



## *Build a* **Road Map to Success** *with a Class Syllabus*

by CAROL COFFEY

**“Can you please explain to me what specifically I will be learning if I sign up for your class?”**

This simple request from an adult learner was a powerful catalyst in helping us bring structure to our classes through the use of syllabi. At Thomas Jefferson Adult and Career Education (TJACE), we’ve embraced this practice as a powerful tool in building shared understanding between teacher and student about what we will do together over the course of a session and how this learning fits into a larger program of study.

### **Do we need a road map?**

We know our adult learners have busy lives with many immediate needs requiring their attention. They need compelling reasons to engage with us in their learning. Many times,

their big and important goals – “I want to get my HSE . . . learn English . . . go to college . . . get a meaningful job with good wages” – seem difficult and distant. Big dreams . . . but how to get there? We can help navigate this quest, class by class, through a well-designed road map. Our syllabus tells us that on this stretch of the road, we are going to learn these specific competencies. Around the bend (next session), we will focus on these additional skills. You can move ahead with confidence through the woods, up the mountain, and over the river because our road map will show us the best pathways and bridges towards your career goals. One step at a time . . . let’s start here.

As instructors charged with creating the road map, we must clarify our thinking about realistic student outcomes within a defined time frame and

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### **Standards-based Instruction**

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## Barbara Gibson, VALRC Manager, Retires



**Barbara Gibson**

In December 2016, Barbara Gibson re-  
tired as Manager of the Virginia Adult  
Learning Resource Center, a position  
she had held for the past thirteen years.  
Barbara also served as Co-Director of  
The Literacy Institute at VCU. Barbara  
expects to remain an active advocate for  
adult education and literacy programs. At  
a retirement party in December, Barbara  
spoke passionately about the value of adult  
education and the important roles adult  
educators play in the lives of adult learners.  
She also expressed her support for the  
[Barbara E. Gibson Scholarship in Adult  
Education](#), which provides tuition assistance  
to students in VCU's online adult literacy  
certification program.

## Calendar

### March

20 - 30

Registration for VALRC  
Spring Online Courses  
• Disabilities and the  
Adult Learner – NEW!  
• Numeracy  
in Adult Education  
• Multilevel ESOL Classes  
[www.valrc.org](http://www.valrc.org)

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TESOL International  
Convention  
Seattle, WA  
[www.tesol.org/  
convention2017](http://www.tesol.org/convention2017)

### April

2 - 5

COABE Conference  
Orlando, FL  
[www.coabe.org/  
conference-2017](http://www.coabe.org/conference-2017)

3

VALRC Spring 2017  
Online Courses Begin

27 - 28

IELCE Symposium  
Richmond, VA

### May

23 - 25

WIOA National  
Convening  
Washington, DC  
[www.thegateam.com/  
dol-wioa-2017](http://www.thegateam.com/dol-wioa-2017)

# Yes, Virginia, CCR Standards are for Adult Literacy Learners Too!

by Victoire Sanborn

Since the introduction of the *College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education* (CCRS) in 2013, a number of private adult literacy program providers have wondered if the CCRS also apply to adult learners who read at a 0 - 5th grade level. The answer is a most emphatic yes! Low literate adults who learn from lessons and activities that apply CCR standards at the A & B levels learn new skills in contextualized lessons that focus on “texts worth reading, questions worth answering, and work worth doing!”

CCR standards emphasize a focus on the careful examination of the text itself, which represents one of the three CCRS “key shifts” in adult basic education and literacy learning. These new key shifts call for lessons and activities that: 1) provide regular practice with complex text and its academic language; 2) encourage reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text (both literary and informational); and 3) build knowledge through content-rich nonfiction.

With the CCRS, reading levels for text complexity have been bundled into five grade-level groupings that reflect adult education levels of learning:

- Beginning Adult Basic Education Literacy (**A**, or K-1),
- Beginning Basic Education (**B**, or grades 2-3),
- Low Intermediate Education (**C**, or grades 4-5),
- High Intermediate Basic Education (**D**, or grades 6-8), and
- Low Adult Secondary and High Adult Secondary Education (**E**, or grades 9-12).

The example below from the CCR reading standards (Reading Anchor 2) shows the increased complexity across each of the five levels.

You might ask yourself, “How do lessons that apply the key CCRS shifts compare to traditional lessons for our low literate adults?” By concentrating on contextualized lessons and materials that students encounter daily (when they are expected to read or write outside of the classroom), students are able to more immediately apply their learning in a variety of real life settings.

Low literacy lessons that incorporate CCR standards include activities in reading, writing, speaking and listening, language, digital literacy, and numeracy. Knowing that adults at the A & B *Continued on page 20 ...*

## READING STANDARDS

A	B	C	D	E
CCR Anchor 2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas. (Apply this standard to texts of appropriate complexity as outlined by Standard 10.)				
Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text. (RI.1.2)	Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea. (RI.3.2)	Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text. (RI.4.2)  Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text. (RL.4.2)	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments. (RI/RL.6.2)  • <i>Application:</i> determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; provide an accurate summary of the text distinct from prior knowledge or opinions. (RST.6-8.2)	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. (RI/RL.9-10.2)  Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; summarize complex concepts, processes, or information presented in a text by paraphrasing them in simpler but still accurate terms. (RST.11-12.2)

# Professional Learning Communities

by Hillary Major

**I**n July 2016, more than a hundred adult educators from regional and civics programs from around the state gathered at James Madison University in advance of the Virginia Institute for Lifelong Learning (VAILL) to attend training on standards-based instruction. The Pre-VAILL event culminated in a two-day session on facilitating professional learning communities (PLCs) focusing on assignments and student work. The seeds planted at that training have flourished; this program year, more than two hundred PLC meetings have been held around the state. Small groups of teachers have been meeting to discuss their own classroom assignments, consider how those assignments meet standards and challenge students, examine how students actually performed on the assignments, and collaboratively revise assignments. In this issue of *Progress*, I join Resource Center colleagues Jeffrey Elmore and Nancy Faux in giving some tips for getting the most out of English language arts, mathematics, and ESOL PLCs. Our suggestions are grounded in our knowledge of the student work protocol and our experiences with PLCs, including hearing from and coaching many of the groups that have been meeting this year.

To set the stage, I'd like to share some background information on professional learning communities for those who are new to PLCs or interested in knowing more about the evidence base.

