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Editor’s Corner

Ready for a fresh start with Fall classes? This issue of Notebook can help steer you along. Adult ESOL students may get by in class responding to practiced questions and answers. Yet in the real world, when someone asks an unexpected question, they may feel like a deer in the headlights. Our story “Spontaneous Conversation and Questions: 3 Ways to Get the Ball Rolling” will help students become more comfortable answering spontaneous questions. Although the skills learned with this activity can help in many situations, we’ve paid special attention to helping students who are preparing for speaking tasks that take place during the U.S. citizenship interview.

Next up is measurements. Do you know how much a half-cup is? A teaspoon? A tablespoon? Are you using the right amounts when preparing food or when measuring medicine? Our activity in “Practicing Measurements with Baking” gives students hands-on practice with this important numeracy lifeskill.

When new adult education classes start, it’s common in many programs to introduce students to the variety of resources available at the local library. Yet when you bring a class to the library, should you just show up and let a library staff member do all the talking? To better prepare students and instructors for a library visit, use our guide in “11 Steps to Prepare Your Class for a Library Visit.”

Adult education students are usually a motivated bunch, but everyone needs an extra push these days. In “Motivating Students with School Currency,” we tell the story of a Florida-based adult education program that hands out school “currency” based on student attendance and achievements. The currency can be used for supplies or at school special events. Find out how the currency program works and if it’s a good idea for your program.

In Exploring Resources, we have the usual wide range of web links, with special attention this issue on financial literacy-focused and health insurance-focused resources.

Finally, our Tutor Profile tells the story of an enthusiastic Illinois teacher who motivates students with technology and family literacy.

Enjoy the issue and, as always, stay in touch with your story ideas. You can email the Notebook editor at notebookeditor@proliteracy.org.

The Editor
Spontaneous Conversation and Questions: 3 Ways to Get the Ball Rolling

Purpose
To prepare ESOL students for spontaneous questions in both general conversation and in the setting of a U.S. citizenship interview.

Rationale
In ESOL class, students often get a lot of practice with learned questions or phrases. Teachers are usually accustomed to helping students who are learning English and will speak more slowly or repeat information often. So, students may be able to follow information in class relatively easily. Yet in the real world, conversation can become much more challenging, especially when people ask questions for which students are not prepared.

This same problem can arise during the U.S. citizenship interview, which requires a certain amount of speaking and, most likely, requesting repetition or clarification. The citizenship interview has a unique wrinkle because, almost always, something unexpected happens, says Phil Anderson, adult ESOL specialist with the Florida Department of Education. Sometimes, the unexpected surprise comes in the way that the officer interacts with the interviewee. Other times, there’s a communication mix-up that can leave the interviewee nervous. Naturally, the citizenship interview is a high-stakes appointment, and that can make conversation with an officer more nerve-wracking.

To help students become more comfortable with spontaneous conversation or questions both during the citizenship interview and throughout life, we present three activities on the next page. The first is shared by Anderson. The second is adapted from the New Readers Press book Teaching Adults: An ESL Resource Book (2013). The third is from Citizenship: Ready for the Interview (New Readers Press, 2014), which is based on the new N-400 application.

More Information
Here are more resources to help students prepare for the citizenship test.

Naturalization Self-Test 1
http://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/quiz/learners/study-test/study-materials-civics-test/naturalization-self-test-1
This site from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services gives students practice with the typical questions asked during the interview.

Preparing for the Oath
http://americanhistory.si.edu/citizenship/
Created by the Smithsonian’s Museum of American History, this site offers students an interactive and visual way to practice for the civics part of the U.S. Naturalization test.

Guide to the Adult Citizenship Education Content Standards and Foundation Skills
http://tinyurl.com/pk3r8jo
Designed by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, this guide helps programs that are looking to develop citizenship-prep curricula. The guide reviews the skills and knowledge necessary for students to navigate the naturalization process.
The Basic Activities

Activity 1:
This activity focuses on helping students not to freeze up when asked an unexpected question. Tape pieces of paper with one question on each piece to a beach ball. For ideas on questions to use, see the websites on this page’s sidebar. Form a circle, and have students catch the ball. Each person catching the ball has to answer the question facing them at the moment he or she catches the ball. You can use this exercise as a warmup, as an end-of-class fun activity, or even as a speaking activity related to a certain topic. For example, if you’re studying work as a lifeskills topic or you’re focused on preparing for employment, you can have work-themed questions.

