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FIELD NOTES

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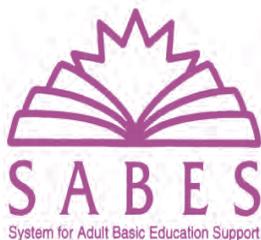
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The Culture Variable in ABE Counseling

BY DIANA SATIN

Have you ever met with a student and tried your best to help, only to be left with the feeling that the communication wasn't as successful as you would have liked? Have you also had the experience of meeting with a student where the communication felt smooth and easy, and the student said she felt understood? In both cases, have you wondered why one meeting was successful while the other was not?

The reasons could be related to elements of culture—values and communication—that can differ between you and the students you work with.

For example, did the discourse style match between you and your student? Some cultures engage in repartee where each person takes a turn speaking for a short time. In other cultures people “hold forth,” speaking for longer periods of time until the other person stops him or her by beginning to speak. Did you and your student have the same understanding about ways to use eye contact? In some cultures, people maintain eye contact with the listener while speaking; some sporadically look at the listener, and some do not look at the listener at all.

Thinking through Your Counseling Experiences

On page three, you will see some descriptions of values and communication styles that can differ among cultures and can vary along a continuum. Think about

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FOREWORD

This issue of *Field Notes* revisits the roles, responsibilities, and possibilities of the ABE counselor. Diana Satin offers her perspectives on the culture variable in ABE counseling, and her continuum chart allows the reader to do some self-reflection in the area of cross-cultural communication. Mary Holmes explores the issue of boundaries in the ABE and ESOL class and offers some guiding questions to help practitioners establish ethical guidelines in their interaction with students. Joe Cianciarulo interviews several ABE and ESOL staff members in programs—counselors, teachers and administrators—to help unpack what we mean when we talk about the counselor’s role. In response to many practitioners’ questions on mandated reporting laws and how they pertain to ABE programs, Jackie Fletcher and Mary Jayne Fay of the Massachusetts Department of Education have contributed a succinct overview of what we need to know in this complex area. Carol Bower, Northeast SABES Coordinator, and Andrea Perrault of ACLS both focus on how the ABE counselor can assist students with “next steps” — work and school possibilities—once they leave our programs. Based on her experiences, Holly Gaye Jones offers a brief overview of the psychological issues of immigrants and refugees in Massachusetts ESOL programs and describes a project at the Immigrant Learning Center in Malden that promotes immigrants as community assets.

This issue also includes a new feature, *Spotlight*, where we present one practitioner’s work related to the topic. Here, we spotlight Michele Forlizzi, who has been involved in SABES task forces on counseling over the years, has worked as a counselor, and is now writing her doctoral dissertation on the role of the ABE counselor.

As always, we include a list of resources, Web sites, and organizations related to the topic. Don’t forget to check out the last page for upcoming themes. We always want your writing.

Lenore Balliro, Editor

Field Notes Mission Statement and Editorial Policy

Field Notes is an adult basic education (ABE) quarterly, theme-based newsletter. It is designed to share innovative and reliable practices, resources, and information relating to ABE. We attempt to publish a range of voices about important educational issues, and we are especially interested in publishing new writers, writers of color, and writers who represent the full range of diversity of learners and practitioners in the field.

Field Notes is also a place to provide support and encouragement to new and experienced practitioners (ABE, ESOL, GED, ADP, Family Literacy, Correction, Workplace Education, and others) in the process of writing about their ideas and practice. Editorial support is always provided to any writer who requests it. Teachers, administrators, counselors, volunteers, and support staff are welcome to write for *Field Notes*.

Our Funder

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Our Editorial Policy

Unsolicited manuscripts to *Field Notes* are welcome. If you have an idea for an article or wish to submit a letter to the editor, contact Lenore Balliro, editor, by phone at 617-482-9485, by email at <lballiro@worlded.org>, or by mail at 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210. Submission deadlines for upcoming issues are published in each issue of *Field Notes*.

Opinions expressed in *Field Notes* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editor, SABES, or its funders. We do reserve the right to decline publication. We will not publish material that is sexist, homophobic, or otherwise discriminatory.

Our Reprint Policy

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Values and Communications Styles

The Culture

Variable . . .

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where you lie on each continuum.

For the third column, think of a time you counseled a student who, in retrospect, may have had a different orientation in terms of values or communication style than you. Were you aware of the difference at the time? How did it affect the counseling? Would you counsel the same way or change something? Write your thoughts in that column. The first one has been filled in as an example.

It is important to include a disclaimer about the descriptions that follow. Any individual student or counselor is influenced by numerous aspects of her or his identity, including gender, race, religion, socioeconomic status, culture, along with a number of others. Each culture has a central tendency with variation around it. Any person will fall along a continuum. It is useful to keep the continuum in mind to think about yourself as a counselor and the students you counsel.

Diana Satin has worked with adult immigrants for over 12 years as a classroom teacher, staff development consultant, and curriculum developer. She is currently teaching a distance-learning ESOL course at the Jamaica Plain Community Centers. She can be reached at <dsatin@verizon.net>.

Value Orientation	Value Orientation	Describe an experience in your counseling
Individualism: Each person has his or her own opinions and ideas, wants to be independent from others, and is responsible for his or her own life.	Collectivism: People are interdependent and are responsible for the groups they belong to, such as family and classmates.	Personal Example: My cultural value is individualism. Brenda is Latina, and her value is collectivism. She told me about a problem with her husband—he wasn't helping take care of their kids. My first thought was to encourage her to talk with him about his responsibilities as a father and husband. Later, she told me she spoke with friends at her church who then talked with her husband. He subsequently started helping out with the kids.
Linear Time Orientation: Be on time. Don't waste time, because it is a great resource. It goes away and you can't get it back.	Circular Time Orientation: Time always continues, so there's no need to rush. People have priority over time, so it is acceptable to be late to an appointment if a meeting with another person ran late.	Your experience:
Control over the Future: Setting goals and working to change elements of one's environment is significant.	"Inshallah," "Si Dios quiere," "If God wills it." The future is out of one's hands; God or higher authority figures should make decisions for you	Your Experience:
Directness: Making the point clear is important. It is fine to be straightforward about what one wants to convey	Indirectness: Communicating one's thoughts in an oblique way is best. Non-verbal communication is an important factor.	Your Experience

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Boundaries in ABE and ESOL Counseling

By MARY HOLMES

Part of the counseling role in ABE and ESOL programs is addressing the challenges that we all face, teachers and students, in our daily lives. We counsel students on finding child care, securing a place to live, locating transportation for getting to school, improving employment options, and planning for the future. These topics are great equalizers. It is no wonder, then, the corners get blurred, and teachers get involved in their students lives. With counseling a part of an ABE/ESOL teacher's job description, teachers need to consider how involved they should become with their students. Are there ways in which getting deeply involved with students makes their lives better, or is it possible that a certain level of involvement is not helping in the way we intend?