## What's so special about PLCs?

A professional learning community brings

**Richard DuFour identified three core principles of PLCs: ensuring that students learn, a culture of collaboration, and a focus on results.**

**While imposing rules or constraints on group discussion, paradoxically, protocols can also offer freedom.**

educators together on a repeated or ongoing basis to work collaboratively to improve instruction and student outcomes. It's long been known that "short, one-shot workshops often don't change teacher practice and have no effect on student achievement (Yoon et al, 2007; Bush, 1984 as cited by the [Center for Public Education](#))." Educator Shirley Hord contrasted this quick-fix, "microwave oven" approach to school improvement with the more effective but more intensive investment in change represented by learning communities (Hord, 1997). Today, the most credible national organizations that promote teacher learning and professional development for educators incorporate learning communities into their core standards. The [Association of Adult Literacy Professional Developers \(AALPD\)](#) calls for staff development that "occurs over a period of time" and "builds learning communities that foster collaboration and peer learning among practitioners." [Learning Forward](#) (formerly the National Staff Development Council) maintains, "Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment."

The term "professional learning community" may seem wordy compared to other terms used to describe small, collaborative teacher groups (for example, "study circles"). The "professional learning community" language is meant to reflect the fact that educators are meeting together for a purpose – not just to talk about a

challenge or a best practice, but to look at and act upon real situations from their own classes and program. Educator and researcher Richard DuFour identified three core principles of a professional learning community: 1) ensuring that students learn, 2) a culture of collaboration, and 3) a focus on results (DuFour, 2004).

### What's a protocol?

There are many ways PLCs can organize themselves to meet DuFour's core principles. A protocol can help. In education, a protocol provides a set process and timeframe that helps guide a group task. Virginia's standards-based instruction initiative uses a "student work protocol" to guide teachers through the process of analyzing and eventually revising a classroom assignment. The step-by-step process helps keep discussion focused, and guiding questions encourage PLC members to make constructive comments. Because the protocol requires teachers to identify

best fit standards for the assignment, even teachers who are less familiar with the standards are prompted to consider and explore them. With student work at the heart of the protocol and an expectation that PLC members report back to the group on results after revising an assignment, the protocol addresses DuFour's core principles by design. The authors of *The Power of Protocols* note that, while imposing rules or constraints on group discussions, paradoxically protocols can also offer freedom – for teachers to be more transparent, more open to inquiry and discovery, and more open and expressive (McDonald et al., 2013)

### What's next for PLCs in Virginia?

PLCs can play an important role in understanding what standards-based instruction looks like in a specific classroom situation and implementing standards-based instruction across a program. Many programs are planning

*Continued on page 15 ...*

## Tips for English Language Arts/Literacy PLCs

by Hillary Major

**Get level-specific to find the rigor behind the anchor standards.** Unlike the math standards, which tend to include different skills at different levels, the English language/arts literacy anchor standards set out the key skills learners at all levels need to develop. Understanding the anchors is the easiest way to get to know the overall focus of the ELA CCRS, but for class instruction, it's the level specifics that are critical. Reading Anchor 8 makes a good example: at lower levels, students are prompted to "[e]xplain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point(s)." When a student reaches Level D, equivalent to middle grade literacy skills, s/he should "delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning

is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient" and "recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced." At Level E, with high school equivalent literacy skills, a student should continue to delineate and evaluate, considering relevancy and sufficiency of evidence while also "assessing whether the reasoning is valid" and "identify[ing] false statements and fallacious reasoning." An argument-focused lesson or series of lessons delivered to ASE or high intermediate ABE learners in which students identify an author's reasons and evidence but do not discuss whether that evidence is sound, sufficient, and relevant is not standards-aligned.

When PLC groups get to Step 2 of the protocol, selecting the CCR standards that best match the assignment's demands, it makes sense to skim

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# Tips for Math PLCs

by Jeffrey Elmore

**S**ometime during my first year as an ABE/GED teacher at Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women, I stumbled into the notion of “looking at student work.” One afternoon following quarterly TABE testing, all of my students were gone and I was sitting at a table with a stack of collected scrap paper. I remember one page standing out. It was covered in haphazard columns of identical single digits all added up ... a stack of six sevens with forty-two at the bottom, a stack of nine eights with seventy-two at the bottom, and so forth. “We’ve gotta do more work on basic multiplication skills,” I thought to myself. Out of curiosity, I browsed through some of the other pages. Most of what I saw was pretty sound, but then a particular percent problem jumped out at me. The arithmetic was accurate, but the problem was set up wrong. The student had done the wrong math right! That spoke volumes to me about what I needed to teach next and how it needed to be taught.

Virginia is well on its way towards implementation of the *College and Career Readiness Standards in Adult Education*, and many of you are now participating in professional learning communities. An essential component of your PLCs is the protocol for looking at student work, so I thought I might offer some thoughts on this challenge. First off, your ability to learn from students’ work is going to hinge on the depth of that work. The work itself needs to be a window into the students’ thought processes, and getting this depth will take planning and

**Your ability to learn from students’ work is going to hinge on the depth of that work.**

facilitation. Because students often want to go straight to an answer, you may need to design structures into your assignments that feature all of the steps you want students to take in the solution process. One strategy for this is to model the complete process for building the solution to a problem in front of your students before asking them to engage in it themselves. Another strategy would be similar to the language arts tool, “sentence frames.” Begin by examining the activity and laying out a solution process by yourself beforehand. Then look at the entire process and selectively remove portions where students have to make key decisions or take significant actions. This should create purposeful gaps that you want the students to fill in, but it will provide them with enough of the process that they won’t get lost in content that they shouldn’t be focusing on for the activity.

Second, don’t limit your definition of student work to just what’s on paper. Use digital tools to expand what you can capture and add to the sense of depth. Set up activities where students are working through problems on a whiteboard. Ask them to use different color markers for different aspects or stages of the solution process. Periodically, take photos of the whiteboard that illustrate the process, and then take a final photo at the end of the solution. If you’ve got a SMART Board, use the technology there to capture what’s been done. For shorter activities, you might go so far as to take a video of the process. When it’s time to present your activity in a PLC, be sure that you have adequate means to share or present your digitally collected work.

