The Adult Education Act and California
A Federal Perspective
Oral History Interviews
with
James T. Parker and Ronald S. Pugsley

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THE ADULT EDUCATION ACT AND CALIFORNIA

A FEDERAL PERSPECTIVE

Interviews by Cuba Z. Miller

California Department of Education
Adult Education Oral History Project

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A FEDERAL PERSPECTIVE

JAMES T. PARKER

Adult Education Program Specialist

RONALD S. PUGSLEY

Director

United States Department of Education
Division of Adult Education and Literacy

Sacramento, California
2002

By Cuba Z. Miller

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RONALD S. PUGSLEY

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PREFACE

Adult education in California has a proud history of helping its citizens to meet the challenges of life in a huge, complex, multicultural state. Through the years, California adult educators have provided leadership to the nation in the development of innovative instructional practices and creative educational solutions.

The California Adult Education Oral History Project began in 1992 as a companion to a print history of adult education commissioned by the California Department of Education. The oral history project started with a small group of leaders whose careers began in the 1950's and 1960's and who witnessed and influenced important events in the development of the nation's largest adult education program.

To date, twenty-seven educators whose careers span seventy years have participated. They represent the varying professional roles, organizations, and geography that comprise our state's diverse adult education programs. Their stories tell how California adult education met the needs of citizens in the wartime 1940's, and those of veterans and an exploding population in the 1950's. The growth and energy of California adult education in the nineteen-sixties, the institutionalization of competency based education in response to the influx of refugees and immigrants in the seventies and eighties, the innovative uses of technology of the nineties, and visions for the new century have been recorded.

Significant assistance to the project was provided by the staffs both of the California State Archives and of the Oral History Program, History Department, California State University, Fullerton. This project could not have begun without the vision of Raymond G. Eberhard, Administrator, Adult Education Policy and Planning Unit, California Department of Education, and the support of the late Lynda T. Smith, Consultant, Adult Education Policy and Planning Unit.

Linda L. West
April 2002

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Interviewer

Cuba Z. Miller

Interview Times and Places

James T. Parker: one interview was conducted in Washington, D. C., on October 3, 2001.

Ronald S. Pugsley: two interviews were conducted in Washington, D. C. on October 1 and 2, 2001.

Editing

The interviewees reviewed and edited the transcript. When the tape was inaudible or when necessary for clarification, some information was added and is indicated by brackets [ ].

Tapes

The original cassette tapes were transferred to reel to reel format at California State University, Fullerton and deposited with the California State Archives.

California Department of Education
Adult Education Oral History Project

Oral History Interview

with

JAMES T. PARKER

United States Department of Education

Division of Adult Education and Literacy
Adult Education Program Specialist
1970 - Present

October 3, 2001

Washington, D. C.

By Cuba Z. Miller

PROJECT: California Adult Education Oral History Project

INTERVIEWEE: James T. Parker

INTERVIEWER: Cuba Miller

DATE: October 3, 2001

CM: This is Cuba Miller interviewing James T. Parker in Washington D.C. on October 3, 2001. Jim is an Adult Education Program Specialist with the Division of Adult Education and Literacy in the U.S. Department of Education. The purpose of the interview is to help gain a federal perspective on California's adult education programs and how they relate to national adult education services.

Jim, you came to adult education fairly early in your career, which is different from a lot of people who hit adult ed in mid-career. What did you do before joining the Adult Education Office?

JP: I was born here in D.C. so for me and my family, it's pretty much a company town. My dad was a civilian worker with the Navy. My second job after high school was with the Census Bureau.

CM: Okay.

JP: Thank goodness the tax payers helped put me through college. I also worked with (Washington) D.C. Public Health in a couple different jobs. I worked with a TB clinic and it certainly gave me some interesting work and ideas and another kind of sense of public service. Before I came to the Department of Ed, I also worked for the Library of Congress. Since I am a collector of antiquarian books and a lover of reading and books . . .

CM: That was a good place to be.

JP: And it's still a wonderful place to be. They just do a wonderful job. I finally graduated from college. My first job after graduating was, and is, with the U.S. Department of Education.

CM: What led to your joining the office? Did you apply specifically with the Department of Ed, or is there a more generic application process for government work?

JP: I got lucky, I'll admit. I went to a job fair at the University of Maryland. There was a representative, or a recruiter from the Department of Education. It seemed like the kind of work I'd done before in public service. He said, "Hey, I'm going to recommend you, and let's set up some interviews at the Department of Ed." The interview that impressed me the most was right here in the Division of Adult Education. Much of my college career had been as an adult student, frankly. It was evening school; it was part-time; it was working two jobs and trying to earn college credits. As an adult ed student, I was doing it inside out. That was another reason why I chose this position, or to be with the Division of Adult Education because I knew first-hand what it took to do all of these things and very much appreciated all of that.

CM: And what year was that, Jim, that you started here?

JP: That was 1970.

CM: Okay. Now, you've also had some frontline experience with adult education other than getting your education that way. You've actually done volunteer work with basic adult learners. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

JP: I'd be happy to. I worked for seven years, at least one night a week, at Howard

Community College and was essentially a teacher's aide. I did one-on-one tutoring in the summertime. I did assessment for ESL (English as a Second Language), just a variety of things. I enjoyed the international parties, particularly with ESL. It's a wonderful addition. And learned an awful lot, again from the inside out, about this field: the challenges, the joy, the recognition, the limited funding. It goes on.

CM: It goes on, and it certainly helps to have policy and administrative people familiar with what goes on in the classroom.

JP: That was critical to me. I had been on the job . . . .

[tape off]

JP: It was my twelfth year here at the Department of Education that I started working as a volunteer in adult basic education. It was high time that I got into the classroom, got a sense of what the challenges are, got a sense of what adult ed teachers do first-hand, the kind of curriculum they use, the assessment that was going on. I was absolutely fortunate, again, working with, I think, one of the best programs in Maryland, perhaps even in the country, at Howard Community College. A CASAS* adoption site, External Diploma Program (EDP) site. A lot of innovative things were going on, and I could be a part of that. It was almost like being in a lab. And I was grateful for that experience.

CM: Very good. When you came here in 1970, Paul Delker was the director of the division, and he started in 1967 and went to about 1986. During this time, the federal adult education programs were really in their infancy. I would like for you to briefly review the history of the Adult Education Act and the role that Paul Delker had in

* CASAS: Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System, Patricia Rickard, Executive Director, San Diego, California.

establishing the direction that the federal program was going to take.

JP: It's a very interesting history, and I hope sometime he'll be able to tell you it also. The federal adult education program came out of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. It was originally administered by the Office of Economic Opportunity, and I believe that's where Paul Delker worked. When he took on leadership with this program, they transferred the program functions to the then U.S. Office of Education and he, in essence, came with it. I don't know if he was the first division director, but he was certainly division director when I came on board in the summer of 1970. A lot of people perhaps don't know this, but in 1970 we were actually administratively in a different place. We were part of the Bureau of Higher Education. I believe that shifted to – we became then part of the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, I think the second year that I was here. That would have been 1972. A major shift, a reorganization of the department, in a sense and has had implications ever since. We were part of the higher education arrangement.

CM: Again, going . . . .

JP: The original legislation was called the Adult Basic Education Act and that was passed in 1964. It became the Adult Education Act in 1966. With greater authorization for funding and a mandate, in those two years it shifted from just basic skills to adult basic education and English as a second language. Again, a major add-on of work and certainly clarified the role that our programs have in serving immigrants and persons with limited English abilities.

In the old days, things changed quickly. In 1970 adult secondary education completion was added on. Prior to 1970 it was with the program for lower ability

levels. As you can imagine GED (General Educational Development) and others lobbied quite heavily for this expanded program. I think professionally that was a good idea. It just made it more realistic.

CM: Until the past couple of years, California kept their federal funds limited to the basic ed. It didn't include secondary ed until just recently.

JP: Right.

CM: But that was because of need.

JP: There will always be need. A few states still do that. I think North Carolina, their adult secondary ed is strictly a state-funded . . . But for most states, it's part of their comprehensive program, the GED and adult secondary ed. They receive federal funding as well as some state funding. So 1970 was a big year.

Another big piece of history, and certainly in the history of Competency Based Adult Education (CBAE), was 1971 when we first funded the State Department in Texas, and then the University of Texas, to do the Adult Performance Level (APL) study (completed in 1975).

CM: Before we go into that, talk about the different parts of the act, the basic grants and then the special grants, and then the fed had some special money.

JP: I believe that special money, that is funds controlled by our office, began to flow in 1968 and was devoted largely to gearing up a teaching staff for this country, and a teacher training staff. It was recognized very early on that as much as adult education had been a part of the education scene here in the United States, particularly in some states like California and New York, just to name two, that in terms of adult basic skills, ESL, adult secondary ed, there really weren't a whole lot of trained and

qualified adult educators to be teaching at those levels. There was a rather major effort with large regional conferences to try to bring it up to speed, to train trainers of teachers, and the investment of the federally controlled money was in that direction. The funding of the APL project was a major shift in that – it seems like a small amount now, but over five years – that was about a million dollar investment, which was large for those times. As we'll see later on, it had a big impact eventually in California and in the country as a whole.

CM. The funds that go to the state also were divided between instruction and special projects.

JP: That happened in 1975.

CM: Okay. So the states didn't have any special project money until it was shifted from the federal government to the states at that time?

JP: Exactly. Our responsibility for development and training funds ran from 1968 through 1974 and got some very interesting stuff going, not the least of which was between 1972 and 1975, a large investment in regional staff development projects that did a number of good things, not the least of which was to greatly increase the number of universities and colleges that got into training and issuing master's and doctorate degrees in adult education. I think it went from twelve universities when we started in 1971 to over one hundred a few years later.

CM: And they've maintained those programs since then?

JP. No. Some have and some haven't.

CM: Okay.

JP: You know in California which are the ones that have been, I think, pretty consistent.

Our last count – and we've been funding a professional development contract. One of their tasks was to try to identify colleges and universities that had degree programs in adult ed with some specialty work in adult basic ed, ESL, and such. They came up with a list of eighty, which was more than I thought was going to be. My University of Maryland gave up our program a number of years ago, but back in the mid-seventies, it was one of the leaders in the country. But there have been some changes.

CM: There have been some changes from twelve, or whatever, to eighty now is still a major impact.

JP: You could count it that way. (both laugh) The glass is eight-tenths full.

CM: Let's talk about what else has gone on.

JP: Historically, another milestone, I believe, was a reauthorization of the Adult Education Act in 1978 that included the mandate for the program to enable all adults to acquire basic skills necessary to function in society. A functional definition, if you will, of literacy.

CM: So that was the first time that the functional aspect of basic skills was . . . .

JP: In the legislation, and then became the law of the land, and that is traced directly back to the results of the Adult Performance Level study which – the report was published in 1975 and had legislative impact in 1978. Of course, by then a number of states, including California, had moved very strongly into functional literacy or functional aspects of basic skills.

CM: Okay.

JP: And not the last time that the nation followed the California lead. (both laugh)

CM: All right, Jim. I want to turn this a little bit towards California for a moment. I know that I had previously told you that when I think of the feds that I think of you, because you've been a frequent visitor to California as a conference speaker and participant. Tell us just a little about your first contacts with and your first memories of California adult education and adult educators.

JP: Let me say now that one of the big regrets of my career is that I don't work day to day with California people.

CM: You are assigned to the southern states?

JP: Exactly. Part of my role is to work with fourteen southern states to help them, first of all, meet the demands of the law in their programs, but also in some ways to improve adult education in their state. My California connection grew from my job as the National Coordinator for Staff Development in the seventies, along with the work I did with the Adult Performance Level project. That led to a number of successful applications for the National Diffusion Network (NDN), two from California, and of course, my interest in California's Competency Based Education movement, which goes back to 1976, I believe.

CM: I think the first project in California was funded in '75, the first state project, the Adult Competency Education Project (ACE), San Mateo County Office of Education.

JP: Three years ahead of the federal legislation. My California connections were in relation to Competency Based Adult Education and directly in relation to the CASAS competency based program and the project CLASS.

CM: CLASS, Competency Based Livability Skills, out of Clovis.

JP: Clovis, right. We call it the Clovis project, but the name was CLASS. Both of those

applied for and won distinction as a National Diffusion Network member and eventually had some money to do some training.

CM: Before we go on in detail on some of the competency based movements, I seem to have skipped over what your primary responsibilities within the division are now and if there have been past primary responsibilities that are no longer in existence. Tell us a little about those.

JP: Sure, and I'll be sequential over time. My first assignment in 1970 when I came on board was to work with the mid-Atlantic states. In the old days there were ten regions of the country. They were the old HEW (Health, Education and Welfare) regions. I worked with mid-Atlantic states, which was very interesting. I got to know the adult educators and what they do and the issues and such through essentially doing an apprenticeship in the middle Atlantic states. It was a very handy thing to do. The second trip I ever took was to get a little money from our training office here at the department. They were experimental back in the old days. It was essentially gas money to hop in my old Volkswagen Beetle and visit each and every state office of adult education in the mid-Atlantic states, just essentially to establish relationships with state offices and get to know what they were concerned about and what they were celebrating, and such. From my whole career, now thirty-one years with the department, it was one of the smartest things I did because it said to the states, the state staff, the state director, here's someone who wants to know what's going on. That's been my M.O. for all of the time. So it was delightful when I could actually work with a state like – there is no state like California – but I could work with California at all levels and interact with them.

CM: You were talking about visiting the state directors of mid-Atlantic states, and in point of fact, that was one of the original goals of the Adult Education Act was to get a state director in all of the states.

JP: Yes. Absolutely. If you go back to the early sixties, I believe there were only eight states that had a full-time director of adult education. It just didn't seem like that was going to happen naturally for all of the states. You are absolutely right, one of the major purposes of having an Adult Education Act was to get the states on board so it could help finance a state director, and maybe a staff person or two, to have some continuity with the program and to help develop programs and have a state-level entity. It did that. When the money flows and when you require it, it happens. All states had state directors certainly by 1967 anyway, before I got here.

CM: Go on with your functions . . . .

JP: Because adult education . . . Let me back up a minute. The National Diffusion Network is something funded by and managed by another part of our department. As one can imagine, by far, the number of certified programs in the NDN were not adult. They were pretty much K-12. Over just a short time, essentially from probably 1975 into the early eighties, there were actually seven adult education programs that had been validated as exemplary and doing training around the country as part of the NDN. The proportion of that, with a percentage of that much larger than adult education vis-à-vis K-12, we're like a 1 percent solution in the department in terms of funding. But we had seven out of perhaps eighty or ninety. So it was a pretty decent showing for adult education, and as I mentioned, California had two of those. I was the liaison with the National Diffusion Network on behalf of adult education. It was a

mission. It was, in many ways, successful. Not because of me, but because adult educators really cared to do this. It didn't pay much. It took a lot of work, a lot of headaches, but I think made some real impact over time.

That was another hat that I wore and continuing as the National Coordinator for Staff Development. In that role, we actually were able to document for a number of years what was going on in the states with the special projects and teacher training projects and whatever R and D (research and development) was going on. As we said earlier, the money shifted from the feds to the states. In other words, it went from a single funding source to fifty separate funding sources in 1975. No more than a half a dozen states made the case to Congress that they could do a better job. Many of them have done a very good job with the money, which is now called Section 223* money.

CM: It changes name periodically.

JP: Back then it was good old 309. What it did was really to hamstring us in terms of research and development. We went without that kind of funding from 1975 to 1988, thirteen years. Thank goodness there was a National Diffusion Network because that was the kind of work, actually, that we probably would have funded had we had the resources in that thirteen-year period. That was a help from another part of the agency.