Activity 2:
Make a list of several questions, and write one question each on strips of paper. You can use the websites from the sidebar on this page for a variety of question ideas. Or, you can use the ideas below:

Give one question strip to each student. Make sure everyone understands the questions they will ask. Have students walk around and find partners. The partners should ask each other the questions on their paper strips. Students should not show their written questions to their partners. By not showing the questions, this simulates real-world conversation and encourages students to ask for clarification.

After students have answered each others’ questions, have them trade questions, find new partners, and repeat the process. Continue the activity until students have partnered with a variety of people.

Activity 3:
In your civics or citizenship prep class, have students take turns practicing the sample conversation on the next page between a USCIS officer (called examiner in this case) and an interviewee. Practice the conversation initially with the whole class so students can ask questions about any words that are unclear. Then, have students pair with someone to practice. Monitor for common pronunciation issues students may have. When finished, ask for volunteers to read the conversation for the class.

Although this activity does not focus on spontaneous questions/conversation, it gives students exposure to ways to ask for clarification or repetition, a skill that is useful during the interview process.

Also, consider having former students from your citizenship prep class come back and tell students what happened during the interview. That could be a real-life way to prepare the class.
HAI’S INTERVIEW

EXAMINER: Have you ever claimed to be a citizen?
HAI: Claimed? You mean did I lie about it?
EXAMINER: Right.
HAI: No. I tell the truth.
EXAMINER: Have you ever registered to vote or voted in a U.S. election?
HAI: No.
EXAMINER: OK. Do you have a title of nobility from another country—a special name like a king or a prince?
HAI: No.
EXAMINER: Have you ever been declared legally incompetent?
HAI: No.
EXAMINER: What does “legally incompetent” mean?
HAI: It means your mind is not OK. Mental illness.
EXAMINER: That’s right. Have you ever failed to file local, state, or U.S. income taxes?
HAI: I pay my taxes every year.
EXAMINER: Do you owe any overdue taxes?
HAI: I don’t understand “overdue.”
EXAMINER: Have you paid all of your taxes, or is there still some money you haven’t paid yet?
HAI: No. I paid everything.
Numeracy

Purpose
To give students practice with various capacity measurements such as cup, teaspoon, and more by baking chocolate chip cookies.

Rationale
Learning measurements for volume is one part of an ABE math class. A fun way to practice this concept is with baking. The lesson featured here incorporates volume measurement practice and multiplication. The idea below is modified from Bright Hub Education’s site http://www.brighthubeducation.com/middle-school-math-lessons/12094-cooking-measurement-math-activities/.

The Basic Activity
Plan in advance how you can complete this activity in the classroom. As most programs don’t have an oven, you may not do the actual baking in class, but you can at least bring in the various ingredients, a mixing bowl and spoon, and the measuring cups. On page 7 is a list of ingredients and supplies needed. If you do not have these items at home, you can plan with students a day or two in advance to help bring in the items. As you may not be able to bake what you make in class, it would be fun for students if you bring in chocolate chip cookies the same day you complete this activity, be they homemade or store-bought.

More Information
Here are more ways students can practice capacity measurements.

Recipes from TV411
http://www.tv411.org/science
If your students enjoyed practicing measurements with the chocolate chip cookie recipe in the article, then you can use the recipes on the TV411 site for additional practice. You’ll find various videos that feature recipes but also focus on various concepts of science, such as carbohydrates, heat, and salt. On this same site, scroll down to the bottom right for “Print Downloads,” and you can access the recipes used in the videos. The dishes include strawberry ice cubes, zucchini succotash, and baked potato tacos. We have reprinted the zucchini succotash recipe on page 8.

Food and Cooking Interactive Game
http://www.gcflearnfree.org/foodandcooking
Can’t bring the ingredients for baking into the classroom? Then the interactive games from Goodwill Community Foundation can walk students digitally through how to bake a cake, from getting the ingredients at the store to measuring ingredients to baking. The site requires Internet access for students to complete the activities.
Ask students if they have ever baked cookies. How do they know if they are adding the correct amount of ingredients? This is where understanding measurements comes in.

Set up a space in the class where everyone can watch the following demonstration and, if the class is small enough, help out. Walk students through how to make chocolate chip cookie dough. First, have someone place the butter in the bowl. How do they know it is a half-cup of butter? (Answer: It should say so on the package. Point out how the wrapper shows the different tablespoons for butter and how eight tablespoons equals a half-cup.)

