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ABSTRACT

This project provided adult educators in Pennsylvania with information about adults with learning differences and training in the use of alternative instructional techniques. Although the majority of training was conducted through presentations, many more adult educators were affected by the project through the information provided in the Learning Disabilities Newsletter, the instructional materials distributed to programs, and technical assistance available through the toll-free phone service. The training included more than 40 topics allowing teachers and volunteer tutors to customize their staff development to meet the specific needs of their programs. These four new training sessions were developed as part of the 1999-2000 project year: Teaching Writing to Adults with Weak Language Skills, Accommodating Adults with Learning Disabilities in Adult Education Programs, Recent Research About Learning Disabilities, and Learning Disabilities Forum. (Appendixes include a list of training dates and locations and sample newsletter.) (YLB)

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Statewide Staff Development Project:

Adults with Learning Differences

Final Report, 1999-2000

By Richard Cooper, Ph.D.

Center for Alternative Learning
6 E. Eagle Rd.
Havertown, PA 19083
610-446-6126

Contract No. 99-00-0003
Contract Amount: \$60,000.00

The activity which is the subject of this report was supported in part by the U.S. Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U. S. Department of Education or the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and no official endorsement by these agencies should be inferred.

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By Richard Cooper, Ph.D.

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Training Dates and Locations

Sample Newsletter

Abstract Page

Project No: 99-00-0003

Grant Recipient: Center for Alternative Learning
6 E. Eagle Rd.
Havertown, PA 19083
610-446-6126

Program Name: Statewide Staff Development Project: Adults with Learning Differences

Grant Allocation: \$60,000

Project Period: July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000

Project Director: Richard Cooper, Ph.D.

Project Purpose: The project proposed to provide adult educators in Pennsylvania with information about adults with learning differences and techniques for instruction.

Project Outcomes: Adult educators in Pennsylvania who participated in the training activities have a better understanding of adults who learn differently and learned how to use alternative instructional tools and techniques for teaching.

Impact: The project helped to improve adult education services provided throughout the state of Pennsylvania to adults who learn differently

Training Developed: Four new training sessions were developed as part of this year's project:

- 1) *Teaching Writing to Adults with Weak Language Skills*
- 2) *Accommodating Adults with Learning Disabilities in Adult Education Programs*
- 3) *Learning Disabilities Forum*

Products Available: This final report

Project Continuation: The training offered through the Statewide Staff Development Project on Learning Differences will continue to provide training through the Northwest Professional Development Center during the academic year of 2000/01.

Conclusion/Recommendations Adult educators and volunteer tutors continue to find that alternative instructional techniques are necessary for reaching students who do not respond to traditional methods. Matching the thought processes of individuals who learn differently to specific instructional techniques offers one of the most promising ways to help adults with weak basic academic skills to improve those skills.

Statewide Staff Development Project: Adults with Learning Differences

Introduction

The Statewide Staff Development project, conducted by the Center for Alternative Learning, proposed to provide adult educators in Pennsylvania with information about adults with learning differences and training in the use of alternative instructional techniques. The project began on July 1, 1999 and ended June 30, 2000. This project was a continuation of projects operated during the four previous academic years.

The project director and trainer was Dr. Richard Cooper, a nationally recognized expert in the field of learning disabilities. He worked with the coordinators in five of the six Professional Development Centers who received requests for training from adult educators in their regions. The coordinators and their staffs scheduled the training sessions and handled the logistics for the majority of the project's training sessions. Administrative and clerical support was provided by staff and volunteers at the Center for Alternative Learning.

Individuals who will find this report useful are staff development administrators who are interested in training adult educators and volunteer literacy tutors to better serve the needs of adults who have learning differences, problems and disabilities.

This report is available from the Adult Basic and Literacy Education's Resource Center where permanent copies are on file.

Advance State Literacy Resource Center
333 Market St., 11th Floor

Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333
800-992-9192 in Pennsylvania
717-783-9192 from outside PA

Fax: 717-783-5420

This report is also available from the:

Center for Alternative Learning
6 E. Eagle Rd.
Havertown, PA 19083
800-869-8336
610-446-6126
Fax: 610-446-6129

This report is online at the Center's web site at:

www.learningdifferences.com

Project Description

This staff development project continues to deliver specialized training to adult educators and volunteer tutors throughout the state through a number of delivery systems. Although the majority of training was conducted through presentations by Dr. Cooper, many more adult educators were impacted by the project through the information provided in the Learning disAbilities Newsletter, the instructional materials which were distributed to programs and the technical assistance available through the toll free phone service. Both adult students and the instructors benefited from the demonstrations of the Cooper Screening of Information Processing.

The training offered through this project included more than 40 topics allowing teachers and volunteer tutors to customize their staff development to meet the specific needs of their programs. Additionally, the model of having the expert go to the staff development regions and to individual programs provides for a sharing of information which otherwise may not take place. This model

also reduces the total miles traveled while increasing the number of people who participated in the training.