Eleven years ago, I kind of switched gears. I switched branches here and became the regional coordinator for the South. That was working nearly day-to-day directly with fourteen southern states to be involved in state planning, review of

* These are different sections of the Adult Education Act: 231 provides funds for local agencies to deliver instruction; 223 provides funds for special demonstration, research, evaluation, or teacher training projects. The specific section numbers have changed with each revision of legislation.

compliance reporting, a variety of things including some assistance to them as needed. I also, for a period of time, was the National Coordinator for our Adult Education for the Homeless Program.

CM: Which we'll talk about later.

JP: Which we'll talk about in a little bit. California was very influential there. For three years I also was National Coordinator for the National Workplace Literacy Program. It was a demonstration program. Out of that role I continue to be the National Coordinator for Workplace Education. Without any money. (both laugh) I also, over all that period of time, still, in some ways, kept my hand in staff development and am now the national coordinator for our major professional development, or the manager for our major professional development program, called PRO-NET (Professional Network for Adult Education). That brings us up to date.

CM: Brings us up to date. You mentioned the Adult Performance Level study two or three times, so we need to go in to what that spawned. During the seventies, the Competency Based Adult Education (CBAE) movement was born and received much attention through the latter half of the seventies and through most of the eighties. The genesis of that was this study in Texas. I'd like you to go on and talk about that a little bit, about the genesis of the movement and the national and California initiatives which nourished the Competency Based Adult Education movement.

JP: So we don't throw the reader off, the nineties have seen the virtual integration of competency based education in adult education programs.

CM: Institutionalized it.

JP: Institutionalized integration, sometimes known as learning in context. What a novel

idea. Back in the sixties, early seventies, it was pretty much a novel idea. I would just say up front that, in fact, it's been very successful. So successful that you just don't often see the term Competency Based Adult Education, but it's with us every day. The Adult Performance Level program was really our first major R and D investment. As I mentioned, we spent a million dollars over five years. A million dollars was real money back in the early seventies. You could actually buy something for it. The results had their national fifteen minutes of fame. Actually, about six months of fame. In 1974 it essentially said there's about . . . .

CM. There's a problem here.

JP: There are about twenty-one million adults who are really struggling, and their educational level and their functional competency are part of that struggle, maybe a major cause of their struggle economically and in a number of ways, health-wise and such. A lot of people paid attention beyond that. When the press stopped paying attention, when other educators stopped paying attention, adult educators paid attention, and no one, no one paid more attention than California. And as you mentioned, 1975, that's like a bang-bang. It hit California, began to pick up on the importance of . . . APL is sometimes understood as a limited kind of phenomenon. It wasn't just about certain types of skills. It was about an educational process, competency-based, outcomes-based as Bill Spady used to [say], and probably still does. OBE has come back again. Now people want to be associated with outcomes. Its accountability may be . . . California figured out early in the game that accountability was going to be important and that in order for the program to grow in California, it would have to show learning outcomes, program outcomes, and

accountability for using public resources. The large ESL population, perhaps this was – I think this actually helped the movement. ESL, God bless it, is a phenomenon in terms of outcome use. You learn a new word, you learn to construct sentences, you learn to speak more clearly, and you use it immediately. You're not waiting six months or a year. You walk out of the class and you use it. As I think back, that may have been a reason why competency based education and functional skills caught on as much as it did. But it took leadership to recognize that and make it happen programmatically. And many states didn't have the people that could have that vision or could see that.

CM: Jim, you mentioned ESL being a natural for outcomes based or competency based ed. At the same time, in the late seventies was when the state started being heavily impacted by the refugee population from southeast Asia. Prior to that time, the Mexican immigrants had a community in California that could provide support for them. So the ESL classes could be pretty much grammar based, basic skills based. I think the coincidence of the timing of the refugee community coming in at the same time that the emphasis nationwide became competency based education – they really meshed well.

JP: Another reason why California, I think, could make such progress so quickly with competency based ed, and use the Adult Performance Level research as we had intended it to be used was because right away California could put in place policies and projects that would make it California's own.

CM: Why don't you talk about our leadership that put that into place.

JP: I've always been, and still am, an admirer of Don(ald) McCune (Director, Division of

Adult Alternative Continuation Education 1975-1986), who provided tremendous leadership for California, of course, but also nationally and probably internationally He, to this day, remains, in some ways, my ideal of a state director that understands the importance of all the different aspects of leadership: policy, funding, programs, vision, outcomes, salesmanship (chuckles), just a whole lot of things. Of course, he was smart enough to realize, he had in his state people around him at every level that he could turn to to help make this happen. Don McCune in a lesser state, I don't know what would have happened. He probably would have tried it for a couple of years and left and gone on to run a bank, or something, or a research institute. But he stuck with it, and California helped him stick with it.

The California Adult Competency Survey (CACS: also referred to as the NOMOS study) was really, really unique. I know very few states, maybe only Texas -- the back of my mind says a couple other large states – did their own, if you will, version of the Adult Performance Level with considerable revisions, so it would be California. The inclusion of cultural competencies, so far ahead of their time. Very, very interesting. These competencies you could take right here off the shelf and people would get excited and think it was something new. In fact, it was this report published in March of 1979. As well as in a real way, a re-validation of some of the work that APL did. California wisely borrowed much from that work that we funded that had been done before and added to it some significant pieces and made it California's own, and that's why it sold, I think.

CM: And Don was the one that provided the vision for that.

JP: Mm-hmm.

CM: Jim, talk about . . . This was part of the dissemination, sort of, of APL, although I don't think they funded it, but once the APL report was out, there were two or three CBE conferences that were kind of national conferences. I think they were invitational conferences. Can you talk about those a little bit?

JP: They were invitational conferences. We invited all the states, and some states sent a few people, some one person. The idea was to get the word out, to use your term, to disseminate the results of the APL study. It was part marketing, part research to practice, we hoped. Certainly, helping the field understand the significance of the research as we felt it. And many states gave it a whirl. There was a lot of interest. Even in 1975, before the report came out, some states – Alabama was one – began having conferences of their own. The first time I met (Dr.) John Tibbetts (San Francisco State University) was in Alabama. (chuckles) We were both speaking at an APL conference. John was another very important California connection, and he remains a very important connection for me, and very important for California.

So we did have two national conferences, and then California started having conferences. And with the results of this California Adult Competency Survey to deal with [came] a really expanding movement in California for competency based education, more broadly seen. I believe June 1979 was the first California conference I attended in the Bahia Hotel in San Diego. The old program here, it's all marked up and bent and wrinkled, but I looked through the names of the people there, presenters and keynoters, and it's really like a treasure document in terms of the history of California and in terms of leadership in adult ed in the country.

CM: Nationally.

JP: National leaders as well as California. And it brings back fond memories of some very, very interesting challenges. I think it was at this conference, and after that, that the enormity of the scope of the movement started to be understood. It wasn't going to come tomorrow; it was going to take time, and it was important enough to pursue, and to invest in. And this was in – '79 was four years after California started.

CM: After APL.

JP: And California started their competency based movement.

CM: I mentioned the Adult Competency Ed out of San Mateo County Office of Education that started in 1975. There were a couple of other major curriculum writing projects in the late seventies, the Clovis one that we mentioned, and then there was a vocational ESL.

JP: VESL (ICB-VESL, Integrated Competency Based Vocational English as a Second Language, Chinatown).

CM: VESL, yes. Out of Chinatown.

JP: Chinatown, okay. Chinatown Resource Development Center in San Francisco. There was a lot going, early on.

CM: They actually went to curriculum projects first and then a high school level project.

JP: The CALCOMP (California Competency Based High School Diploma Project).

CM: You mentioned John Tibbetts, so why don't you go ahead and talk about what he and his partner . . .

JP: (Dr.) Dorothy Westby-Gibson (San Francisco State University).

CM: Yes . . . did to promote this.

JP: John was then the Director of the Center for Adult Education at San Francisco State

University and Dorothy was part of that center too, I believe.

CM: Yes

JP: They always did a lot of things and I could never keep up with all of their work, but I think they were based there at San Francisco State University. Enormous influence, both for the state of California and nationally. They did a lot of traveling. They were at a lot of national conferences. With encouragement, largely from California but also from people in New York, Maryland, and a number of states, we actually, with all of their help, developed a professional group, or I guess it was called a unit then. It was part of the Adult Education Association (ACE, Adult Competency Education Unit of AAACE, the American Association of Adult and Continuing Education). Actually for one year – for two years, Don McCune was the chair of that professional group. I was chair a few years. Elaine Shelton was chair once.

John – no – Dick Stiles. Oh my, yes. John Tibbetts, his leadership was more on the professional development side, which was his calling. He's a master professional developer, as was Dorothy Westby-Gibson. John provided a lot of leadership in professional development. Competency based education, that is, programs systems improvement, and professional development go hand-in-hand. You can't really have one without the other. Again, California was smart in realizing that early on. You can dream all the dreams you want to and develop models for programs and administration, but if you don't have the staff to make it happen, you are nowhere. You just frustrate a lot of people. On the other hand, you can have great staff, but without leadership and program structure and funding, you've got individual adult educators doing the best they can but not feeling part of a group and

not feeling that they're supported. It all has to happen, and again this is something that California and Don McCune recognized very early. Where California also scored big, and continues to do it, unintended I guess, and that's in assessment.

CM: I'll just insert here, because we've talked about the San Mateo ACE Project, which was centered on ABE basic skills; the Clovis project which dealt with both ABE and ESL skills; and the VESL project. California hit these curriculum things first and then followed up with the assessment component.

JP: Let's not forget the CAPS (Competency Achievement Packets, Los Angeles Competency Based High School Diploma Program) out of L.A.

CM: Yes, absolutely.

JP: The Competency Based Activities Packet, which brought a – not only curriculum but a management system that would actually then award credit. I think it has been very influential through the CALCOMP.

But let's talk about assessment. Again, I don't want to over do this, but no state has done more than California in terms of innovation in the area of assessment. The Adult Performance Level project generated, of course, a set of survey instruments which then became modified into an assessment test, if you will, assessment instruments also, which eventually, by

CM: They were kind of surveys though, weren't they?

JP: Started as a survey. It was a national – survey research

CM: They were kind of a checklist, yes no.

JP: Well, some of that but multiple choice also. It was pretty much the kind of test of that era in the early seventies. CASAS, in my view, took off were APL left off, in a

sense. There wasn't that much more done with APL in terms of national testing. There was a set of tests developed, and Texas actually developed a competency based adult high school program, which is still running in Texas, the first level of it being demonstrating functional competency based on APL items. California has done that also with theirs. In terms of turning it into an assessment system, which CASAS is, only California would and could do that. No commercial publishers have done it.

CM: Still.

JP: Still, exactly. They certainly looked at it. They just didn't . . . One of the beauties of CASAS is that it's field based, that no big decisions are made unless the field is involved. The field now is outstanding nationally. When you go to a consortium meeting in February, or the pre-conference to the CASAS summer conference in June, you've got the cream of adult education there. You've got state directors from all over the country. You've got state staff specialties in testing and assessment, in curriculum development, and more so in professional development. You've got major urban area directors. Some of these people are fully supported by their state offices. Some of them are doing it because they love doing it and they want to be influential in their sphere of adult education through association with CASAS. It just grows every year. It's just amazing.

CM: Yes.

[end tape one, side A; begin side B]

CM: CASAS started its system in 1980 and had the first test ready to use by 1982. Also in 1982, California issued their mandate.

JP: Ah, yes.

CM: For implementation of a CBAE program in order to be eligible to receive the state's [federal] funds. Did that make any kind of an impact nationwide, or did it kind of float under the radar?

JP: It raised a lot of eyebrows, so I guess it wasn't totally under the radar. Actually, it was, I think, a bit shocking to some states. My remembrance of it is that it involved the federal funds going to local [agencies], which was then called Section 306 of the Adult Education Act. I think it encouraged some states, like Maryland, to make more of an investment and to see that they had, in all states, including California, had a ways to go for this to really take hold. There had to begin to be professional development systems in place. There had to be a way of assessing learning, and such. I know Don McCune felt the mandate, as shocking as it was to some systems both personally and structurally, had to happen or it would be always an uphill battle just to promote and convince adult educators that this was a good way to improve programs and promote learning. It wasn't enough. There really had to be structure and teeth behind it. It was a gamble, and he admitted that. I remember him saying to me, "Jim, we're making a big gamble, and we're betting it's going to pay off".

I think Don also, more than most state directors, had a real good sense of what he called the leverage principle. The leverage principle – who was it that said if you have a big enough lever, you can move the world, and that's what he was trying to do (chuckles), at least that part of the world. So the policy, backed up by support and funding, a strong mandate and support system and training and all those things that go with making anything really work, it has to start with policy. That's one end of the lever. At the other end, a lot of change happens.

CM: It's a rock in a pond of water.

JP: Ah, the old ripple effect. I think that's a dissemination model. That's a little milder than the leverage principle. But still, it's all very – I see the ripple effect more like the influence to persuade, if you will, and send ripples, and that's very important too. The lever was a solid object that moved things relatively quickly and big distances. He was a big thinker.

CM: They allowed three years for programs to come into line.

JP: A very short period of time.

CM: They, [local agencies], had to have a three-year plan . . .

JP: Exactly.

CM: . . . that they submitted.

JP: That's the one aspect – the one aspect I didn't mention before is you've got to have a plan, and it's got to make sense to the people who have to implement it. Every state, certainly every five-years, has to come up with a state plan for adult education. As one can imagine, it's a continuum of detail. Some states just do a bang-up job. California has invested a lot in planning, including the state plan itself. Other states, it's quite incremental in their approach to innovation and change. And I guess down the line we'll get to the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. Back in the early eighties, CASAS was, and is, an investment by California, and now many states think systematically about curriculum, about instructional technique, and about outcomes and assessment. So I think it's been very, very influential.

CM: You were talking about Don McCune and the lever. He also sometimes just put it in terms of dollars. He said, "We've invested lots of money in these curriculum

projects." (both laugh) "Now we need to make that money pay off" . . . in the curriculum and in the survey and certainly with establishing the projects for CASAS.

JP: I guess it's okay in an oral interview to take a peek at a document, because this is something I recommend highly for anyone, not just for historical purposes. If they want to do change over time with due process and the components for major programmatic change – the date is March 1987 and it's called an evaluation study report, *Investing in Change: Competency Based Adult Education in California*. And it summarizes the components of this major change that was set in place. I've seen, in my thirty-one years in adult education, very few documents and processes that are so thorough. Did it work everywhere? I don't know. You probably know. Is it the right thing to do if you're really going make big change? Absolutely.

CM: Okay. Now. We've certainly been talking about the projects, and so on, that went on in California. You mentioned Alabama, you mentioned Maryland. What other states – and of course Texas did the APL study. Were there any other states that provided leadership in this CBAE movement? Leadership that impacted the nation.

JP: Yeah, as well as in their state.

[tape off]

JP: I'm looking at New York, which is the birthplace of the External Diploma Program. Ruth Nickse and Judy Alamprese, pioneers in Competency Based Adult Education. In fact, at least at one of the California conferences, Ruth Nickse was the keynote speaker. Judy Alamprese has done work as a trainer/consultant over the years. She now promotes competency based adult ed nationally. Again, we don't always call it CB, but we know when we see it, right? New York was quite instrumental in a

number of ways.

