# 5

# Volunteers in Adult Literacy Education

Jennifer A. Sandlin
Ralf St. Clair

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the use of volunteers in adult literacy education programs, examines several current controversies, and lays out possible implications of those controversies. Volunteers have played an essential role in adult literacy education for decades (Belzer, 2002; Tenenbaum & Strang, 1992; U.S. Department of Education, 2000), yet in some ways they remain silent partners in the delivery of adult literacy, numeracy, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), and other basic education provision. Throughout our discussion, we use the term *adult literacy education* because the majority of the research examines work with learners striving to improve limited literacy proficiency.[1]

Given the long relationship between volunteers and adult literacy education, there is surprisingly little systematic research and writing on the

---

[1] Although we do not specifically address ESOL provision, the use of volunteers in ESOL provision is similar.

topic (Hambly, 1998; Ilsley, 1985; Stauffer, 1974). Although training manuals for volunteer tutors and program administrators abound, making up approximately three quarters of the literature on literacy volunteerism, relatively little research has been conducted on such issues as the effectiveness of volunteers, the educational practices of volunteers within programs, and comparison of models of volunteer training (Belzer, 2002; Ilsley, 1985; Tenenbaum & Strang, 1992). The research addressing these issues comes primarily from the 1970s and 1980s, when, judging from the numbers of publications about volunteers in adult literacy, there was considerable interest in the topic of volunteerism (Hambly, 1998). Some research and writing on volunteerism in adult literacy was also published in the 1990s, which may be evidence of renewed interest in this topic. Although there have been a handful of attempts to synthesize the literature (Freer, 1993; Ilsley, 1985; Imel, 1986a, 1986b; Tenenbaum & Strang, 1992), much of it is now almost two decades old.

In this chapter, we supplement the research with other forms of data, including National Literacy Advocacy (NLA) listserv discussions, roundtable discussions, and e-mail and telephone conversations with state adult literacy directors. Because of the gaps in research literature, we also rely on our experience and anecdotal evidence, but we have clearly identified these instances. We begin by examining where volunteers work, before moving on to the volunteer's perspective and controversies in adult literacy volunteerism. Our final section deals with the implications of our discussion for research, policy, and practice.

## LOCATING VOLUNTEERS IN FEDERAL AND VOLUNTARY LITERACY PROVISION

Volunteers have been active for several decades in federally funded adult literacy programs and in the two major volunteer literacy organizations, Laubach Literacy International (Laubach) and Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA), now merged as ProLiteracy International.[2] Briefly examining the history of volunteers in providing adult literacy education helps to understand the current situation.

---

[2] This merger went into effect on October 1, 2002. As this chapter contains information from periods prior to the merger, we refer to Laubach and LVA independently.

## Federally Funded Adult Literacy Programs

Federal legislation began to fund adult literacy education in earnest with the Adult Basic Education Act in 1964–1965. The aim of this act was to help people over the age of 18 attain the numeracy and literacy skills required to become employable and participate fully in society (Kangisser, 1985). States administered the funds and distributed them to educational organizations and community-based groups providing literacy education for adults. Volunteers came to play a more substantial role in providing federally funded adult education and literacy services when Laubach and LVA took on service provision in many states during the 1970s. Where other adult basic education (ABE) programs exist, Laubach and LVA refer their more advanced students to them, and ABE programs refer beginning learners (typically 0–4 grade level equivalent) to the voluntary organizations.

Specific federal volunteer initiatives, such as Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), have also created opportunities for literacy volunteers. The most recent of these programs is AmeriCorps. When introduced in January 1994, the national initiative did not mention literacy as an area of service. The National Coalition for Literacy (a group of organizations committed to raising the profile of adult literacy in the United States) asked the Clinton administration to include literacy and was successful in this effort. In the first funding round, 2 of 47 recipients of direct national grants were literacy organizations (the National Institute for Literacy and the National Center for Family Literacy), as were 35 of the 248 state-level recipients. This represented a commitment of 1,610 volunteers and around $15 million to adult literacy (Business Publishers, Inc., 1994).

By 2000, volunteers comprised approximately 43% of all adult education personnel reported by state-administered adult education programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). In that year, the states reporting the highest percentage of volunteers among total personnel were Pennsylvania (90%), Vermont (83%), Wyoming (79%), Rhode Island (77%), Nebraska (74%), Alaska (71%), and Virginia (71%). The District of Columbia also reported a high percentage (79%) of volunteers. Those states with the fewest reported percentages of volunteers in state-administered programs included Connecticut (0%), Delaware (0%), Texas (2%), Oklahoma (3%), Hawaii (10%), and Kentucky (10%). To attempt to explain these widely varied figures, we talked to several state directors of adult literacy programs. The percentage of volunteers does not appear to be correlated with

either geographical location or amount of funding per student. Directors
in states with high reported percentages of volunteers stated that their staff
had cultivated strong relationships with volunteer literacy organizations,
especially Laubach and LVA. As a result, state funds are distributed to
voluntary organizations, and the organizations' tutors are reflected in the
official state personnel counts. Vermont, for example, has a long history of
collaboration between state-administered programs and LVA, resulting in
shared tutor-training responsibilities. Vermont has a strong commitment
to using volunteers in a variety of roles, including tutoring, administration,
recruitment, and board membership. A similar commitment is found in
Alaska and Wyoming, where LVA and Laubach programs have received
state funding since the late 1970s. In addition, "several of the regional
Alaskan ABE [adult basic education] programs depend on VISTA and
AmeriCorps members to staff their programs" (personal communication,
Alaska state director). Pennsylvania is also committed to funding vol-
unteer programs, with Pennsylvania's state legislature earmarking 20%
of adult literacy funding for volunteer activities. This legislation helps
encourage volunteerism within the state, and the volunteers supported
with state money are included in official counts of state personnel. We
did not receive any information from directors of states with the lowest
numbers of volunteers.

Overall, volunteers have played an important role in federally funded
programs, much to the advantage of those programs and local service
providers.

## Volunteer Literacy Organizations

Frank Laubach founded the Laubach Literacy and Mission Fund in 1955,
having been involved in literacy work since the late 1920s (Kangisser,
1985). His background was in Christian missionary work, and his first
attempt at developing a method of teaching adults to read took place in the
Philippines. Laubach employed a way to systematize letter–sound rela-
tionships using key words and pictures, and he applied this method to not
only Tagalog but a total of 312 languages during the course of his career.
Phonics, based on the interaction between written and spoken language, is
the heart of the Laubach method.

The Laubach method has always centered on the relationship between
volunteers and learners. Three philosophical commitments underpin the
system: Literacy programs should be a means to other ends, such as mis-
sion work or community development; programs should begin with the

problems of participants; and learners should play an active part in the teaching process (Ilsley, 1985). By the time of its 2002 merger with LVA, Laubach had 1,100 member programs in the United States and was the country's largest volunteer literacy organization. Laubach reported that during 2000–2001, an estimated 88,687 volunteers participated in its program, serving 170,200 students. Of this total, 36,791 were involved in literacy for new readers and writers; 22,458 in ESOL; 3,384 in math; 1,735 in "other;" and 8,279 "not indicated" (Laubach Literacy Action, 2001, p. 2). Laubach stated that volunteer numbers have declined over the last 5 years while student enrollment has increased by 11% (Laubach Literacy Action, 2001, p. 2).