The Classroom Is Personal

The nature of the adult classroom doesn't assist teachers in strictly separating the personal from the public. In creating classrooms that keep our adult students motivated, teachers work hard at creating lessons that reflect the interests and needs of our students. One of the rallying cries of adult education theory is to keep our class content relevant and real and to let our students draw from and discuss their experiences. So we incorporate topics like job training, resume writing, finding housing, and economic literacy into our teaching. We create les-

son plans that explore the local food bank, help students find work and child care, and advocate for their improved health. In short, we touch on topics in the classroom that bring us closer to our students. Really, then, a part of our jobs as ABE and ESOL teachers in the classroom is getting involved. We use themes and topics people need in their everyday personal lives. In the intimacy of the ABE

a formal code of ethics clearly articulated. When are we crossing boundaries? Is it making that call to the legal clinic on a student's behalf? Is it sharing a casual cup of coffee, or running into a student in the office and chatting about each other's daily lives?

What about a possible attraction between a student and teacher or counselor? Are we crossing the line if we hire a

As we talk about our own lives in the classroom with our students, are we overshooting boundaries? In formal counseling, there are ethical guidelines on how counselors should conduct themselves with their clients. As ABE teachers we are asked to counsel without a formal code of ethics clearly articulated.

classroom we get to know and admire our students and may become involved in their lives in ways we never expected to be involved.

Crossing Boundaries

As we talk about our own lives in the classroom with our students, are we overshooting boundaries? In formal counseling, there are ethical guidelines on how counselors should conduct themselves with their clients. As ABE teachers we are asked to counsel without

student to clean our apartment for a reduced rate? What about hosting a student pot luck at a teacher's apartment? According to the ethics and standards of many of the national counseling associations, these examples would be considered unethical because they do cross boundaries. Yet many of these examples are commonplace in ABE programs. For example, engaging in self-disclosure, giving or receiving gifts, developing dual

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Boundaries . . .

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or overlapping relationships, and becoming friends can easily be found in many adult education teaching practices between teachers and students.

Ethical Guidelines

There are no firm ethical guidelines or policy statements for ABE/ESOL counseling. However, ABE/ESOL counselors can draw from the American Counseling Association's (ACA) principles of ethics. One major principle is nonmaleficence: not causing harm to others. This concept is often heard as "above all do no harm." For more information about this concept, teachers may want to visit the ACA Web site at www.counseling.org/Counselors/PractitionersGuide.aspx.

While there are certainly stories and anecdotes that could be used to illustrate the danger or the benefit of blurring boundaries between students and teachers/counselors, perhaps it might be better to return to our basic purpose for counseling our students. In Massachusetts, the ABE counseling responsibilities are supportive: counselors help students with goal setting; they refer students to community resources; they help students overcome barriers to class attendance; they help transition students to a "next step" beyond the program, and they keep records of counseling activities. Since we don't have policy guidelines on ethics for ABE counseling, we need to ask ourselves questions as we decide about our level of involvement

with students. These could include the following:

- Is this (activity, interaction, etc.) in my students' best interest?
- Whose needs are being served?
- Am I taking advantage of my student?
- Does this benefit me more than my student?
- Would I be comfortable writing about this in my student's record?

These questions can anchor our goals both as teachers and counselors, making us recognize our primary goal: the success of our students.

Implications

A fundamental problem with the discussion of ABE student/teacher boundaries is that most of us are not trained as counselors; we are ABE teachers. Our

students represent a segment of the population that tends to be disadvantaged in many ways. When we ask ourselves the previous questions, we might also ponder how our temporary involvement helps our students. Can we support them long enough to learn their second or third language or complete their GED for upgrading? Are we, by being involved in this time of their lives, doing no harm and helping to support their success? The answer will always be mixed. However, perhaps by developing policy guidelines on ethical behavior and by offering more training in counseling strategies, the ABE field could help clarify some murky areas in our field.

Mary Holmes, M.Ed, is an ESOL instructor teaching on Martha's Vineyard. She can be reached at <HanjianHolmes@verizon.net>.

Resource for Counselors

American Counseling Association

www.counseling.org/Counselors/

This membership association offers publications, online courses, an annual conference, a code of ethics for counselors, best practices guidelines, and guidelines for cross-cultural competencies. One of their free publications is:

A Practitioner's Guide to Ethical Decision Making

By Holly Forester-Miller, Ph.D. and Thomas Davis, Ph.D.

www.counseling.org/Counselors/PractitionersGuide.aspx

See page 18 for more resource listings for ABE counselors.

ABE Counseling: Wearing Many Hats

By JOE CIANCIARULO

Editor's note: In researching this article, Joe Cianciarulo interviewed over 11 Massachusetts ABE/ESOL teachers, counselors, directors, and other staff members. Although Joe provided names and programs, we decided not to include them in this article.

A recent study of Massachusetts community colleges indicates that a major contributing factor to the success of returning [adult] students is a strong complement of support services—in particular, case management. But how much case management are we really equipped to offer students currently enrolled in our ABE programs? And who is providing these support services?

Is it someone with clinical training? Is it someone fluent in the language(s) native to the enrollment?

Is it someone who makes coffee and brings snacks?

One community-based program director calls the ABE counselor “the least understood role,” and adds, “There’s not nearly enough staff development for counselors.” So, what is it that counselors need to know? What do they need to be able to do? And if counseling can have such an impact on retention and program completion, shouldn’t we officially recognize and guide the efforts of our education counselors? Why is there no required “New Counselors Orientation?” One site coordinator who “wears four or five hats” explains: “Unfortunately, I have no pro-

fessional counseling training. I use my common sense and the few trainings that I took at SABES.”

Some practitioners have worked as education counselors for five or ten years, some perhaps longer, but many have



been in their positions less than a year. However, new

hires often come from education backgrounds with advanced degrees, or bring with them case management experience from other human service agencies or health care professions. One relatively-new ABE counselor, for example, reports that she is currently at Lesley University finishing up her B.A. in Human Services/Psychology and Counseling after working in the field for 28 years in a variety of positions and venues, i.e., the Department of Public Welfare, the Department of Social Services, Boston Children’s Services and The Home for Little Wanderers.