Next, have another student measure ¾ cup of each of the sugars. Ask students how many ¼ cups are in ¾ cup. If you brought an additional ¼ cup for students to see, have them measure one of the sugars three times, so they can see how that is equivalent to ¾ cup.

Next, the class can measure one teaspoon of vanilla. Have them use the half-teaspoon to see how the two halves make one full teaspoon. Then add the egg. You can add the remaining ingredients in a similar fashion. When adding the flour, talk about other ways you could measure flour aside from using the one-cup measurement. (Answer: You could also use two half-cups, four ¼-cups, etc.) Have students demonstrate the various measurement combinations to you.

If students have had some introduction to multiplying fractions, you can ask them how to double the recipe. This could be done on a worksheet or in a class discussion. If they were to double the recipe, ask if they need a bigger bowl to mix the ingredients. Also, if they were to double the recipe, would they change/double the cooking temperature? Although this activity is not focused on putting the cookies in the oven, this still raises the discussion of how doubling the recipe does not mean that you double the temperature.

### Recipe

**HERE'S YOUR INGREDIENT AND SUPPLIES LIST:**
- 1 stick (½ cup) softened butter
- ¾ cup white sugar
- ¾ cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon (tsp.) vanilla
- 1 egg
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1½ cup flour
- ¾ cup chocolate chips
- 1 mixing bowl
- Measuring cups: 1 cup, ¾ cup, ½ cup, ¼ cup
- Measuring spoons: ½ tsp., 1 tsp.

### More Information

**Math Sense 1: Focus on Operations**
For additional practice with capacity measurement, Math Sense 1 from New Readers Press has five pages of practice that focus on ounces, cups, pints, quarts, and gallons.

**Liquid Medicine: Taking the Right Dose**
http://healthliteracy.worlded.org/doses/index.htm
This site from World Education explains an activity once used at a hospital to measure what participants believed was 5 ml of liquid medicine using various measurement tools. The variation in measurements surprised everyone and brought attention to the importance of understanding liquid measurements correctly. You may be able to try this activity with your class.

**Tips for Measuring Liquid Medicines Safely**
This two-page PDF file focuses on why it’s important to use accurate doses of liquid medicines. Review it before sharing it with the class to determine if the reading level is appropriate or too high. The site has some pictures of various liquid measuring tools (syringes, cups, droppers, etc.) that would be useful for a class studying health.
Extension Activity

For additional hands-on practice with volume measurements, students could select other recipes they’d like to practice. The sidebar on page 6 provides the website TV411, where you can find some additional recipes. The class could also discuss an experience of cooking or baking with the wrong measurement of something (for example, how a batch of cookies turned out with too little flour or too much salt).

If you have trouble bringing actual food ingredients into class, try practicing cup/tablespoon/teaspoon measurements with water. Set up an area of the class that may get a little messy, and have towels ready for quick clean up.

You can give students a copy of the recipe shown in this issue at the end of class so they can make it at home.

Here’s a sample recipe from the TV411 website:

Recipe

Zucchini Succotash  Serves 2-4

Ingredients

2 tablespoons olive oil  1 cup lima beans  (fresh, canned, or frozen)
2 medium zucchini, diced  1 cup sweet corn  (fresh, canned, or frozen)
2 yellow squash, diced  ¼ cup chopped parsley
1 red bell pepper, diced  Salt and pepper to taste
½ medium onion, diced

Directions

In a large frying pan, heat olive oil over high heat. Add zucchini, squash, bell pepper, and onion. Sauté for 5 minutes. Stir in lima beans and corn. Cook, tossing, until the corn and beans are tender and beginning to brown, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in parsley and season with salt and pepper. Serve over brown rice.
11 Steps to Prepare Your Class for a Library Visit

Purpose
To prepare adult education students for a class visit to the library.

Rationale
Libraries have a wealth of great resources these days that go beyond books. These resources include computer access, e-books, magazines, movies, special lectures and events, children's materials, and more. Some of our adult ed students may be aware of this diverse mix, but others are too busy in their day-to-day lives to explore libraries.

A field trip to a local library is a great way to introduce adult education classes to all that libraries have to offer. However, just showing up at the scheduled field trip time is not the best way to maximize a library visit. Instructors should prepare in advance to get the most they can out of the class library visit. We walk you through the preparation process below and share some ideas for during and after the tour.