Finally, use looking at students’ work as

**The student work ... spoke volumes to me about what I needed to teach next and how it needed to be taught.**

an opportunity for your own professional development by gaining a deeper understanding of the CCRS themselves. How are the specific content standards and the standards for mathematical practice coming to life through the students' work? What CCRS-related patterns do you see in your own activities and in your students' needs? Along the way, expect to find gaps

in your own CCRS understanding, your peers' understanding, and your program's understanding. Always keep in mind that our CCRS implementation initiative is an ongoing process that is expected to change and develop. ■

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*Jeffrey Elmore is Academic Programming Specialist at the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center.*

## Getting the Most Out of Your ESOL PLCs

by Nancy Faux

Professional learning communities (PLCs) in Virginia's adult education programs got underway with the start of the fall 2016 instructional season. Each PLC tackled the unpacking of assignments, standards, and cognitive demands and the resulting student work by following a defined and fixed protocol that has resulted in some very productive discussions among teachers. However, some questions about how best to carry out PLCs have arisen from the participating members. Here are a few with some possible solutions:

**Question:** Although there is a facilitator, s/he might not be able to lead the session and keep track of everything. What can we do to help?

**Suggestion:** Nominate a time keeper, an official recorder, and someone to make sure that the comments made by the members are inquiry-based and kind. The job of the time keeper is obvious. It is so easy to let the discussion go down multiple paths, leading everyone to lose track of the time. Then, the last steps are done too quickly without the proper input. The notes taken by an official recorder can be the basis of the summary report uploaded to the SurveyMonkey site. As we all know and strive for, our discussions should be impersonal and focused solely on best practices. Having someone keep track of where our discussions are leading us and make sure our opinions, practices, and feelings are respected wards off any

**As we all know and strive for, our discussions should be impersonal and focused solely on best practices.**

negativity that might make the group members reluctant to participate again. This suggestion was made by the Charlottesville City ESOL PLC.

**Question:** Why can't we look at student work right away?

**Suggestion:** Many groups have wanted to jump ahead after Step #1 (looking at the assignment), skipping steps #2 and #3 to look at student evidence (Step #4) and are wondering why that is not a good idea. We can see what the teacher has asked students to do right away, so why can't we see their responses? The reason is that we first need to analyze in depth exactly what the teacher has assigned. We can see the statements about the assignment and have an idea what the students must do or what the purpose of the assignment is, but it takes analysis to determine the deeper cognitive demands, knowledge, and skills that the students need to complete the assignment. As teachers, we make assumptions that our students may not share. To which of the indicators in the Virginia Adult Education Content Standards for ESOL is the assignment aligned? In the PLC, we must unpack these cognitive demands, knowledge/skills, and content standards to find any

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# Civics It Up!

## Curriculum Framework for Teachers

by Susan Watson

**I**n 2014, the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC) was tasked by the Virginia Department of Education, Office of Adult Education and Literacy (now the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education or OCTAE) to develop civics content standards for adult education. Led by VALRC ESOL specialist Nancy Faux, a team of nine ESOL professionals from around the state met to discuss how this project could be used to meet the needs of ESOL teachers and English language learners in Virginia. The first step in defining the project was to solicit input from program managers and regional specialists about professional development needs of teachers as the field prepared to implement integrated English literacy and civics education and standards-based instruction in accordance with the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) (WIOA). After several months of discussion, the team decided to put its efforts into creating a supplemental resource that could

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**The team felt an instructional resource for integrating civics content, workplace skills, ESOL best practices, and content standards into a classroom-ready resource would be the most valuable product for everyone.**

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be used in conjunction with instructional materials and curricula already in use rather than developing comprehensive civics standards. The new resource would fulfill OCTAE's requirements by incorporating the expectations set forth in WIOA but not drastically change what ESOL teachers were currently doing in the classroom. The team felt an instructional resource for integrating civics content, workplace skills,



ESOL best practices, and content standards into a classroom-ready resource would be the most valuable product for everyone. Keeping teachers in mind as the primary end users, the team set out to create an easily accessible tool. In 2016, [Civics It Up!](#) was introduced to the field at the IEL/Civics Symposium in Richmond.

A sample [Civics It Up!](#) content objective that drew strong reaction at the IEL/Civics Symposium focused on the topic of identity theft and safeguarding personal information. As a suggested activity at the beginning literacy level, the teacher makes a large puzzle of a person, let's call him "Bill." On the puzzle piece that is Bill's head, we find his name; on his arm, we find his social security number; on his other arm is his phone number –you get the idea. Each Bill puzzle piece contains personally identifying information. ESOL learners are asked to assemble the puzzle to make Bill a whole person. Then, the teacher role-plays the act of "stealing" Bill's identity by taking pieces of the puzzle and taping them to herself, exclaiming, "Now I'm Bill." While the activity

itself was a big hit, several teachers had first-hand experience with identity theft and expressed strong feelings about integrating this content objective into their instruction. The team felt this reaction served as a great reminder that [Civics It Up!](#) is a supplemental tool that teachers must be comfortable using in their classrooms. At the same time, it is important for teachers to consider how using authentic, even if challenging, content in their instruction aims to produce learners who might be more civically engaged.

### **Putting Civics It Up! to Work in the Classroom**

[Civics It Up!](#) correlates to the Virginia [ESOL](#) content standards that many ESOL educators have been using for the past several years. The ESOL standards are organized by four language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Each language skill contains benchmarks and indicators of what a learner should know and be able to do at the six proficiency levels designated by the [National Reporting System](#). [Civics It Up!](#) content objectives are aligned to the six proficiency levels and include classroom activities that incorporate the language structures of the benchmarks and indicators for each level.

Ideally, when teachers incorporate [Civics It Up!](#) content objectives into their curriculum, they are delivering instruction that contains level-appropriate language structures.