Some programs have a full-time position (or more than one) for an education counselor. Depending on the enrollment and

intensity of the program, counseling might instead be handled by the program coordinator or shared with the teachers. But, in the words of one counselor, who says she is constantly trying to outreach to students, “building a trusting relationship takes time.” When you consider how few hours students are actually on site, the window for helping them is pretty small.

Since teachers have regular direct contact with students, it makes sense that this helping

relationship would involve counseling activities. As one counselor notes: “The challenge is trying to do this with such limited resources.”

So, as a counselor, how much time should you now devote to that vivacious student who just quit the job you spent two afternoons online helping them apply for? And who hasn’t been attending class, even though her work schedule isn’t in conflict. There aren’t enough hours in the week to provide this level of service for everyone in the program.

Especially when a counselor starts to feel like all she does is paperwork and data entry. Or else chase people around for

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missing bits of information or documentation for student files. Or be a full-time test administrator. Or do whatever doesn't fit into anyone else's job description. S/he may even be expected to be able to mediate conflicts among staff, or between staff and students.

The students, too, are often unclear about the counselor's role in their program. They may view this person as the keeper of the gate of entry, and maybe a shortcut past the waiting list. Education counselors are officially charged with helping students overcome barriers to progress, and with assisting students in attaining next steps. Helping students along their path can often take the form of career coaching, with the education counselor assuming the role of an employment specialist, which requires familiarity with the job market in addition to an understanding of training programs and higher education.

Navigating a Complex System

Keeping up to date on options and trying to help a student navigate educational systems can tie a counselor up in knots. A student may have achieved a student performance level (SPL) that will get her into a college transition program, but her immigration status would require her to pay international student rates if she does succeed in applying and getting accepted to college. Or else she can spend that money on a lawyer to straighten out her documentation. Another student may be

extremely motivated to pursue a GED, but given his current literacy skills, passing those tests may take a long time.

Barriers and Next Steps

As it turns out, there are about as many barriers as there are students trying to get to their next step. According to one teacher, helping to overcome barriers begins with "phone calls to students struggling with attendance and subsequent action," and usually requires that a counselor be aware of how to access various resources for students who may need legal advice, health care, or professional mental health counseling. Counselors need to be able to know where to draw the line as to what services they can provide and where to send people to get the help they are not equipped to handle.

One ABE provider, a certified guidance counselor and psychologist with several years of experience in many therapeutic settings, advises that untrained counselors should "listen and not give advice." Even a well-intentioned effort to intervene, she says, can do more damage than good. "Students may have a more serious problem than you realize in the short time you meet with them. You could be liable if something catastrophic happens." This counselor recommends referring people to a professional who speaks their language.

Cheerleaders

"Education counselors are the cheerleaders and the great communicators of these programs." As one counselor puts it, "We are usually the first

people students meet and the last they hear from." The typical ABE counselor is mainly responsible for the program's waiting list, intake, orientation, enrollment, attendance, assessment, goal setting, and follow-up, but the job description may also involve organizing a student council, arranging guest speakers, or running employability skills workshops.

A Long List of Responsibilities

One counselor described her work as follows: working with the Disability Law Clinic, establishing a relationship with the Department of Mental Retardation, the Department of Social Services and the Department of Transitional Assistance, assisting students with finding safe, affordable childcare and jobs, and making referrals to furniture banks for those who have moved from a shelter into permanent housing.

People who stay in the job of directly helping people usually do it because they like it and they are good at it. Says one ABE coordinator-counselor, "I love being the counselor because it gives me a chance to get to know my students. After spending a day attending to DOE rules and regs it reminds me why I'm in this field!"

Joseph Cianciarulo, MEd. is the adult education director for the Charlestown Community Center. He has worked as a teacher and counselor for many Boston-based programs. He can be reached at <jcian@comcast.net>.

Spotlight

Michele Forlizzi Researches the Role of the ABE Counselor in Her Doctoral Dissertation

By LENORE BALLIRO AND MICHELE FORLIZZI

Michele Forlizzi is not a stranger to the evolution of the counselor's role in ABE. Way back in 1990, Michele helped to conceptualize the definition of an ABE counselor's role when she worked with the Notre Dame Education Center in Lawrence. This was the first time that ACLS had required a counseling position as part of the five-year funding cycle. Michele went on to become the Center's ABE counselor for five years; her background as a certified rehabilitation counselor helped inform her work. Even though her positions have changed over the years, Michele has never lost sight of the need to enhance, clarify, and expand the role of the ABE counselor. After spending years on task forces on ABE counseling and in designing and presenting trainings and panels in this area, Mi-

chele has gone back to study for her PhD in Adult Postsecondary Education. Her dissertation in progress, *The Role and Responsibilities of the Adult Basic Educational Counselor in Massachusetts*, offers a breath and depth of insight into the field.

Ambiguity

Michele maintains that the most challenging aspect of the ABE counselor's role is its ambiguity. Contributing strongly to this ambiguity is the disconnect between assumptions the counselor may hold and assumptions the supervisor may hold about the job. These assumptions are often unexamined, causing job stress and dissatisfaction. A stressed out and unsatisfied counselor is not in the best position to assist students. According to Michele, the counselor should be at the center of every ABE program, acting as an ad-

vocate and bridging the student to teachers, community, and the program as a whole. Appropriate areas for advocacy may include connecting students to postsecondary possibilities, career development, or community resources. The ABE counselor, Michele asserts, should never be expected to act as a clinical therapist; students with serious psychotherapy needs should be referred to trained professionals in the community.

In the introduction to her dissertation, Michele suggests "It would be advantageous for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' state-sponsored programs to propose a common standard of practice that helps to create consensus criterion to guide and measure ABE counselor's performance..."¹ In fact, SABES has sponsored and led a statewide ABE counseling task force, made up of ABE practitioners and administrators over the past year, to create a survey, to collect information from the survey, and to prepare a report to the field. Watch for highlights from the report, and for more information about Michele's research findings, in upcoming issues of *Field Notes*.