The Basic Activity
1. Plan when you will take your students to the library. Is it during the first few weeks of class? A lesson on libraries or community resources?
2. Contact the library to arrange the visit. Even if you only work with a small group, it’s best to coordinate with the library in advance so there will be a staff member who can answer questions or show students around.
3. Ask the library what is the best way to get library cards for your class. If you have a small group, it may be something the library can do when you show up. However, in our experience, libraries prefer that you help coordinate card sign-up in advance. This may mean that you or someone in your program will have to pick up library card applications before the visit or access them online.
4. Next prepare students to get library cards. By getting cards done in advance, students will be able to check out materials during their visit. Find out what forms of ID the library requires for library cards, and help students get ready to have that information. Some students may not have the necessary identification to get a card and check out resources. However, they still may want to learn about the library resources that don’t require a library card.

More Information
Here are more library visit-related resources.

Library Lesson Plans
The lesson on this site is somewhat similar to the one presented in our article. It also talks about using the library to do research.

Visit Your Local Library!
http://www.colorincolrado.org/families/letsread/libraryvisit/
This article from Colorin Colorado focuses on parents taking their children to the library. Check the reading level to make sure your students would be able to read this article.

English/Spanish Library Vocabulary
http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/ell/vocab.htm
The Fairfax County, Virginia, government has a listing of library-related words in English and Spanish. Definitions are not provided; the list is a translation. Some words on the list include literacy, librarian, and overdue notice.

ESL Library Lesson
http://www.elcivics.com/esl_library_lesson_1.html
If you have Internet access, you can guide students through these library-themed pictures and have them talk about each picture. There are a couple of sentences beside each picture to explain them.
Lesson Plans That Support Class Trips
http://www.classtrips.com
Although this website is not specific to libraries, it has a great mix of helpful information for a variety of field trips, including amusement parks, farms, and museums. It even has prep information for a field trip to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

Virtual Field Trips
http://www.ala.org/offices/publishing/booklist/booklinks/resources/virtualfield
With field trips sometimes more difficult due to schedules or budget cuts, this page from the American Library Association (ALA) provides links to museum sites that enable students to take virtual field trips. It includes resources from around the world.

Adult Literacy Through Libraries: an Action Agenda
Created through a partnership between ProLiteracy, ALA, and a local library, the Action Agenda is a series of recommendations intended to spur conversation, ideas, and action to integrate the public library with other services available to help adult learners improve their literacy and basic skills.

Everyone On
http://www.everyoneon.org/proliteracy
EveryoneOn is a national effort to get people, especially those with limited incomes, connected to the Internet. ProLiteracy has been approved as one of several national partners to help in this effort. People in the ProLiteracy network—including teachers, students, and volunteers—are pre-approved to take advantage of this offer. Log in at the link above. You will be asked for your zip code and whether or not you have children enrolled in a free school lunch program. The site then provides information on low-cost computers and Internet services in your area.

5. Set a goal for your trip. For instance, a library tour for beginning ESOL students will be very different than that for a class preparing for a high school-equivalency exam or students working on a research project.

6. Speak with someone at the library about your class level. If your class is beginning-level ESOL, mention that the library staff member leading the tour may want to speak a little more slowly or use simpler terms. Or, during the tour, be prepared to take what’s said and repeat it in a way that your students are more likely to understand.

7. Talk with students about your tour. In addition to library cards, do some prep work to cover library basics, such as borrowing books, using computers, and checking out books. In the sidebar on page 9, the resource “ESL Library Lesson” has some pictures you can show your class to get the discussion going.

If your class is meeting at the library instead of going from the school, make sure everyone is clear on the time and place to meet.

8. Pre-teach some library vocabulary. This would include the words on page 11, which you can use as a handout with your class. You can find most of these words and more on the Quizlet website link (https://quizlet.com/30154/library-vocabulary-words-flash-cards/), which will also let you make flashcards with the words and definitions. The site also provides an audio reading of the words and their definitions.

9. Gather handouts and brochures in advance. Many libraries have printed materials to let people know about library programs and policies. Gather this information in advance or when you are there (or, ask the library staff for help in gathering the materials). Share the handouts with students. Review any information most relevant for the class.