North Carolina, with Randy Whitfield as the state director is an adopter state for CASAS and does a lot of work in competency based adult education. She herself does workshops around the country. There was a lot of action in Tennessee in the late seventies, early eighties, particularly out of Memphis State University. They developed APL based CBE curriculum. I think in terms of competency based ed in correctional institutions, Ohio has done a good bit of work. Alan Toopes has promoted that.

On the West coast, Oregon and Washington have been supporters and developers for a number of years and sometimes working in team with California, virtually the whole West Coast was doing some exciting things that had ripple effect throughout the country. New Jersey, although it's been a while now, had three regional resource centers in the late seventies, early eighties that were very influential in promoting and training for competency based adult education and developed a guide to CBAE. One of the things our little unit, our professional unit, did was to develop a consultant resource guide.

CM: Are you talking about the ACE unit, or the professional development unit?

JP: The old ACE unit

CM: I wanted to ask about that because that unit actually came about to promote CBAE. Why don't you talk about the formation of the unit and some of the things that it did.

JP: Back then it was known as NAPCAE (National Association of Public Continuing and Adult Education), which in 1982, I believe, merged with AEA-USA (Adult Education Association of the USA) and became AAACE, as it is now. Back then the unit, as

you say, was really put together to promote, and also to bring together people – researchers and developers and professional trainers – so we could talk to each other and encourage each other and perhaps do some joint projects.

One of our projects was to develop the *CBAE Consultant Resource Guide*. The reason I pulled this out for this interview was that, by far, California had so many more consultants than anybody else. Also, we were talking about other states doing work. John Boulmetis in Rhode Island was one of our competency based adult ed pioneers. Judy Cope when she was in Pennsylvania. Lloyd David in Massachusetts, and he still has his competency based adult high school program there. Massachusetts did a good bit of work. Ronald May, before he went to Texas, was a trainer and developer, and he's in this – this is really a list of who's who in CBAE, in 1980 anyway. Sherry Royce from Pennsylvania, Elaine Shelton from Texas. Carol Kasworm from Texas, now in North Carolina.

CM: So it certainly had its influence – throughout. I mean, every state at least had someone who was enthusiastic about this.

JP: Well, I wish every state, but not all of them. Certainly, big states – and small states. I mean, Rhode Island, limited resources but a real champion there with John Boulmetis. We had this regionally in the country, and we're just going to talk about California because there was so much leadership and you want to get this in the record. Laura Adler from El Monte, California; Walter Popkins from Bell Gardens, California. Some of these people have retired, and they made a big contribution. Joe Cooney, Redwood City.

CM: That was the ACE project.

JP: Elna Dimmock, Clovis, we talked about. Mary Kenoddle (Hacienda La Puente)? Bill Ririe with the competency based adult high school in Los Angeles. Marlene Butler Spencer, who was also the chairperson of our ACE committee at one time. And George Woodward too.

CM: Marlene was from San Francisco Community College. And George Woodward, you say?

JP: Uh-huh. Worked with her.

CM: He's also from San Francisco Community College.

JP: Diane Marinelli from San Diego at the Glenmont Adult School. So you can see that a lot of people – and these are only some of the people. They're the ones that agreed to be a consultant and get their name in the book. There are many, many others, of course. And again, this is twenty-one years old, but you have some sense of that.

CM: Well, it gives a sense of the beginning, of the history.

JP: Yeah. To bring it up to date in terms of the ripple effect and such, again, when you go to a consortium meeting, you go to the CASAS summer conference, there must be people from forty states there. I mean, it really is a national phenomenon.

CM: Okay.

[tape off]

CM: Let's move on, Jim. You've worked as Project Officer for Leadership Projects at the national level for sure. Has that included liaison with the state special projects as well, or just with the national Leadership Project?

JP: It did in the sense that . . . I forgot one of my hats from the old days, and that was not only Professional Development Coordinator but also special projects, in essence, the

old 309, 310. So in that context, I and some other folks on staff collected as many of the final reports and such as we could from what states were funding. For a few years, there was an average of five hundred projects a year that we could account for that were funded by states.

CM: That's been one of the weaknesses of turning that money over to the states.

JP: Pretty spread out, yeah. And that's actually documented in . . . .

CM: In one of the ERIC documents.

JP: In one of the ERIC documents. Midge Leahy did that. Amy Rose touched on it too in her history of the Adult Ed Act and the adult ed program. So I had a bit of an overview and had information about a lot of things that were going on. Some of them were very, very small projects with, at the most, local impact, if that. Others were more grand. Very few states took the risk, like California did, in terms of investment of not only the federal special project money but also substantial state money. And very few states have gotten, I believe, the payoff for investment that California has gotten.

Let's say, as in the aftermath of the Adult Performance Level Study, a number of states began developing curriculum and curriculum guides and some teacher training, and such. Where the movement didn't persist, I think pretty much had to do with level of effort, for one. I mean, all that stuff is expensive, and there was only so much special project money available. Persistence over time is one of the keys, and another is a lot of teacher training, a *lot* of teacher training. Some states either didn't have the resources or wouldn't invest to that extent so that they could really have it take hold throughout their state. There were a lot of well-intentioned attempts, and

certainly, APL was influential everywhere in terms of expanding what our program could do for functional skills taught in context, sometimes competency based in the process of it. It really stretched adult basic education from academic subjects of reading, math, and maybe some writing to a lot more applied basic skills. So it did have that influence and very much so in California.

CM: Which national projects under . . . I mean, projects like the Leadership Project. Which national projects have you worked with on that? I believe you mentioned PRO-NET.

JP: Oh. You mean no matter what the topic. Okay. Gotcha'.

CM: Yeah, state – we're going to your role as projects officer.

JP: Okay, back to the role.

CM: For Leadership Projects. We want to put California in context with the nation here. (chuckles)

JP: And that makes sense. PRO-NET, yeah. PRO-NET is in its twelfth year. It's been a major contract for us. It's in its third cycle of contracts. I hope that over the next couple of years, it will be more influential in turning, essentially competency based education, to the subject of professional development and teacher training staff, and the whole thing. A set of teacher competencies, an indicator has been developed, which is having impact around the country. Management competencies, and the newest – which is now in draft form being field tested – is Professional Development Coordinator Competencies. So the competency education movement has been impacting on practitioners as well as on students and is part of the movement of CBE, of competency based education, and has taken it into different venues. So that's been

influential. There's a PRO-NET website that's available for information, connection, chats, things like that. Part of the project now is to develop a national model and provide training and technical assistance to states in learning certification, developmental certification, focused on work-based education. About half a dozen states, maybe eight states, have developed certification for mid-level ABE and ESL. Everybody knows GED, adult high school, and such. There has been a lot of interest amongst those fields to begin certifying the learning of lower levels, if you will. Our first attempt at that is work-based education, employability, workplace education for mid-range educators. That's something to look forward to in the next couple of years.*

Another project I think is very interesting is, actually, with the Conference Board of Canada. That's in partner with the Conference Board of USA. As I mentioned earlier, we funded for nine years a National Workplace Literacy Demonstration Project. A lot of things were discovered and curriculums were developed, evaluation techniques for workplace education. What this contract did was to do oral interviews and other kinds of surveying – I think there were about twenty-five projects of the last round of funding in workplace education – to determine what were the outcomes. They interviewed workers and union officials and employers, supervisors. Very interesting results of that, I think. It certainly justifies the $130 million we invested in it over nine years. But more so, the viability of workplace education programs, some of them competency based, all of them dealing with learning in the context of work.

* Funding was not obtained to develop work-based learning certification.

CM: Jim, how does this . . . You mentioned the Conference Board of Canada and the Conference Board of USA. I'm not familiar with that terminology. What did they do?

JP: That was the research they did.

CM: They did the research.

JP: They did the research, exactly.

CM: For these surveys on . . . .

JP: For us on workplace . . . It's called the Benefits of Workplace Education. Again, they have a website too, very, very interesting, linking business and adult educators with resources and ideas and stuff. The latest thing they're developing for us is a tool called Balance Scorecard, a way of demonstrating return on investment, geared at employers and HRD (human resource development) people. It's important to have adult education as part of your portfolio of service to your workers, as part of your union contract, whatever the arrangement. It's lifelong learning, and it's about people being more competent, promotable. If they lose their job, as many people do from time to time, [they are] more employable in the next round. Productivity enhancement. A lot of good things come from that. You mentioned earlier VESL, Vocational ESL, along those lines.

CM: Jim, I know that there was some special funding for this workforce education for a few years, and then it kind of went away.

JP: That was our National Workplace Literacy Program.

CM: Now, as you say, you still are kind of doing that without any funding. What all do you include in that? I'm thinking specifically of the Employability Competency

System and Workforce Learning System from CASAS. Would they be included in what you're referring to as workforce education?

JP: Absolutely. In fact, they, again, pioneered a good bit of the work in terms of assessment [and] program development. One of the neatest things, [for me] professionally – this was maybe two years ago. I was out for a CASAS conference, and Jane Equez (Program Manager, CASAS) said, "Hey, Jim, can you spend a couple extra days? We're going to have some fun. We're going to Calloway Golf Clubs industry, and we're going to do a task analysis for their shipping and handling department." I said, "That would really be great." It was a wonderful professional experience. Not only did I learn how difficult and meticulous it is to build really good golf clubs, which personally, I can't afford. But I bought a shirt in the gift shop. (both laugh)

CM: But how difficult a task analysis is.

JP: How difficult it is, and the task analysis, just fascinating. I wish that every adult educator could have this kind of experience, because it's adult education on the line, on the ground, on the shop floor. You're interviewing supervisors and workers. You're getting a variety of responses about the work. And you're getting complaints, and you're getting just a whole lot of data that Jane and her people turn into recommendations for program development. It's very serious business, and it's also a lot of fun because it's adult education in action.

CM: Was that a full Workforce Learning System training, or just . . . .

JP: No. It was actually a job task analysis, just the beginning.

CM: Just the beginning of the training. Okay.

JP: The foot in the door, in a sense, from our adult ed perspective. I believe they did go on and do some training. It was only one part of the industry. That's another "California" – not exclusive, of course. Job task analysis goes way back and certainly was a staple part of our national demonstration program over the years. I've never seen it done better. I'll put it that way. I think it might be a very significant part of the future of adult education, particular if funding gets tied in.

CM: You were saying you wished that every adult educator could go through that. That's what happens when funding drops away, because when you pay to participate in that, it's rather expensive.

JP: Oh, yeah.

CM: And unless you have a company that's paying for the training, for individual coordinators or whatever to go through, it is expensive.

JP: There are some researchers that really believe that adult education shouldn't pay for any of that.

CM: Well, that's fine when all you have to do is persuade other people to pay for it.

JP: It's persuasion. It's a demonstration of, again, return on investment.

CM: But as an adult educator, I can't go out and try to persuade the companies they should do this unless I know what I'm talking about.

JP: Oh, you gotta' have something to sell.

CM: That's right.

JP: Absolutely. And the broker function today is absolutely essential.

CM: And adult educators can't serve as a broker for this unless they've had the introductory training.

JP: Exactly, and hopefully, some really good experience in their portfolio, because companies look at that, and they'll pick up the phone and call some other HRD person and say, "Well, they're knocking on my door. What did you think of them?" Reputation can filter . . . . What we do know [is] that last year's ASTD (American Society for Training and Development) report on expenditures for training by businesses shows the year before something like, I think it was $50 billion that was spent for educational training. Only 2 percent of that went to basic skills training. And yet, that's a billion dollars. That's a lot more than our federal investment this year, $550 million. It's a lot more than we used to have, certainly. In the eighties, it was much, much less than that.

CM: It's continued to grow.

JP: It has grown, fortunately, but it's – investment by businesses and unions is absolutely critical. And that's a role that really only adult educators can play in terms of the basic skills, in terms of the English language, in terms of people getting their high school diplomas, GEDs, or EDPs. That's what we do best. I'm hoping that more and more businesses and unions and chambers of commerce will understand that and value that. But you're right, we have to prove that we can do it.

CM: Do you foresee getting funding again for those workforce learning initiatives?

JP: Every two or three years we propose it, yeah. It hasn't worked yet, but that doesn't mean it won't.

CM: It seems like since the Adult Ed Act has been brought in as a part of WIA (Workforce Investment Act), that that's a natural (chuckles) . . . .

JP: Yeah, I thought that too. (both laugh) The Workforce Investment Act has been with

us since August of '98, so it's over three years now. I think, personally and professionally, it's unfortunate that WIA did not have a special set-aside funding for workplace education, or at least, workforce education. I think it was assumed by Congress, given the experience we had with the national demonstrations in workplace education, that states would invest in workplace and workforce [education] on their own, that is, partly with the federal money under the Act. And certainly in terms of the reporting of outcomes in terms of increase in employability, got a job, went to further training, work-based projects. There's a lot of wording about workplace education in there, but there's no mandate and certainly no dedicated funding for it.

CM: And of course, collecting that outcome data is *so* expensive.

JP: It's the new big challenge. That's right.

CM: The new national reporting system, people are really afraid of.

JP: I think where there's the most fear is in those states that have not paid that much attention to assessments, that have not taken CASAS seriously, that have just been getting along fine by TABEing (Test of Adult Basic Education) everybody. I always thought there ought to be a tee shirt: "TABE 'em all and let God sort 'em out." The TABE is used so much that it's not related to what's going on.

CM: That it is not . . .

JP: It's not the preferred assessment [for CBE] and has grown in some ways. Actually, there are a few TABE tests that are occupation-specific, and I think those can be useful if, in fact, you've got a class dealing with health, or whatever the occupational specialty is. The most flexible, and certainly the most documented assessment system is CASAS with thousands of competency items in the bank. There's no other system

that has anywhere near that.

CM: No, but in addition to the assessment, the pre-post-testing, and so on, it's getting that final outcome data after people have left your program. See, that's what's so hard.

JP: That is hard. That's difficult. And it's new in that we're demanding that [success] be proven. States for many years have been asked to say how many people got jobs, and such, and often, the local programs wouldn't know. The teachers wouldn't know. Now programs pretty much have to know.

CM: The harder the questions, the more data is made up though.

JP: Do you think? (both laugh)

CM: Listen, I've heard that even on the maintenance of effort for the Adult Education Act, the states won't report their true amount of money . . .

JP: Well, let's talk about the state support.

CM: . . . that they spend on it. (both laugh)

JP: Let's talk about state support. Is that of interest?

CM: Yes, sure.

JP: Because I've got to give a nod to California in a number of ways. Every now and then the state directors' national consortium (National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium) [conducts a] State Organizational Survey. It includes amounts of state investments. I have your program here from 1998 and '99. California is far and away the most, shall I say, generous or certainly – yeah, generous in terms of state cash money. Now, the Adult Ed Act, Title 2 of WIA, says that maintenance of effort, which is supposed to be all of the funds that go for services, other than the federal funds, can be cash or in-kind. As you know, the paper

trail, the budget trail on in-kind is very difficult. My sense is that a lot of the in-kind at the local level is not accounted for. So if I'm right, there's a lot more money in adult basic education than shows up on our forms, or even shows up in data like this. But this is specifically about state cash investments. California approaching half a billion dollars a year is well above . . .

CM: It's over that.

JP: It's over that now? Okay. Well, this data is a couple years old. But California is well ahead of any other state.

CM: It's 574 million now.

JP: Oh, my. Well, it's probably then triple the next state down, which would be Florida.

CM: Of course, we're bigger.

JP: Yeah, but you're not three times as big.

CM: No. That's true.