Michele Forlizzi works for the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission in Lowell. She can be reached at <Michle.Forlizzi@state.ma.us.>

Massachusetts Adult Literacy Hotline



Free information on GED, ESOL, literacy, and citizenship classes for adults offered throughout Massachusetts. Information online at

www.sabes.org/hotline

Mandated Reporting: What ABE Practitioners Need to Know

BY JACKIE FLETCHER AND MARY JAYNE FAY

Below are some scenarios that could occur in ABE classrooms.

- You are an ABE teacher in a GED classroom. You've noticed on a number of occasions that your 17-year-old learner has a number of bruises in various stages of healing. When asked, the learner dismisses the bruises as being "clumsy."
- You are an ABE counselor working with a disabled learner helping her to prepare for a workplace education program. The learner mentions that she doesn't have enough money for the bus ride home. When you inquire why, she says that her personal care attendant didn't give her any money. You've noted that this is not the first time this learner hasn't had enough money for food or for transportation.
- You are a program director and you've noted that an elderly student has parallel bruises on her arms and that she shies away from you when you stand too close. She is also jumpy at the sounds of loud noises.

How Should You Respond?

In all of these cases, you suspect the student is in a potentially harmful situation. How should you respond to these scenarios? Do you have a legal responsibility to report sus-

pected abuse? Actually, you do. ABE practitioners are mandated reporters. You are required by law to report suspected physical, sexual, neglect, and emotional abuse.

Who Is a Mandated Reporter (MR)?

A mandated reporter is a person who, as a result of his or her profession, is more likely to be aware of abuse. MRs are required, by law, to report cases of suspected abuse. MRs should not rely on others to file reports for them.

What Counts as Abuse?

Abuse is serious physical or emotional injury that results from an act or an omission, including nonconsensual sexual activity and witnessing abuse. Abuse can be physical, emotional, verbal, and sexual.

What Is Neglect?

A caretaker's failure to take action to protect or provide for the daily living needs of a person covered by one of the statutes listed on the next page is considered neglect.

Policy of the Massachusetts DOE

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires all teachers, both public and private, which includes ABE practitioners, be mandatory reporters and as such, should have training in mandatory reporting. ACLS will

be working with SABES over the next two years to organize trainings on mandatory reporting for each region of the state. Information about mandatory reporting will also be included in all new teacher orientations and director trainings.

Reluctance to Act As a Mandated Reporter

Mandated reporting is complex on many levels. Many people may be reluctant to act as mandated reporters of abuse because they may fear retaliation. The victims of abuse may be unable to explain what happened to them due to disability, fear of rejection, and fear of being blamed for the abuse.

It's important to know that if you report suspected abuse, your identity is kept confidential. You are also immune from civil and criminal liability. However, MRs who fail to file a report are subject to a fine of up to \$1,000.

What Is Reportable?

The standard for reporting suspected abuse and neglect in Massachusetts is any situation where there is a reasonable suspicion to believe that abuse or neglect exists.

Please see the chart on the next page for specific statutes and reporting information.

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Mandated Reporters: Reporting Abuse and Neglect

All adult basic education and ESOL teachers are considered mandated reporters and are required by law to report cases or suspected abuse. If there is a reasonable suspicion of abuse, please call one of these agencies to report or to get more information.

Age	0-18	18-59	60+
Population	Children	Disabled Adults	Elderly
Reporting Agency	Department of Social Services (DSS)	Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC)	Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA)
Contact Phone	1-800-792-5200	1-800-426-9009	1-800-822-2275
Statute	51A	19C	19A

In Massachusetts, mandated reporters

- are immune from civil or criminal liability as a result of making a report.
- are protected from retaliation and their identities will be kept confidential.
- who fail to file a report are subject to a fine of up to \$1,000.

Note: The information in this article is based on a presentation by the authors at a workshop on mandatory reporting.

Jackie Fletcher and Mary Jayne Fay both work at the Massachusetts Department of Education.

Jackie is the statewide disability coordinator at ACLS. She can be reached at <jfletcher@doe.mass.edu>.

Mary Jayne is the ABE licensure coordinator, Office of Teacher Certification and Licensure. She can be reached at <mjfay@doe.mass.edu>.

Additional Resources

Department of Social Services (DSS)

<www.mass.gov/dss>

The DSS supports various initiatives and provides key resources for preventing and addressing child neglect and abuse and for supporting families at risk.

Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC)

<www.mass.gov/dppc/dppc.html>

“The mission of the Disabled Persons Protection Commission is to protect adults with disabilities from abusive acts and omissions of their caregivers through investigation, oversight, public awareness, and prevention.

Executive Office of Elder Affairs

<www.800ageinfo.com/>

1-800-age-info is a Web site “designed to assist consumers and caregivers as well as professionals seeking information and resources on eldercare services. The site lists information on approximately 40,000 services and programs in Massachusetts for elders.

ACLS/SABES

Check with your regional SABES center for upcoming trainings on mandated reporting.

Career Planning Is Life Planning: The ABE Counselor's Role

BY CAROL BOWER

Helping others plan their careers has been a constant thread throughout the span of my 30-year career. Prior to my position as the director of Northeast SABES, I worked as a career counselor in private practice, at a private prep school, and in many ABE and women in transition programs. In addition, just before coming to SABES, I worked in a one-stop career center.

In my SABES role I recently codeveloped a minicourse for ABE/ESOL teachers and counselors called "Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE / ESOL Classroom." Along with the training, Martha Oesch and I developed a resource called *Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE/ESOL Classroom*, which is explored during the workshop and is intended for use by practitioners in their programs. The need for this training and guide arose from my prior experience as a career counselor, especially at the one-stop career center. While working at the one-stop center it became apparent to me that many of our ABE learners could benefit more from their experiences there if they had some grounding in career planning while in their ABE programs, especially in transition to college programs.

The Career Planning Process

The career planning process, which consists of three distinct phases -- self explora-

tion, occupational exploration, and career action planning—is a process that can equip people to withstand the many twists and turns their careers may take in their lifetime. It is common knowledge that the average person changes jobs as many as 25 times in his or her working life with an average of eight actual career changes. The key to career planning can be summed up by the phrase "know thyself." To the extent that people have an understanding of themselves— their own strengths, skills, interests, values, and experiences — they can make these career transitions easier and less haphazard. By engaging in a systematic step-by-step career exploration process, an individual can actually turn seemingly impossible employment situations or challenges into incredible opportunities.

ABE counselors are uniquely positioned to be able to facilitate this career planning process with adult learners in their programs. The SABES mini-course and *Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE/ESOL Classroom* are excellent tools to support them.