Under WIOA, teachers must now become familiar with the [College and Career Readiness Standards](#) (CCRS). The aim of using the CCRS is “to forge a stronger link among adult education, postsecondary education, and the world of work ... [and to incorporate] the critical skills and knowledge required for success in colleges, technical training programs, and employment in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” (Pimental, 2013, p.1). The CCRS are not curricula but are to be translated into curricula through lessons and activities that help teachers assess whether learners have developed the skills and knowledge contained in the standards. The CCRS address mathematics and English language arts or ELA. Of importance to ESOL teachers are the ELA standards, called anchors, that cover reading, reasoning, and communication skills. The anchors have five levels with correlated grade-level equivalencies: (A) K-1, (B) 2-3, (C) 4-5, (D) 6-8, and (E) 9-12. Most but not all [Civics It Up!](#) content objectives correlate to a CCRS

*Continued on page 19 ...*



**The Civics It Up! team (left to right): Susan Watson, Emily Beckett, MaryAnn Florez, Jennifer Fadden, Debby Cargill, Rosa Chiarello-Ugarte, Debbie Tuler, Lauren Lang, Nancy Faux**

# English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education

According to guidance from the Virginia Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, “In Virginia, we will be transitioning in 2017-2018 from the Virginia ESOL standards to the English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards for Adult Education that were released in October 2016, which ... directly correlate to the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education.”

## What are the English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education?

The U.S. Department of Education Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education contracted with American Institutes for Research (AIR), which brought together a panel of national experts, to develop the English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education. The ELP standards “were identified to help ELLs acquire the language knowledge and skills necessary to achieve their postsecondary and career

goals” and were based on a K12 framework developed by a multistate consortium in 2013. They “strongly emphasize the academic language needed by ELLs [English language learners] to engage with and meet state-adopted content standards” and “are intended to address the urgent need for educational equity, access, and rigor for adult English language learners.”

The complete *English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education with Correspondences to College and Career Readiness Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy, and Mathematical and Science Practices* can be read online at: <https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/elp-standards-adult-ed.pdf>

## How are the ELP standards organized?

The ELP standards comprise ten basic standards, each broken down into five proficiency levels. They address the four language skills – reading, writing,

**Table 2. Organization of the English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education and Functions of Standards**

ELP Standards for AE An ELL can...	Functions of standards
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>construct meaning from oral presentations and literary and informational text through level-appropriate listening, reading, and viewing.</li> <li>participate in level-appropriate oral and written exchanges of information, ideas, and analyses, in various social and academic contexts, responding to peer, audience, or reader comments and questions.</li> <li>speak and write about level-appropriate complex literary and informational texts and topics.</li> <li>construct level-appropriate oral and written claims and support them with reasoning and evidence.</li> <li>conduct research and evaluate and communicate findings to answer questions or solve problems.</li> <li>analyze and critique the arguments of others orally and in writing.</li> <li>adapt language choices to purpose, task, and audience when speaking and writing.</li> </ol>	Standards 1–7 describe the language necessary for ELLs to engage in content-specific practices associated with state-adopted academic content standards. They begin with a focus on extraction of meaning and then progress to engagement in these practices.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>determine the meaning of words and phrases in oral presentations and literary and informational text.</li> <li>create clear and coherent level-appropriate speech and text.</li> <li>demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English to communicate in level-appropriate speech and writing.</li> </ol>	ELP Standards 8–10 support ELP Standards 1–7. They focus on micro-level linguistic features such as determining the meaning of words and using appropriate speech and conventions of language.

speaking, and listening – and aim to close the gap between what is generally taught in ESOL classes and the language demands of employment and advanced education. Each of the ten ELP standards corresponds to anchors from the CCRS. There are two views:

- View One presents the ELP standards in numerical order accompanied by leveled descriptors and followed by correspondences to CCR English language arts/literacy anchor standards, CCR math practices, and science and engineering practices.
- View Two presents CCR English language arts/literacy anchor standards and the accompanying level-specific standards for “Level E,” the highest, ASE (adult secondary education) level of the CCRS. Each CCR standard presented in View Two (not all are included) is followed

by the correlated ELP standard(s) and level descriptors. This view is particularly helpful for ABE (adult basic education) and ASE teachers who have ELLs in their classes. Teachers using the CCRS can readily look at View Two of the ELP Standards to find standards that offer guidance on the language, knowledge, and skills those students will need to access the CCRS. ::

## References

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (2016). *Adult English language proficiency standards for adult education*. Washington, D.C.

Virginia Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (2017, February 1). Adult education competitive grant application process question and answers: Set 2-Questions 37-59. Retrieved from [www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/adulted](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/adulted)

# Getting the Most Out of Your ESOL PLCs

(continued from page 7)

gaps in the actual assignment. Once this is done, then we can move on to see how the students responded to the assignment and whether any of the gaps were reflected in their work. Only after fully examining what the assignment actually meant for the students can we see clearly why they responded as they did.

**Question:** How can we find the right indicators of the ESOL standards without looking through all of them?

**Suggestion:** This can be a daunting task at first glance, because we may be unfamiliar with them or not know where to start. First of all, if it was a writing assignment, then we need to look in the writing set of standards; if an oral assignment, then the speaking set. However, at times, the students are asked to provide a written response to a text, so the reading standards must also be consulted. The same applies

with speaking and listening. Once you have decided which set(s) to explore, usually you can tell by the assignment itself which level of language proficiency the activity was designed for. Focus on one level first; if that level is not appropriate, then explore the indicators at a lower or higher level. For example, if an assignment is probably for a low intermediate class, begin there. Then, explore the indicators for high beginning and high intermediate. You may find some that cross levels for different indicators.

As you spend time in your PLCs, I am sure that you will have a lot of other questions or issues. Please contact us at VALRC, or me directly, with your questions. We are very happy to assist you in optimizing these meetings for the best learning experiences with your colleagues. ::

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*Nancy Faux is ESOL Specialist at the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center.*

# Communicating the Essential Role of Adult Education to Partners

by Kate Daly Rolander

As practitioners in the field of adult education, we understand and fully appreciate the vital role we serve to our students, to our communities, and, more recently, to industry. And ever since I began working with PluggedInVA (PIVA) seven years ago, I have also come to understand the importance of strong partnerships that are built on mutual appreciation and a shared commitment to serve students, communities, and industry. Where I continue to struggle is in communicating that understanding and, in particular, the critical contributions of adult education to our postsecondary and employer partners.

## **Begin by asking about the partners' needs.**

Building strong partnerships requires us to step outside of our field and recognize that our partnering organizations may not readily realize our value. Many do not understand what we actually do, apart from preparing students to take the GED® test. Clearly communicating what we add and why we are essential is key to building partnerships that will strengthen our relationships with other organizations and help our students succeed.