Goals

The project had three goals: 1) To continue the staff development project, which began in the 1995/96 academic year, providing training to adult educators about individuals with learning differences, problems and disabilities. 2) To provide the adult educators in Pennsylvania with a wide range of staff development activities and instructional strategies for teaching students with learning differences. 3) To facilitate the flow of information from international, national, regional and state information centers to adult education providers in Pennsylvania.

Objectives

The project goals were to be achieved through the following objectives:

1. To operate a statewide staff development project in each of the six regional professional development centers which continues the training for adult educators in the previous four projects.
2. To use a variety of staff development methods (training sessions, video recordings, printed materials, classroom demonstrations and observations, the 800 phone line, newsletter, fax, e-mail, web site and listserv) to help adult educators improve their instructional skills.
3. To provide training to at least 200 adult educators who did not participate in the previous years' project and to provide advanced training to at least 350 adult educators.

4. To conduct a minimum of 60 staff development activities in the regional staff development centers and adult education agencies throughout the state.

5. With the assistance and cooperation of the regional Professional Development Centers, to reach out to agencies whose staff have not received training about adults with learning differences.

6. To encourage the use of screening for learning differences and provide adult educators with instructional strategies and techniques which matches the individual's learning differences found through the screening.

7. To operate the staff development project incorporating the ABLE Guiding Principles for Staff Development.

8. To spend time weekly reviewing the many research projects that are being conducted around the nation and to share that information and information from the National Institute for Literacy, National Institute for Health, and University Research Centers with adult educators in Pennsylvania.

9. To provide technical assistance, as requested, for anyone in the state offering training with the Learning Differences Modules and the National Institute for Literacy's *Bridges to Practice*.

10. To distribute alternative instructional materials and the administrator's manual for the Cooper Screening of Information Processing to programs which would like to use those materials.

11. To make information about this project and learning differences available on the Center's web site.

12. To prepare and submit a final report.

Procedures

The popularity of this staff development project has continued to increase with Dr. Cooper spending approximately half of his time on the project. As in previous project years, the availability of training, the schedule of training sessions and a description of the project were posted on the Center's web site and described in the *Learning disAbilities Newsletter*.

The training module, *Characteristics of Adults Who Learn Differently*, offered across the state through the Professional Development Centers, provided adult educators with an overview of learning differences, problems and disabilities. The participants were encouraged to attend follow-up training sessions offered by Dr. Cooper on how to instruct adults who learn differently.

Although it is highly recommended that individuals attend the initial training session, either during previous project years or by attending the module training, before they attend other training offered through this project, adult educators could attend any training sessions since they stand alone and provide information about specific instructional strategies. The topics for these training sessions were determined by the staff of the host agency or the staff of the regional Professional Development Centers. Two new training sessions were added to the project this year, *Teaching Writing to Individuals with Weak Written Language Skills* and *Recent Research about Learning Disabilities*.. The former became the most popular training session this year.

As in other training years, some agencies opened the training sessions to both teachers and learners. The responses from these sessions were again very positive. The students reported that they learned much about themselves, and the teachers and tutors reported that observing the students' reactions to the information and techniques provided them with insights into the students' educational experiences and learning differences.

In five of the six professional development regions, Dr. Cooper conducted training on Accommodating Adults with Learning Disabilities. He used the Handbook developed by the University of Kansas through a Research grant from the National Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation Research. The Learning Disability Forum, lead by Dr. Cooper, provided participants with the opportunity to discuss issues and concerns they have about providing services to adults with learning differences, problems and disabilities. These training sessions differed greatly from the other training offered through this project. Participants in the Accommodations session learned about the legal rights and responsibilities of individuals with disabilities enrolled in adult education programs.

The response to these two new activities was very positive. Participants who choose to attend the training on accommodations reported that they do so because they felt a need to ensure that their programs were in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Participants learned how to determine if individuals have a disability and, if so, how to identify appropriate and reasonable accommodations. The training emphasized the spirit of the law rather than its exact legal requirements.

The participants in the LD Forum listed a number of concerns. The most common concern was the lack of resources for diagnosing adults with learning disabilities. Participants were able to share their knowledge of resources both at the state and local levels. Additionally, Dr. Cooper pointed out that many adults do not need a formal diagnosis but rather an assessment of how they learn. In most cases the only reasons that adults need to be formally diagnosed is to determine whether they are eligible for accommodations on tests and on the job or eligible to receive services and protection under the law.

Other concerns discussed in the LD Forum included: 1) how to retain students who are frustrated by their learning problems, 2) how to communicate

to volunteer tutors that individuals with learning problems usually do not learn in the same way that the tutors learn and 3) what to do with students who make slow gains and score poorly on tests.

There are many efforts both in this country and in other countries to better understand learning disabilities. These efforts are helping professionals in many disciplines to improve the diagnosis and treatment of children and adults whose schooling success has been impacted by learning problems. Dr. Cooper incorporated the latest research results into the training sessions he offered. For example in the training sessions on reading and writing, he explained why phonological awareness and knowledge of the structure of language were necessary for the development of language skills for adults who learn differently.