Curriculum Guide

Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE/ESOL Classroom illustrates the career planning process. The guide starts by helping teachers and counselors build their own cultural awareness as well as the cultural awareness of their learners. It then focuses on life accomplish-

ments and their vital role in the development of transferable skills. The curriculum walks staff through the process of helping learners identify transferable skills by exploring their life and work histories. Values clarification is another key aspect covered in *Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE/ESOL Classroom*. Values exploration exercises encourage learners to examine their cultural and work values to create a clearer understanding of who they are as workers and as individuals. This is a highly affirming process for anyone.

The second step in the career planning process is to explore resources on occupations. A myriad of occupational resources are available for local and statewide career opportunities, postsecondary education, and training. Students can also engage in occupational exploration by conducting informational interviews and by attending career fairs and job fairs.

The third step in career planning involves building or strengthening a variety of life skills. These skills include making decisions, solving problems, and creating support systems to help with a lifelong career path.

This last phase of the process enables adult learners to compile all the information from the previous two steps into a career action plan, a step-by-step guide to achieving career and

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Career Planning . . .

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life goals. All of these life planning skills can be drawn upon throughout one's life. Richard Nelson Bolles, who wrote the first edition of *What Color Is Your Parachute?* over 36 years ago, identified these career planning steps. Bolles believes that the knowledge acquired by engaging in a thorough self exploration and career planning process will always be accessible and useful whenever needed for a career or job transition.

Educational counselors or student support specialists within ABE programs are well positioned to engage in career and life planning discussions and activities with their students. We know that the majority of adult learners who find themselves in Massachusetts ABE or ESOL programs are seeking a better job or wish to continue their education so they can get a better, more highly skilled job. These goals often become clear in an intake interview with the counselor. The counselor typically becomes the

link among the adult learner, the community, the program, and the classroom. The counselor's involvement in cofacilitating the career exploration process in the program, either with the classroom teacher or individually with the student, creates a continuity of service to students.

Career planning with learners can be enhanced within an ABE program when it is a joint effort between counselor and teacher. The counselor can provide the resources and information the teachers need to engage in this process in the classroom and be involved in cofacilitating this process throughout the program. In addition, it is essential that career planning activities be supported by the program director or site coordinator. After all, career planning is life planning which is a basic skill for many adult learners who are striving to make better lives for themselves and their families.

Carol Bower, M.Ed Counseling, is the director of Northeast SABES. She can be reached at <cbower@necc.mass.edu>.

Picturing the Role of the ABE Counselor

BY CAROL BOWER

The roles and responsibilities of the counselor in adult education in Massachusetts are multifaceted. Although the role of the counselor (or student support facilitator) can vary from program to program.

SABES developed a Venn diagram, included on the next page, to explicitly illustrate the basic interrelationships among counselor, students, teachers, director, program, and community.

As you can see, the student is at the center of this diagram. Let's take a look at what this diagram represents by beginning with the counselor in the upper left circle. The counselor interacts with the teacher regarding assessment, student goals, and curriculum development, related to goal setting, career planning, life skills, and related areas. The counselor interacts with the community by developing a list of resources that can support students in overcoming barriers to persistence and retention and by establishing contacts for student referrals.

Notice also that the counselor eventually follows up on students once they have left the program and have entered the community.

The teacher, as represented in the top right circle, collaborates with the counselor in a

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New Resource

Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE/ESOL Classroom



You can now download this entire document as a pdf file. Go to <www.sabes.org> and look at "what's new" on the home page.

To find information about a workshop on career awareness in ABE, contact Carol Bower or your regional SABES workforce development coordinator.

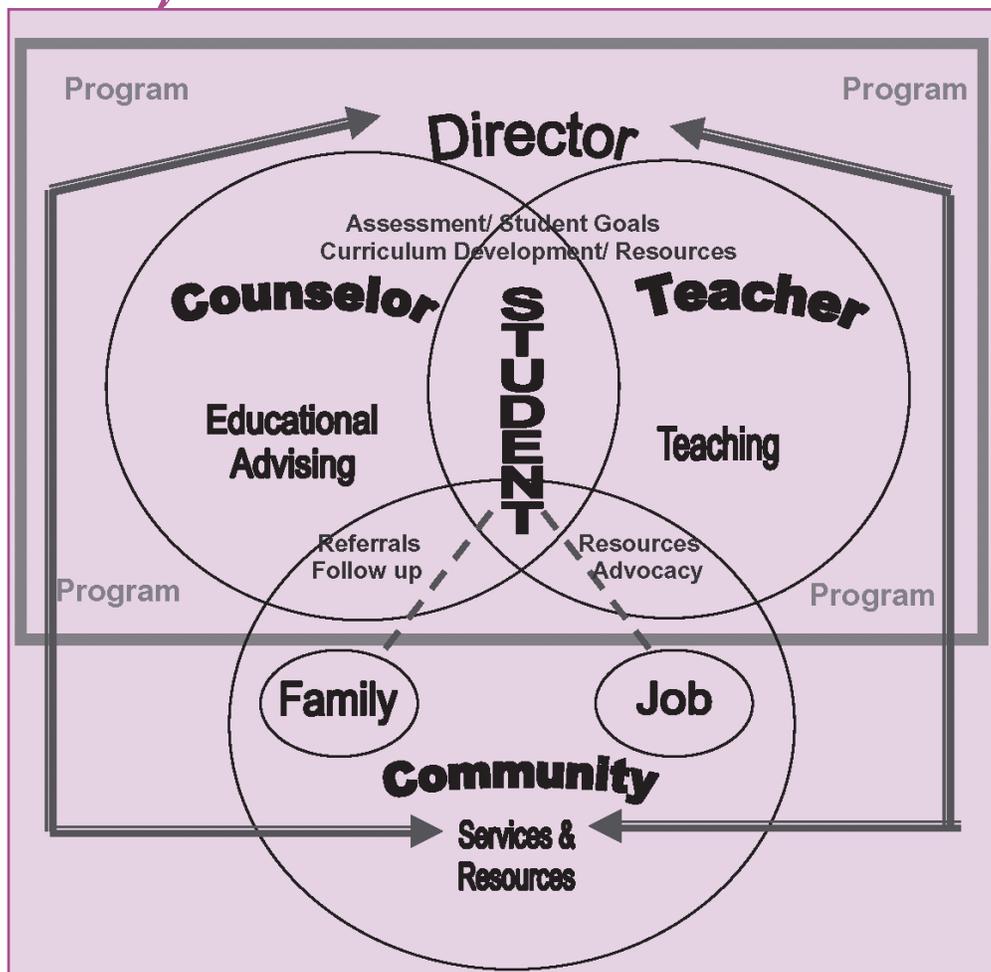
Picturing the Role . . .

