In this issue:

- Classroom Management
- Reading
- Assessment
- Speaking
- Exploring Resources
- Student Profile
Editor’s Corner

In the Fall, many adult education programs launch new classes for their students. We’re certain that this Fall issue of Notebook will provide some inspiration to launch new classroom techniques and approaches.

As the baby boomer population enters retirement, it’s no surprise there is an increasing number of older instructors in adult education classrooms. At the same time, many classrooms will also see a rise in the number of older learners. Our article “6 Ways to Make Learning and Teaching Easier for Older Adults” shares some interesting statistics and provides practical ways to enhance the learning and teaching experiences of this age group.

This year’s highly anticipated presidential election will take place in November. To assist students in understanding the U.S. presidential election process, “Choosing a President” features an excerpt from the News for You Voting Guide, as well as a ready-to-use activity to accompany the excerpt.

Next up, we focus on assessment, an area of lesson planning not addressed often enough in the adult education classroom. In “Minute Paper Offers Quick Learner Assessment,” you’ll discover what the minute paper is and how it can help instructors and students alike to better evaluate what’s been taught.

Pronunciation can be a challenge for ESOL students at any level. One particularly challenging area is minimal pairs, which contrast two words with similar sounds. In the article “Making Pronunciation Easier with Minimal Pair Activities,” you’ll find fun approaches to minimal pairs.

Our regular Exploring Resources feature is full of information about teaching and professional development websites, books, and instructional briefs to improve the learning experience.

Finally, our Student Profile tells the story of Arkansas-based student Jennifer Chadwick, who overcame reading difficulties and now plans to study early childhood education. Chadwick received the Dollar General Student of the Year award last year.

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
6 Ways to Make Learning and Teaching Easier for Older Adults

Purpose
To provide age-specific tips that will make learning and teaching easier for older adults.

Rationale
News reports for several years have been dominated by headlines of the baby boomer generation entering retirement. And it isn’t just in the U.S.; right now, 8.5% of the world’s population is 65 and older, but that number will jump to nearly 17% by 2050, according to a news release from the National Institutes of Health earlier this year. “America’s 65-and-over population is projected to nearly double over the next three decades, from 48 million to 88 million by 2050,” the press release reports.

ProLiteracy has noticed an increase in the number of older instructors (specifically, 60 and older). The number of instructors in that age group jumped from 35% in the 2010–11 Annual Statistical Report to 48% by the 2014–15 report, the most recent numbers available.

Although the ages of your adult students may span a wide range, it would not be a surprise if you’re seeing an increase in the number of older learners.

To help guide programs through this demographic trend, here are some ways to assist older adult instructors and learners.

More Information

World’s Older Population Grows Dramatically
This press release from the National Institutes of Health shares some facts on the increase in lifespan of the population and promotes the report “An Aging World: 2015.”

ProLiteracy 2014–15 Annual Statistical Report
http://tinyurl.com/jrm9atv
In this report you can find out about the growth in older instructors among ProLiteracy member organizations, as well as other facts.

Visual Impairment, Blindness in U.S. Expected to Double by 2050
This press release from the National Eye Institute provides details on the rise in visual impairment.

Restoring Vision
http://restoringvision.org/
Restoring Vision is a nonprofit organization that helps provide eyeglasses to the needy around the world who would otherwise not have access.
6 Ways to Help Older Students and Tutors

1. **Consider visual impairment.** The number of visually impaired or blind people in the U.S. is expected to double by 2050, according to information released in May from the National Eye Institute, which is part of the National Institutes of Health. It’s no coincidence that the increase coincides with the growing older population. Because so much of learning is visual, the adult classroom is a potential place to help learners with their visual issues. Here are a few ideas:

- **Ask local eyeglass shops for donations.** “We give a letter to the students to give to all eyeglass shops. The letter on our letterhead states students’ names, relationship to our program, what their problem is, and asks for them to donate an exam and glasses if they can,” says Florence G. Phillips, founder and executive director of the ESL In-Home Program of Northern Nevada. The letter lets the eyeglass shops know that the program will thank them on their website and in the media and will send a tax donation letter. Phillips’ program has had positive results.