10. Decide if you want students to complete any worksheets or information while at the library. Depending your class level, you could have students do a worksheet during their visit to answer certain questions and check comprehension. (For a beginning ESOL class, it may be easier just to have them focus on the actual tour.) Some sites recommend library scavenger hunts—see the following site from The Show Me Librarian for more details: http://showmelibrarian.blogspot.com/2012/11/scavenger-hunts-for-library-visits.html.

11. Debrief back in class.
On page 11, we have a worksheet that your class could use as a springboard to discuss their library experience. Feel free to add or adjust to it per your class focus or level.
Vocabulary

fiction books – n. stories and novels that are not true
non-fiction books – n. books that have facts and information
reference section – n. where the encyclopedias, dictionaries, and other books for research are
circulation desk – n. the front desk where you go to check out a book
periodical – n. another name for a magazine
online catalog – n. the place to find what books are in the library and where they are located
borrow – v. to use something that belongs to someone else and then return it
overdue – adj. not returned by the required time
check out – v. to borrow something from the library

Library Tour

Write your answers to the questions. Then talk about your answers with a partner.

1. What did you like about the library tour? ____________________________________________________________________________________________
2. What was something new for you at the library? ________________________________________________________________________________________
3. Did you get a library card? ________________________________________________________________________________________________
4. Did you get any books or other materials? If yes, what did you get? __________________________________________________________________________
5. When do you think you will go back to the library? ____________________________________________________________________________
6. What is something you still want to learn about the library? __________________________________________________________________________
Motivating Students with School Currency

Purpose
To present one program’s offering of school “currency” to foster greater motivation of adult students.

Rationale
If you have any contact with the K–12 educational system these days, you may have seen positive reinforcement through a school-wide (and sometimes, a county-wide or state-wide) program. For example, students may get tickets or tokens for turning in homework, remaining quiet during class, or helping others. As those tickets or tokens accumulate over a semester, students can then use them toward supplies or special school events. See how leaders at the adult education program at Brevard County Schools in Florida modified this approach to encourage adult learners.

The Story
“I said, ‘I’m not interested.’ I wasn’t buying it.” That was Bruce Pearce’s initial reply when asked if he wanted to attend a Positive Behavior Support (PBS) three-day training within his state. The state-wide PBS program is commonly used in the K–12 system, but Pearce, the Clearlake Education Center’s career counselor and night school manager, didn’t think it would work with his adult students, who range from ages 16 to 60.

Ultimately, Pearce decided to attend the training. Although he still wasn’t completely sold on the idea of how PBS would work in an adult ed setting, he also didn’t want to lose what he got out of the training. As he and others at his program discussed the idea of using PBS with adults, they realized something. “All of the students need something,” he said—that could be gas or bus money to get to school, he said. So, the school came up with the idea of “Clearlake Cash.” Clearlake Cash ties in with school attendance. For instance, students get $1 of Clearlake Cash (not real money) for attending their first period, arriving on time, and remaining in class the whole period. As the school has two periods in a given day (each period lasts a couple of hours), a student can earn $2 of Clearlake Cash just for attending school and arriving on time. Each Clearlake dollar is worth about 10 cents compared with real money.

If students have attended class all week and remained in class the whole period, they get a “bonus” of $5 Clearlake Cash. There’s also an initial enrollment bonus of $20 for each semester a student is enrolled.

More Information
The story about Clearlake focuses on earning “currency” for attendance and achievement. In other school settings, students may earn rewards for their behavior. Behavior issues are not usually a problem in adult education compared with what we may think of in settings with children. Still, any class can benefit from some behavioral structure. Here are some adult student–geared resources and ideas.

**Adult Classroom Management Techniques**
http://www.tesall.com/tesol-teaching/adult-classroom-management-techniques/
This article talks about setting rules with students, working toward set goals, and fostering an encouraging, positive climate in the classroom.

**Tips on Classroom Management for Adult ELL Classes**
http://www.eslcenter.org/about-us/blog/103-tips-on-classroom-management-for-adult-ell-classes
Similar to the first article, this one also addresses classroom management rules for adult ed. Toward the end of the article are some ideas on how to handle problems that should be addressed quickly, such as a student who receives and proceeds to take a call during class.
The program also has “Bruce Bucks,” which are used for achievements within the program. Students get $20 of Bruce Bucks when they complete a high school credit course or move up a level in their ABE, GED, or ESOL class.