The evolution and rapid expansion of the PIVA model has provided many opportunities to partner with postsecondary institutions, employers, and other government and community organizations. The SNAP E & T (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program, Education and Training) grant, in particular, has provided valuable lessons in how to better advocate for ourselves as a partner. The Virginia Community College System and the Department of Social

## **Without consistent communication ... programs fell back to business-as-usual practices.**

Services have oversight of the SNAP E&T grant, and adult education was written in as a partner to implement the PIVA program. Our involvement in initial grant-writing meetings and project planning meetings was a positive presence that boded well for our involvement as an active partner, and we were involved in all state-level planning activities and held technical assistance sessions with the seven funded local sites. However, low enrollment, rotating staffing, and a lack of communication between agency partners led to a breakdown of the model in all but one of the sites, requiring us to work with all partners to develop a training and a message that would address the challenges we faced in implementing the PIVA model. For example, at one particular location where adult education staff had not yet been hired, students were enrolled in postsecondary programs that either would not begin for several weeks or months or had been filled to capacity, leaving them without any plan of action except to wait until another opportunity presented itself. No plans had been developed to accommodate the students coming into this program, and adult education students were incorporated into the college schedule with no additional academic supports; consequently, retention plummeted.

The major assumptions and problems identified across SNAP E&T projects were as follows:

- Recruitment for the program was lower than expected, making program implementation difficult. Without consistent communication with each of



## Partnership-building Resources

### ProLiteracy

#### Workplace Literacy Guide

<https://www.proliteracy.org/Portals/0/Downloads/Workplace%20Literacy%20Guide.pdf?ver=2016-06-02-160543-527>

### Making Skills Everyone's Business

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/making-skills.pdf>

### Career Pathways Toolkit

<http://www.workforceinfodb.org/PDF/CareerPathwaysToolkit2011.pdf>

the local sites, programs fell back to business-as-usual practices, leading to lower retention and higher failure rates.

- Assumptions about the messages recruiters were delivering to interested students resulted in students' confusion about the actual nature of the programs.
- Assumptions about adult education as solely a resource for GED® preparation resulted in miscommunications about our role in the grant as a whole.
- Lack of awareness at the state and program levels of what the PIVA model actually includes weakened implementation.
- Lack of expertise in providing adult education services left students without needed basic skills support.

In collaboration with the partnering agencies, we developed written guidance and an online training to address these assumptions and issues. In our training:

- we referenced the original grant text that spelled out the program as it should be run;
- we familiarized our partners with the College and Career Readiness Standards to demonstrate the fuller range of academic skills we cover;
- we discussed the PIVA model and why all components, not only GED® preparation and credentialing, were essential elements; and

- we worked on creating plans for messaging and for instruction that would accommodate their unique situations and retain fidelity to the adult education model.

This has helped establish adult education as an essential partner in the project.

While none of the following suggestions is a silver bullet to break through the communication barrier, we have found that making these actions a habitual part of partnership-building helps solidify adult education programs as foundational partners. These are some lessons learned from our adventures in grant-funded partnering:

- Begin by asking about the partners' needs rather than asking partnering organizations how they can help our adult students.
- Clearly articulate the need for adult education services and emphasize that our students are nontraditional students who have a unique set of strengths and needs. We as adult educators have a unique skill set to help our students.
- Characterize the adult education program as a valuable asset: an affordable option for customizable soft skill and academic training, a testing center, a resource for instructional expertise, and a mechanism for recruiting adult populations.
- Work together to build an understanding of what adult education actually is.

*Continued on page 14 ...*

# Communicating the Essential Role of Adult Education to Partners (continued from page 13)

Share information about our goals, our instructional standards, our pedagogical priorities, our federal legislation, our projects, and our network of support and expertise. It is important to communicate that a single program is not an isolated island but rather an integral part of a much larger and comprehensive system.

- Collaborate to define the goals and outcomes of the project, assigning responsibility for tasks and outcome measures.
- Meet and communicate regularly to discuss the project process, problems, and progress. Regular communication will ensure students do not slip through the cracks and that programmatic issues get addressed before they become problems.
- Remain flexible as circumstances shift and unanticipated events add new dimensions to the partnerships.
- Many institutions will revert to business-as-usual services without direct and consistent communication that emphasizes the value of the many roles adult education provides.
- Build a mutual understanding of what the adult education program's role in the partnership will be; we are a valuable resource and have a stake in the outcomes of any partnership; we can fight for our students and our programs by leveraging our contributions rather than agreeing to dictated terms that may not benefit our interests.

As part of a plan to resolve the challenges at the site where scheduling impacted student retention, we held several working meetings where all partners came together to discuss the nature of adult education, this particular population, and the supports they would need. Adult education instructors have been hired; a stronger partnership with the local adult education program has developed; and students now have a supportive cohort

**Clearly communicating  
what we add and  
why we are essential  
is key to building partnerships that  
will strengthen our relationships  
with other organizations and help  
our students succeed.**

of teachers, counselors, and peers to help them persist through their coursework. Partnerships can be challenging, and they force us to step outside of our comfort zones, but when done through collaboration, mutual respect, and a shared mission to positively impact our adult learners, they can give us and our students the resources, expertise, and comprehensive support we need to go beyond what any one of our agencies is capable of achieving alone. ■

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*Kate Daly Rolander is Workforce Instructional Specialist at the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center.*

## Professional Learning Communities: References

Center for Public Education (2013). *Teaching the teachers: At a glance*. Retrieved from [www.centerforpubliceducation.org](http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org)

DuFour, R. (2004, May). What is a "professional learning community?" *Educational Leadership*. pp. 6-11.

Hord, S.M. (1997). *Professional learning communities: Communities of continuous inquiry and improvement*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

# Professional Learning Communities (continued from page 5)

to expand their PLCs offerings to reach more instructors next program year. Some teachers who have been PLC participants will step into new roles as PLC facilitators. Some PLCs that began meeting this year may want to continue their work in the coming year; some ABE/ASE-focused groups may want to switch from a math to an English language arts focus or vice versa. After becoming familiar with the student work protocol, some longer-running PLCs may choose to explore a challenge identified by group members; this might include adopting a different format for PLC meetings or applying a narrower focus to the student work protocol (perhaps using it with assignments that focus on a specific content area, workforce context, or student skill level). Resource Center staff are happy to consult with programs about planning for, facilitating, and managing PLCs.