- **Provide visual aids.** The Literacy Council of Western Arkansas keeps a supply of reading glasses available for use in each class, says Leah Lane. At Literacy Action, Inc. in Atlanta, Georgia, several initiatives have been put in place to assist older learners with impaired vision. The program offers onsite vision clinics, reading glasses, handheld magnifying glasses, and large-print testing materials. “By offering visual aids, we not only decrease the demands on their visual abilities, but we also increase the probability of our students reaching their academic goals,” says executive director Austin Dickson.

- **Request accessible materials for visually impaired students.** Most publishers, including New Readers Press, offer materials in alternate formats upon request, such as large print, audio, or electronic files.

2. **Do a needs assessment.** Find out what older learners want to gain from class. You’ll find that it is usually different than what younger, working students want to learn, says Dr. Mary T. Brauch Petersen, director of the Language & Culture School of Omaha, in Omaha, Nebraska. Older students may not be interested in job-related materials. Additionally, many may have never had formal educational experiences before. “Now, in their 50s to 90s and beyond, they want basic reading, writing, conversation, and listening skills. These skills need to be reinforced again and again to be learned,” she says. Brauch Petersen finds that many older adults want to learn English to better communicate with their grandchildren.

However, older learners’ lack of focus on practical goals, such as earning a high-school equivalency diploma or getting a job, can sometimes make funding challenging, says Mary Silva, executive director of the Literacy Services of Indian River County in Vero Beach, Florida. “Most funders are only interested in supporting a student if they are trying to get a GED®, go on to college, improve a job situation, or help their child do better in school,” she says.

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**More Ways to Help Older Learners**

The ideas below come from Judy S. Comeaux, an ABE instructor with Adult Literacy Advocates of Greater Baton Rouge, in Louisiana. She says that most of the older students in her class are reading at a level between 1st and 3rd grade but bring with them a plethora of life skills. “We try to build on their reading skills by working to strengthen phonics, decoding and encoding and sight words,” she says.

- Use reading materials that are of interest to the students. “Our seniors enjoy reading a chapter from the Bible at the beginning of each class period,” she says. They also enjoy reading the newspaper and simple biographies of historical figures, such as Booker T. Washington, George Washington Carver, and Harriet Tubman.

- While using these biographies to improve reading, build on language skills by answering discussion questions.

- Limit class sessions to 1 1/2 to 2 hours.

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**More Information**

The Elder Literacy Initiative
https://elderliteracy.org/
http://tinyurl.com/z9sfo6
This curriculum from adult learning organizations in Minnesota caters to older learners with literacy issues. You can request a free copy of the full curriculum and see portions of it online. The second link here is Notebook’s previous article about the curriculum.

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More Ways to Help Older Learners

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3. **Time your tutor trainings (or classes) accordingly.** At Newton Free Library in Newton, Massachusetts, Susan E. Bécam, ELL and literacy program coordinator, offers four 10-hour ELL tutor training workshops each year. In the winter, she schedules the workshops in the afternoon, and in the summer, she has them in the morning. “This helps out tutors who do not drive at night to attend the sessions,” she says. “Quarterly tutor roundtables follow this same schedule.” If your program has a large number of older students, you may want to adjust some class times accordingly.

4. **Evaluate how you can provide extra help.** For example, one older student at Episcopal Community Services of San Francisco (California) who has a developmental disability has difficulty working with other students in class, mainly because of his hearing issues. An individual tutor helps him in a separate classroom. The program provides other help as well, says education program manager Kathryn L. Benton. “Because the students we serve are often homeless or living in unstable conditions, we provide reading glasses for them to use while they are here, as well as a referral for glasses. We also serve a hot lunch,” she says. “Our agency also runs a senior center nearby, and several students get case management there as well.”

5. **Do some handholding with technology.** It’s probably no surprise that older learners and some instructors may not use newer technology as often as younger students and colleagues do. Yet that shouldn’t limit them. For example, Literacy Action in Georgia offers courses in basic digital literacy, and 68% of the courses’ enrollment is students over age 50, Dickson says. These courses focus on increasing computer access and digital inclusion. If your program does not offer computer-focused classes, you can let students know of other places locally that may offer tutorials, such as libraries.

6. **Stay aware of memory issues.** The Jones Library in Amherst, Massachusetts, has had to occasionally turn away or “retire” tutors who are having trouble with memory loss. “We can accommodate almost any other physical disability as long as the volunteer still has clear speech and hears well,” says ESL coordinator Lynne Weintraub.