Students can use their Clearlake Cash and Bruce Bucks for supplies such as paper, notebooks, and writing accessories. They can also use the money for a $6 bus pass ($60 Clearlake cash), a $5 gas card, or a $5 Sonic card. The school also has a cookout on Fridays, and students can pay for their hot dogs, pizza, and drinks with their Clearlake Cash. Many of the items used in the program are donated by local organizations.

The school also has special events like a business academy and a Chik-Fil-A semester grand finale. Students can use their Clearlake Cash or Bruce Bucks to attend the events. Both of these events are supported by local businesses—in these cases, a local bank and Chik-Fil-A. The school has also incorporated other involvement from local businesses.

Although school leaders initially worried about student buy-in, they have found that it hasn’t been a problem. The school has continued to use the Clearlake Cash program for four semesters because it has been successful. “Students love it and look forward to it,” Pearce says. Students sometimes appear to value their school “money” more than their real money, he says.

Pearce is taking part in PBS as part of a state-wide effort that also incorporates data collection and reporting. You may not have the need or desire at your school to take part in such a program, but Pearce says you can still implement the same concept. Here are some of Pearce’s suggestions to make it work:

1. **Get teacher buy-in first.** You can consider using a PBS-like program first with teachers for a short time period before trying it out with students. This way, teachers will also have a better understanding of how the program works and how to explain it to students. Of course, buy-in from the program administrator is crucial as well. Pearce is grateful that his administrator gives him free rein with the program.

2. **Prepare how you’ll explain the program to students.** This is especially important with ESOL students who may have initial trouble with comprehension.

3. **Partner with local businesses.** You’ll likely find that a number of local businesses are eager to support your school with certain events or giveaways, as it’s good promotion for them—or they may see your students as possible future hires. Some businesses that have supported Pearce’s program include an investment insurance firm, a local restaurant chain that furnished the business academy breakfast, and a credit union. This also means that someone in your program needs to take the time to form and maintain relationships with local businesses.

4. **Change the color of your program “money” every semester.** That way, staff members know when students earned money, and it makes it harder for someone to counterfeit the currency.

5. **Mix up the program from time to time.** As enthusiastic as students are about Clearlake Cash and Bruce Bucks, it can get a little routine at times. When that happens, Pearce will come up with creative ideas to vary things, such as offering double cash for a week or holding the special event Pumpkin Smash for Clearlake Cash. Students get to smash pumpkins, literally.
Focus on Better Financial Literacy with FoolProof Me

http://www.foolproofme.com/
http://www.foolproofteacher.com/

For an extra focus on financial literacy, take a look at the FoolProof Me website, created by the FoolProof Foundation. The site focuses on helping learners become money-wise and has a curriculum geared toward middle- and high-schoolers, although some of the lessons could be used in adult education as well. The second site above, FoolProof Teacher, provides free access to the financial curriculum modules. Topics include credit scores, budgeting, and savings. Review the modules before using them in class to be sure the language is level-appropriate if you are working with an ESOL class.

Digital Promise

http://www.digitalpromise.org/initiatives/adult-learning#adult-learning
http://www.digitalpromise.org/blog/entry/breaking-down-barriers-of-distance-learning-through-technology

Want to discover what other adult ed programs are doing to promote digital learning, so you can decide if those initiatives would work at your school? Then take a look at Digital Promise. The nonprofit organization focuses on bringing technology to everyone, including adult education learners. For a success story, go to the second link above and find out how Pine Technical & Community College in rural Minnesota is using state-of-the-art technology to help students develop better job skills.

Control Your Money, 2nd Edition


The New Readers Press book Control Your Money has been updated. The new information covers safe online banking tips, apps, monitoring online accounts, mobile banking, online bill payment, and money management apps. There is also a new glossary of money management terms. Safety tips throughout the book warn students about how to protect themselves and their money from fraud and scams (for example, phone cards, debit cards, PIN protection, identity theft, credit report warnings, and bank fraud).
Readers for Lower Level Literate Beginners

http://resources.marshalladulteducation.org/reading_skills_home.htm

It can be challenging to find appropriate readings for lower-level beginners. A series of online stories developed by Marshall Adult Education in Marshall, Minnesota, can help. The readings are at CASAS level 200 to 235. You can access the stories online, or you can print them. The stories cover a range of topics from health to jobs (some titles include “A Healthy Pregnancy,” “Overcoming Obesity,” and “The Farmers Market”). If your students choose to read the stories online, they can both see the stories and listen to someone read them out loud.