## Where can I find more information?

### SBI 2 Training Materials: PLCs

<http://valrc.org/learning/sbi/sbi2.html>

The Resource Center website includes links to the full set of training materials for PLCs focused on looking at student work and aligning to standards. PLC materials and student work protocols are given by strand – CCRS ELA, CCRS math, or ESOL and IEL/Civics. Bookmark the direct link, or navigate to the page by visiting [www.valrc.org](http://www.valrc.org), choosing “Professional Learning” from the top menu, selecting “Standards-based Instruction,” and looking for PLCs in the left sidebar.

### Learning Forward

<https://learningforward.org/standards/learning-communities>

This professional organization (formerly NSDC) places learning communities at the heart of its Standards for Professional Learning. Their website includes many resources related to PLCs, including two full issues ([2008](#) and [2012](#)) of their staff development journal *JSD*.

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### All Things PLC

<http://www.allthingsplc.info/tools-resources>

This site, maintained by Solution Tree, includes resources for understanding and implementing PLCs and a database of PLC practices and achievement data from schools that have implemented PLCs. (The majority of the examples are from individual K12 schools, including some in Virginia.)

### Protocols for Professional Learning by Lois Brown Easton

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/109037/chapters/Introduction.aspx>

This book published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) discusses the rationale and strategies for both PLCs and protocols (free excerpts are available online).

### The Power of Protocols: An Educator's Guide to Better Practice by Joseph P. McDonald, Nancy Mohr, Alan Dichter, and Elizabeth C. McDonald

<https://www.tcpress.com/the-power-of-protocols-9780807754597>

This book from Teacher's College Press discusses protocols, including why and how to use them, facilitation strategies, and examples.

### National School Reform Faculty (NSRF) Protocols and Activities ... from A to Z

<http://www.nsrffharmony.org/free-resources/protocols/a-z>

### School Reform Initiative (SRI) Protocol Alphabetical List

<http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/protocol-alphabetical-list-2/>

These two websites compile a variety of protocols for different purposes. ■

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# Tips for English Language Arts/Literacy PLCs

(continued from page 5)

the anchor standards for standards that cover the same topic area as the assignment in question. From there, groups can look at the level-specific standards to determine at which level(s) the assignment seems to fit. If there seems to be a mis-match between the intended student audience and the best-fit level-specific standard, this should come out in discussion, and it's something to note when deciding whether the activity has weak, strong, excellent (or no) standard alignment. I'm often asked how much time needs to be spent when using the chart to determine the degree of standard alignment; my answer for most groups is "not much." Groups should not get too bogged down in debating whether the alignment of a given assignment is "strong" or "excellent," but go with the holistic, "gut reaction" of the group majority. The idea is to quickly identify any places where the assignment may not be

meeting the spirit (or the level specifics) of the standard, so that the alignment can be made stronger during the assignment revision process of Step 4.

**Be open to adjusting the reading passage(s) or text(s).** One of the foundations of the ELA standards "is research indicating that the complexity of text that students are able to read is the greatest predictor of success in college and careers" (U.S. Department of Education, 2013, p.9). Reading Anchor 10 includes a chart showing readability levels, according the different quantitative measures, that are appropriate at standards levels B through E. Many of the ELA reading (and one writing) standard refer back to this chart. For resources on determining readability, see the "Reading" section of the Resource Center website, which includes a page devoted to "Readability."

Sometimes, when PLC members review an activity against the ELA standards, the assignment or task seems appropriate (it includes higher order questions, addresses level-specific skills, etc.) but the reading passage seems off. Perhaps the readability is too low for the student level – or significantly too high. Perhaps the student work shows that all students easily understood a text, including its thematic elements and academic language, after a single reading. Such a passage may not be complex enough for that group of standards; students should aim to master skills, but the standards value "productive struggle" along the way. Perhaps the text

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## Professional Learning

Click on one of the topics below to find find resources relevant to the areas of adult education and literacy that most interest you.

<p><b>Career Pathways</b></p> <p>Career pathways is an important component of both workforce development and access to postsecondary education.</p>	<p><b>ESOL</b></p> <p>As an ESOL teacher or program manager, you will want to have the tools to provide up-to-date content with current methodologies aligned with content standards to improve your students' learning. You will find resources that are worthwhile tools for teaching ESOL in this section.</p>	<p><b>High School Equivalency</b></p> <p>This section offers information about high school completion options for adults in Virginia and professional learning opportunities for instructors.</p>	<p><b>IEL/Civics Education</b></p> <p>Included in this section are resources focused on writing grants, immigration data and statistics, IEL/Civics instruction, and workplace preparation.</p>	<p><b>Learning Disabilities</b></p> <p>This section contains a wealth of information on learning disabilities and, specifically, how learning disabilities affect our adult literacy learners.</p>
<p><b>Numeracy</b></p> <p>Numeracy is the word to know for today's math teachers! It's more than computation and devising mathematic formulas. Numeracy is the ability to use mathematical ideas, principles and procedures for a purpose in one's life.</p>	<p><b>Reading</b></p> <p>This section is dedicated to resources that rely on research-based principles of reading instruction and suggest practical ways to apply research findings to adult learning settings. You will find resources related to reading and adult basic education instruction.</p>	<p><b>Standards Based Instruction</b></p> <p>This section contains resources to support standards-based instruction and links to Virginia's adult education standards; the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education and Virginia's Adult Education Content Standards for English for Speakers of Other Languages Instruction.</p>	<p><b>Tech Tools</b></p> <p>Technology changes constantly, so our intent with the following links is to provide information about new resources, important links, and online resources you can use to help you integrate technology into your programs and lessons.</p>	<p><b>Writing</b></p> <p>Writing skills are demanded by employers, job training programs, and academic institutions. Technologies like email and social media make writing an even more integral part of daily life, both at home and in the workplace. In this section, you'll find helpful links for educators who teach writing.</p>

**Have you visited the Resource Center website since 2016's major redesign added a section devoted to standards-based instruction?**

is level-appropriate and informative, but not a good example of high quality writing or “exceptional craft and thought.” (It’s not realistic that all texts students read will be “exceptional,” but if after several meetings, a PLC notices that most of the reading passages students encounter are encyclopedia-style textbook passages, the group may want to discuss where they find other types of teachable text. Not every “text” students work with will be a reading passage – signage, cartoons, music, and video can all be worth students’ time and

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**If there seems to be a mis-match between the intended student audience and the best-fit level-specific standard, this should come out in discussion.**

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attention – but it is important for students at all levels to be exposed to high quality writing and to practice reading skills.)