Richard Cooper's screening, the C-SIP, is currently being reviewed in many states through their participation of *Bridges to Practice*. Since the Cooper Screening of Information Processing was a product of previous 353 projects in Pennsylvania, it is available free of charge to adult educators in Pennsylvania and nationwide. In order to make the C-SIP more useful for adult educators, Dr. Cooper wrote and distributed a manual for the administration of the C-SIP to programs which requested it. Since Dr. Cooper conducts the screening in Spanish, for Spanish adults with limited English proficiency, he was asked to have the Cooper Screening translated into Spanish. The translation is now finished and will be included in a U. S. Department of Education study of screening instruments for adults whose first language is Spanish.

The most popular new training session introduced by Dr. Cooper this year was entitled *Teaching Writing Skills to Individuals with Weak Language Skills*. Participants reported that this training provided them with activities for the teaching of writing to individuals who the teachers and volunteers were beginning to give up on.

The *Learning disAbilities Newsletter*, now in its 17th year, was distributed to all the funded adult education programs and distributed to all training participants. The Newsletter is also available on the Center's web site and can be downloaded from the site. The Center's staff encouraged adult education agencies to duplicate and distribute the Newsletter to all their teachers and tutors. The staff at the Center has begun to collect e-mail addresses so that the next issue of the *Learning Disabilities Newsletter* can be sent electronically.

The 800, or toll free, phone line which was installed as part of the 1995/96 project continues to be a valuable resource for the project. Access to the toll free number encourages adult educators to call and inquire about training and request assistance for working with students. Although most of the scheduling for the project was done through the Professional Development Centers, many adult educators called the Center for Alternative Learning to discuss training topics before formally requesting the training. The phone line has an answering machine attached to it so that teachers can make inquiries or ask questions at their convenience, twenty four hours a day. The toll free phone line has been and will continue to be an important component of the statewide staff development project because teachers do not hesitate to call for information.

The Center's web site (www.learningdifferences.com) contains information about the statewide staff development project, Dr. Cooper's training schedule and the *Learning disAbilities Newsletter*. The staff at the Center continued to add information about learning differences to the site so that adult educators who have access to the Internet were able to quickly and inexpensively access the information.

Dr. Cooper screened many students at adult education programs around the state and at the Center for Alternative Learning. Many of these screenings were demonstrations to train adult educators in the use of the C-SIP (*Cooper*

Screening of Information Processing). As a follow-up to these demonstrations, adult educators from many programs in the state forwarded copies of the screenings they had completed for guidance in interpreting the results. The results of these screenings were used by teachers and volunteer tutors to develop individual instructional plans for students who were suspected of having learning problems and disabilities

Project Objectives Which Were Met

1. The object to operate a statewide staff development project in each of the six regional professional development centers was met to some degree. Five of the six regions scheduled training through the project. It continued the training for adult educators offered during the past four years. Many participants attended advanced training.

2. The second objective to use a variety of staff development methods was mostly met. Staff development was provided through training sessions, video recordings, printed materials, classroom demonstrations and observations, the 800 phone line, newsletter, fax, e-mail and web site.

3. The number of participants in this year's project again exceeded expectations. The project proposed to provide training to at least 200 adult educators who did not participate in the previous year's project and to provide advanced training to at least 350 adult educators. The attendance at the training sessions for this project exceeded the proposed. The exact numbers were collected by the staff at the Professional Development Centers.

4. The objective to conduct a minimum of 60 staff development activities in the regional staff development centers and adult education agencies throughout the state was met and exceeded. Dr. Cooper conducted 63 training sessions. Some of these sessions were conducted for individuals from many

agencies in the Professional Development Center regions and others were conducted at agencies for their staff, teachers and volunteers. The primary method of training was presentations by Dr. Richard Cooper. All requests for training were scheduled and completed at the convenience of the regional Professional Development Centers and/or local agencies on weekdays, evenings and Saturdays. Only one scheduled training session had to be postponed due to a scheduling conflict; it was rescheduled and offered within the same week as it was originally scheduled.

5. The fifth objective was met. This objective proposed to reach out to adult education programs which had not previously participated in the Statewide Staff Development Project. A number of programs did schedule training sessions at their facilities and other programs sent some of their staff to training offered by regional Professional Development Centers.

6. The sixth objective to encourage the use of the Cooper Screening was met by making the C-SIP available to adult educators and conducting demonstrations to show how the screening can be used to improve instruction for adults who have learning differences.

7. The objective to operate the staff development project incorporating the ABLE Guiding Principles for Staff Development was met through planning and on-going evaluation of the project .

8. The eighth objective to spend time weekly reviewing the many research projects that are being conducted around the nation and to share that information, was met. Dr. Cooper monitored the field of learning disabilities by reviewing newsletters from many organizations and by accessing information on the Internet.