LVA was founded by Ruth Colvin in 1962, and her approach differed from Laubach's from the start. One critical distinction between LVA and Laubach was the role of phonics. Phonics was Laubach's primary instructional approach, whereas LVA used phonics as a peripheral strategy to decode text as a first step to interpreting meaning. LVA provided volunteer tutors with an intensive 18-hour training program (Ilsley, 1985) that included phonics, word patterns, context clues, sight words, and the language experience approach (an approach in which beginning readers dictate a story to the tutor, who writes it down and uses this learner-generated text for instruction). In 2000, LVA had a national network of 350 volunteer programs serving 80,000 learners annually (Laubach Literacy Action, 2000). Of the volunteers, 32,584 served as tutors, 852 as certified trainers, 3,749 as board members, and 4,674 in administrative support, with some volunteers having multiple roles (LVA, 2001).

Despite their differences, the two organizations shared many features before their merger. Both have been national leaders in the literacy field and view literacy as a resource for improving lives. Their merger makes sense as a strategy to strengthen the delivery of voluntary adult literacy education and to increase adult literacy's political presence at the federal and local level. Their influence calls into question the argument that voluntary provision is only a temporary stage in the development of professionalized educational provision, as suggested several decades ago during the early development of these organizations (Hely, 1960).

With regard to diversity, Laubach reports that 82% of its volunteers and 41.5% of its students are White (Laubach Literacy Action, 2001), and LVA reports 68% of its tutors and 26% of its students are White (LVA, 2001).[3] For as long as figures have been available, White tutors have

---

[3] The ethnic group(s) of the tutors who are not White are not reported.

predominated, although the tutor population has slowly become more diverse over the decades. In 1974, Stauffer reported data from a nationally representative sample of literacy volunteer programs showing that almost 99% of tutors were White (Stauffer, 1974). Learners, however, tend to be more diverse in both race and age. Fifty percent of LVA volunteers are over age 45, whereas 66% of learners are under the age of 45, and 21% are under the age of 24. There are also slight gender differences: Seventy-two percent of volunteers are female, compared with 57% of learners (LVA, 2001). Although the volunteer organizations did not respond to our queries about their approach to diversity, the difference in the composition of the learner group and tutor workforce suggests that it should be addressed.

These voluntary organizations have a unique connection with libraries as a venue for volunteers working with adult learners. A study by the Library Research Center in 1999 (Estabrook & Lakner, 1999) found that 90% of the libraries surveyed provided literacy services. One popular arrangement has been for libraries to accommodate and offer some support to local programs, such as LVA and Laubach (Ilsley, 1985). LVA staff estimated in 1985 that 95% of their affiliates had a cooperative relationship with a library (Kangisser, 1985).

## VOLUNTEERS IN THE
## PROGRAM SETTING

The majority of volunteers are used as one-to-one tutors (Hambly, 1998; Tenenbaum & Strang, 1992; U.S. Department of Education, 1986, 1989, 1990). A recent survey of state directors from 43 states and the District of Columbia (Belzer, 2002) found that in state-administered programs, 18 states use volunteers primarily as one-to-one instructors teaching a variety of content areas. One state uses volunteers primarily as one-to-one instructors specializing in a particular content area, and no state uses volunteers primarily as classroom assistants. Nineteen states use volunteers in some combination of these roles, and six states use volunteers in all of these roles, including "serving on advisory committees and community boards, classroom teachers, facilitators of small groups, and clerical support" (Belzer, 2002, p. 3).

Volunteers serve in noninstructional roles as well, in both volunteer literacy programs and state-administered literacy programs (Belzer, 2002; Tenenbaum & Strang, 1992; U.S. Department of Education, 1989). For

example, a report providing examples of ways literacy programs use volunteers (U.S. Department of Education, 1990) described a number of roles for volunteers other than tutoring, including facilitation of an adult literacy education speakers' bureau, mentoring other tutors, raising funds, recruiting students for programs, remodeling buildings, assessing disabilities, designing curricula, and assessing vision and hearing. Kawulich (1989) argues that "the various talents of volunteers can be a boon to underfunded programs when existing resources are insufficient for meeting existing needs" (p. 52). She then suggests a variety of ways volunteers could be used, other than as one-to-one tutors:

•  *Support services:* child care; transportation, counseling, student follow-up, graduation planning, recognition efforts, translation, or development of public service announcements.

•  *Clerical services:* filing, bookkeeping, typing, telephoning, telephone answering, library maintenance, data entry, or copying.

•  *Resources and public relations:* fundraising; resource solicitation; speech writing or making; materials collection; lobbying; grant writing; classroom space procurement; publicity; advertising; graphic design; newsletter writing, design, and layout; outreach and recruitment; public service announcement development; or videotaping.

•  *Instruction:* recorded readings, training of volunteers, coordination of volunteers, student and tutor matching, small group leader, lesson planning, curriculum development, or revision of materials.

•  *Administration:* planning, form completion, data collection, testing, research, or correspondence (p. 53).

Some researchers and educators argue that tutors should play support roles rather than be involved in direct instruction (Pohl, 1990). For example, one participant in a Canadian roundtable discussion on the use of volunteers in adult literacy education stated:

> I think the programs that I've seen that are the most successful—who use either a combination of community volunteers and peer tutors within the program—are using them as adjuncts to the program. The volunteers are actually integrated within the program. It's not, here's your pay, you go off and do a bunch with them. It's much more the volunteer is augmenting some other activities that are taking place within the program setting, be it on site or in some other kind of capacity. (Ontario Department of Education, 1991, p. 5)

## Training for Volunteers

Typically, support for volunteers has consisted of mandatory initial training and optional follow-up sessions (Meyer, 1985). Training for volunteer tutors in Laubach and LVA programs usually lasts between 12 and 18 hours (Meyer, 1985; Tenenbaum & Strang, 1992; Unwin, 1989).

Although the national Laubach and LVA organizations have traditionally mandated approaches to tutor training, there is some flexibility at the local level (Freer, 1993; Tenenbaum & Strang, 1992). Unwin (1989) states that in the Laubach-affiliated programs, tutors complete a 12-hour training program conducted locally by certified trainers. Generally, this training consists of teaching tutors how to use the Laubach Way to Reading with students, although local programs can modify this approach. Freer (1993) argues, for instance, that the "primary instructional approach in Laubach Literacy Action's new basic literacy tutor training will be a local option, not necessarily the Laubach Way to Reading" (p. 1). This also seems to be the case among LVA affiliates, as some local affiliates add components to the basic training to cover additional topics, such as learning disabilities (Literacy Volunteers of America Mercer County, undated). In LVA-affiliated programs, tutors go through an 18-hour training course focused on defining literacy, learning about learners and tutors, understanding the four language components (reading, writing, speaking, and listening), and learning techniques for literacy instruction (language experience approach, sight words and phonics clues, phonics, word patterns, and writing). LVA training also includes segments on both formal (grade equivalents and readability formulas) and informal (portfolio as well as informal oral reading and writing) assessment, helping learners set short- and long-term goals, and creating lesson plans based on assessments and learner goals. LVA's training mixes introductions, videos, demonstrations, learning tasks or practices, discussions, homework, and review (LVAMC, undated). ProLiteracy International and the National Center for Family Literacy are undertaking an initiative to move tutor training online, making it available anywhere in the country at any time.

Programs not affiliated with Laubach or LVA have widely varying training requirements. For example, a program in Bellevue, Illinois, provided 8 hours of initial training, whereas a program at Boston University has tutors receive an initial 18 hours of training, plus additional hours throughout the semester, for a total of 112 hours (Witherell, 1992).