In many situations, changing the reading passage can be an important part of assignment revision. Depending on where your PLC meets, however, it can be a logistical challenge to find a replacement text. If your group meets in a classroom or program resource room, textbooks and other resources that PLC members can use to recommend specific texts may be readily available. Some groups meet in locations with WiFi access, where group members with tablets or smart phones can browse many free online resources to suggest appropriate texts. Sometimes a PLC member may remember and recommend a text that s/he has taught or considered teaching. If a PLC’s meeting location lacks resources (online or physical) for finding alternative texts, or if discussion time runs short before a compelling alternative passage can be agreed upon, PLC members should try to state clearly what features (lower/higher readability? more academic vocabulary? more attention to craft?) they would look for in a substitute passage. This should be noted as part of Step 4. When the presenting

instructor updates the group at the start of the next PLC meeting (either sharing what happened when s/he taught the revised assignment or how s/he incorporated the suggestions into other activities taught), s/he can share which reading passage(s) s/he ultimately decided to teach.

**Share resources beyond your PLC group.** PLCs should be a safe space not only to share classroom successes, but also to ask for advice when students continue to struggle with a skill you’ve taught and retaught or to share and discuss student work from a lesson that unexpectedly tanked. It’s important that teachers feel the challenges they bring to the group will be kept in confidence. Because each PLC member takes a turn “in the hot seat” as a presenting instructor, PLC members should be equally vested in bringing collegial support as well as constructive criticism to the group. But what happens in the PLC needn’t stay entirely in the PLC: once an activity has been analyzed, discussed, and revised by the group, it represents the best of both the presenting instructor and fellow PLC members. Many programs and PLC groups are choosing to post the revised activities created by PLC groups to a shared wiki or Google folder that is accessible to all teachers in the program; some are printing hard copies to keep in a binder for the program library or resource room. In many PLC groups, the presenting instructor or a rotating volunteer serves as scribe for the session, taking notes during the meeting and afterwards sharing a clean copy of the revised assignment with all group members. PLCs aim to make the most of one of adult education’s most valuable resources – teachers – and sharing PLC results across the program can demonstrate how teachers’ work is valued and extend craft-enriching discussions. ■

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# Build a Road Map to Success with a Class Syllabus

(continued from front page)

design a scope and sequence of instruction accordingly. A syllabus forces us to decide what content to include by determining what's really important. Further, it encourages us to stay on course. A quick off-track detour discussion requires scrutiny and justification. A syllabus can also cue learners on how learning will take place and the roles of teacher and student in that process. Course content, learning objectives, and class topics are key components; additionally, including student expectations, attendance policies, textbooks, study strategies, contact information, and other resources is helpful. We can customize our syllabus to establish a shared understanding of our work together and set the stage for a successful learning and teaching experience!

## Construction Zone!

At TJACE, we began our syllabus journey when being tasked with helping our students master multiple learning goals: subject content required for the GED® test, College and Career Readiness Standards (ELA and math), ESL, employability skills, and college knowledge (including how to use a syllabus).

In 2014-15, since we had already divided our program year into three 12-week sessions, we started by asking teachers to create a syllabus for each session. We wanted to show students what they would be learning in our classes and how it fit into a bigger picture. Our curriculum emphasized content for the new GED® test and the development of career goals and pathways. Additionally, we devised instructional strategies to build better communication, problem solving, critical thinking, and technology skills. With support, teachers created their own syllabi. The only requirement was that they include a general course description, weekly breakdown of topics, expectations for students, and teacher contact information.

Some teachers also included student expectations for participating in social learning methods such as circle, world café, open space, and project-based learning. We made adjustments based on student input: "Does this make sense to me? Do I know what topics we will cover in the next 12 weeks and understand my role in my own learning? How does this help me reach my goals?"

In 2015-16, we made some programmatic changes. We realized that many of our syllabi covered information relevant to all students, so we created a uniform orientation process for all TJACE students helping them understand our learning culture, create career pathway plans, and set learning strategy goals. Reviewing the class syllabus is an important component of our orientation. Further, we changed the name of our GED® classes to College and Career Readiness Core Skills (CCR Core Skills) and we decided to offer three basic classes: Core Skills Math, Core Skills Science, and Core Skills Social Studies. The CCRS ELA standards (reading, writing, speaking/listening, and language) are taught throughout the year in the contexts of science and social studies.

Our teachers worked in these three subject teams to further refine the content scope and sequencing for each subject over three consecutive sessions. Our professional learning communities (PLCs) and other professional development prioritized the integration of the CCRS in both ELA and math. Teachers fine-tuned their syllabi to include both content and CCRS standards. In 2016-17, we have been more explicit with our employability skills instruction and include these learning goals in our syllabi as well. Each session, we get better, clearer, and more focused on our learning goals, instructional strategies, and assessment methodologies. We capture our learning through this iterative process using our syllabi.

## Bridge to the Future

We believe a syllabus is a strong indicator of the teaching/learning quality in a course. Consequently, we review every syllabus and follow up with individual teachers with questions and suggestions. We want our syllabi to be functional and relevant tools not only for teachers and students, but also for program improvement and outreach. Well-designed syllabi can also be helpful in educating our WIOA and community partners about the value of our core skills development services toward sustainable employment and communities.

Most importantly, the best reason to design a syllabus is to help our learners see the path ahead. Every journey is easier with a road map. To build on the famous quote from Lao Tzu, "An *educational* journey of a thousand miles begins with one step *AND* a *good syllabus!*" ❖

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## Civics It Up! Curriculum Framework for Teachers

(continued from page 9)

anchor and grade-level equivalency. Ideally, when teachers use [Civics It Up!](#) content objectives they are also delivering grade-appropriate instruction aimed at preparing adult ESOL learners to successfully transition to further education and training.