9. The objective to provide technical assistance for the Learning Differences Modules and the Development of a module for the delivery of

Bridges to Practice was met but to lesser degree than anticipated. Dr. Cooper received a few inquiries for assistance and provided the information that was requested.

10. The objective to distribute alternative instructional materials and the manual for the Cooper Screening of Information Processing was met. At each of the training sessions, instructional materials, relevant to the topic, were distributed and demonstrated.

11. The objective to make information about this project and learning differences available on the Center's web site was met. The current and past Learning disAbilities Newsletters which contain information about the project is available on the web site. We continue to post information about learning differences to the web site.

12. This final report was submitted to meet the last objective of the project.

Objectives Which Were Not Met

Although all the objectives were met to some degree, two were not fully met. The objective to providing training in all six professional development regions was only partially met since training was scheduled and completed in five of the six regions. The number of training sessions offered through the project exceeded the goal of 60 because each of the other five regions scheduled more training. The other objective which was only partially met was the second because plans to add a listserv to the Center's web site was not achieved.

Evaluation

During each of the training sessions, Dr. Cooper requested feedback from the participants about half way through the session. This feedback provide him with information about what the participants thought of the information being provided and how he might adjust the presentation to better meet their needs. At the end of each session, Dr. Cooper asked each participant for feedback on the content and the presentation. The feedback was very positive with adult educators stating that the materials provided at the training sessions and the explanation on how to use them to meet the specific learning needs of their students were most helpful, because they could implement alternative instructional techniques immediately.

Evaluation instruments were provided by the coordinators of the Professional Development Centers. Each project participant completed an evaluation form. At the end of each session, Dr. Cooper reviewed these evaluations to note comments which could be used to improve future training sessions. The evaluations showed that most of the participants found the training helpful and practical. In some of the training, a few participants reported that the training did not meet their needs because the students they teach do not have learning problems.

Dissemination

Copies of this report are permanently on file at the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education. Copies can be obtained for review by contacting the AdvancE. This report is also available from the Center for Alternative Learning and has been added to the Center's web site at www.learningdifferences.com.

This staff development project is further disseminated through Dr. Cooper's work around the country. The training sessions which are offered as part of this project were developed by him and he presents these same training sessions at national conferences and for adult education programs and agencies in many states who contract for his services.

Appendices

1999/2000 Staff Development Activities

July 28	Philadelphia Professional Development Center <i>Cooper Screening of Information Processing</i>	9:30 - 12:00 Philadelphia
August 11	Philadelphia Professional Development Center <i>Teaching Math to Adults with Learning Problems</i>	9:30 - 12:00 Philadelphia
August 31	Abington Library Literacy Program <i>Questions and Answers for Tutors</i>	7:00 - 9:00 Abington
Sept 14	Lock Haven University Literacy Corps <i>Tic Tac Toe Math</i>	6:00 - 8:30 Lock Haven
Sept. 20	Lawrence Co Literacy <i>Demonstration of Cooper Screening of Information Processing</i>	12:00 - 3:00 New Castle
Sept. 20	Lawrence Co Literacy <i>Adults who Learn Differently</i>	12:00 - 3:00 New Castle
Sept 21	Clarion Co. Literacy <i>If They Learn Differently, Shouldn't They Study Differently</i>	9:00 - 12:00 Clarion
Sept. 21	Crawford Co. Read <i>Demonstration of Cooper Screening of Information Processing</i>	4:00 - 5:00 New Castle
Sept. 21	Crawford Co. Read <i>Adults Who Learn Differently</i>	7:00 - 8:00 New Castle
Sept 22	Edinboro University Literacy Corps <i>Cooper Screening of Information Processing</i>	12:00 - 2:00 Edinboro
Sept 22	Edinboro University Literacy Corps <i>Accommodating Adults with Learning Problems</i>	4:30 - 6:00 Edinboro
Sept 22	Edinboro University Literacy Corps <i>Teaching Reading, Writing and Math to Adults with Learning Problems</i>	7:00 - 8:30 Edinboro
Oct. 2	Berks Co. Literacy Council <i>If They Think Differently, Shouldn't They Study Differently</i>	9:00 - 12:00 Reading
Oct. 27	Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit <i>Learning Problems and English As A Second Language</i>	10:00 - 2:00 Danville