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reciprocal manner regarding goals, assessment, and curriculum development in areas where a counselor can support classroom activities. The teacher also interacts with the community by using community resources to support classroom learning and by engaging in advocacy for their learners. The teachers and counselor can support each other by sharing information and resources to more effectively serve their students.

The director, located at the top of the diagram, provides leadership for all aspects of the program and interacts with the community through a community planning partnership and an advisory council. This collaboration impacts program design and implementation. The counselor may benefit from participation in the community planning partnership by gaining information on useful community services, enabling him or her to build alliances with service providers to better assist students.

The counselor is also uniquely positioned to provide information on student needs to community partners; this results in a continuity of services from the program to community agencies. The counselor can also provide vital information and input to the director regarding student needs and makes other relevant contributions to program services. For example, some counselors organize career



days or career fairs; some support student leadership teams to carry out a variety of student-centered projects on health, immigration, and other topics.

The lower part of the diagram reflects students' lives outside the program. Interactions students have with family and work often affect and influence their participation in the ABE program. These family and work influences can have either positive or negative impacts on students depending on circumstances. Once again, counselors can help students overcome barriers to their success in school. The interrelationships among the counselor, the student, and the program are complex and

intertwining and reflect the pivotal role of the counselor within the ABE and ESOL program. As a result, ABE educational counselors can contribute a great deal toward impacting program design and all aspects of program success.

For further information on the "Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE/ESOL Classroom" minicourse, please contact Carol Bower at <cbower@necc.mass.edu> or your regional SABES workforce development coordinator.

Helping Students to the “Next Step”

By ANDREA PERRAULT

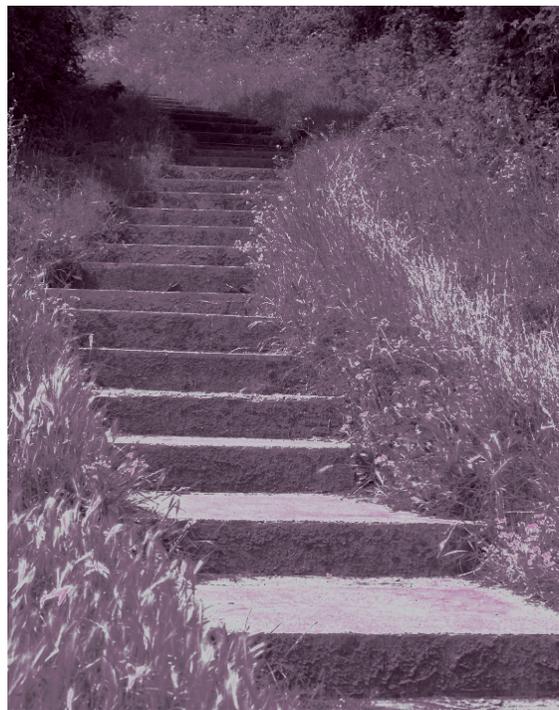
At Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) we understand that the road to “that next step” for adult learners can be long and hard. Whether a student’s next step is attaining a credential, getting or advancing in a job, or going on to college, we encourage programs to address students’ counseling needs to reach their goals. Students benefit from more than academic instruction; the counseling support they find at their literacy programs clearly helps them to reach their next steps. The importance of student support in ABE programs was illustrated at a recent event in Hampden County where students had a chance to speak about their successes.

Raising Awareness

Late last spring, Hampden County Literacy Works sponsored a “Breakfast of Champions.” This legislative breakfast was held to celebrate local literacy students’ success and to raise awareness about the need for more ABE services. The legislative delegation for the region attended in force, and the tone of the event was especially celebratory; just the day before the event, the Massachusetts State Senate had passed an amendment to their budget increasing funds for literacy by \$3M.

As with most events like this, the real impact was made by students’ remarks. For example, Ruth, a student at the CARE

Center in Holyoke, talked about the help she received there to build her self-confidence and to expand her personal goals and academic abilities. Ruth had not believed she could enroll in and succeed in college. But through the support and guidance of staff at the Care Center, she came to see herself in a different light. Ruth realized that she could aspire to more than a job



in a fast-food restaurant, and she is now a sophomore at Holyoke Community College with a work-study job in an office at the college.

Another student speaker had been enrolled in the literacy program at the Hampden County House of Correction (CHOC) directed by Sheriff Michael Ashe. It also took this young man a while to see that he could improve his life through learning.

During his second incarceration, he decided to give it a shot. He succeeded in the CHOC literacy program and now is enrolled as an engineering student at Springfield Technical Community College. He, too, cited the support of program staff as a major factor in helping him realize he could succeed in the world.

Maria was enrolled in classes at the Juntos Collaborative to attain her GED and to improve her employment prospects. Through the strong collaboration between the Juntos program and Career Point, a Hampden County One-Stop Career Center, Maria attended workshops at the career center; now she works there.

Julia, a young woman who was abandoned by her mother at 16, became pregnant and needed to support herself and her child. She found her way to Holyoke Works; there she received the support she needed to help her through a major crisis when her child became seriously ill and required hospitalization. Staff at Literacy Works supported her at that time; later they helped her to re-enroll in the program and to succeed in attaining her GED.

The profiles of these students demonstrate the significant roles that staff of literacy programs play in the lives of their students. We support programs in addressing students’ counseling

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Helping Students . . .

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needs to get to their next steps in the following ways:

Goal Setting

If implemented effectively, the goal setting process designed by ACLS can help students plan for a next step, even if it is several years away. Goal setting can model success: if students are successful in their ABE programs, they can also be successful in college or work.

Goal setting should start from each student's needs and interests. The process helps students think about and plan for the future. As with the students described here, it may be difficult to set such lofty goals upon enrollment in the program. They may seem very remote, if not impossible, when students initially enroll.

However, if the goal setting process is continually revisited, goals can be refined as students gain more skills, abilities, confidence, and clarity about future choices for post secondary education and employment.

Professional Development

ACLS funds SABES to provide professional development to meet the needs of practitioners. SABES offers the following options in the area of counseling related topics:

- "Introduction to Counseling" workshop (with increased hours for a more in-depth training)
- "Next Steps" workshops
- Curriculum guides for integrating job-readiness and career awareness into the ABE/ESOL curriculum.