Some literacy programs are experimenting with the *form* of tutor training in an attempt to address the problem of how to teach volunteer tutors

the concept of student-centered learning. Reporting on one such attempt, Talarr (1995) states that regardless of what training style she used to introduce literacy tutoring methods, she found that it was first necessary "to figure out how a nonprofessional could move beyond an ideology that focuses on learners' deficiencies to one that focuses on their strengths, in order to be able to help learners build on them" (p. 385). She found that after tutor training, tutors often "reverted to traditional teaching, and if they perceived that learners weren't getting their instruction, they often blamed the learners for some shortcoming . . . rather than reflect on their own practice" (p. 384). To address this issue, she introduced training activities through which tutors see that "learning becomes a dynamic relationship rather than transmission of a predetermined body of knowledge or a static position between knower and learner in which the learner is subordinate" (p. 385).

After initial training, many tutors still feel underprepared, have a sense of isolation once they begin their tutoring, and suffer from retention problems (Cook, Dooley, & Fuller, 1994). Cook, Dooley, and Fuller, a research team made up of adult literacy practitioners from Virginia, conducted focus groups with literacy volunteers and found that although material resources are important to them, tutors also stressed the importance of having staff and other support personnel to turn to when they had questions. Cook et al. (1994) state that the tutors they talked with "were looking to other people, primarily in one-on-one contact, to help them with problems" (p. 8). Because of such problems, there is a general consensus in the literature that in addition to initial training, volunteers also need follow-up trainings and ongoing support by programs (Fingeret & Danin, 1991; Ilsley, 1990; Kawulich, 1989; Pohl, 1990; Tenenbaum & Strang, 1992; U.S. Department of Education, 1989; Witherell, 1992).

## Volunteer Tutor Practices

Although volunteers provide a range of services within literacy programs, much of the literature describing volunteer practices focuses on the role of tutor. For decades, one-to-one tutoring was the dominant mode of tutoring in volunteer literacy programs, including LVA and Laubach (Demetrion, 1999). However, use of alternative, more collaborative models is growing (Freer & Enoch, 1994). Since the late 1980s, LVA has broadened its emphasis to include collaborative learning (Cheatham, Colvin, & Laminack, 1993; Cheatham & Lawson, 1990; Demetrion, 1999; Freer, 1993; Freer & Enoch, 1994). This strategy reflects "current thinking in adult literacy education," supporting a learner-centered philosophy and a whole

language approach to literacy (Freer, 1993, p. 1). Collaborative learning emphasizes the advantages of learning in groups rather than one-to-one. As described by Cheatham and Lawson (1990), collaborative learning

> contends that we learn from each other, from our interactions with each other and with our environments. We can refine our thinking only as we discuss with others, as we read what others have written, or as we listen to what others say. This collaborative learning sees all people as social beings and learning as a social event. (p. 4)

For instance, Demetrion (1999) reports on a scaffolding paradigm of learning developed at the Bob Steele Reading Center that includes a "strong emphasis on whole language theory, a respect for process, and collaborative learning, broadly conceived" (p. 61). Other examples of tutors moving beyond the one-to-one model are seen in the 1990 report *Volunteers in Adult Education* (U.S. Dept. of Education, 1990). Of the 14 descriptions of instructional practices involving volunteers, 7 described one-to-one tutoring, 6 described activities for use with groups, and 1 was unclear and could have been used for both.

Some educators support the move toward group instruction (Kazemak, 1988) because of the disadvantages they see in one-to-one tutoring:

> The commonly held assumption that supports this practice—that illiterate adults are ashamed of their illiteracy and cannot or will not participate in group instruction—is questionable. One-on-one tutoring not only disregards the social supports available in group instruction; at worst, it can foster unequal relationships between adults; the tutor is the knowing teacher while the student is the dependent illiterate. Instead of a dialogic relationship, such programs too often reinforce the misgivings that many adult students have about their own abilities. As Green, Reder, and Conklin observe, "Even in home tutoring, the dynamics of being tutored by a stranger evoke formal instruction expectations and anxieties" (1988, p. 4). (pp. 474–475)

However, a group instruction approach is not without problems. Freer and Enoch (1994) reported on a pilot project for collaborative tutoring sponsored by LVA. Although their findings reinforced other literature demonstrating the benefits of collaborative learning groups, including that learners gained both psychosocial and cognitive benefits from collaborative learning groups, they also noted difficulties arising among both learners and group facilitators. Some learners experienced "fear of making mistakes and being embarrassed in front of peers" as well as "interpersonal struggles within the group due to different goals, expectations, and cultural backgrounds" (p. 136). Freer and Enoch (1994) surmise that these

problems could have been caused or exacerbated by tutors who needed further experience in facilitating groups and who lacked "the ability to develop cohesiveness among groups that have varied abilities" (p. 139). Tutors experienced additional problems, including not knowing how to navigate the "wide disparity in reading levels and abilities" (p. 137). They concluded that the small group/collaborative approach requires programs to supply increased training, follow-up in-service training, ongoing tutor support, and a sound volunteer management system.

Another alternative to the traditional model of one-on-one tutoring is volunteers working as classroom aides, assisting paid teachers directly in the classroom. This approach has been utilized in programs in Massachusetts, for example, as part of the Commonwealth Literacy Corps, initiated in 1988. In this program, volunteers are trained either to provide one-on-one instruction to students or to serve as classroom aides in programs in which teachers use tutors to facilitate small-group work while teachers help other students. (See Massachusetts Department of Education Guidelines for Effective Adult Basic Education Education, http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/wiatitleii/abeguide.pdf, pp. 3–4).

Tutors usually rely on methods they learned in training sessions, which can include instructional approaches beyond workbooks, traditional direct instruction, and drill and practice. For instance, tutors from Drexel University involved in the Student Literacy Corps in Philadelphia are encouraged to help "learners to take considerable initiative in their pursuit of reading and writing competency" (D'Annunzio, 1996, p. 14). Tutors in this program are trained to use three nonintrusive procedures: the language experience approach, individualized reading, and expressive writing. These learning strategies were "combined with the pervasive use of nondirective counseling procedures to establish an experiential, meaningful, whole-person learning situation" (p. 14). Witherell (1992) reported another innovative tutoring approach. In the community-based volunteer literacy program she describes, instruction includes language experience stories, sentence writing, journal writing, and writing for publication in the program's literacy magazine.

## FROM THE VOLUNTEER'S PERSPECTIVE

This section outlines some of the reasons volunteers give for participating in literacy education and highlights some of the challenges they face.

## Volunteer Motivation and Commitment

Tutors have given a number of reasons for volunteering, most reflecting the humanitarian impulse to help those in need of reading skills (Cook, Dooley, & Fuller, 1994). A study of volunteer tutors in three literacy organizations in Virginia found that "most tutors volunteer for the big ideals: passing on the gift of reading, making an impact in lives, conquering the problem of illiteracy, finding a teacher's dream" (Cook et al., 1994, p. 16). In addition, many tutors volunteered in a one-to-one tutoring program because they assumed that this approach would be especially effective, given the amount of time they were able to devote (Cook et al., 1994). These volunteer tutors were also drawn to the idea of self-motivated adult learners, whom they assumed would "have a higher degree of interest in learning than students in other programs" (Cook et al., 1994, p. 3).