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**More Benefits of Working With Older Instructors**

Lynne Weintraub, ESL coordinator at the Jones Library in Amherst, Massachusetts, shares the following about working with older learners:

Since the baby boomers started retiring, I am getting high numbers of senior volunteers. A few of them like tutoring so much they stay all day and work with a series of students, one after another. And they stick with the program for years at a time. They tell me that they feel the time spent here is the most meaningful part of their lives because they can see the progress their students are making, and the students so appreciate the help they are getting.

I often get requests from students for older volunteers because they’re seen as more reliable, and they have a lot of life experience and transferable skills from the workforce and as parents. Our conversation circles are entirely staffed by seniors, and that’s been a blessing because I rarely have to recruit new ones.

When people think about the service we provide to the community, they mainly think about how we help newcomers with English and cultural orientation. But I think we’re also providing a service by offering a meaningful way for people, especially seniors, to contribute their time and knowledge to the community. They stay active, feel needed, they learn a lot in the process, and they can do it on their own terms—we’re flexible with scheduling/locations and let them pick out their own student(s). It sometimes seems like we’re running an alternative branch of the town’s Senior Center here at the library.
"Choosing a President": A News for You Voting Guide Excerpt

Purpose
To guide students through a reading selection from the News for You Voting Guide and help them better understand the presidential election process.

Rationale
News for You, the weekly newspaper published by New Readers Press, has created a free voting guide that explains the U.S. election process. Find the 12-page guide at: http://www.newreaderspress.com/filebin/pdf/2016_NFY-VotingGuide.pdf. The guide, available to anyone (not just subscribers to News for You), covers the following topics: “Who Votes,” “Reasons to Vote,” “What We Vote On,” “Choosing a President,” “Political Parties,” “Getting Informed,” “What to Watch for in a Debate,” “Political Campaign Ads,” “Registering to Vote,” and more. As adult students try to keep up with this year’s presidential election, we’ve selected one topic from the guide, “Choosing a President,” and have provided additional practice.

The Basic Activity
1. Read the article “Choosing a President” on page 7 of this issue before class. Make sure you have enough copies of the article for everyone.
2. Before reviewing the article with your class, ask students what they know about the U.S. presidential election process. The class or students can write down what they already know. Or, you can write it down using their ideas.
3. Go through the reading in whatever method your class usually follows. See the vocabulary words below that may be new for your students. You may choose to go over the vocabulary before or after the reading, or have the words and definitions on the board or other area of class for students to reference as needed.

complex – adj. difficult
run against – (phrasal verb) compete with
delegates – n. people who are chosen or voted to act for others
cast – v. make a formal vote
ballot – n. piece of paper used to vote in an election
majority – n. number that is larger than half of a total
revised – v. changed

4. Have students complete the handout. After reading the story and answering any questions students have, share the handout on page 8 of the issue. This provides general comprehension and cloze questions based on the reading. (Answers are also on page 8.)
CHOOSING A PRESIDENT

Presidential elections involve a complex process. First the political parties must select candidates. Later the candidates run against one another in the general election.

The Beginning
People who hope to run for president start to raise money and begin campaigning at least a year before the general election. If a person wants to represent a political party, he or she must first be nominated by party delegates at the national convention.

Primary Elections and Caucuses
Delegates to the national convention are chosen through primary elections and caucuses. Every state has either a primary or a caucus system.

Most states use primary systems. In primary elections, voters go to the polls and cast their ballots. They choose the person they want to run in the general election from among those seeking their party’s nomination.

Fewer states hold caucuses. These are meetings where voters of a certain party gather to choose delegates for their party’s national convention.

Primary and caucus results tell which delegates will go to the national conventions. Each candidate gets a certain number of delegates. Usually delegates have promised to vote for a certain candidate at the national convention.

National Conventions
The parties hold their national conventions in the summer before the general election. Each state sends a certain number of delegates to the convention.

To be nominated by their party, a candidate must win a majority of delegates at the convention.


General Elections
After each party’s delegates have named a candidate, the general election process begins. Candidates campaign around the country to try to win the support of voters.

In November, voters decide who they want to become president. They cast their ballots on Election Day, the Tuesday after the first Monday in November. That is November 8 this year. However, the president is not chosen directly by the voters, but by the Electoral College.

The Electoral College
The U.S. Constitution requires that the Electoral College finally decide who will be president. The Electoral College is a group of citizens selected by the people to cast votes for president.