In addition, SABES and ACLS are collaborating to survey counselors in the field to better understand what kinds of support they need to be effective in helping their students. Results of the survey will be published in the fall, and staff input will be included in the expansion of the "Introduction to Counseling" workshop

ACLS also funds SABES to hire staff as workforce development specialists. These staff members help practitioners



understand more about post secondary and employment options so program staff may develop engaging ways to use this information to inform students.

Program Development

ACLS supports programs as they implement on-site professional development through SABES. Onsite professional development assists programs in implementing curricular approaches programwide, rather than having few teachers or counselors adopt them after attending an off-site workshop. We encourage programs to work with SABES to increase the effectiveness of program and staff development.

Planning Time

ACLS also encourages directors and staff to facilitate stronger collaboration between

teachers and counselors within their program. Collaborative planning helps strengthen the goal setting processes and, as a result, classroom practice.

At ACLS, we understand that students come to ABE/ESOL programs with immediate needs to improve their academic skills, and that they may not have given any thought to setting personal goals for success beyond that. However, we know that ABE providers are caring and committed professionals whose focus is always student-centered. As you see students begin to aspire to explore new horizons, it is important to remember that your efforts to help them link to postsecondary education or jobs with career potential are critical.

Your role in helping students take positive next steps can make the difference in their ability to sustain themselves in an increasingly challenging economy. As a practitioner, you can assist students in developing and strengthening skills; you are also building confidence and creating a climate of optimism and as well as hope for the future. Students often see ABE staff as the people who open doors to opportunity. That is an important gift that you can rightly cherish.

Andrea Perrault, M.Ed Counseling, is the Program Developer for Workforce Development at Adult and Community Learning Services. She can be reached at <APerrault@doe.mass.edu>.

Addressing Psychological Issues of Immigrants and Refugees in ESOL Programs

By HOLLY GAYE JONES

When I began working at the Immigrant Learning Center in Malden, I did not anticipate how useful my background in mental health would be.

I was unaware of how strong an impact leaving one's country has on immigrants and refugees and how this impact manifests itself in the classroom. I soon encountered incidents in our classes: students unable to concentrate, students who seemed depressed, and students who would burst into tears for no obvious reason.

I was fortunate to be able to use my background in psychology to recognize and address these issues. I began offering workshops in the classroom on depression and stress management to help students cope. Students would talk to me about missing their country and their families who still live there. Many have no friends in this country and feel alone and isolated. I found that many immigrants had held professional positions—like doctors and lawyers—in their countries but now work at a Dunkin' Donuts or a cleaning company in the United States. This contributed to their feelings of discouragement and depression. The language barrier only made those feelings worse. Students I could not help I would refer to counseling centers where someone spoke their language.

Adjustment and Culture

I began doing research and found issues that affect immigrants and refugees across the board, even though their cultures differ from one another. For example, it has become more commonly known that many immigrants and refugees experience some degree of culture shock as they adjust to the United States, and this can effect their learning. Open discussion in the classroom about some topics—such as gay marriage and sex—are considered immoral to some students and cause extreme discomfort. If students come from traditional families, they may see a breakdown of the family network in this country.

The Role of Children and Elderly

Resettlement in the United States also brings child rearing challenges that can cause stress, no matter where the immigrants come from. Children of immigrant families often must take on the responsibility of translating for their parents as they quickly become more fluent in English. In a sense, the children take on some of the parental role, and it may become difficult for parents to set limits and discipline them. The newly-Americanized children may become rebellious and find attractive all the things their parents forbid. Elderly immigrants and refugees often feel isolated and become depressed; in their native countries they

were more commonly cared for and respected, while here they may feel like burdens.

Specific Cultural Differences

For those of us working with refugees and immigrants, understanding their native countries and what they have been coping with is the first step in helping them with their adjustment. As a counselor working in an ESOL program, I feel this is crucial. I continue to learn more every day about the different cultures of our students, and I am always trying to increase my referral network.

Cultural differences can help explain rejection of psychological help. Some cultures represented by our ESOL students turn to natural healing or priests rather than to psychiatry, talk therapy, or Western medications. For example, traditional Chinese culture often sees a stigma attached to psychological problems; such problems are seen as shameful to the family. As a result, psychological problems can manifest themselves in somatic problems such as headaches and backaches. In traditional Chinese culture, these somatic problems can then be explained by energy imbalances (*chi*).

Russian immigrants often are reluctant to discuss emotional problems and might see them as shameful. Suffering is not expressed often; it's more

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Psychological Issues . . .

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important to be “strong.” Immigrants with Muslim beliefs often are distrustful and suspicious of counselors/psychotherapists. Among Arabs, where the family is the source of support, new immigrants are not likely to seek professional help. Therapists might be seen as interfering with the father’s authority and the family’s religious teachings.

Brazilian immigrants come from a culture of emotional closeness, solidarity, and fun. When they come to the United States, they can become lonely and depressed because they miss the support of their loved ones and their social life.

Psychology of the Refugee

For refugees a sense of safety and security is eroded due to the traumas they have faced in their countries. Their world is no longer a predictable place. Deliberate violence can have a more damaging effect on mental health than natural disasters and accidents. These individuals often re-experience their trauma, and this can result in feelings of helplessness, fear, anxiety and depression. Many refugees suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD is caused by exposure to a “serious traumatic event that causes or threatens serious harm or injury, or violation of bodily integrity. The individual experiences intense fear, helplessness, or horror in response.”¹

Those diagnosed with PTSD exhibit three or more of the following: difficulty falling asleep

or staying asleep, irritability or outbursts of anger, difficulty concentrating, hypervigilance, exaggerated startle response, and re-experiencing the trauma.²

Promoting Immigrants as Assets

Refugees come to the United States for freedom and to escape traumas. September 11th may have brought back fears and anxieties that they had in their own countries. The rise in anti-immigrant sentiment and prejudice against Muslims adds to stress and anxiety. At The Im-



migrant Learning Center, some students stopped attending school because of the reaction they were receiving on their way to school after the events of Sept. 11. The Immigrant Learning Center is working on educating the community with the “Promoting Immigrants as Assets” component of our program. As a way of continuing to help ILC students become successful workers, parents, and community members, the program expanded its mission to include

promoting immigrants as assets to the United States. This part of our mission is known as the Public Education Program, which has four major initiatives designed to promote a positive image of immigrants as contributors to the economic, social and cultural vibrancy of the United States. These initiatives

- examine the impact of immigrants as entrepreneurs, customers, and workers through business sector studies;
- support professional development for K-12 teachers on teaching about immigration across the curriculum;
- offer a “briefing book,” that is, collection of research that includes statistics on immigrant issues such as immigrants and taxes, immigrants and jobs, and immigrant entrepreneurship; and
- support the the Immigrant Theater Group and class at the ILC.