One study of the factors involved in volunteering in a wide range of settings found that volunteers' motivations change over time (Ilsley, 1990). The study was a 4-year qualitative research project conducted in seven cities and towns in three U.S. states. More than 300 interviews were conducted with 180 paid staff, managers, and volunteers in 34 organizations in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Organizations included in the study were neighborhood groups, museum volunteer organizations, religious volunteer programs, cancer and AIDS hospices, peace and feminist movements, and adult literacy programs. Laubach and LVA were the adult literacy programs in the study. Ilsley and his associates interviewed people in the national headquarters of both organizations, and at the state offices in New York, Illinois, and California, as well as volunteers from various local chapters of the organizations. Researchers also attended staff meetings, conferences, and training sessions.

Ilsley (1990) found that, in general, new volunteers "enter the organization full of expectations and enthusiasm and with very clear ideas of their reasons for joining" (p. 31). Over time, however, volunteers become socialized to the organization so that "their values often change as well, becoming so aligned with those of the organization and its mission that the volunteers no longer give much conscious thought to why they continue to serve. Their work is simply an accepted part of 'who they are'" (p. 31).

Ilsley stresses the importance of knowing volunteers' motivation, suggesting that this knowledge can "improve decisions about task assignment, organization, and conduct of meetings, systems of recognition and reward, and many other facts of program structure, and it can help managers plan

programs that will produce steadier performance, better attendance, and longer duration of service" (p. 17). Ilsley also suggests that for an organization to motivate volunteers to join and stay it needs to

> build flexibility into its program—allowing volunteers to change tasks and roles, for example—to not only recognize but also take advantage of changing volunteer motivations. Some organizations lose volunteers because they continually treat the volunteers as if they were new and had new volunteers' motives. (p. 31)

Reacting to volunteers' motives and their changing needs over time seems especially crucial to adult literacy organizations because, of all the volunteer groups in Ilsley's study, adult literacy volunteers were typically involved for the shortest amount of time. Ilsley's figure of less than a year as the typical duration of adult literacy volunteers is supported by other research (Witherell, 1992) and stands in contrast to other types of organizations, such as museum and women's peace groups, in which volunteers had an average of more than a 10-year commitment. To explain this contrast, Ilsley focuses on whether volunteers in these organizations provide opportunities for instrumental/didactic, social/expressive, or critically reflective forms of learning. Ilsley (1990) speculates that perhaps one reason for the short duration of adult literacy volunteer service is that the training provided is often didactic skill training, which "loses its appeal once the skills have been mastered" (p. 71). This kind of learning "is aimed at increasing the professional appearance of an organization's volunteers" and seeks to "instill minimum levels of competence so that volunteers can feel assured that they will have the intellectual tools they need for their assignment" (p. 62). In other organizations, "learning that is related to problem solving and critical awareness is more slowly elaborated and holds a person's attention far longer" (p. 71). Perhaps one key to increasing volunteer commitment within adult literacy programs would be "to make the establishment of a healthy learning climate and multiple opportunities for learning a high priority" (p. 71).

## Challenges Faced by Volunteers

The short duration of volunteer service in adult literacy education may also be related to the problems volunteers encounter (Cook et al., 1994; Horrell, 1983; Witherell, 1992). Adult literacy volunteers reported such problems as:

• **Frustration at students' lack of progress and perceived levels of commitment.** Witherell (1992) points out that tutors often have difficulty dealing with learners' slow progress and states, "They go into the program expecting to work miracles in a year and are disappointed when they feel that all their efforts do not reveal any progress" (p. 10). Tutors become more frustrated when they spend time preparing for sessions and learners do not show up (Witherell, 1992).

• **Feelings of being inadequately trained.** Cook et al. (1994) found that about half the tutors in their focus groups felt they were not prepared well enough initially. Follow-up training is usually not mandatory for tutors, further exacerbating this problem (Witherell, 1992).

• **Lack of resources and support.** Tutors "wished for access to experienced tutors or specialists for help in dealing with the new tutoring experience" (Cook et al., 1994, p. 9). Witherell (1992) discusses the tutor burnout factor, caused at least in part by their working in isolation in understaffed and underfunded programs.

• **An inability or unwillingness to deal with students' personal problems.** Tutors get frustrated when these problems affect learners' progress and commitment (Cook et al., 1994; Witherell, 1992).

Many volunteer tutors gain rewards from their experience despite the problems they encounter, often because their students gain academic skills and self-esteem. Although all tutors feel some frustration, "it is how the tutor reacts to these frustrations that will determine whether or not the tutor will find a real satisfaction in the tutoring experience" (Cook et al., 1994, p. 16). Tutors who seem able to deal with these frustrations typically have two characteristics, "the ability to get excited by small goals or successes [of their students] and being able to see the student's life from his [sic] own perspective" (Cook et al., 1994, p. 17).

Ilsley (1990) offers suggestions for keeping volunteers motivated:

• Allow volunteers to participate in problem solving and significant decision making.

• Assign volunteers to tasks and roles that fit their individual needs and interests.

• Give volunteers work that offers opportunities for both personal development and meaningful service.

• Soon after volunteers join the organization, work out explicit agreements that specify a feasible commitment of time and other resources and allow for personal variations in time, energy, and interest.

   • Provide on-the-job experiences that include constant opportunities both for reflective study and evaluation and for joint planning of organizational service goals and action. Much of volunteers' continuing motivation comes from seeing clear steps that lead toward the group's goals and then successfully completing them one by one.
   • Provide a job structure that allows for individual advancement through a series of steps that lead to higher levels of responsibility, skill, and influence.
   • Develop channels for supportive feedback from clients, co-workers, and managers or leaders, and for recognition of volunteers by the organization and the community.
   • Encourage meaningful learning activities both inside and outside the organization. (pp. 31–32)

Other proposed solutions include increasing funding for programs and supplying more support staff, which could help solve the problem of tutor burnout by providing more ongoing support and training (Witherell, 1992). Kawulich (1989) states that although many volunteers "derive personal satisfaction from their work and require no other reward, the recognition of effort can be achieved in many ways" (pp. 54–55), including providing letters of recommendation for promising volunteers; asking volunteers to take on additional responsibilities; letting volunteers know they are valued; presenting volunteers with awards, certificates, or plaques; and providing financial incentives, including sponsoring volunteer attendance at conferences.

## CONTROVERSIES IN ADULT LITERACY VOLUNTEERISM

The use of volunteers sparks intense debate among educators and researchers working in adult literacy education. Traditionally, volunteers have played a significant role in the education of adults, but questions about the most effective, efficient, and appropriate way to shape and support that role have been asked for a long time. Writing in the *Handbook of Adult Education in the United States,* Houle (1960) identified two significant issues related to the use of volunteers. The first concerned using lay leaders to lead discussions of highly complex subject matter, which specialists in the subject might see as inappropriate and insufficiently informed. Houle's solution was to view volunteers as "first among equals" (p. 122),

encouraging a collaborative approach to learning rather than having them take on the role of expert. The second issue concerned volunteer training—questions such as whether volunteers should receive specialized or general training, and whether it should focus on content or methods. Houle's response was that a diversity of approaches to the use of volunteers was both desirable and inevitable.

Current debates about volunteers in adult literacy education include Houle's concerns as well as other related issues. These debates center around three main issues: the quality of instruction provided by volunteers; the impact of professionalization in adult literacy education on the use of volunteers; and accountability for programs using volunteers. The fundamental question underpinning much of this debate is whether the cost of managing and supporting volunteers is justified by the services they provide (Knox, 1993).