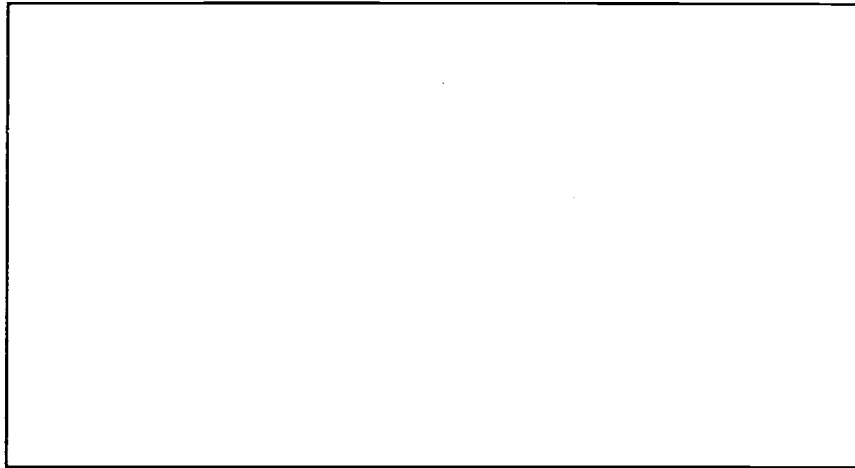
Nov. 12	Penn Ohio Adults Who Learn Differently	9:00 - 2:00 Mars
Dec. 2	Penncrest School District <i>Teaching Adults with Learning Problems</i>	4:00 - 8:00 Saegertown
Dec. 3	ARIN <i>Teaching Techniques for Adults with Learning Differences</i>	9:00 - 12:00 Indiana
Dec. 3	Community Action Inc. <i>Teaching Techniques for Adults with Learning Differences</i>	5:30 - 8:30 Punxsutawney
Dec. 6	Alle-Kiski Learning Center <i>Teaching Adults Who Learn Differently</i>	9:00 - 12:00 Arnold
Dec. 6	Alle-Kiski Learning Center <i>Reading, Writing and Math Techniques</i>	1:00 - 3:00 Arnold
Dec. 6	Alle-Kiski Learning Center <i>Reading, Writing and Math Techniques</i>	6:00 - 9:00 Arnold
Jan. 6	Delaware County Intermediate Unit <i>Teaching Reading to Adults with Learning Problems</i>	12:30 to 3:30 Media
Jan. 7	Philadelphia Professional Development Center <i>Mnemonics Techniques</i>	Philadelphia 9:00 to 12:00
Jan. 12	Philadelphia Professional Development Center <i>Teaching Reading to Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Philadelphia 9:00 to 12:00
Jan. 21	Focus on Renewal <i>Instructional Techniques for Adults with Learning Differences</i>	9:00 - 12:00 McKees Rocks
Jan. 21	Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council <i>Instructional Techniques for Adults with Learning Differences</i>	9:00 - 12:00 McKees Rocks
Jan. 24	Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council <i>Math Techniques for Adults with Learning Differences</i>	5:30 - 7:30 Pittsburgh
Jan. 25	Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council <i>Instructional Techniques for Adults with Learning Differences</i>	6:30 - 8:30 McKeesport
Jan. 28	Philadelphia Professional Development Center <i>Teaching Writing to Adults with Weak Language Skills</i>	Philadelphia 1:00 to 3:00

Jan. 12	Lehigh Carbon Community College <i>Teaching Reading to Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Allentown 9:30 to 3:00
Feb. 4	PAACE Conference <i>An Overview of Recent Research on Learning Disabilities</i>	Hershey 10:00 - 11:15
Feb. 4	PAACE Conference <i>Teaching Writing To Adults with Weak Language Skills</i>	Hershey 4:00 - 5:15
Feb. 7	Philadelphia Professional Development Center <i>Alternative Math Techniques</i>	Philadelphia 9:00 to 12:00
Feb. 21	Mansfield University <i>Alternative Math Techniques</i>	Mansfield 6:00 to 9:00
Feb. 25	McKeesport Goodwill <i>Math and Reading Techniques</i>	McKeesport 10:00 - 3:00
March 2	Northeast Professional Development Center <i>Teaching Life Skills to Adults with Social and Emotional Problems</i>	Danville 1:00 to 4:30
March 8	Delaware County IU Even Start <i>Tic Tac Toe Math</i>	Media 11:30 to 1:30
March 10	Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council <i>LD Forum</i>	9:30 - 3:00 Pittsburgh
March 13	1199 Hospital Workers Training Fund <i>Teaching Adults with Learning Problems</i>	Philadelphia 4:30 to 6:30
March 15	Southeast Professional Development Center <i>Accommodations for Adults with Learning Disabilities</i>	Exton 10:00 to 3:00
March 16	Chester County Library <i>Teaching Adults with Learning Problems</i>	Exton 7:00 to 9:00
March 21	Adult Literacy Lawrence Co. <i>Cooper Screening of Information Processing</i>	New Castle 10:00 to 3:00
March 22	Adult Literacy Lawrence Co. <i>Cooper Screening of Information Processing</i>	New Castle 10:00 to 3:00
March 23	Southwest Professional Development Center <i>Accommodations for Adults with Learning Disabilities</i>	Pittsburgh 10:00 to 3:00