The candidate who wins a majority of the people’s votes in each state gets all of the state’s electoral votes. In the end, the presidential candidate who gets a majority of electoral votes wins the election.

The number of electors for each state is based on how many seats it has in Congress. The number is revised every 10 years. California has the most electoral votes, with 55. States get no fewer than three votes. The District of Columbia has three votes.
Choosing a President: Review

**a. Answer in complete sentences.**

1. When do people start to raise money and campaign to be president?

________________________________________________________________________________________

2. What are the two systems that states use to choose candidates?

________________________________________________________________________________________

3. What happens during the Democrat and Republican national conventions?

________________________________________________________________________________________

4. When is Election Day this year? When is Election Day usually held?

________________________________________________________________________________________

5. What is the Electoral College?

________________________________________

**b. Complete each sentence with the correct vocabulary word from the story.**

- delegates
- cast
- majority
- revised
- complex

1. In primary elections, voters go to the polls and __________ their ballots.

2. He or she must first be nominated by party __________ at the national convention.

3. The number is __________ every 10 years.

4. Presidential elections involve a __________ process.

5. To be nominated by their party, a candidate must win a __________ of delegates at the convention.

**Answers:**

1. When do people start to raise money and campaign to be president?
   - Candidates start to raise money and begin campaigning in late a year before the general election.

2. What are the two systems that states use to choose candidates?
   - The two systems that states use are a primary or a caucus system.

3. What happens during the Democrat and Republican national conventions?
   - They nominate their presidential candidate.

4. When is Election Day this year? When is Election Day usually held?
   - Election Day is on November 8. It is the Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

5. What is the Electoral College?
   - The Electoral College is a group of citizens selected by the people to cast votes for the president.
Minute Paper Offers Quick Learner Assessment

Purpose
To present a quick and easy way to assess what students have learned in class—or to get a sense of what students think about a lesson.

Rationale
Tests and quizzes are just one way to evaluate what students have learned. An approach called the Minute Paper gives instructors of any level a bigger-picture way to evaluate what students have learned from a given lesson or course. It also can potentially provide students a way to share feedback with teachers on how to improve a lesson. The description in the sidebar on page 10, from the Center for the Enhancement for Teaching and Learning in Somerville, Massachusetts, nicely sums up the purpose of the Minute Paper (http://provost.tufts.edu/celt/files/MinutePaper.pdf).

More Information

Minute Paper
This site from the University of California Santa Barbara presents a detailed description of what the Minute Paper is, how to specifically use it in class, and its pros and cons.

The Minute Paper
http://provost.tufts.edu/celt/files/MinutePaper.pdf
This sample Minute Paper and explanation, shared by the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, could work well in a class with a higher level of language proficiency.

Teaching Idea: The One-Minute Paper
http://cte.virginia.edu/teaching-tips/teaching-idea-the-one-minute-paper/
This short description of the Minute Paper from the Center for Teaching Excellence talks about its versatility in gauging what students have learned and/or obtaining feedback on what students thought of the class.

Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers
This is the book where the Minute Paper concept originally appeared. It was published in 1988 originally by Jossey-Bass.
Here is how to use the Minute Paper with your adult students. The end of this article discusses how to modify the Minute Paper with lower level adult ESOL students.

**The Basic Activity**

1. **Take a minute (pun intended!) to review the Minute Paper on page 11 of this issue.** The paper shown here is modified from the Center for the Enhancement for Teaching and Learning. Decide in advance how you will fit the Minute Paper into your class. Although we focus here on its use after a specific lesson, it could also be used as a warm up (to respond to a previous lesson) or even as a mid-semester or end-of-semester quick assessment for what students have learned.

2. **After a lesson or a reading, discuss with students what they have learned and what is still not clear to them.** This helps students brainstorm some ideas before they complete the Minute Paper.

3. **Hand out the Minute Paper, and give students time to review the questions.** Make sure they understand the questions.

4. **Give students time to write their answers.** Although some students may initially have a hard time deciding what to write, the idea with the Minute Paper is a relatively quick assessment—say, 5 to 10 minutes.

5. **Collect the Minute Papers and review them.** Did students learn what you were hoping they would learn? Are there potential follow-up lessons based on their responses? Adjust your follow-up lessons accordingly to cover points that were not well understood or to help answer questions that students still have about a topic. You could also share Minute Papers during the next class; you may choose to do so without revealing student names that appear on the paper.