Students in the theater class (under the direction of their playwright/teacher) write and perform plays showing immigrant experiences. These topics include leaving one’s home and first coming to the United States, experiencing life as a refugee, and working in the United States. The Theater Group has performed in the community, and their performances have been taped and aired on local cable television.

Four studies have been published as part of the business sector research. The most recent includes *The Rise of Asian-Owned Businesses in Massachusetts* and

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Psychological Issues . . .

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Immigrant Entrepreneurs in the Massachusetts Biotechnology Industry. Others include *Immigrant Homebuyers: Keys to the Revitalization of the Cities* and *Immigrant Entrepreneurs & Neighborhood Revitalization.*

Promoting immigrants and refugees as assets to a community through this kind of initiative helps to strengthen immigrants' sense of place and purpose, thus proactively addressing mental health issues.

References

1. Katz, O. & Katz, N. (2002). Brain and stress: Disorders and coping strategies. Concord: CA: Institute for Natural Resources, 6
2. Ibid.
3. McGoldrik, M., Giordano, J., & Pearce, J. (1996). Ethnicity and family therapy. New York: The Guilford Press.

Holly G. Jones is the program coordinator, counselor, & ADA coordinator at The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. in Malden, MA. She is a nationally certified psychologist. You can reach her at <hjones@ilctr.org>.

Resources for ABE Counselors

American Counseling Association

www.counseling.org

Offers online courses for counselors and more. See page 5 for more.

American School Counseling Association

www.schoolcounselor.org

"ASCA believes in one vision and one voice and works to ensure it meets the needs of all professional school counselors, regardless of setting, experience, level or needs."

The Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights

www.bcrhhr.org/pro/course/course_index.html

Provides comprehensive medical, mental health, and dental care—coordinated with legal and social services—to over 300 individuals from 67 countries each year. Interpreter services are available for over 30 languages to aid in the healing journey of each patient and their families. Located at the Boston Medical Center. Check out their online course: Caring for Refugees and Survivors of Torture and Related Trauma.

Community Legal Services and Counseling Center (CLSACC)

www.clsacc.org/pages/counseling.html

They assist clients who are experiencing anxiety, depression, social isolation, relationship difficulties, family troubles, work problems, trauma associated with violence, and other concerns. Fees range from \$5 to \$55 per visit. **No one is turned away due to inability to pay.** They help people with low incomes who are uninsured and under-insured. They do not accept health insurance payments for services. Call 617-661-1010 for an appointment.

Learning Disabilities Association of America

www.ldanatl.org/aboutld/adults/assessment/screening.asp

This site provides information specific to adults with learning disabilities. It offers guidelines for screening, information gathering, and referring to professionals.

www.consumerlaw.org/issues/immigrants/index.shtml

How Consumer Law Issues Impact New Immigrants

This section of the National Consumer Law Center's Web site is especially helpful to immigrants. It covers potential consumer abuses, finding affordable utilities, establishing credit, and more.

American Psychological Association

www.apa.org/ethics/code.html

Mark Your Calendar

Check the SABES Web site, <www.sabes.org> for local and regional activities. This list was prepared by Lou Wollrab.

October 30–November 2, 2007

American Association of Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE), 2007 Conference
Spirit of New Norfolk: Life and Adult Education Celebrated Daily
Location: Norfolk VA
Contact: AAACE
Web: www.aace.org/conferences/index.html

November 7–10, 2007

ProLiteracy Worldwide, 2007 Annual Conference
Location: Alexandria, VA
Contact: ProLiteracy, 315-422-9121, x352
Web: www.literacyvolunteers.org/conference/

November 8–9, 2007

National College Transition Network
Effective Transitions in Adult Education
Location: Providence, RI
Contact: Priyanka Sharma, 617-482-9485
Web: www.collegetransition.org/novconference.html

March 24–28, 2008

American Educational Research Association (AERA)
Toward Civic Responsibility
Location: New York, NY
Contact: AERC, 314-367-5000
Web: www.aera.net/meetings/Default.aspx?menu_id=342&id=2936

April 9–12, 2008

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), 2008 Meeting and Exposition
Becoming Certain About Uncertainty
Location: Salt Lake City, UT
Contact: NCTM, 703-620-9840
Web: www.nctm.org/conferences/content.aspx?id=11662

April 25, 2008

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
42nd Annual Convention & Exhibition
Worlds of TESOL: Building Communities of Practice, Inquiry, and Creativity
Location: New York, NY
Contact: TESOL, 888-547-3369
Web: www.tesol.org/s_tesol/seccss.asp?CID=1518&DID=8281

Conferences for Counselors

March 26–30, 2008

American Counseling Association Annual Conference and Exposition
Location: Honolulu, Hawaii
Web: www.counseling.org/Convention/

This year's conference features keynote speaker Bradford Keeney, PhD, recognized as an elder shaman and spiritual leader in many countries throughout the world.

June 28–July 1, 2008

American School Counseling Association Annual Conference
Setting New Standards
Location: Atlanta., GA
Web: www.schoolcounselor.org/

August 14–17, 2008

American Psychological Association
Location: Boston, MA
Web: www.apa.org/convention07/future.html



Did You Know?

The System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES) publishes *Field Notes* four times a year, and every ABE/ESOL staff member is entitled to a copy.

The SABES library lets you go online to borrow books, and you can have them mailed to you. (Go to <www.sabes.org>.)

SABES publishes guides and materials frequently, and you can download them right off your computer. (Go to <www.sabes.org>.)

Field Notes has an advisory board, members get stipends for participating, and we need new members for 2007-2008. If you are interested, contact Lenore Balliro, editor, at <lballiro@worlded.org>.

Upcoming Themes for *Field Notes*

Winter 2007

Technology in ABE

Distance learning, use of computers, innovative software, media literacy, and more.

Submit by September 15.

Spring 2008

Learning Disabilities in ABE

Submit by December 15.

Summer 2008

Open Issue

Anything goes. Well, almost.

Submit by March 15.



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