JP: And the way you can count "big" is the amount of federal money that a state gets, because it's directly tied to the proportion of adults in the state that have not finished high school. There's a little different wrinkle added now in the last couple years because of immigrant populations, essentially. So California, the current budget, it's almost $74 million [federal funding]* under the Adult Education Act. The next largest is New York at $43 million. That includes the basic grant and the ELCivics (English Literacy and Civics), but California and New York both have very large ESL populations. So you can compare those very large states population-wise, and California – it's less than twice. But in terms of state investment, probably five times

* The 2002-2003 allocation for California will be $76,321,000.

as much as New York, three times as much as Florida. When you get past that, you get into small numbers. And some states give virtually nothing in cash.

CM: Sometimes when those figures are being discussed, people will express – I guess it's jealousy. I was going to say resentment.

JP: (chuckles) Those are cousins.

CM: I don't know whether it's really resentment. I mean, California is kind of like the eight-hundred-pound gorilla in money committed to adult ed. When people complain about us getting so much of the federal funds, they don't look at what the state gives in addition to that.

JP: Exactly. And the federal investment – well, what is 74 compared to 550? It's about one-seventh, I guess. So California does stand alone in terms of state investment and has for a number of years. That has taken work. It goes back to leadership, vision, necessity, a lot of things. So California is definitely to be commended for investment as no other state invests [proportionately as much].

CM: Full time equivalent – we talk about a.d.a. (average daily attendance),* but other people seem to understand full time equivalent better – is about $2200 per in our state funding.

JP: Per learner.

CM: Per full time equivalent, yeah. We calculate it on the number of attendance hours. But, as I say, most people find it easier to think of full time equivalent, and ours is about $2200 per full time student.

JP: It's still a fraction of what is spent on child education.

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* One unit of a.d.a. is generated for each 525 hours of aggregated student attendance.

CM: Oh, absolutely. About a third.

JP: About a third. Adult educators have had to do the best they can if given that. I don't know that I can compare it with other states that I have data on. We have numbers, and then we know that last year the average contact hours per learner was, I believe it was 88 hours. ESL tends to have more hours than adult basic education, understandably.

CM: When I say most people find it easier to talk about full time equivalent, we get that $2200 for each 525 hours of student attendance. That's how we figure it. And 525 hours is going to school 3 hours a day for 175 days. That's our funding formula.

JP: That's a different full time than a kid in school 6 hours a day for 175 days.

CM: Except that funding for kids is based on what they call a minimum day. So many minutes is a minimum day.

JP: I see.

CM: Three full hours comes pretty close to that minimum day. (chuckles)

JP: I didn't know that. That doesn't include lunch and recess, huh?

CM: We're getting off on things that we have no business getting off on here. Okay. Jim, I want to go back.

JP: I just hope I've established that California's investment in adult education is superior, and no state comes close.

CM: Okay. We've been constantly making allusions to professional development and teacher training, and so on. And in point of fact, the membership of this Adult Competency Unit, the ACE unit, the membership itself sort of morphed into a Staff Development Unit. I want you to kind of take us through the steps in organizing this

Professional Development Unit and describe some of its activities.

JP: You think it's linear? (laughs)

CM: No. Well . . .

JP: Well, maybe it is. Let's try.

CM: Enough people left the ACE unit to go to the Staff Development Unit that the ACE unit died. Let's put it that way.

JP: I don't know if that was cause and effect though. Boy, I've got to remember this.

CM: Well, look at the leaders in both groups, and . . .

JP: But I don't think that was I mean, John Tibbetts is a constant through all of this. Patty Keeton of Maryland, a constant through all of this. Just the whole – John Boulmetis, Elaine Shelton.

CM: The Connecticut people.

JP: Very good. And that's a state I didn't mention, but wow! Talking about a whole-state adoption and doing fantastic work, not just in competency based adult ed but in the professionalism of adult education as well.

CM: I didn't want to complicate things by saying sort of morphed into, but talk about the Professional Development Unit and some of the things that it's done.

JP: Certainly – you're right. Many of the leaders in the Professional Development Unit were also part of the ACE, the competency ed. That discontinued, I think, it had partly to do with the parent organization itself and some structural changes with that. And maybe it was time to move on. Many people that were always involved in professional development in one mode or another said, "Let's see if we can have a national unit on professional development that can have a vision and help other folks

understand ways that PD might be improved." That organization – I think it was about ten or eleven years it ran. As many know, the AAACE organization itself has gone through a lot of changes in the last few years, and it's a much smaller and more focused organization now.

CM: As the Commission on Adult Basic Ed pulled out

JP: Yeah. What we tried to do with the Professional Development Unit – and we did develop a set of principles for quality professional development. We would meet once or twice a year at major conferences. And we've had leadership there. I mentioned John Tibbetts. Mark Kutner (Pelavin Research Center, Washington, D.C.) was a leader. I think I was chair one time. And a number of other folks were involved in that. I think Jane Zinner (Director, Dissemination Network for Adult Education, CA) was one of the chairs of that. We felt – and still do actually feel – there's a need for that. Of the federal money that's used for special projects, now called Section 223 of the Act, professional development is by far the largest proportional investment. In some states, it's almost total investment. At $550 million (total appropriation for federal adult education program), 12.5 percent of that would be almost over $60 million. That 550, by the way, is an all-state grant. But certainly over $50 million is invested as part of this now called State Leadership Program. I would say 70 or 80 percent of that is for professional development in one configuration or another. In fact, many states, and the state directors' consortium, are very interested in getting the legislation changed so there would be much more money available for professional development. And I professionally think that's a critical aspect.

CM: I've got a couple specific questions. I know that a monograph came out on ABE staff development. Did that come out from an ad hoc committee or did it come out of this office?

JP: I'm trying to think of all the things our unit did. We did have principles of – we had – I'm drawing a blank on that. In the early seventies, there were some monographs on professional development that we published – or one of our contacts published. Sorry.

CM: That's fine. Jim, certainly professionalization

JP: Are you thinking of the monograph series from PRO-NET?

CM: I may be.

JP: That began to be published about six years ago. Yeah, there's a lot. A lot of it is available on the website.

CM: Professionalization of the field is always kind of held out there as a goal. Certainly in terms of getting a field of . . .

[end tape one, side B; begin tape two]

CM: This is Cuba Miller interviewing James Parker. This is tape two, side A of the Jim Parker interview. Certainly in terms of professionalization with full-time employment as a goal, that's still a long, long way off.

JP: As an absolute goal, I think it's not realistic, programmatically, anyway.

CM: You talked about, at the beginning of the Adult Ed Act, that the national government sponsored the institutes and the general training.

JP: Right.

CM: Certainly, we can become more professionalized with good solid training. Can you

kind of take off on that?

JP: It's kind of interesting that some states – Tennessee and some others – are discovering the idea of an institute. (laughs)

CM: I see. (laughs) Okay.

JP: Again, another topic where California has long since tried and, I think, been reasonably successful. I remember the ESL Institute.

CM: I think that was the first institute, was the ESL Institute.

JP: And the idea of being something that will endure, that's relatively well funded and supported, that it's not just, as John Tibbetts would say, a one-shot staff development opportunity. And certainly not just a conference – as important as conferences are in a professional world – something that you practice when you get back home, that you know there are expectations for application of the learning. In other words, good adult education. And the institute technique, I think, will just grow more, particularly if the legislation can be changed to allow for more funding for professional development. I think for a lot of states, for a lot of the field of adult education, that's something on the horizon. And I hope they have the backward vision to take a look at what California pioneered in the eighties and nineties with the institute technique for full professional development. I think that's another major contribution that California made.

CM: Maybe the federal government needs to fund dissemination of some of the major teacher training projects that have been done in different states.

JP: I think that's an excellent idea.

CM: Because I know California's not the only one that has had to take the teacher training

initiative.

JP: The field of adult basic ed and ESL is at a really quirky point right now in 2001. I was just looking at some data. In the last four years, forty of the fifty states – let me say it a different way. In the last four years, we've had forty new state directors at adult education, an average of ten a year. Wow! So when you're talking about leadership, investments, just having the clue that something like an institute is a good idea – may be a good idea – that's asking a lot for people who may not have any adult ed background, certainly nothing in their professional history that would exactly prepare them to be a state director. There is no other job in the world, I think, like state director. It's just very demanding. Fortunately, some new state directors have inherited competent staffs, people that have experience. But then, some good state directors have lost their staffs. I mean, we're at an age where people are retiring at all levels: teacher, local manager, state level, regional manager. As a professional field, it's very difficult right now. So we do need to look backward, look forward, identify things that have real potential for success. Please, not reinventing the – I guess in the computer age we call it not reinventing the disk.

CM: Certainly, through all of that, the emphasis would be on the training of trainers. I mean, not just delivering training over and over and over again.

JP: Exactly. Exactly.

CM: But to keep a cadre of local trainers.

JP: Yeah. As I mentioned earlier, the newest product still in development from our PRO-NET project is the identification of competencies for professional development coordinators, the teacher trainers, the manager trainers, that kind of thing. Some

states have continued to support a state resource center that does a good bit of their training. So there is that support, that persistence over a number of years that practitioners can turn to for various things.

CM: I actually was going to ask about the resource centers under dissemination, but since you mentioned it, we may as well talk about it.

JP: Yes.

CM: Again, California is one of the states that . . . We started our resource centers early. We started them in 1988. Then, of course, the National Institute for Literacy was instrumental in the initial funding, and now that's gone for – nationwide. So I was going to ask you if you have a feel for how many other states have maintained their resource centers after the specific funding left.

JP: I think it's either 40 or 50 percent of the states have –

CM: About half.

JP: Yeah, I would say about half have it in some configuration. Some of them are part of multi-state regional, like the Northeast has a regional set up and the Northwest has a regional set up. So there's that, that the states are involved in and help support. The funding under the National Institute for Literacy never really amounted to a whole lot of money.

CM: No, it didn't.

JP: Then after, I think, three years – four years, it was gone. Congress didn't continue to appropriate the funds. So it really is a state-by-state kind of decision to make.

CM: We talked about professional development. It's not the same thing, but dissemination and professional development are very closely – I wish they were closer – tied

together. (chuckles) So let's kind of move on a little more to some dissemination of products and procedures. You worked, both formally and informally, with professional development and with dissemination. Why is dissemination important and why is it difficult?

JP: Ah. Okay. It's important, at least, because there really isn't enough money for everybody to invent everything and train everybody to use everything that's invented. That's kind of a practical dollar kind of thing. It's just wasted energy, and sometimes time, and certainly money. We've tried, actually, on the federal level in, I think, significant ways over time to promote dissemination. Our first real serious effort was with the Regional Staff Development Centers. There were ten around the country. I think I mentioned it earlier. They ran from '72 to '75 when we had the authority to fund those. Those, as they developed, became very important multi-state, and in some cases, national dissemination networking tools. The National Diffusion Network did dissemination that went well beyond its initial adoption and documentation of adoption. Good things, not only we learned about, put in place, but also documented that they were in use. That, I think . . . I would love to see an adult ed national diffusion network.

CM: That would be nice.

JP: I think it would be worthwhile. It would have to be federally funded, I believe. Subscribership is very difficult to get a critical mass of states. Some states will have a joint conference now and then on a particular topic, like workplace [education]. In the South, they have an annual workplace education conference that involves twelve to fourteen southern states every year. That's information sharing and morale and all

of the things you do at a professional conference.

CM: But not really training.

JP: It's not real training and it's certainly not an adoption project, but many ideas, and sometimes curriculums are swapped. Good things happen. National Diffusion Network was full-blown, comprehensive, serious diffusion and adoption type of thing that I think the field could use.

CM: Jim, you mentioned that –

JP: Now, the barriers. What gets in the way of dissemination?

CM: Oh, yes. Okay. Then I'll come back to the other.

JP: Thank you. One thing is the turnover. I mentioned that there are so many new state directors. Well, many teachers [also leave to] do something else. They have to be replaced. Local managers . . . At one point, a few years ago I believe, there was some data to show that every year we lost a third of our local adult ed managers. Retirement, different careers, burn-out, whatever the reason. So there's a lot of turmoil, a lot of turnover in the field. So you can disseminate and train, and then six months later, that person may be gone. That's why it's so critical to have, as you suggested, teacher trainers, to have specialists in professional development that can persist year after year and help grow the field and innovate the field over time and deal with the teacher turnover, and all of that.

CM: I was going to say, you mentioned a third turnover in managers. It was also a few years ago that we – we used that same figure, a third turnover in teachers in California.

JP: I've heard that in a number of states.

CM: And we've had figures to back that up. I don't know whether it's exactly that now or not.

JP: Actually, there's some indication that it might be even worse because of retirement, veteran teachers retiring. Another factor is the shortage in many communities, and some whole states, a shortage of K-12 teachers that are certified, because the K-12 teachers are retiring or getting other jobs, taking advantage of the new economy and leaving education. They love it, but they can't afford to stay in it in some places. So if an adult educator has a choice between a ten-hour a week job or a full-time job in another part of education, they may take that full-time job. And we lose good people. Now, they're not lost to education in this country, but they're lost to us. So that's – dissemination and adoption is a challenge in part because of people turnover.

It's also challenging because, what are you going to disseminate and is it of proven worth? Has it been evaluated rigorously? Has it been field tested? We don't know whether and to what extent these [state administered] special projects [with] federal funding actually were evaluated. I know some years ago when Midge Leahy wrote her twenty-fifth anniversary review of products and such, her sense was that there were a lot of things being funded with no evaluation component, certainly not tested even in other counties, other parts of the state. If [programs] are going to purchase something, they want to know that it has a chance to work.

CM: That's where the National Diffusion Network – I mean, it was a very rigorous process.

JP: Right.

CM: You had mentioned earlier that there were seven adult ed programs that had been

taken into NDN, and of course, there were the CLASS and CASAS projects in California. I'm going to put you on the spot. How many of the other five can you remember? Can you tell us a little bit about other adult ed programs that were in NDN?

JP: The very first that I know of for adult education was Ruth Nickse and the External Diploma Program, followed right after that with the Adult Performance Level project as they developed APL based curriculum and teacher training mechanisms, so they did a lot of training for adoption. So EDP, APL, CASAS, CLASS, family literacy out of Kentucky, project FIST from New Jersey. They did some wonderful work in terms of functional literacy, particularly at low levels, out of New Jersey. How many is that, six?

CM: Wasn't there a reading project out of Virginia?

JP: No, but there was one out of Utah. Maybe it's in part adult education, but I think there was another – it's always the last one you have trouble remembering. I know there were seven. I hope I come up with it. I'm going to embarrass myself (chuckles) Someone's going to say, "Hey, Jim, don't you love me anymore?"

CM: I mean, NDN's been gone for several years now.

JP: It has. That's true.

CM: Again, in California, we had a dissemination project modeled after NDN, Dissemination Network for Adult Education (DNAE), that ran for seven years under – Jane Zinner was the director of that project.

JP: Yes. I know we mentioned her earlier in another context. But yeah, that was a fabulous project. For seven years it ran?

CM: Yeah.

JP: Wow!

CM: From '80 to '87. It may not have had the vigorous evaluation that NDN did, but it certainly had a selection panel. Materials were submitted, and people visited the programs, some of the panel members visited the programs before they were –

JP: It was a major investment by California and, I think, had a big impact. And I always wished that many other states had taken up that type of dissemination challenge.

CM: Again, Jim, though, it's the training and the follow-up training . . .

JP: Yep. It's the way adults learn.

CM: . . . that has to be done for any dissemination effort. Did any of the other states have effective dissemination projects that you are aware of?