March 24	Northwest Professional Development Center <i>Accommodations for Adults with Learning Disabilities</i>	Erie 10:00 to 3:00
March 29	Reading Area Community College <i>Teaching Writing To Adults with Weak Language Skills</i>	Reading 7:30 - 9:00
April 4	Center for Social Policy and Community Development <i>Teaching Adults with Learning Problems</i>	Philadelphia 1:00 to 3:30
April 7	Philadelphia Professional Development Center <i>Tic Tac Toe Math</i>	Philadelphia 9:00 to 12:00
April 13	Northwest Professional Development Center <i>Learning Differences Forum</i>	Erie 9:00 - 3:30
May 6	Philadelphia School District Adult Education <i>Teaching Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Philadelphia 9:00 to 4:00
April 18	North Central Professional Development Center <i>Learning Differences</i>	Lock Haven 6:00 - 9:00
April 24	Hiram G. Andrews Center <i>Multi-Level Classroom Techniques</i> <i>Employment Skills for Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Johnstown 9:00 - 12:00 1:00 - 4:00
April 27	North Central Professional Development Center <i>Forum on Learning Differences</i>	Scranton 9:00 - 2:30
April 28	Philadelphia Professional Development Center <i>Forum on Learning Differences</i>	Philadelphia 9:00 - 3:30
May 4	North Central Professional Development Center <i>Accommodations for Adults with Learning Disabilities</i>	Nanticoke 10:00 - 3:00
May 6	Philadelphia School District Adult Education <i>Teaching Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Philadelphia 9:00 - 4:00
May 9	Abington Literacy Program <i>Teaching Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Abington 10:00 - 3:00
May 12	Southeast Professional Development Center <i>Forum on Learning Differences</i>	Souderton 9:00 - 3:30
May 13	JCCEOA <i>Reading Comprehension and Accommodations</i>	Punxsutawney 9:00 - 3:00

May 19	Southeast Professional Development Center <i>Teaching Reading to Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Lebanon 9:00 - 3:00
June 5	Community Action Southwest <i>Employment Skills for Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Waynesboro 1:00 - 4:00
June 16	Intra-region Conference Southwest & Northwest PDC's <i>Questions and Answers on Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Mars 9:00 - 12:00
June 21	Lutheran Settlement House <i>Teaching Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Philadelphia 9:00 - 2:30

Center for Alternative Learning
6 E. Eagle Road
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Serving Those Who Learn Differently

Learning disAbilities Newsletter

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San Antonio Meeting

On April 10 and 11, Dr. Richard Cooper was invited to participate in a U.S. Department of Education meeting on the screening and diagnosis of learning disabilities in Spanish speaking adults. This two day meeting, in San Antonio, Texas, identified two problems 1) an insufficient number of bilingual professionals trained to diagnose learning disabilities and 2) little research on the effectiveness of screening instruments on Spanish speaking populations. A number of screenings for learning disabilities, that are available in Spanish, were reviewed by the 30 participants. Four screening instruments were selected to be included in a field test to identify the effectiveness of the screenings in determining who should be referred for further testing. The C-SIP (Cooper Screening of Information Processing) is one of the screening instruments that will be field tested in a number of states to determine how reliable it is in identifying individuals who should be referred for testing to diagnose a learning disability.

The C-SIP in Spanish is now available for review. Dr. Cooper is seeking help with the translation to include language that represents different Spanish speaking backgrounds and countries. If you feel that you could be of assistance by reviewing the translations and making recommendations for adding synonyms in Spanish, contact our office.

One of the requirements for inclusion in the national study on Spanish speaking learners is to shorten the C-SIP so it can be administered in 15 minutes. This presented a problem because, the Cooper Screening is not only a screening instrument for learning disabilities but it is also an instrument for identifying learners' strengths and weaknesses as a diagnostic teaching tool. In order to meet the requirement for a short screen and the benefit of the longer form, Dr Cooper has reformatted the screening so the short and long version are combined in the same document.

Single copies of both the English and Spanish version of the C-SIP are available free of charge from Learning disAbilities Resources. Multiple copies of the Screening in English are available for .020 per copy. Multiple copies of the Spanish version will be available after June 30th, when the final revisions are completed.

A computer program for scoring the Cooper Screening is currently under development and should be available in September. For more information about the Screening instrument contact Dr. Cooper at our office.

WRITING WORKSHOP

The most popular new training session Dr. Cooper offered this year has been Writing Techniques for Adults with Weak Language Skills. In this session, he discusses issues of avoidance, the structure of language, and writing exercises that he has found effective with individuals with various levels of writing skills.

One adult educator in Reading, PA wrote in response to the training session that she was perplexed by individuals who could not express themselves in writing. "This session provided me with techniques which I can use immediately with several of my students who have not been able to improve their writing skills."

Dr. Cooper has placed the techniques he describes in this training into a workbook. This workbook describes a number of writing exercises for individuals with limited writing skills and includes worksheets for the students to use. He also has a video that explains the concepts in the workbook. Both the workbook and video are available through the Learning disAbilities Resource Catalog.

The Pegasus Group

The concept of learning disabilities and differences changes as we learn more about how people learn. One thing about a learning disability or difference is that it does not have to hold the person back. Individuals with learning differences can be found working in any career. Over the 18 years he has worked with both children and adults, with learning disabilities, Dr. Cooper, who himself has a learning difference, has encountered many educators who have learning problems. Some have reported that their learning differences affect their career as educators.