**Note:** Minute Paper experts recommend that teachers not overuse the Minute Paper. If you do, it won’t be as effective, and students may come to feel it’s more of a gimmick than a novelty. You’ll also want to decide which lessons work best with a Minute Paper, as not all lessons can easily be summed up with this approach.

*—The Center for Enhancement for Teaching and Learning*

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**More Information**

**About the Minute Paper**

The Minute Paper is a commonly used classroom assessment technique. It really does take about a minute and, while usually used at the end of class, it can be used at the end of any topic discussion. Its major advantage is that it provides rapid feedback on whether the professor’s main idea and what the students perceived as the main idea are the same. Additionally, by asking students to add a question at the end, this assessment becomes an integrative task. Students must first organize their thinking to rank the major points and then decide upon a significant question. Sometimes, instead of asking for the main point, a professor may wish to probe for the most disturbing or most surprising item. It is thus a very adaptable tool.

*—The Center for Enhancement for Teaching and Learning*
Minute Paper

1. What are two or three new things you learned from today’s lesson?
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

2. What questions do you still have about the topic?
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

3. Is there anything from today’s lesson you still don’t understand?
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
Making Pronunciation Easier with Minimal Pair Activities

Purpose
To introduce students to the concept of minimal pairs and to provide various ways to practice minimal pairs in class.

Rationale
English pronunciation has vexed many adult students because we often don’t say words the way they are spelled. Or, words in English may have sounds that are not in a student’s native language. Minimal pairs are a set of words that are the same except for one sound or phonological element. For example, in bat/bet, the only sound difference is the middle vowel. In zoo/sue, the difference is the beginning sound. Minimal pairs can be a fun way to practice English pronunciation with students.

Presented below are a variety of minimal pair activities. You will also find on page 13 a list of commonly used minimal pairs. Although you could potentially use the full list with your class, perhaps doing one column per class may be more useful to pinpoint and practice sounds that are difficult for your specific students—for example, the /th/ sound for Spanish and many other speakers.

You can search online for lists of minimal pairs by sound, or you can use the various lists found on the site English Club, at: https://www.englishclub.com/pronunciation/minimal-pairs.htm.

After each of the following activities, we indicate the original source. Note that some activities require internet access.

The Basic Activities

1. **Minimal Pair Stations.** Depending on which of two sounds they think they hear, students run and touch one of two walls in the classroom (for example, the right wall for vest and vet and the left wall for west and wet.

If running and touching walls isn’t possible, students can do other physical actions such as holding up their right or left arm, touching their nose or knees, or holding up flashcards with the two sounds written on them. (From English Club, Minimal Pair Games, https://edition.englishclub.com/tefl-articles/minimal-pairs-games/)

2. **Watch and Practice With Videos.** Are you using videos from sources like YouTube to help students practice English? If not, maybe you should. There are several videos that address minimal pairs, some geared toward ESOL and some for speech therapy. The video “60 Minimal Pairs” (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CrIfQfOl97k) slowly pronounces 60 minimal pairs so students can repeat them. “English
Pronunciation Exercises With Minimal Pairs: Vowels” (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_6ZRgCKfPhU) explains what minimal pairs are and walks students through several examples that they can practice. “Minimal Pairs Identification Task—Vowels” (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZXc7QCGBjd0) allows students to practice in a game-like format by identifying which word the speaker is saying.

3. Minimal Pairs General Practice. Write examples of minimal pairs on the board, and practice pronunciation of the examples. Ask students to give examples of other word pairs that may be minimal pairs. Distribute the minimal pair sheet below. For lower levels, say each minimal pair, and have students repeat them. Higher-level students can work in pairs to practice pronunciation. Repeat as often as necessary. If you think your students can come up with their own minimal pairs, ask them to do so. (From ESL About.com, http://esl.about.com/library/lessons/blminimal.htm)

4. Computer Practice. This link from ManyThings.org allows students to quiz themselves on a variety of minimal pair sounds, such as /l/ versus /r/ and /th/ versus /t/. (http://www.manythings.org/pp/)

