

# THE LITERACY CONNECTION

## NEW YEAR ISSUE 2008

### Table of Contents

PAACE Midwinter Conference .....	1
Reflection: A vital part of tutoring ..	2
TLC at PAACE .....	3
ABLE Honor Roll .....	3
TLC's Feature Training .....	3
Just in Time Tutor Training .....	3
Pearls of Wisdom Update .....	4
On-Line Resources .....	4
Intensified Tutoring Services .....	5
Adult Educator Survival Kit .....	5
Family Literacy Update .....	5
TLC Training Calendar .....	6

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*Funded by ABLE  
 Editor: Kim Rossman*

*To All of You Working to Increase Literacy in the World:*

*Once again I am late in getting this newsletter published. I never cease to be amazed at how quickly time flies; I'm convinced time has a mind of its own, just like computers!*

*I hope you enjoyed a peaceful, refreshing holiday season and are ready to start the New Year with a renewed energy and commitment to making life better for those around you. How fortunate we are to work in a field where the main goal is to improve others' lives.*

*This issue has updates on several of TLC's projects, information on the 2008 PAACE Midwinter Conference, and other articles that I hope you find useful.*

*Best wishes for a happy, rewarding 2008 and I look forward to seeing you in Hershey in February.*

*Sincerely,*

*Kim Rossman, TLC Training Coordinator and ITS Initiative Coordinator*

**The 43rd Annual PAACE Midwinter Conference on Adult Education**, the largest gathering of adult educators in Pennsylvania, will be held at the Hershey Lodge, **February 6-8, 2008.**

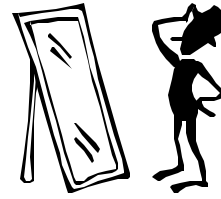


At a time of continuous change, a competitive global economy, and uncertain support for adult education, PAACE is throwing open the windows to take an affirmative look toward the future. Thus the theme of our conference, "Opening Windows"—opportunities for adult learners, sound instructional strategies, efficient delivery systems, postsecondary transition, workforce development, new studies, professional development, and advocacy. Conference attendees will include representatives of Literacy, ABE, ESL, and Family Literacy services; corrections education, higher education, and training providers; and the workforce development community.

If you are a teacher or tutor of adults, program administrator, postsecondary educator, community collaborator, workforce development partner, trainer, publisher, or researcher—or you're simply interested, you will not want to miss this conference.

Join us in Hershey, **February 6-8, 2008**, reconnect with others, meet new people, and open your own adult education windows. 📖

Reflection: A vital part of tutoring  
By Sue Snider, Past TLC Chair  
Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council



When Kim asked me to write a piece about reflective practice for tutors, I really had to do some reflection of my own! I know that in adult education the concept of reflection is very important, not only to the tutor, but also to the student as well. While I was reflecting, I was thinking about my very first experiences with the students I tutored. I would prepare for the lessons and diligently execute them. On the way home, I would start to wonder if there was something I could have done differently or better. I would go over the session in my head again and again, wondering if I did the best I could for my student. Most times I would arrive at home and start to rewrite that particular plan for the next time I would use it, but sometimes I would just let it go and wait until the next session. If things went well in the next session, I realized I worried needlessly, but if they didn't then I was able to be more aware of where things needed to be revised.

Reflection is a wonderful tool for adult educators; actually, it's a wonderful tool for everybody, no matter what he or she does. The key to reflection is time. Reflection gives us a chance to critically review what we've done and what we're about to do. It helps us to make sense of our purpose, but we need time to think about what we've done and what we intend to continue to do. (As tutors, we always have the feeling that if our students don't "get it," somehow we have failed them. We need to remember that sometimes they just aren't receptive!) As long as we understand our students' goals, we can evaluate how well we are helping them attain those goals. Reflection usually takes place around the 50 hour posttest mark, but we should reflect more often than that. We can reflect after each lesson. It's really a time for self evaluation and a great way to keep both you and your student on track. Just by asking yourself if

you've accomplished what you intended is a great way to get started. Don't forget to ask your student how he/she felt about the lesson. Ask what challenges the lesson might have presented to your student. This may give you some insight as to what you can do differently the next time you teach or review this lesson. Every time we get input from either ourselves or our students, we become stronger and more confident tutors.

We can also help our students to reflect. Ask them to think about the session you've just completed and either write down or verbalize to you what they got out of it. Give them time to think about it. Remember they will need time to reflect as well. Ask them to reflect in between meetings with you. This is actually a skill that all students can use and practice in their daily lives. You can start out your lesson with a short discussion on what they've been thinking about.