To meet the needs of educators with learning and attention differences, Dr. Cooper is initiating a new organization: The Pegasus Group. This organization will begin as part of the Center for Alternative Learning and, after it has grown, will become an independent

organization. The concept of this new group of educators with learning differences is to provide a network of educators, a support system for those having difficulties, and a forum for information sharing. The organization will operate primarily on the Internet at www.learningdifferences.com/pegasus. There is a \$15.00 fee to become part of the Pegasus Group and gain access to the organization page on the Center's web site. Individuals who do not have access to the Internet can participate and receive information through regular mail.

NAASLN The National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs officially has a new home. Its administrative office is located at the Lynn Boggs Literacy Center at Loyola University in New Orleans.

The new mailing address is:

NAASLN
Boggs Center
Loyola University
6363 St. Charles Ave., Box 63
New Orleans, LA 70118
Phone 504 864-7041



Visit the association's web site at NAASLN.org

LDR Catalog

For those newsletter readers who have not received a copy of the **2000 Learning disAbilities Resources Catalog**, please phone our office and we will send one immediately. We would be pleased to send multiple copies to anyone who would like to share the catalog with friends and colleagues. Anyone who would be willing to distribute copies of the catalog to local schools, please contact Scott in our office at 1-800-869-8336.

Tic Tac Toe Math Certification Program

As the interest in alternative instructional methods grows, Dr. Cooper has established a program to certify Tic Tac Toe Math trainers. The certification process involves a test and a demonstration to insure that the person certified as a trainer knows the Tic Tac Toe Math, (Single, Double and Multi-digit Grids and how to use it for multiplication, long division, fractions

and percentages). We are planning an advanced certificate for trainers who know the Tic Tac Toe Cube.

Individuals certified as Tic Tac Toe Math trainers will be licensed to sell the Tic Tac Toe Math materials. For information about this program, contact our office at 1-800-204-7667.

Center For Alternative Learning New Services

There are two new services available through the Center for Alternative Learning: one for non-profit agencies and the second for employers.

1. Partnering for Literacy: A Fund Raising Program: The first of the new services is a fund raising partnership designed to assist local agencies raise money to support their literacy efforts. This program is available to any non-profit organization in the country that would like to sponsor training about learning disabilities and literacy. Dr. Cooper, whose training about this subject has been growing in popularity will assist the local agency to set up a fund raising event. This program for non-profit agencies involves a partnership between the Center for Alternative Learning, the local non-profit agency and sponsors.

2. LLWD (Learning, Living, and Working Differently) During the 18 years that Dr. Cooper has been offering services to individuals with learning differences, problems, and disabilities, he has assisted hundreds of both employers and employees deal with the difficulties caused by the learning problems. Two examples demonstrate how learning differences can affect job performance. The first was a welder who fabricated equipment. He occasionally put doors and gauges on backwards. Dr. Cooper assessed the welder's learning problem and recommended that he use a Polaroid camera, copies of the plans and a binder with clear document pockets. The welder was instructed to take a picture of a completed product and store it and a copy of the blueprint in the binder. When in doubt about future projects, he would refer to the pictures and plans of similar products he had previously produced.

The second example was a young woman who was hired as a clerk for an insurance company. She had to process incoming inquires about insurance and forward the inquires on to the appropriate department.

After her 90 day trial period, she still had an unacceptable error rate. Dr. Cooper was asked to evaluate the situation. He found that this employee has a visual tracking problem that was causing her errors. He developed an assistive device for her to guide her eyes and her error rate dropped to acceptable levels. These two examples demonstrate the type of assistance which employers and employees can receive through the LLWD program.

This new program systematizes the services that Dr. Cooper has offered over the years. LLWD will provide the following services to employers:

- 1) Assessment of workers suspected of having learning or attention problems
- 2) Consultation about accommodations in the workplace
- 3) Training about learning and attention differences for Human Resource personnel
- 4) Training on working with individuals with learning and attention differences for supervisors and managers.

For more information about the LLWD Program contact us at 1-800-869-8336.

Presentations by Dr. Richard Cooper

Last spring Dr. Cooper made a presentation about *Attention Differences* or ADHD to a group of parents and professionals at the DuBois Campus of Penn State University. This year, a neighboring community asked him to make the same presentation. On April 19th he returned to that part of the state to conduct a day long presentation at the Riverside Intermediate Unit in Clarion, PA.

On April 25 Dr. Cooper made a full day presentation to faculty and students about the *Characteristics of Learning Differences and Alternative Instructional Techniques* at Cumberland County College, Vineland, NJ

During the month of May, Dr. Cooper assisted the Long Island, New York, team to present *Bridges to Practice*. He was asked to participate in the training to provide the participants with answers

to their questions about learning disabilities which are not covered by the materials provided in the *Bridges* resources.