## Quality of Instruction Provided by Volunteers

Much debate concerns the quality of instruction provided by volunteers. That is, educators and researchers question whether volunteers without specialized training can effectively teach reading, but there is very little empirical research-based literature concerning the quality of instruction. This section presents the little empirical research found and relies heavily on the opinions of educators, presumably formed as a result of personal experience. Many researchers and educators in the field of adult literacy, especially those trained in reading education, question the value and effectiveness of the instruction volunteer tutors provide adult learners, despite tutors' good intentions (Balmuth, 1987; Ceprano, 1995; Hambly, 1998; Kazemak, 1988; Mealey & Konopak, 1992; Meyer, 1985; Park, 1984; Pohl, 1990). Practitioners working in adult literacy share this concern, as evidenced by discussions on the National Institute for Literacy-sponsored National Literacy Advocacy (NLA) listserv (the role of volunteers was the subject of several long threads in 1997 and 2001). Inadequate training is at the center of criticism regarding instructional quality provided by volunteers. Among the criticisms are that tutors are not trained in use of the most effective reading instruction strategies; they are not adequately trained to deal with students' learning disabilities and past educational failures, both of which may interfere with learning; and they do not receive sufficient training to teach the lowest level learners.

*Tutors' Use of Effective Reading Strategies.*    One of the few examples of empirical research we came across on this issue was Ceprano's (1995) study in which she interviewed 16 LVA-trained volunteer tutors about their strategies for selecting reading materials, treating miscues, preparing students for reading success, questioning for comprehension, and teaching word meaning. She found that volunteer tutors usually have good intentions, but they frequently did not use strategies "currently recognized as most effective" (p. 56) within the world of reading. For instance, with regard to the treatment of miscues, Ceprano cites Barr, Sadow, & Blachowicz (1990) and Goodman (1976), who agree "that correction of miscues that are grammatically acceptable and that do not significantly alter passage meaning should not be required from students as they engage in supervised oral reading" (p. 58). When reading miscues change the meaning of the passages read, Ceprano states that reading researchers generally agree that teachers should avoid lengthy discussions of each error, which would distract the reader from gaining meaning from the passage. Instead, teachers are "encouraged to casually interject the correction as soon as the reader makes the error, so that meaning acquisition is not disrupted" (p. 58). However, Ceprano found that the tutors she interviewed typically veered from recommended strategies. Ceprano concludes that most tutors:

> utilize instructional strategies and practices that could ultimately lead to feelings of frustration and defeat for their clients. Indeed, teaching strategies and practices of volunteer tutors seemed to be based more on models to which they themselves were exposed as learners (with the assumption that what worked for them will work for anyone), than on current theory and practice. Unfortunately, for the adult illiterate who takes the difficult step of seeking help, an instructional approach methodology that was previously (and may still be) inadequate will almost certainly produce aversion. (p. 63)

Another reading specialist, Meyer (1985), is of the opinion that:

> many well-meaning volunteers believe that because they themselves can read, they are capable of teaching another person to read. This attitude, although well intended, is an oversimplification of the skills necessary to teach an adult illiterate to read. Beyond decoding, reading involves a thinking process while interacting with text in a meaningful manner. Volunteer training must not separate learning to read from reading to learn. (p. 707)

*Tutors' Ability to Deal With Students' Learning Disabilities and Past Educational Failures.*   Commenting on the participants in an all-day tutor training workshop he conducted, Kazemak (1988) states that although these volunteers "cared, and cared deeply, about their adult students, they did not know enough about the nature of adult teaching and learning in general, and adult literacy instruction in particular" (p. 468). Kazemak specifically worries whether volunteers' training is adequate to deal with adult students' learning disabilities:

> The task of literacy tutors is made even more difficult by the fact that many of their adult students have already experienced failure with reading and writing, and bring with them the psychological and emotional distress that accompanies such failure. Again, caring is necessary, but not sufficient. The adult literacy instructor also needs knowledge, skills, strategies, and an understanding of the adult learner. (pp. 468–469)

Meyer (1985) also expresses the opinion that students' learning disabilities pose a challenge to tutors who may not have the teaching strategies needed to address them. She argues that neither Laubach nor LVA "equips tutors adequately to detect learning disabilities. Unfortunately, a volunteer tutor may do more harm than good in these instances; a learning disabled adult may have his/her expectations raised, only to face failure again" (p. 707). Both LVA and Laubach have addressed the criticism about lack of training for volunteers to work with learning-disabled adults by sponsoring programs and research to "improve their services to adults with learning disabilities (or the characteristics of learning disabilities)" (Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center, 2000).

*Tutors' Effectiveness With Lowest Level Learners.*   Another concern related to quality of instruction is some states' common practice of using volunteer tutors to work with the lowest levels of students (Tenenbaum & Strang, 1992), whereas students at higher levels are served through classes or drop-in clinics staffed by trained teachers. A typical pattern is that Laubach and LVA provide one-to-one tutoring to the individuals with the lowest assessed skill level, who then move into more formal classrooms when they reach the skill level deemed to be appropriate (for example, 4th grade). This can be seen as a win-win situation: The voluntary agencies get state funding, and the state gets high-quality services and an opportunity to count volunteers as state-managed providers. Another way of looking at this, however, is that volunteers actually provide the state with a cut-rate workforce willing to tackle some of the hardest-to-reach learn-

ers. We could find little written on the subject but raised the topic when talking with the state directors of adult literacy. They were familiar with this practice, and even those whose states widely used it were cautious about and even critical of the practice. One director who said her state uses this approach only in a small number of cases speculated that the practice is generally widespread because programs might assume that lower level students are easier to teach or that teaching a lower level student does not require as much training or expertise as teaching a student at a higher level. She stated that another assumption underpinning this practice is that lower level students need one-to-one instruction. She explained that programs think this approach is appropriate, and, therefore, it seems more efficient to match a volunteer tutor with a lower level student rather than use a full-time teacher. She expressed concern about this approach because she believes paid teachers are better trained, more skilled, and more experienced, and thus better able to work with lower level students.

Another state director agreed with this assessment. She stated that volunteer organizations often have the luxury of doing one-to-one instruction, and the prevailing wisdom—whether right or wrong—is that lower level learners will do better with more time and attention given through one-to-one instruction. She surmised that this thinking could be traced back to the popularity of the Laubach model of teaching reading. In her state, learners who test at lower levels when they enter state-sponsored programs get placed in one-to-one instruction with volunteer tutors. She explained that the programs use this practice because they believe that although the volunteers have the least amount of formal training, they have the most time to devote to one-to-one instruction. She stated that she had seen great successes in one-to-one tutoring, especially because tutors can be supportive and patient with lower level learners, but she has also seen a great deal of frustration among tutors and learners. She explained that she therefore sees this practice as somewhat problematic, stating that it is "misleading" to ask tutors untrained in dealing with learning disabilities, mental health issues, and other learner problems to work with those in the greatest need of trained teachers.

A Canadian roundtable discussion on volunteers in literacy education also addressed this issue. One participant argued against the practice of placing the lowest level readers with volunteer tutors:

> Certainly in the [United] States . . . people who were reading, for a lack of terminology, below grade four, are often the ones that are delivered to volunteer programs. Often, out of that population, those are people who fall into that category of having been to school, having some kind of learning

difficulties and needing some specific kind of learning strategies and approaches that are unlikely to have been acquired by volunteer tutors. Not due to any ill will or even lack of desire on their own part, but just lack of experience in the field. Occasionally, I know, those folks are trained teachers, and that's useful, and they can be utilized in that way. But a lot of times, they're not. That's when the quality does come into it. It seems to me that the people who need the most experienced adult education and adult literacy workers are the people that aren't getting them. The people with the most experience are teaching the upper levels who, I figure, a good trained volunteer would do the best work with. (Ontario Department of Education, 1991, p. 2)

***Suggested Solutions for Improving Quality of Instruction Provided by Tutors.***    Often, those who are critical also provide suggestions to improve the quality of instruction. For instance, Ceprano (1995) suggests:

> Volunteer training curricula should be designed to provide knowledge of a variety of teaching approaches and techniques that can facilitate the adult learner's acquisition of literacy skills. In addition, training should also provide insights on how to evaluate the learner's particular learning strengths and weaknesses, and how to use such information in effectively choosing and implementing an instructional approach. (p. 63)

She goes on to argue that reading professionals should provide mentoring to tutors, either to "reinforce good tutoring practices or suggest alternative strategies that will yield more results" (p. 63).