5. Memory Game. Have students spread a pack of cards face down across the table and take turns turning two cards over to find a matching pair. You will need to make the cards up before class; the website does not provide them. This game can be used for minimal pairs practice by making the cards’ words vary by just a single sound (e.g., rid with lid and den with deign). Students must find pairs of cards that are different by only a single sound, pronounce them differently, and explain the difference. Minimal pairs words could also be mixed up with homophones and homonyms, with students also having to explain whether the pair is pronounced the same or different. The same games can be played with pictures instead of written words. (English Club, https://edition.englishclub.com/tefl-articles/minimal-pairs-games/)

More Information

Phonetics: The Sounds of American English
http://soundsofspeech.uiowa.edu/english/english.html
For more advanced students, the diagram on The Sounds of American English, from the University of Iowa, may be helpful. It breaks sounds down into different phonological categories. By clicking on an individual sound, users can see how it is pronounced (there is a small video of someone saying each sound) and practice specific words.

Pronunciation Links
www.eslgold.com/pronunciation/pronunciation_links.html
The site ESL Gold has put together a list of about 20 pronunciation practice links.

Rachel’s English
http://rachelsenglish.com/video-categories/#sounds
This is an engaging site for higher-level learners to practice the sounds of English. The site has almost 400 videos to practice pronunciation and listening comprehension. Videos focus on specific sounds as well as intonation, rhythm, stress, and conversational English.

Minimal Pairs

| Added activity: If students are proficient in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), have students transcribe the minimal pairs as a means of strengthening their knowledge of the IPA. |
|---|---|---|
| lit - light | read - red | sing - sang |
| bed - bad | saw - sought | boot - boat |
| soot - suit | but - boot | why - way |
| know - now | wreath - wreath | leak - lick |
| look - luck | sock - suck | vest - vast |
| cod - card | dug - dog | thirst - first |
| fair - fear | pay - bay | read - lead |
| need - mead | zoo - sue | near - ne’er |
| catch - cash | azure - assure | jet - chet |
| leige - lease | whistle - thistle | beige - bays |
| fur - fear | care - chur | noon - nun |

SAVE THE DATE! 2017 ProLiteracy Conference on Adult Literacy
September 27–30, 2017 | Radisson Blu Mall of America | Minneapolis, Minnesota
www.proliteracy.org/Education-Network/Conferences
The ProLiteracy Conference on Adult Literacy focuses on adult literacy and basic education issues that help attendees discover new tools and strategies, implement dynamic programming, enhance leadership skills, and engage with a diverse group of peers from organizations of all types and sizes. Stay tuned for details on the next conference. Watch for our call for proposals! See you in Minneapolis!

Teaching Adults: A Math Resource Book
Whether you're an experienced math teacher or new to teaching math to adults, this resource guide will simplify your life as a math instructor. The book covers all levels of teaching math and includes overviews, teaching tips, classroom activities, and more. Part 1 guides instructors on understanding adult math students, math competencies, lesson planning, and more. Part 2 focuses on math concepts for the beginning math students through high-school equivalency level and includes teaching tips, reproducible activities, and more. The link above also has links to 12 videos that correspond to the book. Teaching Adults: A Math Resource Book is the fourth book in the popular Teaching Adults series from New Readers Press.

In other New Readers Press news, Citizenship: Passing the Test—Ready for the Interview book and audio CD have been updated to reflect recent changes to the N-400 form. The new N-400 form went into effect on Aug. 9.

ProLiteracy Updates Website, EdNet to Follow Soon
www.proliteracy.org
https://www.proliteracy.org/Get-Involved/Become-a-Member/Member-Central/Notebook
If you haven’t checked it out already, be sure to visit ProLiteracy's website to see its revamped look. The site is cleaner, visually appealing, and makes it easier to find information that your program needs.

New features include:
• Learn the Facts: A direct way to see the economic impact of the adult literacy crisis in the U.S. and worldwide. The numbers speak for themselves.
• Student Stories: Real people. Real stories. Stories of heartbreak, embarrassment, even desperation. In equal measure, you will read tales of accomplishment, triumph, and inspiration.
• Become a Member: See enhanced member benefits and easily register for and renew membership online.
• Blog: This is a fresh new resource for information on adult literacy, program highlights, and student stories.

Back issues of Notebook are now available at the second link above. The website for ProLiteracy Education Network will follow with its own update later this year.