### Moving Forward with Civics It Up!

The 2016-2017 program year is a time of transition into full WIOA implementation. Several programs mentioned [Civics It Up!](#) in their civics grant proposals. Beginning with the 2017-2018 program year, civics grants will include integrated education and training (IET) programs. IET is concurrent and contextualized language and content instruction focused on specific career clusters aimed at preparing adult ESOL learners for a particular career pathway. The ESOL team is currently expanding [Civics It Up!](#) to include an IET section

with the goal of helping teachers in this endeavor. Under consideration are broad career fields such as customer service and health. Stay tuned for the unveiling of the new IET section of [Civics It Up!](#) at the 2017 Civics Symposium in April! ❖

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*Susan Watson is a member of the Civics It Up! development team, a doctoral student at Virginia Commonwealth University, and a graduate assistant at VALRC.*

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U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (2013). *College and career readiness standards for adult education*. Washington, D.C.

Virginia Department of Education (2013). *Adult education content standards for English for speakers of other languages instruction*. Richmond, VA. Retrieved from: <http://valrc.org/learning/ielcivics/index.html>

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (2014). Public Law 113-128 (29 U.S.C. Sec. 3101, *et. seq.*).

# Yes, Virginia, CCR Standards are for Adult Literacy Learners Too!

(continued from page 3)

levels often come to programs with skills gaps, explicit work on foundational skills is heavily encouraged. Indeed, tutors and instructors should set time aside in every lesson (10 minutes, for example) to provide systematic instruction in at least one of the four foundational reading skills: alphabetic, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Because these foundations are essential to student success, the CCRS includes a section for “Reading Standards: Foundational Skills”; alphabetic and fluency are addressed here. (Comprehension is a primary focus of the standards in the main reading section, and vocabulary is addressed in the reading and language standards.) In the CCRS example below, one can see that the suggested fluency skills for levels A-C are alike; the difference would come from the complexity of the texts read by students, which would be considerably lower for level A than B.

Lessons that incorporate CCR standards provide students with as much reading, writing, and foundational practice as “traditional” literacy program curriculum. Standards-aligned lessons can address topics that many working adults are already familiar with – completing their jobs in teams or alone; accessing health information; or filling out civics documents, such as driver’s license applications, voting registration forms, and the like.

A significant effort, spearheaded by the Virginia Literacy Foundation, is underway to create a PluggedInVirginia Pathways professional soft skills curriculum designed for students at CCRS levels A and B. Unit 1 of this curriculum teaches low level literacy students about one of the most important professional soft skills adults need to develop – communication. The **chart on the back page** of this issue is drawn from Lesson 1 of Unit 1: Communication in the Workplace; it shows how workplace skills and CCRS, including reading foundations, can come together in an effective contextualized lesson.

In PIVA Pathways Unit 2, Safety in the Workplace, students build on reading, writing, and digital literacy skills learned in Unit 1. They search for information online and read lengthier articles that offer repeated practice finding information in the text, interpreting graphs and charts, and learning about employer and employee responsibilities in maintaining a safe workplace. Contextualized industry-related instruction is possible for the lowest level adult literacy students, as evidenced by activities such as “Maria’s Incident.” [Click here](#) to see teacher notes and a full set of handouts that include reading and questioning activities; vocabulary instruction; a reading comprehension exercise in which the student

## READING STANDARDS: FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

A	B	C
<b>RF.4 Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. (Fluency)</b>		
Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. a. Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding. b. Read grade-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings. c. Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary. (RF.K.4 and 1.4 merge)	Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. a. Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding. b. Read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings. c. Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary. (RF.2.4 and 3.4 merge)	Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. a. Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding. b. Read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings. c. Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary. (RF.4.4 and 5.4 merge)

identifies setting, characters, events, and the resolution; and practice filling out an incident report form. CCR standards for “Maria’s Incident” include the following three standards:

- Reading Anchor 2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
  - Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text. (R2A)
  - Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea. (R2B)
- Writing Anchor 4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
  - Produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. (W4B)
- Speaking and Listening Anchor 2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
  - Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood. (SL2A)
  - Determine the main idea and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. (SL2B)

Additional standards could also apply to the lesson, as evidenced in the materials and handouts. In conclusion, when low literate adults are assigned work “worth doing,” they are more engaged and motivated than adults who are unable to connect classroom lessons to their real life goals.

If, after reading this article, you are interested in learning more about CCR standards that apply to adult literacy instruction for the lowest level adult learners, please click on the following links:

- [CCR English Language Arts/Literacy Standards \(Levels A & B, including Reading: Foundational Skills Standards\)](#)
- [CCR Mathematics Standards \(Levels A & B, including Math Practices\)](#)
- [College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education](#) ❏

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# Communicationg at a Construction Site



*Read Yes, Virginia, CCR Standards are for Adult Literacy Learners Too! in this issue to learn more about this example of contextualized, standards-aligned literacy and career pathways instruction.*

Purpose of the Activity	After reading the 238-word story, students will discuss the challenges that a foreman faces in giving instructions to his team of construction workers. To answer questions, students will find evidence in the text that describes the suggestions the team has made to the foreman to improve his communication skills.
CCR Standards, Level A	<p>Reading Anchor 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it: cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask and answer questions about key details in a text. (R1A)</li> </ul> <p>Speaking and Listening Anchor 6: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.</li> <li>• Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation. (SL6A)</li> </ul> <p>Reading: Foundational Skills Anchor 3: Know and apply grade level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words. (RF3Aa-k)</p>
Reading	The students are asked to read a short story at grade level 4 about a foreman who has difficulty giving instructions to his construction crew.
Vocabulary	foreman, communicating, construction, instructions, challenges
Word Skills Practice	Sight word practice: should, loud, sound Pronounce the beginning sound of the word and the ending sound of the word. Create word families using a variety of beginning consonant sounds with the -ound ending.
Discussion	Before reading: Students discuss “what I know about communication or miscommunication at work.” During reading: Students look for and analyze the foreman’s communication difficulties. After reading: The teacher asks text-dependent questions and a critical thinking question to encourage students to base their answers from information found in the text.
Digital Literacy	Students enter the Goodwill Foundation mouse tutorial and practice rollovers, clickables, and drag and drops. Students with more digital literacy skills are asked to practice a more advanced mouse game, read the instructions, and move through the game independently.
Filling Out Forms	Students study time sheet vocabulary and how to fill out a time sheet (days of the week, time, weekly total, writing in hours and minutes, signature, etc.). They study an empty form and a filled in form. By the end of the lesson, they will fill out a time sheet on their own.