In April Dr. Cooper made a number of presentations at the Ohio Adult Education Conference. His presentations were so well received he was asked to come back on June 1st and provide training about alternative instructional techniques to Ohio adult educators who had received *Bridges to Practice* training.

On June 2, Dr. Cooper made a presentation about Reading Techniques to the Montgomery County Literacy Program in Clarksville, Tenn.

For the sixth year in a row, Dr Cooper will again make five presentations at the Kansas Adult Education Summer Institute on June 28, 29 and 30, in Manhattan, KS.

Employability Skills and Writing Techniques for Adults with Weak Language Skills are the topics Dr. Cooper will present at the Pennsylvania Corrections Education Conference on August 17

Upper Darby Teacher Trainer Courses: *Teaching Math to Children with Learning Differences*, July 11, 12 & 13 and *Teaching Reading and Writing to Children with Learning Differences* August 8, 9 & 10.

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Pennsylvania Statewide Staff Development Project

It has been a busy spring for Dr. Cooper as he traveled the state conducting training sessions for adult education teachers and volunteer tutors. Included among the topics that he offered through the Statewide Project on Learning Differences, Dr. Cooper conducted two new activities in five of the PDC regions: *Accommodating Adults with Learning Disabilities* and the *Forum on Learning Differences*. Participants at both these activities recommended that some of the information presented in the training to adult education practitioners be distributed through this newsletter. Hence the new sections that follow.

LD Forums

The Forum provided teachers, administrators, tutors or support staff an opportunity to discuss the issues and concerns they have about adult students with learning differences. The concern about how to obtain diagnostic testing for individuals needing accommodations on the GED was raised at each of the forums. Suggestions about how adults can be tested included the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation or private psychologists. It was pointed out that not everyone can receive services from OVR and private testing is expensive. Many adult educators who attended the Forum mentioned the need for early identification of individuals with learning differences. An intake process which uses a screening to identify learning problems was recommended.

If you were unable to attend the LD Forum when it was held in your region, you can still contribute by mail or e-mail. We invite your comments on individuals with learning problems in adult education and literacy programs. To help you organize your comments, questions and concerns refer by number to

1. Recruitment
2. Intake
3. Assessment
4. GED Issues
5. Instruction
6. Retention
7. Staff Development

Accommodations Issues

The most common question asked at the Accommodations Training was whether the Adults with Disabilities Act applied to adult education and literacy programs and how. The ADA states that organizations cannot discriminate against individuals with disabilities. Since it is the mission of most adult education and literacy programs to serve the most educationally needy, there should be little concern that programs are not complying with the law. However, if a program denies access to an individual with a disability, the staff of the program should check that they are doing so in compliance with the law. Adult education teachers and tutors in Pennsylvania can contact Dr. Cooper at **1-800-869-8336** to inquire about accommodations, alternative instructional techniques, or to ask questions about their students.

As part of the Statewide Staff Development, the Center is beginning to disseminate this newsletter via e-mail. It will be sent by e-mail to all the adult education and literacy programs in the state and to adult educators and volunteer tutors who request the newsletter. If you would like to receive the newsletter by e-mail, please send us a message at **rcooper642@aol.com**.

Pennsylvania Staff Development Training Sessions Offered This Spring

April 18	North Central Professional Development Center <i>Learning Differences</i>	Lock Haven 6:00 - 9:00
April 24	Hiram G. Andrews Center <i>Multi-Level Classroom Techniques</i> <i>Employment Skills for Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Johnstown 9:00 - 12:00 1:00 - 4:00
April 27	North Central Professional Development Center <i>Forum on Learning Differences</i>	Scranton 9:00 - 2:30
April 28	Philadelphia Professional Development Center <i>Forum on Learning Differences</i>	Philadelphia 9:00 - 3:30
May 4	North Central Professional Development Center <i>Accommodations for Adults with Learning Disabilities</i>	Nanticoke 10:00 - 3:00
May 6	Philadelphia School District Adult Education <i>Teaching Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Philadelphia 9:00 - 4:00
May 9	Abington Literacy Program <i>Teaching Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Abington 10:00 - 3:00
May 12	Southeast Professional Development Center <i>Forum on Learning Differences</i>	Philadelphia 9:00 - 3:30
May 13	JCCEOA <i>Reading Comprehension and Accommodations</i>	Punxsutawney 9:00 - 3:00
May 19	Southeast Professional Development Center <i>Teaching Reading to Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Lebanon 9:00 - 3:00
June 5	Community Action Southwest <i>Employment Skills for Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Waynesboro 1:00 - 4:00
June 16	Intra-region Conference Southwest & Northwest PDC's <i>Questions and Answers on Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Mars 9:00 - 12:00
June 21	Lutheran Settlement House <i>Teaching Answers on Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Philadelphia 9:00 - 2:30
July 12 & 14	Southeast Professional Development Center Conference <i>Writing Skills for Adults with Weak Language Skills</i> <i>Reading Strategies for Adults with Learning Differences</i>	Malvern 1:30 - 4:15 9:00 - 10:15



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