Other solutions include asking the government for more money to support professionals within literacy programs and decreasing reliance on volunteers. Kazemak (1988) argues, "We must not be satisfied with platitudes and paltry sums of money to run advertising campaigns and sorely inadequate volunteer programs" (p. 483). Instead, he calls for literacy professionals to:

> Demand that federal and state governments provide adequate funding for adult literacy education. . . . Without adequate funding for programs, materials, teachers, and so forth, professionals ultimately will have little long-term effect upon the nature of adult literacy education in the United States. (p. 483)

Despite criticisms of the current quality of volunteers in adult literacy programs, educators also point to instances of success, where volunteers have made a unique and valuable contribution in adult literacy education, arguing that the use of volunteers should continue or increase (Jones,

1991; Kawulich, 1989; Waite, 1983). For example, in an evaluation of the Drexel University program mentioned earlier, interviews with tutors and learners indicated that:

> learners had made considerable progress in working toward their stated goals; their collaboration in assessing progress provided learners with continuous feedback, learners' interests and functional literacy needs were met as a natural outgrowth of the nonintrusive learning procedures, and rapid progress had been made in reading and writing. (D'Annunzio, 1996, p. 16)

Kearney (1999), too, found that learners receive positive impact from participating in volunteer literacy programs. In an economic impact analysis of LVA based on interviews with 217 ESOL and basic literacy learners in New York and Wisconsin, in which he collected both qualitative and quantitative data, Kearney (1999) reported that:

> Overall, students are very satisfied with the economic improvements they have realized as a result of LVA's efforts. Students have also experienced significant improvements in their basic skills as well as in their roles as parents, citizens, and employees. LVA has been the primary source of the improvements in most aspects of the students' lives. (p. 8)

Waite (1983) argues that "the average individual is quite capable of assisting someone in learning to read" and states that the use of volunteers in literacy tutoring should be expanded (p. 4), a view shared by Rogers (1984). Waite states that when three fundamental components are in place, "a potential reader is capable of deducing the decoding process" (p. 4). These components are:

• A comfortable environment. Physical surroundings must be comfortable to the student and suitable for learning.
• Relevant training materials. Reading materials must be appropriate to the student's goals, abilities, and interests.
• A supportive relationship. The teacher, tutor, mentor, friend, pastor, or other individual must be committed to assisting the person in learning how to read and have some knowledge on how to proceed. (p. 4)

The distinctive contribution of volunteers was discussed in both a Canadian roundtable on adult literacy volunteers, and in two recent (1997 and 2001) NLA listserv discussion on volunteers:

> A lot of creative things do come out of the volunteers. It would feel wrong not to have volunteers in a community program, for me. One aspect of

volunteers that seems very positive to me is that process that somebody mentioned of being a tutor and then becoming a literacy worker. It's a way that a person in a particular community without, necessarily, any formal teachers' training or background of that kind can become part of a literacy program. It's something that kind of renews that program. So, I think there are positive aspects to having a program that brings people in front of the community as volunteers. As you were mentioning, they go out into the community again and influence how things are done in the community. (Ontario Department of Education, 1991, pp. 3–4)

## Impact of Professionalization in Adult Literacy Education

Shanahan, Meehan, and Mogge (1994) suggest that professionalization can be regarded as "the movement of any field towards some standards of educational preparation and competency" (p. 1) by attempting to (a) use education or training to improve the quality of practice; (b) standardize professional responses; (c) define a collection of persons as representing a field of endeavor; and (d) enhance communication within that field.

The professionalization of adult literacy instructors, a growing trend throughout North America (Sabatini, Ginsburg, & Russell, 2002), raises several questions about the role of volunteers. As is typical in adult literacy education, each state has its own approach to professionalization (Sabatini et al., 2002). There is a shared assumption in the theoretical and policy literature that professionalization refers specifically to instructors — very often administrators are already part of a profession, such as nonprofit management or educational administration. Although ProLiteracy supports the professionalization of *volunteers* (Waite, personal communication, January 22, 2003), here the discussion is limited to how the professionalization of *paid instructors* has an impact on literacy volunteerism.

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, a professional is "one who has an assured competence in a particular field or occupation" (cited in Shanahan et al., 1994, p. 1). In addition to the assurance of high-quality service to consumers stemming from such competence, arguments for professionalization include the advantages to practitioners:

> The claim to unique competence, legally supported, is the basic strategy of professionalization. . . . The advantages of professional (monopoly) status are to guarantee high material rewards, exclude outside judgment of performance and give guaranteed security of tenure to those allowed to practice. (Jary & Jary, 1995, p. 525)

One way professionalization of paid instructors has an impact on volunteers is that with increased professionalization comes the increased power of a profession to exclude some people while including others, even if this exclusion is based on the most objective criteria possible. In effect, professions set up a barrier of competency, with professionals on one side and nonprofessionals on the other. This barrier challenges the role of volunteers as, once again, volunteers are seen as inferior to professionals. Yet there is little evidence that the trappings of professionalization ensure a more effective educational experience for learners (Shanahan et al., 1994).

The central characteristic of professionalization in adult literacy education is credentialing (Sabatini, Daniels, Ginsburg, Limeul, Russell, & Stites, 2000; Shanahan et al., 1994). A National Institute for Literacy (NIFL, 2000) publication reports that 51% of 53 states and territories require some form of certification for adult literacy instructors. However, the nature of the credential can vary a great deal, from high school plus professional development to a K–12 teaching credential. This concerns some adult educators expressing their opinions on the NLA listserv, who believe that the skills and experience required to teach adults well are quite different from those used to teach children.

One important challenge to a credentialing system in adult literacy is the extent of part-time work in the field (Wilson & Corbett, 2001). People will not participate in a professional credentialing process if they do not see that the credential offers some advantage to them. When literacy instructors are working a handful of hours a week for just over minimum wage, the inconvenience of obtaining the credential can be a substantial disincentive. The same concerns apply to volunteers, who might be unlikely to commit a significant amount of time to educational preparation and obtaining a credential.

On one hand, professionalization has the potential to affect volunteers in a negative way by moving them out of the real work of the program—the work done by professionals. It is hard to imagine a traditional professional setting in which volunteers could become involved in the activities Ilsley (1990) identifies as encouraging motivation: participating in significant decision making, being offered opportunities for personal development and meaningful service, and advancing to higher levels of skill and influence. The strength of the boundary between the competent professional and the amateur continually reemphasizes the nature of the volunteer's role. On the other hand, if put into practice with sufficient attention to the working conditions of instructors and volunteers, professionalization could benefit volunteers by providing a framework for their endeavors and

a pathway along which to develop skills. An example would be the development of volunteer master trainers and mentors able to share their knowledge and experience with new volunteers and staff alike. Volunteers could end up with an enhanced, paraprofessional status. The direction professionalization takes is likely to be a critical factor in the future of volunteers in adult literacy education.