Spotlight on…Flashcards
https://youtu.be/DcIO2ln5-iU
This 14-minute professional development video from the Arlington Education and Employment Program in Arlington, Virginia, demonstrates how ESOL teachers can use flashcards in the classroom, both during instruction as well as for solo practice or during games like word bingo. The video shows an instructor using flashcards.
Civics It Up!
https://civicsitup.org/
If you’re teaching civics lessons related to health, employment, or consumerism to ESOL students, then Civics It Up!, created by Virginia Commonwealth University, in Richmond, Virginia, may come in handy. The site has a number of easy-to-use activities within the given topic areas and explains various techniques to proceed with the lessons. The site also aligns its lessons with Virginia ESOL Content Standards and College and Career Readiness Standards. Lessons are available for a variety of proficiencies, from Beginning Literacy to Advanced.

OER in Adult Education
http://oerinadulted.org/
Want to find inspiration for your next ABE or ESOL lesson—or want to share your latest inspired lesson plans with others? Then check out the site OER (open educational resources) in Adult Education. The site focuses on an open sharing of practical lesson ideas for ABE and ESOL teachers. One example in the ESOL segment is Nutrition Bingo, with ready-to-use Bingo cards. In the ABE segment, the Create a Budget resource is comprehensive and practical.

Issue Briefs on Topics Relevant to Adult Instructors
This Spring, The Literacy Information and Communication System announced three new issue briefs geared toward practitioners working with adults learning English. The briefs are part of Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education’s ESLPro project. Each ESLPro resource includes an issue brief, Companion Learning Resource, and an online module. The briefs are “Meeting the Language Needs of Today’s English Language Learner,” “Integrating Digital Literacy Into English Language Instruction,” and “Preparing English Learners for Work and Career Pathways.”

Exploring Personal Finance Choices for the Adult Education Student
If your students are looking for more guidance on personal finance, Michigan Adult Education’s resource “Exploring Personal Finance Choices for the Adult Education Student” should help. The 97-page guide covers setting financial goals, using a checking account, debit cards and ATMs, credit ratings, identity theft, and much more. The resource is geared toward pre-high school-equivalency students.

Adult Learner Featured on Show “Secret Lives of Americans”
The national cable TV show Secret Lives of Americans on PivotTV filmed an episode around Cleo, an adult who struggles with low literacy skills. PivotTV aired the series in June. Secret Lives of Americans is a groundbreaking documentary series that takes an unflinching look at the secrets people keep and the strength that it takes to reveal them to friends and family. ProLiteracy worked with Participant Media on the Secret Lives of Americans show for months, contributing resources and statistics, and helping to find an adult learner who was willing to share his or her literacy journey, struggles, and triumphs. You can find out more about the show by visiting the link above.
Jennifer Chadwick, of Camden, Arkansas, graduated high school but was not able to read above a third-grade level. While in school, she was constantly moved from one special education class to another, and was told that a low reading level was the highest she’d be able to achieve.

Over time, Chadwick wanted more for herself. “I was tired of asking my mom ‘What does this word mean?’” she says. She and her mom heard a commercial for classes on learning how to read, and she decided to take advantage of them. Chadwick contacted the Literacy Coalition-South Central Arkansas in Camden, which arranged transportation for her to attend four-hour classes twice a week.

Chadwick found the program staff helpful and friendly. With help from the Literacy Coalition, Chadwick has improved her reading level from a Literacy Level 2 to a Literacy Level 5, or about a tenth-grade reading level.

In the five-year span that she has worked with the Literacy Coalition, Chadwick also has gotten a driver’s license, volunteered, obtained independent living, and practiced digital literacy.

Chadwick continues to take classes through the Literacy Coalition and eventually would like to study early childhood education at her community college. She also plans to reach Literacy Level 6 and read at the same level as a high school graduate.

“For any adult literacy learner, access to a literacy organization, trained and caring tutor volunteers, and self-determination are important factors for educational achievement and personal growth,” says Linda Nelson, executive director of the Literacy Coalition-South Central Arkansas in Camden. “For Jennifer, these components all worked together to make it possible for her to overcome many obstacles.”

Chadwick’s many accomplishments in such a short time led her to be nominated and chosen for the 2015 Dollar General Student of the Year award, presented at the ProLiteracy Conference on Adult Literacy in Charleston, South Carolina, last year.

Chadwick shares some advice for others who are looking to improve their literacy. “They don’t need to be afraid. They can go on and do the best they can. If they push themselves, they can change ‘I can’t, I can’t, I can’t’ to ‘I can, I can, I can.’”