The more I reflect on reflection, the more excited I get. If you haven't started to reflect on your practice, start small. You'll be surprised where these thoughts will take you. You will see yourself expand and you'll be anxious to teach each session to see what reaction you'll get from your student. Reflection should be an integral part of your lesson plans. Once your students start to reflect on the lessons and share their reflections, you can remind them to keep using this skill in their everyday lives. Strengthening this skill will definitely help our students become better parents, citizens, and workers. And after all, isn't this what we want for our students? Don't we want to provide them with skills they can use with their children, in their jobs, and in their communities? Reflection is a tool that can be beneficial to not only the tutor, but also the student as well. 📖

If you would like your name added to or removed from  
*The Literacy Connection's* mailing list,  
please contact Jill at TLC, [jill@tlcliteracy.org](mailto:jill@tlcliteracy.org) or (814) 867 - 0203.

**TLC Opens Windows for Fresh Ideas:  
Literacy Tutor Roundtable  
PAACE Midwinter Conference  
February 7, 10:15 am**

Join TLC for an informal roundtable discussion about current and ongoing issues concerning volunteer tutors. Potential topics include: serving the changing needs of today's tutors, meeting the accountability challenge, and successful recruiting strategies. Discussion will be guided by participants' interests.

TLC will set the stage for Opening Windows and sharing fresh ideas regarding successful involvement of volunteer tutors in adult literacy programs. Tutors,

administrators, students, and practitioners will unite and share experiences and ideas associated with how to best serve the adult literacy volunteer tutor; trends and concerns facing agencies that support tutors; and ways to network with agencies supporting a similar mission. The agenda is intentionally open-ended and flexible to allow participants to drive the discussion.

The session will begin with a brief membership meeting and a summary of TLC's past program year. New goals will be discussed and suggestions/comments will be welcome. Door prizes and literacy materials will again be some of the welcoming features of the meeting structure. 📖

## ABLE Honor Roll



Tutors of Literacy will no longer be facilitating the ABLE Honor Roll. These awards will be incorporated into awards presented at a ceremony to be held every spring by the Bureau of ABLE. The ceremony held in 2007 was very successful; the award recipients were the focus of the event and the entire day. Check [www.pde.state.pa.us/able/site](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/able/site) for nomination details. Don't forget to nominate your students and teachers for 2008 awards! 📖

## ***Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth's Feature Training Volunteers Make a Difference - Take Advantage***

Volunteers are a precious resource and making them a part of your program can be a challenge. This training provides programs with information on all stages of volunteer incorporation, from recruiting to retaining and numerous steps in between. Programs will learn various reasons for incorporating volunteers into their program, the three steps of recruiting, where and whom to recruit, techniques for managing and recognizing volunteers, and suggestions for handling inappropriate volunteers. This comprehensive training is valuable to programs with an existing volunteer population and to programs that are considering making volunteers part of their program. 📖



### **Just in Time Tutor Training**

The concept of Just in Time (JIT) Tutor Training is to condense the initial training provided to tutors and focus on relevant topics that will be applicable to all tutors. Specific topics and techniques will then be provided to tutors after they have been matched with a learner and spent time tutoring together. Research completed by Alisa Belzer, (*Less May be More: Rethinking Adult Literacy Volunteer Tutor Training*, Alisa Belzer, *Journal of Literacy Research*, 2006, Vol. 38, No. 2, Pages 111-140), is the foundation for this training. For more information, please attend the Just in Time Tutor Training session which will be presented at the 2008 PAACE Midwinter Conference on Friday, February 8, 11:00 am, or contact Kim at [kim@tlcliteracy.org](mailto:kim@tlcliteracy.org) or Alisa Belzer at [belzera@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:belzera@rci.rutgers.edu). 📖

## Summary of December 6, 2007 Pearls of Wisdom Workgroup Meeting



On December 6, 2007, the Pearls of Wisdom workgroup had a conference call/face-to-face meeting to continue creating a training for new TLC Tutor Trainers. We agreed that we need to give this training a very clear cut, simple name that is self-explanatory. We did not come to any conclusions on this name, but we all like the idea of including “Core Training” in the title.

The goal of this training will be to address the **how** to teach and a follow up training will focus on **what** to teach. Topics to cover in Part 1 include:

- Characteristics and techniques of an effective trainer
- How to create a positive learning environment
- Adult learner characteristics
- Methods of instruction/delivery
- Managing groups
- Transference of learning
- How to stay professional

Part 2 of the training will have four categories: ABE, GED, LD, and ESL. After trainers have taken Part 1 they can chose the Part 2 that will be their focus topic and they can take any or all of the other topics at a later date. Part 2 will come no more than a month after Part 1. **What** to teach will be addressed in Part 2; topics will include:

- Awareness of impact of cultural differences
- Ways to access resources of “best practice,” current trends, who to call with questions/problems
- Reading, writing, vocabulary, math instruction, fluency, phonics, and comprehension
- Multi-level instruction
- Adult learner characteristics
- Addressing and setting goals of students, identifying and evaluating needs
- Lesson planning with real-life application
- How to stay connected, interaction with other tutors
- Learning differences
- Problem-solving, how to help learners think independently
- Desired tutor characteristics
- Teaching techniques/strategies
- Assessments
- Adult materials/testing, tools available for tutoring
- How to start

Shortly after completing Part 2, new trainers will be required to watch the series of *Training by Design* video tapes and complete an associated assignment. Within six months of having taken Part 1 and Part 2 new trainers will be required to participate in a Train the Trainer training. After completion of all of these steps, a trainer will be considered a TLC certified trainer.