## Accountability for Programs Using Volunteers

Contemporary education, including adult literacy education, strongly emphasizes accountability, usually considered in terms of the demonstrated outcomes of an educational process. Freer (1993) states that "the two national literacy volunteer programs [Laubach and LVA] have responded to these demands with additional training and materials for local programs" (p. 1) and argues:

> Program evaluation and learner assessment will increasingly be issues for literacy volunteer programs, due to increased visibility, acceptance of public and private funds with demands for measurable outcomes, mandated learner participation due to welfare reform, and changing roles of learners in participatory programs. Debate over quantitative versus qualitative assessment procedures will continue as portfolio assessment research and practice gain wider acceptance for youth in the K–12 curriculum. (p. 2)

Recent legislative changes support the emphasis on accountability, the most wide-reaching being the National Reporting System required by Title II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. States are required to report learner progress to the federal government, which can then evaluate learners' progress across the United States. The federal government is also able to examine learner performance in each state to ensure that the state is living up to its commitments. The states, in turn, are able to examine the performance of programs (Equipped for the Future, 2001). The Workforce Investment Act does not specify exactly how these data are to be collected. Among the proposed approaches is a framework based on the Equipped for the Future (EFF) initiative of the National Institute for Literacy. EFF, a map of adult basic education based on consultation with adult learners and input from subject-matter and educational researchers, has produced a report (Ananda, 2000) offering a systematic approach to performance-based assessment. This initiative provides a means to address accountability yet retains a rich understanding of the context and form of adult learning.

The National Reporting System raises the stakes for programs that do not meet outcome goals, meaning that instruction has to be both high quality and consistent. Meeting this standard could be hard with a volunteer workforce that has received only 18 hours of training and may have backgrounds other than education. Also, authentic testing requires complex skills that volunteers may not have. One factor making paper and pencil tests so reliable is that they are easy to administer. Performance-based assessments require a rich understanding of competence and the ability to judge it with accuracy and confidence. It is likely that continued emphasis on accountability, especially if it moves away from standardized tests, will limit the options for volunteers within literacy organizations.

## IMPLICATIONS

This final section discusses some of the implications for research, policy, and practice of our exploration of volunteerism. This discussion is somewhat speculative, but our intention is to provide food for thought to those involved in creating and managing volunteer programs.

### Implications for Research

There is a general need to expand research about volunteers in adult literacy education. Empirical or even normative data about certain key issues are lacking. For example, we could find very little about the relationship between volunteer practices and program outcomes. It would be useful for program planners to know whether and how volunteers affect the recruitment and persistence of learners, whether the amount of training a volunteer receives has any effect on growth in learner skills, and whether having volunteers as part of a program has a positive or negative effect on available resources, including those for materials or paid staff. Previous studies often accepted the presence of volunteers as a given and addressed such pragmatic issues as how best to manage them for value and effectiveness.

Adult literacy education, we suggest, is a unique context for volunteers. They are being asked to take on complex educational tasks (teaching reading, writing, math, and other core communication skills) with limited preparation and, our review suggests, not much ongoing support. Research is needed on the effectiveness of one-to-one volunteer tutoring for beginning learners, the costs of volunteer involvement compared to paid part-time

staff, and why volunteers do not stay longer in literacy programs. Such fundamental inquiry holds enormous potential to influence the way the field regards and manages volunteers. We also suggest that private foundations interested in volunteerism fund this research and encourage literacy instructors and volunteers to develop imaginative approaches to studying these and other questions.

## Implications for Policy

The major policy question is whether federal and state governments can reach some consensus on the role of volunteers in adult literacy provision. Increasing demands for accountability may also create pressures for programs utilizing volunteer tutors. For example, current accountability models are largely concerned with fairly high-level goals such as GED attainment or entry to college. As mentioned earlier, states often ask volunteers to work with new literacy learners, and to some extent this is a logical strategic response to the need to focus major resources on higher level learners to ensure their success. The current evaluation framework, the National Reporting System, can be seen as making volunteer contributions invisible by focusing only on higher level learners—with whom volunteers tend not to work.

## Implications for Practice

Our review suggests there are some useful and clear guidelines to involve and motivate volunteers in adult literacy education. They can be summarized in two words: flexibility and support. Volunteers should be given the chance to try different responsibilities as they gain work experience. At the same time, they need sufficient pre-service and in-service training, and good support systems for instructional issues and resources. The high turnover of literacy volunteers reflects the difficulty of the job and the piecemeal nature of current support systems.

Programs should think about their philosophy of volunteerism and aim for consistency. They should consider whether their organization sees volunteers as full participants in program management or bound by clear but limited expectations. It may be more important to be clear than to adopt any particular approach. Using volunteers to deliver prepackaged curriculum materials is very different from involving them in planning the entire provision of education. Some learners and volunteers will prefer the former, some the latter, and it is important to attempt to match the program's

orientation to that of the tutors and learners. One option programs might consider is having volunteers in expert roles, such as trainers within the organization. A volunteer who has been trained in administering a specific assessment or working with a particular type of learner is likely to have a higher degree of commitment to the program than one who does not feel a sense of accomplishment.

Overall, volunteers are likely to continue to play a number of important roles in adult literacy education. The form of their involvement is still open to question, however, and many aspects of volunteerism are not sufficiently researched or understood. When we do not know whether volunteers offer a net financial benefit after management costs are taken into account, whether they can be as effective as trained reading specialists, or whether they can be encouraged to stay with programs longer, we must recognize that the commitment to volunteerism is philosophical rather than pragmatic. Working with volunteers, or as a volunteer, in adult literacy education remains a challenging proposition requiring careful planning and thoughtful execution.

# REFERENCES

American Library Association. (2002). *American Library Association: Leading the way for literacy.* Retrieved August 15, 2002, from http://www.ala.org/Content/Navigation-Menu/Our_Association/Offices/Public_Information/Factsheets/Leading_the_way_for_literacy.htm

Ananda, S. (2000). *Equipped for the future assessment report: How instructors can support adult learners through performance-based assessment.* Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy.

Balmuth, M. (1987). *Essential characteristics of effective adult literacy programs: A review and analysis of research.* Albany, NY: New York State Education Department.

Barr, R., Sadow, M., & Blachowicz, C. (1990). *Reading diagnosis for teachers* (2nd ed.). New York: Longman.

Belzer, A. (2002, April). *Conceptualizing tutor training: A national report on tutor training in adult basic education.* Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Business Publishers, Inc. (1994). Slants and trends. *Literacy Programs, 6*(17), 129.

Ceprano, M. A. (1995). Strategies and practices of individuals who tutor adult illiterates voluntarily. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 39*(1), 56–64.

Cheatham, J. B., Colvin, R. J., & Laminack, L. L. (1993). *Tutor: A collaborative approach to literacy instruction.* Syracuse, NY: Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc.

Cheatham, J. B., & Lawson, V. K. (1990). *Small group tutoring: A collaborative approach for literacy instruction.* Syracuse, NY: Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc.

Cook, K., Dooley, J., & Fuller, C. (1994). Why tutors do what they do. In *The year in review, Volume 3: 1993–1994. Reports of research conducted by adult education*

*practitioner-researchers from Virginia* (pp. 1–30). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED375302)

D'Annunzio, A. (1996). College students as tutors for adults in a community-based literacy program: A replication study. *Community Education Journal, 23*(4), 14–17.