JP: Yes. Maybe not currently, but they certainly have. New Jersey had, again, a north, central, and south resource center system that did fabulous work. They were influential nationally too, because they would do some research and they would publish publications. One of the publications of the Montclair Center in northern Jersey was a *Guide to Competency Based Adult Education*. So they were part of the movement. Unfortunately, those centers don't exist anymore, so there have been changes over time. I personally think that every state should have a resource center. With the advent of computers and the Worldwide Web, there's so much that can be done. It may not be a physical place in some states. It might be a virtual resource center. So I think we're going to see some growth in that area with states doing dissemination, maybe even training, through that.

CM: You mentioned that the New Jersey centers did some research. That's another area

that we need. But research for the practitioner.

JP: Ah, yes. Getting *to* the practitioner, of use for the practitioner, and in some ways accessed by practitioners. There's a day and a half seminar that starts tomorrow on that topic of research to practice. We've asked a number of people that over the years have had experiences in diffusion, adoption, dissemination, and such to come and just talk about what worked for them and how it worked and maybe even why isn't it around anymore. There's a lot of reasons why things don't persist, even if they're very good. So we're trying to attend to that. There's the ERIC system (Education Resource and Information Center). There's the ESL Clearinghouse, the Center for Applied Linguistics. There are a number of things that go on, mostly for information dissemination, not so much for training.

CM: There's stuff online also.

JP: Yeah. And PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) has dissemination of some curriculum. There are numerous web sites that deal with information sharing, [such as the] NIFL (National Institute for Literacy) LINCS systems, which we invest in a little bit. They have a very promising workforce education dissemination system.

CM: Okay. Now, for a few years there was this special Adult Education Program for the Homeless for which you were responsible. Tell us about that and how it was implemented and what happened to it.

JP: (laughs) Well, yet another reason why good things go away if they lose direct support. The National Adult Education Program for the Homeless began in 1986 with legislation under the Stewart B. McKinney Act. Someone was smart enough to . . . I'm sorry. It was signed into law in 1987. It had an adult ed component to it and

said it's not just enough for people to have housing and food and medical care and psychiatric care. All of those are absolutely critical, but education and training are critical too. A lot of people thought, homeless adults? How are they going to learn? And do they have the capacity to learn? This is, in thirty-one years, one of the most proud things I've been a part of and witnessed in adult education is our homeless program. It didn't cost very much. A lot of years, it was $7-8 million for the whole national program. But it really showed that adult education can be flexible and adjust to different needs and do the impossible, it seems, in some cases. I did a report documenting that program a couple years ago.

Essentially, it went away because we had a change in the U.S. House. We had another party take over, and they had consolidation in mind for adult education. It might be six years now the program hasn't had funding. Some states – and I must say California is on my champion list for this – have kept the faith and continued to support homeless programs. During the years that I funded California as a state homeless program, leadership – Dick Stiles was the leader for a number of years. Tremendous work, really state-of-the-art work, not just in terms of homeless – certainly, homeless – but in terms of adult education: lesson plans, counseling components, collaboration with community agencies, all the stuff that should be done, that was supposed to be done, in fact, was done by virtually all of the sites in California. So I think that was a real – and is a success story for California in terms of serving this special population of adults and their families. There's a lot of family literacy that's going on as part of our homeless programs.

Over an eight year period, over 300,000 homeless people, adults, were served

through this program. California, as you can imagine, was the leader in terms of level of service also. In the last three years of our ability to fund programs, California served over 10,000 homeless adults in that three-year period. Also, what sets California's homeless program apart is that often it was intensive counseling, referrals, resource allocation, sometimes hundreds of hours of instruction. It wasn't just go to a shelter for a couple of hours a week, as helpful as that might be for some homeless folks. In fact, there was a lot of intensity to instruction and comprehensive services.

CM: Jim, I know that California's programs were centered through shelters, or it might have been residential shelters like battered women's or something like that. But was that the model that was followed in other states? I mean, did anyone try to operate this out of community centers rather than shelters?

JP: It was a mix. For instance, in West Virginia, with one exception, which was a homeless men's shelter, there were the other dozen local programs through battered women's shelters. Their focus [was] on family literacy. It was a very good project. Others, the local adult ed center would take the lead, but they would collaborate with the shelters and the city. It was kind of interesting. Some of our programs were based in a transitional housing setup. It wasn't intended to be an experiment or a demonstration. It was funded to do it. That was its work. But in fact, a lot of innovation, including in California. As you can tell, I miss that program. I think it was very good adult education, and it was quite cost-effective. It cost no more per client to serve homeless adults than the regular program. There were a lot of matching funds, obviously.

CM: Of course. Now, the homeless program was kind of a set-aside for adult ed.

JP: It was actually money that we administered.

CM: There's now another set-aside for EL Civics (English Literacy and Civics), and there's been others coming and going. What do you think about set-asides in general? And have you determined how the field responds to them?

JP: The EL Civics program last year was very controversial among smaller states, the states with smaller ESL populations. The formula is different than the regular basic formula, and it has to do with recent immigrants and overall ESL-type populations. California, of course, financially, has done very well no matter what the formula. In fact, I believe California gets some $20 million dollars this year just for EL Civics [$19,609,000 in 2002-2003].

I think, actually, that's a good idea. The year before the Workforce Investment Act was passed, a work group here at the Department of Ed [was] looking at what to do about ESL in the new legislation. The Adult Ed Act had to be reauthorized. It was running out of time, as it does every five or six years. So we – where can we try this new – where should we put – should we make special investments? And ever since we've had a program with a formula based on, "Did he finish high school?" ESL has been not fully represented in the formula. Many immigrants have high school diplomas. They still need English.

So high school diploma graduates to begin with, obviously. But they're not counted in the base grant formula. Also, the increase in immigrants in the last few years is just overwhelming to some adult ed programs, so there's special relief for that. There's also the need for citizenship and citizenship-type of competency, which

is very important. In a country where only half of our eligible citizens vote, you've really got to do something. I think that's the key indicator of democracy, and we're lacking in that aspect of it. So the more people who understand about their government and the importance in their lives and the role that they play as citizens in our democracy, the more democratic we become, theoretically. I think that's an important factor. I was in favor, years ago, of having – either broaden the base grant formula to include ESL characteristics, or immigrant characteristics, demographics, or have a separate funding for them. It turned out I was right, two years too early. In fact, Congress created this now fairly large – $70 million a year – set-aside for ESL.

CM: Based on your experience in working with the homeless program, and based on your experience with workplace education, you've gone through two of these now where there was funding that was set aside, and then the funding died. So you must have some kind of a grasp on whether this is really needed or . . . We keep hoping that things will be institutionalized and the state will take them over, but they don't always.

JP: You're absolutely right. It depends on the nature of the program. So that our terminology – we understand each other, usually a set-aside means money goes to a state and has to be used for special things other than local instruction. For instance, Section 223, state leadership is a set-aside. Twelve and a half percent of the federal money has to go for professional development and dissemination and a variety of things. That is a set-aside. When we administer it from here, it's a separate program. So the homeless was The Homeless Program. We wrote RFP's (Request for Proposals), got applications from states. They competed among themselves for

funding for the homeless. It wasn't a formula kind of thing. The same thing with the workplace education. I frankly believe both of those programs should still exist as national programs because they were that effective, that influential. An interesting thing about the National Workplace Literacy Demonstration Program, it started as legislation in 1988. It actually was part of the Trade Act. It wasn't even in the education amendments. It was transferred here when it was passed.

CM: With its own money.

JP: With its own appropriation. That's right. It never got over $20 million, often less than that, in a given year. Back in the late eighties, early nineties, in terms of public policy and funding policy, there was this thing called the "trigger effect." The idea was that if Congress thought enough about program . . .

CM: Problem.

JP: A problem, a program to put substantially more money in it, then it would go on a formula basis to the states. It would have proven that it's worth it. The Workplace Ed Program, never getting more than $20 million, never came close to the trigger amount of 50 million in any given year with Congress. And it could have. It wasn't like we were poor in the nineties. There was considerable growth in revenues and the economy. Congress, in any given year, can say, "Okay, this is worth $50 million for this year." That would have triggered or kicked into a formula where every state would have gotten a piece of that $50 million. [If that had happened,] I think we'd be looking at a different piece of legislation in WIA that would really be promoting expenditures for workplace education. I think that makes sense. So I would have rather we'd gotten that amount of money and gone into the trigger. Then, from the

national level, we could have provided some training, maybe some regional workshops on workplace education. We could have done some things from here also to help professionalize that part of it. None of that happened, but it still could. It's a matter of priorities.

CM: Jim, some of this may be -- in fact, I know part of it will be kind of a summary of some of the things that we've talked about before but in a little bit of a different context. You have referred to California as an "incubator for innovation," and I want you to elaborate on that, what you mean by that.

JP: Okay. Incubation is a word that's now come back, and a lot of it has to do with technology, where there's a lot of research, and even more so, a lot of development. To get products up to market, you've got to test them out first. You've got to kind of shelter them and incubate them and generate new ways of doing things, and new machines and stuff. California, I must say, without reservation, has done more incubation of innovation than any other state. Some other states, particularly larger ones, have had their niche. New York gave us the External Diploma Program, which is one of the most "adult" programs I've ever witnessed. California, though, has done it consistently since, I guess, 1976, 1975 in areas such as competency based education, innovative assessment techniques for a variety of programs and populations, ESL, learning disadvantages, workplace [education].

CM: Welfare.

JP: Yes.

CM: Amnesty.

JP: Taken on the hard work. Life skills is another area, like the Clovis project that was

an NDN project. I think the latest big idea, if you will, out of California is dealing with the National Reporting System. Many states are just really, really struggling. As I said earlier, they tend to just use tests off the shelf, sometimes without even training [for their use]. If you can buy it, if the local program can buy a TABE, it's there. There's no requirement that I know of for use of that, even though there are guides and there are protocols and there are processes that the publisher gives them. It's not unheard of for teachers, God bless them, to actually take the scissors to those tests and create their own instruments. Drives the publisher crazy, but it's done, in part because of lack of training for the proper use of the tests: placement and pre-post testing and use of data. The CASAS contribution to that can't be overstated as a national influence because of adoptions all over the country, because of training, because of the annual conference to grapple with the issues. It's interesting – and actually a little scary – to think that probably the hothouse for worrying and dealing with the issues of the National Reporting System happens twice a year nationally. And that's not in our conferences. (both chuckle) That's in San Diego in February and June when the consortium gets together. And we don't pay for that. California, and all the states that are part of the consortium, which must be twenty-five or thirty now, pay for that, make that happen. I think that's the latest incubator for innovation – for the reporting system.

CM: And you had earlier mentioned teacher institutes.

JP: Teacher institutes, yeah. I don't think there's been a year since '76, for the last twenty-five years, that California hasn't had at least one nationally significant project going, and sometimes multiple projects. Other states have peaked and waned with

innovation.

CM: Certainly, with the role that technology is playing, OTAN (Outreach and Technical Assistance Network) has really stepped up as –

JP: Yeah. And that's something we have helped fund, finally, with the Cyberstep project. You've got me thinking so historically, I kind of – [Cyberstep] brings [us] right to now, because that's future innovation too. I've been a big fan of OTAN's ever since I heard about it when it first got started. In fact, there was some potential, I believe, for OTAN to be national, NOTAN (National OTAN). (laughs)

CM: Outreach and Technical Assistance Network.

JP: Yeah, yeah, national network. And we let that get away here and paid for it. It took us quite a few years to even begin to have the technology capabilities for use with the states [and the field in general]. I think we're playing catch-up, and part of that catch-up is actually to fund OTAN to do a lot of work through the Cyberstep and some other things, I believe. I'm not the monitor for that, but I hear good things about it.

CM: Yes. Of course, there's lots of material that's posted in full online through OTAN. What isn't posted in full is abstracted. I think it has a larger selection than the ERIC Clearinghouses do.

JP: Wow! That's a lot.

CM: The adult ed portion.

JP: I understand. ERIC, which is a fabulous dissemination system, does have a dedicated center in Columbus, Ohio, but that covers three different things. That covers adult, vocational, and career. So it's broader than our kind of adult ed. OTAN is dedicated [to adult education]. That's a good point.

CM: How many other states have distance learning projects? I know California has one now, not OTAN but a separate distance learning project (CDLP, California Distance Learning Project).

JP: You mean the real virtual thing where there's no teacher. There's a learner – there's a machine and a learner kind of thing.

CM: That talks back to you, yes.

JP: I don't know. I think there's a lot of states that are interested in it. We have just funded a major technology project where OTAN is a major partner.

CM: Cyberstep.

JP: Well, it's actually a national . . . a new one.

CM: Oh, a new one, okay.

JP: A new one that – the heart of it is to promote and provide assistance to all of the states in using virtual learning in the various ways it can be used, including in learning centers, but also in distance learning, the pure distance learning function. So we're looking forward to the development of that over the next few years, with California fully involved again and funded to be so, for a change.

CM: Then also, along with the distance learning, we have our 5 percent program* in California that allows 5 percent of an agency's [state] apportionment to be used on something other than classroom instruction. We've gotten quite a few people involved in that. Under this, in terms of incubation for innovation, we alluded to it earlier when we were talking about using projects as a lever to move the rest of the field. I don't know how many other states do that, but that has been a mainstay of

* Upon application to and approval by the California Department of Education, 5 percent of a school's total program can be used for alternative methods (other than classroom based) of delivering instruction.

California adult education since the late seventies, early eighties, targeting all of the special project money into a few -- three, four -- large projects that support the local agency's federal program, rather than splitting the special projects up.

JP: As Don McCune said early on, that's a risk that he took and that California took, a political risk, even at the risk of getting some local adult educators mad because they didn't get their little $15,000 fun money. Some of the fun money still goes on, but I think it's less and less as the field gets more and more serious. Certainly, there have been large expenditures just trying to make the states part of the National Reporting System. California has invested a lot in that too. I think that's more the trend -- to have a few big projects that can have potential for impacting state law.

CM: You've been very gracious, Jim, in saying lots of nice things about California's programs.

JP: It was easy.

CM: But not everyone's perfect.

JP: Aha!

CM: What do you see as weaknesses in California's programs?

JP: (pauses) Here's my disclaimer, in a sense, because California is not in the region that I pay day-to-day attention to.

CM: Sure. I understand that.

JP: So I've got real limitations on knowing weaknesses, as well as I'm sure I've overlooked many of the strengths, the last few years in any case. But I'll try. I understand that California has given more priority now to basic skills versus ESL, even though the ESL needs are greater than ever. And I think an attempt in the last

couple years to really serve all of the citizens of California that need help with basic skills. It's a bias I have, but I'd like to see California do more with workplace education, even though by sheer numbers, they're one of the leaders among states in terms of numbers of adults in workplace ed programs. That's still an area that . . . And I believe that that is more of a priority now, to work with businesses and unions and such. I think that's a real potential growth area for California.

California has the challenge of the reporting system; although, I believe they've done more than any other state to make that happen and have helped many other states grapple with that. So that's not a weakness. It's just something that – it's a constant challenge and a continuing challenge. (pauses) (chuckles) I don't have a long weakness list for California.

CM: You've done some writing on the future of adult education. If you could sort of wave a magic wand and have anything you wanted for the field, what would that be? And then, the other side of that, realistically, what do you think we can expect in the future of adult ed?

JP: California and the world? In other words, the whole program?

CM: The national program.