Preparing Students for the Affordable Care Act

http://www.enrollamerica.org/hil/

Open enrollment for the Affordable Care Act (ACA) starts again on November 1 this year. One great resource to educate your students about ACA is Enroll America’s health insurance literacy hub. The site provides links to various other sites that help learners better understand health insurance and choose a plan.

Smart Choice Health Insurance

http://extension.umd.edu/insure

Designed by the University of Maryland Extension Office, the Smart Choice Health Insurance resources are rated at an eight-grade reading level, and the materials have been tested with 1,500 consumers in seven states. At the website above, you’ll find factsheets to help consumers understand health insurance-related concepts. You can also access for free the “My Smart Choice Health Insurance Workbook,” a 26-page guide to help users consider and plan their health insurance needs.

ProLiteracy Conference on Adult Literacy

www.proliteracy.org/conference

Join us at ProLiteracy’s biennial conference this year October 14-17, 2015, in beautiful and historic Charleston, South Carolina. The conference will include over 100 workshops, dynamic speakers, panel discussions, and awards for students and adult literacy practitioners. Visit the website URL above for more details and a complete listing of workshops available. Registration is still open—don’t miss your chance!

Digital Challenger

http://www.newreaderspress.com and search “Digital Challenger”

Help students learn controlled vocabulary taught through age-appropriate fiction and nonfiction passages. In Digital Challenger, each lesson incorporates phonics, word analysis, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, and study skills. The series also has audio and video to enhance reading and expand topic knowledge. Digital Challenger is available on computers and tablets by using the book’s URL online or via a digital download. Select activities are also available on smartphones. Teachers can track learner progress, number of attempts at practice questions, time spent per lesson, and score report for end-of-book assessment. At the website above, view a sample demo or download a placement test for your students.

What’s Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl

http://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov/

Our story on page 6 of this issue focuses on cooking and measurements. If your students particularly enjoyed that lesson, then take it a step further by trying out recipes from the the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Mixing Bowl website. You’ll find recipes for healthy and yummy-sounding dishes like strawberry s’mores, green bean and rice casserole, and mango cucumber soup. If you click on “My Cookbook,” you and the class can save your favorite recipes for a custom cookbook. Maybe this will inspire the class to create a cookbook with recipes from students.
In an increasingly tech-focused world, Emily Arvizu of the Tolton Center of De La Salle Institute in Chicago doesn’t want adult ESOL students to get left behind.

Arvizu has a good deal of experience in family literacy, and it frustrated her that the Chicago school system has a way for parents to check their child’s grades or attendance but that it is only online, something a number of immigrants may not know how to navigate.

So, over the past few years as an instructor, she’s helped students establish e-mail addresses. She’s taught them how to use Google Docs to peer edit stories by fellow students. She’s shared the app myON so students could read books to their children or practice English on their own through reading.

All of these efforts “have made technology part of the regular routine of their life,” she says. She sees less fear of technology from students now, and students report sharing the computers or tablets at home with the younger family members.

Arvizu’s path to adult literacy had a few twists along the way. Her grandfather was an immigrant from Mexico. Arvizu’s mom no longer spoke Spanish, but she encouraged Arvizu and her siblings to study the language, which she did throughout high school and college, where she studied elementary education and Latin American studies. She was planning to work at the elementary school level after serving in a mission program for a year where she was a full-time volunteer for the Tolton Center, which offers ESOL, ABE, and high school-equivalency prep classes.

That’s when things changed.

She fell in love with adult ESOL and came on board as a staff instructor for Tolton. “The job was a combination of things I’m passionate about and things I went to school for,” she says. Her long-time study of Spanish came in handy as well, with many students in the program coming from Latin America.

Arvizu focused on introducing technology to students and helping with family literacy. After seven years at Tolton, the program ESL coordinator, Mary Ellen Lesniak, wanted to work toward retirement and picked Arvizu as the new program coordinator. Arvizu has been the Tolton ESL coordinator for two years.

“Emily’s gifts of knowledge and leadership have greatly impacted the Tolton Center,” says Susie Perez, Tolton’s executive director. “She is a highly intelligent and deeply committed young woman who brings a wealth of knowledge, energy, and commitment to all of her activities.”