Demetrion, G. (1999). A scaffolding paradigm: Small group tutoring at the Bob Steele Reading Center, 1990–1995. *Adult Basic Education, 9*(1), 46–66.

Equipped For the Future. (2001, Winter). *EFF Voice.* Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy.

Estabrook, L., & Lakner, E. (1999). *Literacy programs for adults in public libraries.* Urbana-Champaign, IL: University of Illinois.

Fingeret, H. A. & Danin, S. T. (1991). *This really put a hurtin' on my brain: Learning in literacy volunteers of New York City* (executive summary). Durham, NC: Literacy South.

Freer, K. J. (1993). *Adult literacy volunteers. ERIC Digest no. 132.* Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED355454)

Freer, K. J., & Enoch, L. F. (1994). Small group/collaborative literacy instruction: Lessons learned—future directions. *Adult Basic Education, 4*(3), 129–143.

Goodman, K. S. (1976). Reading: A psycholinguistic guessing game. In H. Singer & R. Ruddell (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (pp. 497–508). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Hambly, C. (1998). *Behavior and beliefs of volunteer literacy tutors. Working papers on literacy No. 3.* Montreal: Centre for Literacy. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED440265)

Hely, A. S. M. (1960). *New trends in adult education: From Elsinore to Montreal.* Paris, France: UNESCO.

Horrell, S. (1983). *Bears and butterflies: The literacy volunteers of Gloucester, Project POWER 1982–83.* Gloucester, VA: Gloucester Community Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED244075)

Houle, C. O. (1960). The education of adult education leaders. In M. S. Knowles (Ed.), *Handbook of adult education in the United States.* Chicago: Adult Education Association of the USA.

Ilsley, P. J. (1985). *Adult literacy volunteers: Issues and ideas.* Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED260303)

Ilsley, P. J. (1990). *Enhancing the volunteer experience: New insights on strengthening volunteer participation, learning, and commitment.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Imel, S. (1986a). *Adult literacy volunteers. ERIC Digest No. 48.* Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED268301)

Imel, S. (1986b). Volunteers and adult literacy education. *Adult Literacy and Basic Education, 10*(2), 117–128.

Jary, D., & Jary, J. (1995). *Collins dictionary of sociology* (2nd ed.). Glasgow, Scotland: HarperCollins.

Jones, K. (1991). The rocky road from frustration to fulfillment: The saga of a volunteer. *Connections: A Journal of Adult Literacy, 4,* 62–64.

Kangisser, D. (1985). *Pioneers and new frontiers: The role of volunteers in combating*

*adult illiteracy.* New York: Business Council for Effective Literacy. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED308343)

Kawulich, B. B. (1989). Using and retaining volunteers in adult literacy programs. *Adult Literacy and Basic Education, 13*(1), 52–55.

Kazemak, F. E. (1988). Necessary changes: Professional involvement in adult literacy programs. *Harvard Education Review, 58*(4), 464–487.

Kearney, A. T. (1999). *Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc.: Economic impact analysis.* Chicago: AT Kearney.

Knox, A. B. (1993). *Strengthening adult and continuing education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Laubach Literacy Action. (2000). *Laubach LitScape.* Retrieved September 5, 2002, from http://www.laubach.org/NEWS/Litarticle.html

Laubach Literacy Action. (2001). *2000–2001 statistical report: A year's work in literacy.* Syracuse, NY: Laubach Literacy Action.

Literacy Volunteers of America. (2001). *Profile of adult learners & volunteers July 1, 2000–June 30, 2001.* Retrieved August 12, 2002, from http://www.literacyvolunteers. org/about/faqs/profile2001.html

Literacy Volunteers of America Mercer County. (undated). *Course description: Adult basic literacy tutor training workshop.* Trenton, NJ: Author. Retrieved August 12, 2002, from http://www.princetonol.com/groups/lvamc/tutors/coursedescription.html

Mealey, D., & Konopak, B. (1992). Getting beyond "grade-level" thinking: Toward whole language adult literacy programs. *Reading: Exploration and Discovery, 40,* 42–50.

Meyer, V. (1985). The adult literacy initiative in the U.S.: A concern and a challenge. *Journal of Reading, 28,* 706–708.

National Institute for Literacy. (2000). *State policy update.* Washington, DC: Author.

Ontario Department of Education. (1991). *The role of volunteers in adult literacy; Roundtable conducted at the National Colloquium, L'alphabetisation des adultes: questions et options (Adult literacy: Questions and options)* (ED 383 908). Toronto: Ontario Department of Education.

Park, R. (1984). The use of volunteers in teaching adults to read: A professional perspective. *The Adult Educator, 3,* 3–4.

Pohl, S. E. (1990). *The federal government's role in trying to solve the adult illiteracy problem: The current situation and proposed solutions* (ED 326 684). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University.

Rogers, J. J. (1984). Maintaining volunteer participation in adult literacy programs. *Lifelong Learning, 8*(2), 22–24.

Sabatini, J. P., Daniels, M., Ginsburg, L., Limeul, K., Russell, M., & Stites, R. (2000). *Teacher perspectives on the adult education profession: National survey findings about an emerging profession.* NCAL Technical Report TR00-02. Philadelphia, PA: National Center on Adult Literacy.

Sabatini, J. P., Ginsburg, L., & Russell, M. (2002). Professionalization and certification for teachers in adult basic education. In J. Comings, B. Garner, & C. Smith (Eds.), *Annual review of adult learning and literacy* (Vol. 3, pp. 203–247). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Shanahan, T., Meehan, M., & Mogge, S. (1994). *The professionalization of the teacher in adult literacy education.* NCAL Technical Rep. No. TR94-11. Philadelphia, PA: National Center on Adult Literacy.

Stauffer, J. (1974). *A descriptive study of a national volunteer literacy program.* Paper presented at the Adult Education Research Conference, Chicago.

Talarr, C. (1995). Active listening: A framework for introducing volunteer tutors to student-centered learning. *Journal of Reading, 38*(5), 384–385.

Tenenbaum, E., & Strang, W. (1992). *The major national adult literacy volunteer organizations: A descriptive review.* Rockville, MD: Westat. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED359370)

Unwin, C. G. (1989). Two volunteer programs for instructing adult illiterates: An evaluation. *Adult Literacy and Basic Education, 13*(3), 118–126.

United States Department of Education. (1986). *Adult literacy programs: Services, persons served, and volunteers.* Washington, DC: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED268387)

United States Department of Education. (1989). *Volunteerism in adult education: Status report of adult education and literacy volunteers.* Washington, DC: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED313550)

United States Department of Education. (1990). *Volunteers in adult education: Practices used by volunteers in ABE and literacy programs.* Washington, DC: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED319962)

United States Department of Education. (2000). *State administered adult education program 2000 Adult Education Personnel.* Retrieved December 3, 2003, from http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/2000personnel.html

Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center. (2000). *Partners: Students and tutors write about learning together.* Retrieved December 3, 2003, from http://www.aelweb.vcu.edu/pdfs/partners.pdf

Waite, P. A. (1983). *The role of volunteers in adult literacy programs.* Syracuse, NY: Laubach Literacy Action. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED240294)

Wilson, B. & Corbett, D. (2001). Adult basic education and professional development: Strangers for too long. *Focus on Basics, 4*(D), 25–26.

Witherell, N. (1992, May). *A volunteer literacy program: Problems in volunteer tutor recruitment, training, and retention.* Paper presented at the International Reading Association 37th Annual Convention, Orlando, FL.