JP: Well, I hope I don't sound gratuitous, but my wish list for adult education is for more states to be like California in terms of investment, in innovation, in terms of professional development, in terms of innovations in assessments. I would like to see more states be more strategic about their state leadership investment, that's Section 223. I would like to see there be more available under that so that states could be more strategic in improving [programs] and in professional development. I would

like us all to do a better job in moving worthy research practices. As I mentioned earlier, we're moving in that direction. I would like to see state buy-in to a national adult ed diffusion system, because it's not enough to have the national make it available to local programs, or whatever. I think the systemic approach would be the most powerful. So that would, frankly, take some different kind of behaviors in leadership in states to buy into something bigger than themselves. So that's part of my wish list. More money for full-time instructors, as appropriate, to do the various jobs that we have to do. And finally, I would really like states to pay attention to their history and understand and help decide where they want to go, partly based on where they've been. And I congratulate California for doing that.

CM: I asked realistically what we could expect, and somehow, I think if we keep plugging away, we could almost expect your wishes to appear.

JP: Well, there isn't much choice but to plug away because the demands are just there, and they will be for a long time, I think. I don't think we're going to work ourselves out of this business in the near future.

CM: Not any way soon.

[end tape two, side A; begin side B]

CM: We're about to wind up here, Jim, finally.

JP: One more wish list. You gave me a chance. And that is technology. Again, California has led the way. Some other entities around the country, some other research outfits are helping out with that. I think there's huge potential for use of technology in adult education programs so we can serve more than the relatively small percentage of adults that could benefit from our services. That's going to take a

total national community effort so that the equipment is available and the lines are available for transmission. I think this is an exciting new era for adult education.

CM: That might have been what I was about to ask you, if you had any other final thoughts, anything that we've left out that you might want to comment on.

JP: (pauses) I'm sure there are some things, but . . . Thank you.

CM: We'll call it good.

JP: We'll call it good.

CM: I want to thank you, Jim, not only for this interview but for your thirty-one years of service in adult education and particularly for the support that you've given to California adult education programs through the years.

JP: It's been my pleasure. I hope I can continue to do that.

CM: This interview was completed as a part of the California Adult Education Oral History Project.

END OF INTERVIEW

James T. Parker

SUMMARY

Adult Education Program Specialist. Area Coordinator for the 14 Southern States, National Coordinator of Workforce Education and Project Officer for professional development and leadership projects. Authored and edited numerous publications in the areas of Competency-Based Education, Workforce Education, Program Policy & Evaluation, Professional Development, and Adult Education Futures. Frequent speaker/facilitator at national and state conferences.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1970 – 2001	Title, Division of Adult Education, US Department of Education
1967 – 1970	Title, District of Columbia Department of Public Health
1965 – 1966	Title, Library of Congress
1963 – 1964	Title, Census Bureau, US Department of Commerce

EDUCATION

Bachelors of Science, Sociology, University of Maryland, MD

Masters of Arts, Public Administration, University of Oklahoma, OK

HONORS AND RECOGNITION

Outstanding Volunteer Award, Maryland
Distinguished Service Award, Adult Competency Education
CASAS Award of Recognition
Award of Commendation, Adult Homeless Education

BOARD AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Executive Board, International Workplace Learning Conference

California Department of Education
Adult Education Oral History Project

Oral History Interview

with

RONALD S. PUGSLEY

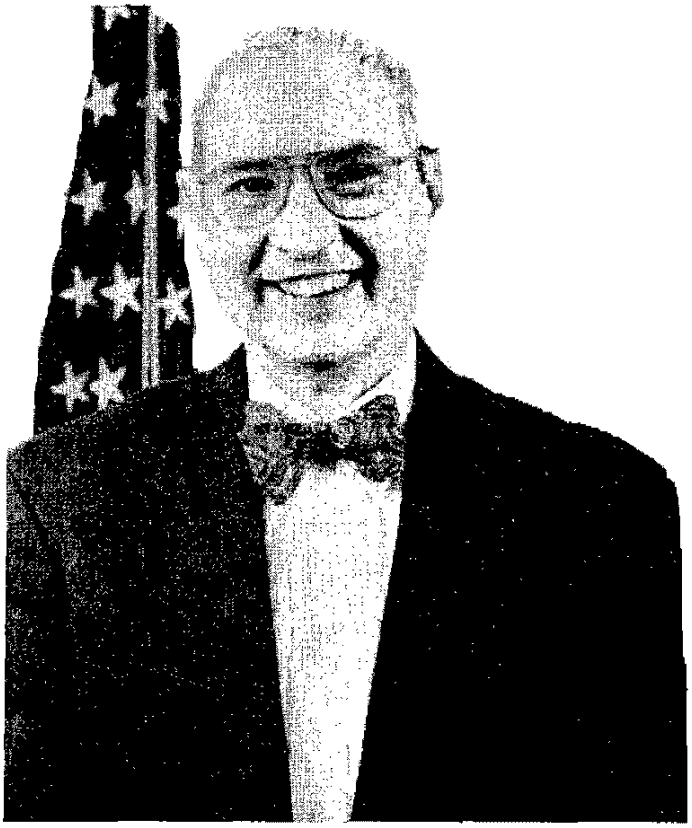
United States Department of Education
1968 – Present

Division of Adult Education and Literacy
1984 - 2002
Director
Acting Director
Chief, Program Services Branch
Strategic Planning

October 1 and 2, 2001

Washington, D. C.

By Cuba Z. Miller



PROJECT: California Adult Education Oral History Project

INTERVIEWEE: Ronald S. Pugsley

INTERVIEWER: Cuba Miller

DATE: October 1, 2001

CM: This is Cuba Miller interviewing Ronald S. Pugsley in Washington D.C. on October 1, 2001. Ron is the Director, Division of Adult Education and Literacy, in the United States Department of Education. The purpose of the interview is to be an overview of the Federal Adult Education Program, and California's participation in, and contribution to, that program.

Ron, very few people prepare for a career in Adult Education. They tend to come to it mid-career. What did you do before coming to the Adult Education office, and what led to the transition?

RP: I could approach this from several points of view. First, how did I get to the United States Department of Education?

CM: Okay.

RP: Thirty-three years ago I was teaching political science in Occidental College in Los Angeles, and I received a call, which I accepted, for a one-year leave of absence to come to the United States Department of Education. For the first thirteen years, I was the Chief of the Accreditation Policy Branch in the United States Department. I worked with all accrediting agencies in the country, regional and specialized. I then left the department for one year on a Presidential Executive Exchange Program, where I worked with G.E. (General Electric) in the area of strategic planning. I came

back to the department, and in my new capacity I was the Deputy Director of Policy and Planning, in the Under Secretary's office, responsible for strategic planning. I was there for four years. From there I became the Manager, Education Appeals Board, which was a semi-autonomous group, within in the department. Then in 1984, as I recall, I received a call from Paul Delker. Paul Delker had been the Director of the Division of Adult Education for around twenty years, almost since the inception of the department. Paul called and said he would like someone to come into adult education with a strategic planning background who could do some forecasting work. I was completing the work I was doing with Education Appeals Board, so that's how I got to adult education. Prior to really coming into adult education, I had one exposure to adult education, and that was when I was running the department-wide strategic planning [process]. We were looking at the question of, and making projections on the number of teachers available in elementary, secondary, and post-secondary. The one area that we could not really get a reading on was adult education. It was kind of a footnote to our discussion with then Secretary (Terrel H.) Bell. We had a pretty good five to ten year reading on K-12, as well as post secondary, but we could never really get a grasp around adult education. I was delighted to come over to take another peek at it.

CM: People still can't get a grasp around it. (both laugh)

RP: I think that's exactly where we are today.

CM: Okay.

RP: In fact as an aside, Cuba, I'd say in our current projections this is an area that we foresee as sort of critical -- with some critical concern – that with the demand, and the

increased demand for more ESL teachers, with the demand for teachers within K-12, and the expected retirement within our own system of adult education, we potentially face a critical shortage, and at the moment, we do not have the incentives that you might find in K-12 for attraction. We are looking at that.

CM: The lack of full-time employment and those kinds of things.

RP: Yes, all kinds of fringes of full-time employment. We are looking at various ways of linking this. I think the issue of professionalization is going to become a bigger and bigger niche.

CM: Yes, absolutely. So Paul was still here when you first came to your office?

RP: I came, and I came at Paul's invitation.

CM: What did you do then? Were you still working on strategic planning through the short time that Karl Haigler and Joan Seamons were here?

RP: No, when I came over [to the Division], while Paul was here, and Paul was Director for maybe eight more months, before he retired, and in that capacity I basically focused on planning activities on a number of issues. When Paul left, I was then appointed the Branch Chief, Program Services Branch. We'd reorganized into a Program Improvement Branch and the Program Services Branch. The Program Services Branch was the branch that dealt with the administrative side of the Adult Education Act, working with all the State Directors of Adult Education, both in terms of statistical reports, required by the office, fiscal reports and other administrative management issues.

CM: Okay. All right. You've been director of the division since 1993, or 1992?

RP: I was the Acting Director for thirty-three months. It has now been eight years since I was appointed as the Full Director.

CM: Okay.

RP: [When I was Branch Chief], Karl Haigler, whom you mentioned, came over as Director [when Delker retired]. He had been the director of the Reagan [administration's] Adult Education Initiative. That was a political appointment, so the position of Director [of Adult Education] was basically politicized in 1986. It was (Secretary William) Bennett who converted the division directorship into a political position when Karl came in. The irony was, it became the only divisional directorship in the department that was political. [The situation changed under] Gussie Kapner, Assistant Secretary [of Vocational and Adult Education] under President Bill Clinton. When she left the Department seven and a half years ago, she went to the White House and suggested the time had come to reconvert the position back to civil service.

CM: What are your primary responsibilities as Director, Division of Adult Education?

RP: The primary responsibility is the administration of Title II of the Workforce Investment Act. Title II is the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act which replaced the Adult Education Act that we had known for twenty-five or twenty-six years. As the national administrator of Title II, there are probably two primary responsibilities I have. One is a stewardship responsibility under the State Administered Grant program, which is the main source of federal funds for adult education. I highlight the fact that it's state administered because we distribute the funds through a formula based on the number of adults, aged sixteen and over and out

of school, without a high school diploma. My role here is to ensure that the federal funds are expended within the context of five-year state plans that every state is required to develop for the department. [A state plan] is the basis for eligibility for federal funds. The second part of my responsibilities has to do with the National Leadership Activities Account, which today is at fourteen million dollars. This is discretionary money and it's there for eight to ten very specific functions: research and development, demonstrations, system building, technical assistance, the development of a national reporting system. This is a very, very important account that...

CM: It's where you can kind of point the direction that you would like to see policy changed?

RP: Yes. This is basically how it's used. It's within this account that we try to identify where the research holes are that we'd like to fill, where there is a need for strong technical assistance, where there is the need for development of new products in areas that seem to be on the horizon that we should take a look at. For example, the whole issue of access to services is a big issue. If you look at our program, that is the National Adult Education State-Administered Grant system, we serve close to three to three and one half million adults. That three to three and one half million adults maybe represents 6 to 8 percent of our target population.

CM: A drop in the bucket.

RP: Our access is minimal. We are actually operating on the fringes, on the margins. If we are going to impact more adults who have a need of these services, we have to

think in terms of new concepts and that's why we moved into distance learning as one of our areas of interest.

CM: I specifically wanted to ask you that a little later.

RP: We'll come back to that.

CM: I know it's a particular interest of yours.

RP: I also have responsibility for the Community Technology Centers, which is under the Elementary and Secondary Act. It's a new program that we are very hopeful about.

CM: Just as you have these national projects, of the money that goes to the state, that's also divided between instruction and special projects as well?

RP: That is correct.

CM: Okay. When the Adult Education Act was first passed, the federal government would support up to 90 percent of an adult education program within a state. I know that percentage has kept going down. What is the percentage of a state grant now that the state has to match to get the federal funds?

RP: There is minimal matching of 25 percent.

CM: Okay.

RP: Nationally I believe most states are matching 60 percent, with wonderful exceptions and I wish there were more. California happens to be one, and I think you are matching at 98 percent in terms of the federal allotment. There's only a handful of states in the 90 percentile.

CM: So the average now is about 60 percent?

RP: Yes. For every federal dollar there are three to four state dollars that are brought into the system.

CM: All right. Part of this is to get your take on what California has done with the federal program. What do you remember about your very first contacts with the California Adult Education Program or personnel?

RP: That's kind of a fun question. My first contact with California personnel in adult education goes back to 1985.

CM: Okay.

RP: I'd just come on board here. I was new in the position of being the Chief, Program Services Branch and we had just created something known as Area Representatives. Under (President Richard) Nixon the Department's Regional Representatives [were] dissolved. The regional representation was confined to civil rights, student financial aid, and then kind of general rather than a special program. We felt that we needed to maintain ties with the states. Basically, we were losing [communication with] them, so we created four area representatives. My first contact with California was out in San Diego. It goes back, and I'm trying to think of the chap, and you might recall who he was. He was in the Peace Corps, or had been with the Peace Corps.

CM: Are you talking about Don(ald) McCune? (Director, Division of Adult, Alternative and Continuation Education, 1975-1986)

RP: After Don.

CM: (Dr.) Jerry (Gerald) Kilbert? (Assistant Superintendent, Youth, Adult and Alternative Education, 1986-95)

RP: It was between Jerry and Don. Right between the two of them. (both laugh) You placed him.

CM: I know who you are talking about and for some reason I'm not coming up with his name right now.

RP: Anyway, we were meeting with the western states, and I've always enjoyed the area workshops because it's fascinating to see the different normative way in which [each area] conducts business. Whether we are from the West, the East, the South, or the Midwest, it's very different. Basically we go through the same agenda, but we do it very differently. That was my first exposure of the adult education side of California. Claude Hansen (Manager, Adult Education Unit, 1984-88) that's right. I have a vivid memory of the first encounter. Claude said, "We are going to Tijuana". "That's wonderful", we all said. I asked how we were going to get there, and he said, "We are going to take a bus". We got on this bus, and we didn't depart until 7:00 p.m. or 7:30 p.m. and it was pretty dark. I think it was in the fall. We arrived at this place, and everybody got off the bus, and the bus left. It was just an empty space. None of us knew which way to go, right or left or backwards. It was just fascinating. Finally Claude said, "Just follow me". We walked a half-mile and we finally hit the town. (both laugh) That's why I remember that.

CM: That's why you remember that.

RP: I've never returned again.

CM: Did you have any contact with Donald McCune before he died?

RP: No, I did not.

CM: He was Claude's first supervisor.

RP: Yes. He had a wonderful reputation in the adult education field.

CM: Yes. His plane crash was in 1986.

RP: Okay, 1986. No, I had no contact with Don, unfortunately.

CM: You missed something very nice, very nice indeed. Starting off with Claude's trip to Mexico, maybe you found out that California adult educators like to have fun along with their work.

RP: Absolutely, absolutely.

CM: We do work hard.

RP: Yes, you do work hard.

CM: Sometimes we play hard also. Ron, I want to go on. You meet regularly with state personnel from the Council of State Directors.

RP: Correct.

CM: There's kind of a dual organization there. Besides the council there is the National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium. I'd like for you to talk about those, and the differences between the two, and what the structure and function of these groups are.

RP: The membership is the same.

CM: Yes.

RP: That is the one similarity. The difference is that when we come together as a consortium, the focus is usually on professional development issues. In this case, it's not professional development for the field; it's professional development of managers and state personnel. The consortium has that function and standing here in Washington as a professional development organization.

CM: They actually pay state dues to that consortium?