With holidays and inclement weather in the air, we will make our next session a conference call. If you are interested in participating in this workgroup, it is not too late to join. Contact Kim at [kim@tlcliteracy.org](mailto:kim@tlcliteracy.org) or (814) 867 – 0203 for more information or come to the PAACE Midwinter Conference and attend the session February 6 at 4:00 pm. 📖

### On-Line Resources

Eileen Kocher, from the ABLE Resource Center, recently identified a website that has numerous valuable resources for tutors and literacy programs. The website, <http://literacyconnections.com>, features links for the literacy volunteer tutor, literacy programs, and adult literacy (among others). It also supplies a link to *The Key: A Newspaper for New Readers*, <http://www.keynews.org/>.


## New Impact Funds Provide Opportunity for Intensified Tutoring Services


Tutors of Literacy is facilitating the new Intensified Tutoring Services (ITS) initiative which is supported by the Impact funds. Tutors of Literacy is providing technical assistance and professional development to the ten participating programs with the intention of serving more programs in future years. The goal of the ITS initiative is for each program to increase educational gains by increasing the hours of services provided to adult learners. The adult learner must be a current student receiving three hours of one-on-one tutoring; three additional hours are available to the learners in a variety of forms such as small groups, mini classes, computer labs, and study circles. The common goal is to increase educational gains: individual programs have goals such as increasing community partnerships and meeting individuals' financial needs.

Networking is a crucial part of this initiative. Programs are networking through conference calls, face-to-face meetings, and participation in an on-line discussion list. They will be networking at a session, *ITS Networking Time*, at the 2008 PAACE Midwinter conference. Intensified services resulting in educational gains will benefit all involved. 📖


To make an  
Adult  
Educator  
Survival Kit ,  
put the  
following  
items  
together!

### Ingredients for an Adult Educator Survival Kit

A rubber band because you are flexible 

A paper clip because you keep it all together 

A piece of gum because you stick with it

A tea bag because you give comfort 

And.....

A mint because that is what you are worth! \$\$\$

## Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth Family Literacy Services

Tutors of Literacy's mission is "to provide training, support services, and leadership to (adult and family) literacy programs throughout the Commonwealth. Our guiding principles are to promote literacy education, provide quality training for volunteer tutors and practitioners, strengthen student involvement, and increase public awareness of literacy issues." The goal of our family literacy services specifically is to train family literacy volunteers to provide assistance to the program by tutoring, mentoring, assisting in classrooms, recruiting other tutors and families, and performing other supporting duties.

In light of these goals, TLC's family literacy trainings will target parents and community members *who currently are volunteering or who are committed to volunteering* within the program. The same training and workshops will be offered, with content slightly modified when necessary. In times of funding cuts, these services will offer family literacy programs a means to utilize the "free" resource of volunteers in their programs. TLC will provide training in the use of volunteers, the roles volunteers can play, and the recruitment and retention of volunteers.

Please contact Colleen Serencsits, [colleen@tlcliteracy.org](mailto:colleen@tlcliteracy.org), (814) 867 – 0203, to set up a training.

If you have any questions feel free to contact:

Kim Rossman, TLC Training Coordinator, [kim@tlcliteracy.org](mailto:kim@tlcliteracy.org), (814) 867-0203

Susan Reeve, Professional Development System Advisor, [sreeve@state.pa.us](mailto:sreeve@state.pa.us), (717)787-6344 📖

# TLC Training Calendar

## January 2008

Saturday, January 12, 9:00AM-4:00PM  
Basic Tutor Training  
YWCA Pottstown

Saturday, January 19, 9:00AM-3:00PM  
Financial Education Training  
Butler County Community College

Saturday, January 19, 9:00AM-12:00PM  
Basic Tutor Training  
Washington County Literacy Council

Friday, January 25, 10:00AM-1:30PM  
Volunteers Make a Difference Follow-up Training  
Mercer County Literacy Council

## February 2008

Saturday, February 2, 10:00AM-1:00PM  
Basic Tutor Training: Advanced Lesson Planning  
MCOL

Monday, February 4, 11, & 13, 5:00PM-8:00PM  
Basic and ESL Tutor Training  
Blair County Literacy Council

**For the most up-to-date listing of activities, check e-campus at  
<https://www.ecampus.ed.state.pa.us> or call TLC at (814) 867-0203.**

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