activities you might consider asking for.) Requests for these activities cannot come from individuals; they must come from programs and reflect the interests and priorities of program staff as a whole. So, if you have an idea for something you'd like to see your program request, or if you'd like more information about this, talk to your program coordinator and ask to see the material on "program-tailored activities" when it arrives.



## Mini-Grants

Has an idea ever occurred to you for a staff or program development project that you thought would be useful and interesting to work on, but you didn't know what to do about it? Maybe you should think about applying for a staff/program development mini-grant. This year the A.L.R.I./SABES Greater Boston Regional Support Center will be awarding mini-grants of up to \$2,000 to staff at adult basic education programs in our region (again, that's Boston, Cambridge, Somerville, Watertown, Brookline, and Belmont) to enable them to carry out staff and program development projects. (Staff at both DOE-funded and non-DOE-funded programs are eligible.) If you're interested, ask your program coordinator to be sure to show you the mini-grant information and application form when it arrives at your program later this month, or call the A.L.R.I. to ask for a copy.

## A Reminder About Staff Development

New teachers (and others) at programs funded by the Massachusetts Department of Education may not be aware that your program's funding includes money to pay for your staff development time. Each full-time staff person is expected to participate in 50 hours of staff development each year, while the figure for part-time staff is pro-rated based on the number of hours you work. You're encouraged to talk with your program coordinator if you have any questions about this.

# NEWS FROM THE A.L.R.I.

## Funding Update

We want to thank everyone who took the time to write a letter to the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education regarding the A.L.R.I.'s funding situation. We were extremely pleased and, indeed, moved by the breadth and depth of support we received from the field. As a result of your efforts, a meeting did take place between Higher Education Chancellor Judith Gill and A.L.R.I. Director David Rosen. Unfortunately, there was no promise of continued funding and the issue remains unresolved, though Chancellor Gill did indicate her interest in exploring possible means by which MBHE funding could reach us in the future. We'll certainly keep everyone informed as to how this turns out.

## Space Update

Some of you may remember seeing, earlier this year, a note here in the newsletter regarding our use of space in our building, while others may have simply noticed that, all of a sudden, we were holding all of our activities in our library/computer lab. We had been told at that time by the manager of this building that we would no longer be able to use other classroom space in the building for our staff development activities. This put us in a very unsatisfactory situation in terms of our ability to provide the range of activities we are required to offer, so, with the very helpful intervention of the Massachusetts Department of Education/Adult and Community Learning Services, we were able to have a meeting with all the parties involved in the administration of this building to try to solve this problem.

The result of that meeting is that we will now be able to use one of the rooms here (specifically, room 101) on weekday afternoons between the hours of 1:00 and 4:00 for our various workshops, mini-courses, meetings, etc. Therefore, with a few exceptions, starting this fall, all of our activities will take place in room 101 (first floor, to the right as you enter the building, last room down the hall), during this 1:00-to-4:00 block of time. The exceptions will probably be: technology-related activities that will take place in our computer lab, room 213, and may be scheduled for mornings or afternoons; occasional activities that may take place at another location outside of this building; and certain activities (such as one of the New Staff Orientations) that will be scheduled to take place here in the evening. We hope this new arrangement works out!

## New Neighbors

Ellis the Rim Man, the auto parts store with the enormous signs right next door that we used as a landmark for helping people find us, has closed (and been replaced, apparently, by a futon store). So, when giving people directions for getting to the A.L.R.I., please don't say, "Look for Ellis the Rim Man," anymore.

## From the A.L.R.I. Library

Many of the books borrowed from the library earlier this year still need to be returned. As you organize for the coming year, if you find any of these stray materials in your classroom, teachers room, or office, or under a huge stack of papers on your desk, PLEASE return them to us. No questions asked, and your fellow teachers will appreciate being able to borrow the returned resources.

The library now has a complete set of the Ken Burns film series, *Jazz*. Supplementary materials include curriculum with classroom activities (also available on the PBS website), reproducible handouts and the video index, including summaries, an alphabetical and subject listing to locate specific musicians and topics within the series and the discography. *Jazz* connects to American history, race relations, creativity, culture and social change. But the music remains the center of this series. Share it with your students. "Jazz music objectifies America. It is an art form that can give us a painless way of understanding ourselves." (Wynton Marsalis)

Other new videos found in the library include: *Ralph Ellison's King of the Bingo Game* (PBS—American Storytellers); *In Remembrance of Martin* (PBS; a documentary honoring Martin Luther King, Jr.); *Frederick Douglass: When the Lion Wrote History* (PBS); and *Regret to Inform You* (Sun Fountain; Barbara Sonneborn visits Vietnam twenty years after her husband was killed there and focuses on stories of American and Vietnamese women who lost their husbands to war).

## ALL WRITE NEWS EDITORIAL POLICY

The goal of the *All Write News* is to present news and information dealing with adult literacy/adult basic education (which here includes ABE, ESOL, GED, and EDP/ADP) and to provide an open forum for articles and other materials that are written by and for adult basic education practitioners in the greater Boston area. Our policy is generally to print all material received from the field that is related to adult literacy/adult basic education, so long as it is of reasonable length (usually not more than five or six double-spaced pages, though there have been exceptions to this). We reserve the right to reject articles which advocate racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, or anti-semitism or which are libelous or consist essentially of personal attacks on individuals. All signed articles represent the opinions of the individual authors and are not intended to reflect the views or policies of the Adult Literacy Resource Institute or its sponsoring institutions or funders.

---

## REMEMBER THE A.L.R.I. JOB BANK!

### *People seeking jobs in the adult basic education field--*

You're urged to come in to look at our Job Listings Book to see what jobs are out there at programs in our region and to leave a copy of your résumé in our Résumé Book.

### *Adult basic education programs (especially those in the Boston area)--*

You're reminded to mail, fax, or e-mail us copies of your job announcements for our Job Listings Book anytime you have openings, and you're also welcome to come in and look through our Résumé Book for possible job seekers.

## Adult Literacy Resource Institute

989 Commonwealth Avenue  
Boston, MA 02215

*Massachusetts  
Readers: Please  
Open Promptly—*

*Announcements  
of Upcoming  
Staff Development  
Activities at the  
A.L.R.I. Enclosed*