RP: They pay state dues for that. One of the functions of the consortium is to provide information to the Congress in terms of requests that they make. Sometimes it gets over into the role of the Council of State Directors when you are asked to make certain appearances, or references. When we meet as the Council of State Directors we look at administrative issues that are rising out of the Adult Education Act, or now the Adult Education and Literacy Act. We review formula or distribution issues [and], let's say, priorities under State Leadership Funds in relationship to the National Leadership Fund, which we administer. In both instances we are dealing with priorities in the use of this discretionary money. We look at the whole issue of accountability and reporting. Really ways in which, and this has been more recent, states that are better endowed than other states can mentor or even provide services to those states that are lacking those services. To come back to your question, are there really big differences, sometimes you wouldn't even know at all. It doesn't make that much difference at all.

CM: It kind of sounds like the Council of State Directors, in theory at least, is more administrative, deals with administrative matters connected to the federal legislation, and the National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium is more programmatic.

RP: That's right. I would say the Council of State Directors is concerned with policy, and whether the [policies] of the federal legislation are working or not working. The Council has its own legislative representative who analyzes the legislative scene at the national level for the Council.

CM: Garrett Murphy?

RP: Garrett Murphy.

CM: Former New York State Director.

RP: Yes, former New York State Director who does, I think, a bang up job for us. He's very astute in analyzing statutory provisions, not only in adult education, but also in welfare reform, and employment and training, and other areas of public legislation to see the relationship between the adult education side and other programs.

CM: Has there ever been any tension between, let's say, the state directors and the federal office? Are there times you want to go in different directions?

RP: The answer is yes. I'll illustrate it by a classic example, and I'll also illustrate the converse of that, where we are trying to work together in a very collaborative way as opposed to going in the opposite directions. Several years ago, I think it was four or five years ago, it was at the time when the Congress had basically removed our discretionary grant [programs]. Some of our finest programs were kind of wiped out, the National Workplace Literacy Program, the National Homeless Program, the National Resource Center Program. It was a period of time when Congress was just cutting discretionary programs right out of the budget. Also included in that was a very small item, about three million dollars, national discretionary [funds for adult education] that was not funded. Under the Adult Education Act, we also had authority, if we didn't have a line item for that account, to take a percentage, up to I believe 3 percent, from the major allotment. We chose to do that, and we proposed to do that. That created a hue and cry that we could be taking monies away from direct services. It reminded me [of the battle between the Department and the states in the 1970s over the use of national discretionary funds]. I think you are going to be

talking to Jim (James) Parker (Adult Education Program Specialist, U.S. Department of Education), on my staff. He'll go into this in greater detail. [The battle was around the use of funds for] Section 309 (of the Adult Education Act)*.

CM: Yes.

RP: At that time, up to 10 percent of the national allotment could go for discretionary grant programs. The states took umbrage at that program. That was under Paul Delker, [and for some] reason, [the states were not satisfied with the way the Department administered this program]. They said we don't want the federal government to have that, we want that discretionary money. [Congress then] created what was known as Section 310, which were state demonstration projects and staff development [activities]. It left the federal level with no money for research and development or technical assistance. It was, I believe, in 1988 that a small line item was put in [to restore national initiatives]. When that again was wiped out [in 1995], we chose to invoke the 3 percent [clause], and it created a hornet's nest. Part of the concern that did come up that we listened to, because obviously the state directors are a major stakeholder for us, was the complaint that the views of state directors were not being taken into account with respect to the expenditure of [discretionary funds]. We listened and set up what I think is a unique system, an ad hoc advisory group of eight state directors, two from each of our four regions, [recommended] by the Council of State Directors. They are appointed by us, but at their recommendation, and this ad hoc committee has been intact now, without basically any change in membership, for four to five years. [The group has] reviewed all of our projects

* Section 309 and Section 310 refer to sections of the Adult Education Act that provide funds for special demonstration, research and teacher training projects.

under the then discretionary grant program, under the Adult Education Act, and now the National Leadership Activities account. They make recommendations, they express concerns, they express areas that really need to be taken into account. It's a wonderful dialogue that we have going. We meet with them at least twice a year to hear their views, and for them to hear our views. There was an example where we really were at loggerheads. I'll bring up another time when we had been somewhat at loggerheads. There had been requests over time to change the [funding] formula. For maybe eight years we have tried to make the formula more equitable in the sense that it could be more reflective of [disadvantaged] adult needs, the adults at risk. What we came up against [were the demographics of] large states and small states.

CM: Yes.

RP: We couldn't resolve that. That had to be resolved among the states themselves. We were subsequently able to get a meeting of the minds in 1998 with the adoption of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act where we removed, what had been for almost twenty-five years, a situation where in-school adults were being counted as part of the formula. We always argued that we should confine our count to out of school adults, who lacked a high school diploma, rather than counting those adults aged sixteen and above who were also in school. That was a big bonus to the larger states, or the states with a larger population. That now has been removed.

CM: There is a minimum grant that goes to the states, isn't there?

RP: Yes. Every state has a minimal level of two hundred thousand, and after two hundred thousand is given to everybody, we then go to a scheduled percentage of the number

of adults within the states, age sixteen and above, out of school, and lacking a high school diploma.

CM: Okay.

RP: I didn't tell you one thing. I said there's another concern. Currently, we are developing with the Consortium of State Directors a National Technical Assistance Program, where we are investing a very significant amount of money into using peers, within the state system, as consultants on such issues as the National Reporting System, professional development, establishment of priorities. Rather than contracting to an outside agency, we are contracting, in this instance, with the Consortium. The Consortium is to work with us on developing the priorities, for making technical assistance investments, and also the training of peers within the system to be a part of that training system.

CM: That training is directed towards state level, directors and state consultants?

RP: That is correct.

CM: Okay. Very good.

RP: That gets me to, as an aside, before I forget it. We will, and I hope this year, be launching a major training institute for practitioners. Going back twenty years ago to the late 1960s and early 1970s when we had 309 funds, we funded training institutes around the country. Everywhere I've gone in my career here, [I've heard] they were well worth it, [according to] the individuals that were involved. When we brought, and we just did recently, our ESL people, practitioners and local administrators in, it's very clear we need to be doing more for them than we are now. It's really to

supplement what the states are already doing, to broaden the network [between practitioners on a national scale].

CM: Out of these two groups, the Council of State Directors, and the National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium, what national leaders have emerged between these two organizations?

RP: By name?

CM: Yes, sure.

RP: Well…

CM: Not all of our state directors are leaders in the field.

RP: Without going into personalities, or I'll point you in a different way. You just asked the question.

CM: Maybe the question should be, have national leaders emerged?

RP: Absolutely.

CM: And give us a couple of examples.

RP: National leaders have emerged very much out of these organizations in terms of having impact on the legislative front. [One] individual who comes to mind is Bob (Robert) Bickerton from Massachusetts. He was the legislative liaison for four years, I believe, for the Council of State Directors. He did a bang up job in really helping all the states to develop a network for communicating on policy issues, and for activating input into the hill around issues. Garrett Murphy has always been a leader. The major states have always performed a critical leadership role. California, Florida, New York and, until recently, Illinois. What [I am] highlighting is something that we actually helped develop. I think the field has forgotten that. Back in 1985 when the

Adult Education Act was up for reauthorization, it was apparent to us that the voice of the field, that is the states, was not a very loud voice. [The states] were disparate or disconnected in [expressing policy positions]. Maybe a single state, or a couple of states [were effective], but it was not a unified front or a unified voice as to where we should be going as a field. I think it was 1984 or 1985, no it was 1994 that we held a meeting here in Washington, a two and a half day discussion that focused on what the issues should be in the reauthorization of the Adult Education Act. The way in which we structured this meeting was to go through the Act itself.

CM: Line by line.

RP: Section by section and said where do you stand, or where do you think we should stand? That resulted in [the states] really coming together into more of a nucleus, and they formed the Council of State Directors out of that. The Council, since that time, has been kind of a force, a voice for adult education. A subsequent [component] has been that they have joined with the volunteer sector and have brought in the adult learners as a further voice. Today we have the Council of State Directors, VALUE (Voice for Adult Literacy United for Education, an organization of adult learners), and the two national volunteer organizations working together with the Washington Literacy Coalition, which is comprised of twenty-five to thirty-five organizations that support adult education, both directly or in some related way.

CM: That came out of this group of state directors.

RP: That is correct.

CM: Ron, some state directors tend to stay in their positions for long periods of time?

RP: Correct.

CM: Forever.

RP: I feel like I'm one of them now.

CM: Other states have frequent turnover. What impact does that have on the national program?

RP: The turnover in state directors has been significant in the last four to six years. I would have to believe that two thirds of the state directors have changed. That has a major impact on the program. In large measure, the individuals who have come in as replacements have come through the state system. Many of them come with only a minimal understanding of adult education.

CM: Yes.

RP: So their first challenge is to begin to understand what this field is all about, and what the delivering of [adult] services is all about. How diverse, and how complex it is. [The situation is] compounded by the fact that they are also working under a new act that is itself very complex. The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act is a transforming, a system changing act that has requirements and objectives that really are very, very challenging for the best of us. The question is, does it make a difference? It certainly does. I'll use as my illustration the implementation of the National Reporting System. The National Reporting System is the main way in which we are implementing the accountability provision of Title II.

CM: Again, I have some specific questions about that later.

RP: We'll come back to them. The development of the National Reporting System runs over six to eight years. Those who have been with us for six to eight years understand the [system and its] development. If you've just come in, that's a big load

to swallow. Wise and complex as it is, [it's a major task to understand] where it's going, how to implement it, how to give support to it. This is very, very challenging. [However,] I am really very encouraged by some of the people who are coming in. I think they are very exciting, and they have very fresh ideas, but I certainly understand how they have suffered. It's not easy to walk into this system, at the state level, and expect it's just going to move forward. The demands for strong state leadership have never been greater than they are now. It calls for very quick reads.

CM: This turnover again goes back to the fact that you said the State Council is developing this peer system to help new people. Obviously it came out, to meet that need.

RP: That's exactly why. We are very hopeful and that's why we are making this investment into a mentoring/peer system of support. We have so many new folks online who need to benefit from the experience of their colleagues.

CM: California has a relatively new team in place at the state level. Can you make some comments on the stability of [California] state leadership? In recent years it hasn't been too stable.

RP: No, it has not been too stable; there's been a lot of change there. For me, the ups and downs of this changing have been very difficult because California is such an important state. California basically accounts for almost a third of our program. California has been a belwether state, and I can go through, I don't know if you are going to ask me this, the many wonderful things I think California has done in adult education, and is doing. But, leadership is absolutely critical and there have been periods of time when we haven't had leadership. It's been a vacuum, and that has impacted us nationally as well. We need California . . .

CM: To be strong.

RP: To be as strong as it possibly can because they are such an important part of our system. There have been wonderful leaders in California, and I could go through them. It's under that leadership [that California became] a bellwether state in assessment, for example. I guess this goes back to McCune, when the CASAS system (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System, Patricia Rickard, Executive Director) was developed. [CASAS has] had a national impact of the highest degree. [Other areas include] the OTAN system (Outreach and Technical Assistance Network, John Fleischman, Executive Director) in technology, and use of the computer, and use of the web. We look to [these developments], and I think the OTAN system as an information storage and retrieval system [has been] wonderful.

CM: Dissemination.

RP: Yes, in dissemination as well. [OTAN] is a wonderful system. I don't know quite where you are today on training. For a while there you certainly were a bellwether state in training, both in terms of managers, and in terms of practitioners in both ABE and ESL. You've been a bellwether in development of standards, especially in ESL.

CM: Both the ESL training and the standards were under the leadership of Lynn Savage (City College of San Francisco)*.

RP: Yes. Speaking of Lynn Savage she has done wonderful things in our distance learning such as: *Crossroads Café, On Common Ground* and currently *Madison Heights.* Lynn has done some wonderful work there. Lynn is not alone...

[end tape one, side A; begin side B]

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* Founding Director, ESL Institute and Staff Development Institute; committee chair and editor of California's *ESL Model Standards for Adult Education Programs;* lead academic and writer for *Crossroads Café* and *On Common Ground.*

CM: Ron, I understand that you and (Dr.) Ray(mond) Eberhard (Consultant 1975-1984 and Administrator 1988-1997 of the Adult Education Unit) have done some training and had some interesting sidelines to it.

RP: Yes. Ray professes to be a scratch golfer, and he has always challenged me that way. He and I were in Kauai once and he loaned me his putter. Somehow that putter came back with me to Washington. It took me two years to get it back to him, and I've never heard the end of it. I always thought that was technical assistance on the part of Ray to my game. We've had some wonderful times. Some people claim that we go on some of these trips just to play golf. It's true, we do play golf, but what most people don't realize is that in a relaxed atmosphere an awful lot of very good work is done.

CM: Yes.

RP: Good conversations.

CM: I understand that this one Pacific Rim conference got sort of undermined by the weather also.

RP: I'm trying to think back? You have to clue me in a little bit.

CM: That's ok. Ray just said you went to Kauai and ended up with 56-degree weather with all these people who had come in from the South Pacific Islands, and they were all freezing to death.

RP: That's right. I remember that.

CM: Okay, let's get back to more serious things here. Congress provides the parameters of the federal program through legislation, but implementation of that is the responsibility of this office. You've made some allusions to the way the directors

have input, but if you would outline the planning process that you take to translate legislation into programs, and then from there, the states also have to implement your guidelines, so there's a planning process at the state level as well. Let's start with what is your planning process to translate legislation into programs?

RP: It's changed drastically since the adoption of the Title II, Workforce Investment Act in 1998. Prior to 1998, and over the twenty-five or twenty-six years of the Adult Education Act, the implementation of the federal statutes was always through regulation. We would develop drafts of regulations, which concerned the interpretation or the meaning of the statute. In terms of that planning process, we'd usually go through a process in the federal register where we would solicit public comment, and then look at all the public comment in terms of the draft regulations, and come to a final decision of where we wanted to be. To illustrate, under the Adult Education Act, through regulatory action, not statutory action, there was a prohibition against charging fees for adult basic education. [Today, under] Title II, [there are] no regulations. It was the decision of this department, unlike the Department of Labor, which [administers] Title I and which has issued regulations. It was the decision of the Department of Education, and this was across many educational programs, to minimize, if not avoid, having regulations. We choose not to have regulations in implementing Title II, substituting [a] program memorandum [for policy guidance]. There were two ways we've gone about doing that. We developed a guideline for development of the state plan. It's within the state plan that a state indicates to us how it plans to implement the statute. In implementing the statute, it's also telling us how it interprets the statute. If we see something that is out of line or seems to be

going down left field, we communicate directly with that state and suggest that they may be out of statutory bounds. We've also issued, again through memorandum, interpretations around certain areas that states have asked for interpretations about. The purpose of Title II is to give states much greater flexibility. Now, having said that there is a trade-off. The trade off [is that] states develop a performance accountability system. California has been, clearly, a leader in that. In fact, they went right to the cutting edge because they went not only to full implementation but also to a pay for performance system as well. There's only one other state in the nation that's done that, and that's Florida. I think we'll probably see more states moving in that direction. California really bit a big chunk when it moved on the accountability system under Title II. Also, there's a section in Title II [that contains] new considerations that are to be taken into account in funding eligible providers. For example, the curriculum is to have a research base to it, and that's to be explicit in the application for federal funds. There is to be a clear emphasis on establishing a set of outcomes with respect to the learning process, and it's to be explicit and measurable. These are some of the trade-offs you have for greater flexibility in how you implement the Act, in exchange for greater accountability.

CM. We specifically talked about the state plans and California went through another state planning process a few years ago. If you want to comment on our strategic planning.

RP: [In] the early half of the 1990s, California launched a strategic planning [process] that I think was really outstanding.

CM: It actually started in 1989. [1988 is the correct year.]

RP: Was it 1989 and 1990?

CM: Yes.

RP: It was a ten-year plan. It [included] an environmental forecast that was truly outstanding. It was very helpful to us here. We [reviewed the] plan and the strategic planning process. [The plan impacted our thinking and actions.]. It was very easy for us to do that since California represents one third of our delivery system. The directions that California was taking impacted, in some degree, the directions that we were taking as well. We saw where there were differences and where there were similarities. That process that California put into place, I thought, was just outstanding because it was state and practitioner driven, as well as being developed by some outstanding researchers in the state. [The] environmental assessments in terms of trends were just outstanding. That to me has held true of California and why their state plan is really a wonderful plan to read.

CM: Yes. To see the follow through on that, to see this strategic plan reflected in the state plans that have been done since then. Of course that was perhaps the last of our real stable leadership with Ray Eberhard and Jerry Kilbert.

RP: I think it was.

CM: Our turnover started after that.*

RP: The turnover started after that. I certainly give both Jerry and Ray kudos or five stars for their work on developing the strategic planning process.

CM: You've sort of alluded to this, but let's try and narrow it down. What influence does your office have on Congressional legislation and appropriations?

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* Dr. Kilbert left in 1995, Dr. Eberhard in 1997.

RP: Both authorizing committees and appropriating committees staff consult with the department on changes. If we are in the authorizing [phase], then we are dealing with specific legislative language, and we have a dialogue back and forth: what they are proposing, what we are proposing, and see if effective steps can be developed. Annually we of course go through the appropriations process, and that's absolutely critical. The administration puts forth its budget and we have to justify that budget. What's really important, in terms of our budget today and how appropriations committees are looking at a budget, is how well we are fulfilling our GPRA provisions. GPRA is the Government Performance and Results Act. It was passed in 1993 and was to come into effect in 1998. GPRA's [message was] that every educational program would be measured against achievement of its outcomes. We have put forth a set of GPRA outcomes, in terms of how our delivery system performs, that we have set as targets. Several years ago, the system we put forth was considered, in the department, as a model. Coming into compliance with GPRA, and developing a nationwide system of reporting that would feed into these outcomes, and that's the National Reporting System.

Let me tell you how important this is, and why this is important, and this has to do with California. Three and a half or four years ago, under the Clinton administration, we were... This was in 1993, after the passage of the Workforce Investment Act, so we are talking about 1998 or 1999. We had just signed the Workforce Investment Act. The Workforce Investment Act, as you know, takes adult education out of elementary and secondary education and puts it into the Workforce Investment Act. Our partners, in other words, are no longer K-12, but the DOL

(Department of Labor) and special education. Those are the sections, and Voc Ed by reference. The first year of the Workforce Investment Act, because of our relationship with DOL, we were in October having discussions with the National Economic Council, and the Domestic Policy Council, about future directions of adult education. Just as Department of Labor was there for future directions of employment and training under the Workforce Investment Act or Title I, we were there under Title II. In the course of these discussions, and this is with the folks from the National Economic Council, we were discussing just how underfunded we are, and yet our target population is so enormous. From the national adult education survey and the international adult education survey, we know what our target population is. In the course of these discussions however, the folks from the National Economic Council basically turned up and said you are doing God's work, go forth, but we are not convinced this is an area that we should put lots of resources into. Thank you. We pursued this question, and the response was, it's like an investment in a dark or black hole. That was like taking it right between the eyes. That's saying, you are doing wonderful work, but you really have no evidence that much of what you do has meaning to it. You certainly don't have anything quantitative to demonstrate it. You may have heard the story. The story is we said to them, how long do we have? What we were all about, by the way, was trying to [become] one of the reference programs in the State of the Union message. Everybody lines up in October and November to get into the State of the Union message. Some succeed, but most [programs] don't. We've lined up for twenty-five years and had never been mentioned.

CM: Never got mentioned.

RP: It looked like we weren't going to make it again. We would be an investment in a black hole. In other words the programs that are mentioned in the State of the Union [have obtained] a commitment from the Administration of significant public resource. So, we said, "How much time do we have to demonstrate to you that we do have measurable performance output?" The response was you have forty-eight hours. That's when we called Pat Rickard, our California counsel, and said, "Pat we want you to run the computers, we've got forty-eight hours, and by the way, we want the data reported back within the National Reporting System framework." It was just coming online. Well California did that, and why we went to CASAS was we knew we had the data. CASAS had longitudinal data as well, so we could see trends. It came back [reported] within the National Reporting System framework. We put that [data] on the table. They said, "We didn't think you had this." We said, "Yes, the system is coming into place nationally." So we walked in the door, and as you know, that year we were mentioned not once, but twice in the State of the Union message. That highlights the importance of accountability, the importance of [sound] data. That's an important part of the dialogue today between the appropriations members. It's also an important part of the dialogue now between OMB (Office of Management and Budget) and the department with its programs. Which programs are meeting the GPRA objectives? We still have a long way to go, but we've made some really significant progress, I think, in the field of adult education. We are, you know, one of the most under funded programs in the department. We're a tertiary program, we are

not a priority program. Yet I think we are a cutting edge program in many ways: in what we do, in our faculty, and the way of delivering services.

CM: Of course CASAS, they do have that longitudinal data since 1982.

RP: That is correct. It's wonderful data.

CM: A number of states have adopted that system since then.

RP: Yes.

CM: So we know that that's helpful. Okay. I have something here about funding allocations for the state. I think we've probably covered that. I don't think you've mentioned specifically what the annual appropriation is now. In the federal.

RP: It's five hundred and forty million dollars. We have moved past the half billion mark. When I first came in we were just under one hundred million, so we've come a long way percentage-wise. We still believe we have a long way to go. Our goal, and my goal, has been one billion dollars on the federal side. Until we reach that level, we will not make the intervention that we feel is so needed.

CM: We talked about the base funding that the states put up, and everyone is guaranteed the two hundred thousand and follow formulas for the rest of that. Congress has a tendency to write set-asides into legislation. You mentioned a few years ago...

RP: They write them in, and then they take them away. (both laugh)

CM: Yes. Such as for the homeless and currently we have a set-aside for EL Civics (English Literacy and Civics) and as you say, they write them in and take them away. What impact do these set-asides have on the total program, and what problems do they pose for you, and how do states respond?

RP: The EL Civics program is a set-aside within the basic grant. That is different from a set-aside that creates a discretionary grant program. We [used to] have discretionary grant programs, but we don't have any today. We do have an earmarked portion of the overall state basic grant for EL Civics. Set-asides are important in focusing on an area of critical importance.

CM: Okay.

RP: In 1988 we had a set-aside discretionary grant [program], for the National Workforce Literacy Program. At the same time, we had the homeless (McKinney Act) set-aside. We had a set-aside for the (State) Literacy Resource Centers (SLRC). Currently we have the EL Civics [program] and this is, I think, very important because it emphasizes an awareness that there has been an exponential growth in the number of ESL adult learners that we serve. This growth is no longer confined to the big five states: California, Florida, Illinois, New York, Texas. It is now national. There is not a state in the nation that is not impacted by English literacy instruction. The EL Civics combination is looking at assimilation and acculturation, [as well as] the effectiveness of ESL instruction. It's enhanced by linking [instruction] within the context of [civics] activities that are useful. [While the program is] new, contextual education is old. That's been the achievement of adult education almost from the beginning, to provide instruction within a context that is useful for adults. I do believe the EL Civics program, the new EL Civics program is taking us a step further from where we were with citizenship. I think we tended to see citizenship as a checklist of things to be memorized. In the new program, it's much more looking at how we govern ourselves, how communities work and to me that's a much more

meaningful way of bringing people from outside this country into this country. Part of their learning the language process is to learn how we govern ourselves.

CM: Is it fair to say Ron that the EL Civics program kind of grew out of the ESL Citizenship that followed the amnesty program in California?

RP: Yes. I think very definitely. I think the ESL Citizenship program in California was the prototype, without question. In terms of driving it, and this was driven from the White House, it was demographics and projected demographics. This was a trend, a significant trend of the 1990s. It is not going to stop [but will continue as] a significant trend into the twenty-first century. The concern is, in part, the disconnect between obtaining a mastery of our language, and maybe citizenship, but still not having a real grounding into what it means to be a part of this society. It was the [California] ESL Citizenship program that was the prototype for this program.

CM: How do states respond to set-asides? Do they like them, do they not like them?

RP: They hate them.

CM: To put it simply.

RP: I'm speaking [of the] state directors.

CM: Yes.

RP: State directors would much prefer to have a state grant. A state grant they [control and] determine how funds will be allocated. When you have a set-aside like this, that's another reporting requirement, it also may not meet with their interests. What's interesting, and this is probably where I stand and state directors don't agree with me on this, I find that practitioners and local programs people do like our discretionary grant programs. They do like the opportunity of applying directly, for example, to

Washington for a specific program, as opposed to maybe getting an allocation from the state. Actually, I don't know what the answer is on that.

CM: Yes.

RP: It's a mixed bag out there, and it goes both ways I guess.

CM: Set-asides like this are certainly very well liked by the community based organizations (CBO).

RP: Oh, absolutely. In fact we ought to back track. The EL Civics program, I said was in part a prototype of the [California] ESL Citizenship program and driven by demographics. Well, I should add to that. It also is very much driven by the community based organizations that were part of the old SLIAG (State Legalization and Immigrant Assistance Grant) amnesty group that [ended]. Suddenly there wasn't amnesty anymore, and they still wanted to be a player. Community based organizations, especially with English language instruction, are a powerful constituency and their voice is being heard now. That, in part, represents why we have an EL Civics program.

CM: With our fifty states we have fifty different state delivery systems for adult education. The federal funds are predominant in many states, and other states have a significant amount of state funding as well. Can you make any generalizations on the comparative funding and scope of the state programs?

RP: The comparative funding?

CM: Maybe coming at it from this other direction. About how many states have significant state appropriations in addition to the federal?

RP: A dozen.

CM: Okay.

RP: After that dozen, the next twelve states would probably be those who have set 50 percent to 60 percent state share to federal share. After that the federal share becomes increasingly more significant and it goes all the way down to just 25 percent. We have maybe eight to twelve states that are at that level They put in their minimum 25 percent, and 75 percent is then covered by federal share.

CM: So it is a bell curve?

RP: It is a bell curve. Unlike most educational programs, adult education is unique in the sense that we are a significant contributor to that delivery system. The state federal partnership is very, very critical here. Many times you hear the statistic that federal investment is only 6 percent of the total educational investment. That's true for K-12, but 30 to 40 percent of adult education funding is dependent on federal funds. The partnership we have is very critical. Your question had other components to it. Go back to it.

CM: Okay. The federal funds are predominant in many states, and other states have a significant amount of state funding as well, and if you could make any generalizations on the comparative funding and scope of the state programs? I think we've pretty much covered that.

RP: What you do find is that in those states that have just minimal state support the state staff is almost confined to one. That is really just keeping your head above water in terms of trying to manage a delivery system as complex as the one that we have. It's complex because there are multiple providers.

CM: Yes.

RP: That's kind of unique. As you well know, we don't have the stability of extensive full-time delivery staff. It's principally part-time and volunteer.

CM: Again, on these different state delivery systems, in California our adult education is primarily through the public school districts, as well as about 20 percent through the community colleges. Community based organizations are eligible for the federal program, federal funds that come into the state. I know for example that adult education in Arizona is through the community colleges, and in Tennessee it's through the county. Is there a predominant delivery system throughout the country, or is it just a total hodgepodge? Do you see any trends with respect to states changing their delivery systems?

RP: In terms of the state governance over adult education, there has been a trend toward community colleges. This is as opposed to being under K-12. That's in terms of overall governance under Title II. Ten years ago, as I recall, 78 to 82 percent of our delivery system was through LEAs (local education agencies). Today, we're down to 60 to 62 percent. The expansions of the delivery systems that are coming into place have been through colleges and through community based organizations. It's about 12 percent to 15 percent for community colleges and then 12 percent to 14 percent for community based organizations. How do you add all of this up? We are still sustaining a multiple delivery system. The local education agency is absolutely critical to the system. The LEA is still the predominant one. If there's been a decline, and I think an unfortunate decline, it has been a loss of funding by discretionary grants. There are fewer libraries, I believe, within the adult education delivery system than there were. Some of them have been given a new green light

through the community technology fund, another delivery system out there that is very diverse in terms of its providers. More so than what we have in adult education. No, it's actually the same eligibility, it's just very broad. Those are the trends I've seen.

CM: Ron, what impact do . . . As far as publicity is concerned, there is a lot of publicity through the volunteer in literacy programs, and yet we've talked about professionalizing the field. How do you balance these two, and what impact does the volunteer program have on trying to get the field professionalized?

RP: The volunteer sector is a critically important part of our delivery.

CM: Yes, it is.

RP: That's especially true for adult learners who are most deficient in language skills and basic skills.

CM: The lowest level.

RP: The lower level, where they need a one on one tutorial relationship. As a field, if you take the three to four million [adults] who we serve, probably no more than eight hundred thousand are at that level. The rest are at higher levels. I think as a nation, we are moving up in terms of the level. We are moving more into the intermediate level of instruction. We have the one big exception, which is the ESL, where we start at EL literacy and EL development. What was your question again?

CM: The balance between the volunteers and the professionalization of the field.

RP: For us to really seriously tackle the professionalization of the field, several things have to happen. There has to be a major, major commitment on the part of the federal government and the states in this area of activity. It has to be awareness that this is a

critical area of education, and we as a nation have to take ownership of that. At the moment we are the best-kept secret in society.

CM: Still.

RP: And, still are. If we are talking about professionalization, which means investment, then increasing that public investment, state and federal, so we could sustain full-time professionals and offer them a professional career tract [is necessary]. It's going to take a tremendous investment. Professionalization can only come if the collegiate sector provides sufficient graduate training for that. There's been some growth in the past few years, it's gone both ways, we've lost some graduate institutions and we've gained a few. We are nowhere in a position to really educate the number of people we'd need. I think there needs to be an investment both in terms of training, and an investment in terms of salaries and incentives, to be in this arena, and there probably needs to be an investment in some kind of national certification system. We, as a field, have kind of fought [about this].

CM: Danced around it for twenty years, at least.

RP: We've danced around it, and danced around it, and so forth. If we are serious about professionalization, it's very important. One thing that the National Reporting System is doing for us, it's raising the perception that we seem to know what we are doing. We are demonstrating gain. The [perception] that we've fought and come up against is the stereotype that we don't know what we are doing because we use volunteers, we aren't well trained, we are part-timers and it is not a professional field. The truth is, it's a very professional field, but we do not have the marks of professional certification that we need to have in the public's [eye].

CM: The public agency employees can take a more active part in training volunteers where they are used.

RP: That's right.

[end tape one, side B; begin tape two]

October 2, 2001

CM: This is Cuba Miller continuing the interview with Ronald Pugsley in Washington D.C. on October 2, 2001. Ron, this fall Sylvia Ramirez (ESL department chair, Mira Costa Community College) attended a national ESL symposium and said that you gave an excellent presentation on accountability. We need to talk about that. The past few years we've seen an increasing demand for accountability in the adult education programs. How much of that is in the legislation, and how much is in the federal and state plans, and what has prompted the increased demand for data?

RP: The accountability movement, in part, began as I suggested earlier, with GPRA, the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993. The provisions of GPRA we began to really implement in 1998 relied on performance reports that we received from states. [These were] a version of the National Reporting System as we now know it today. Title II basically picks up on the theme though in requiring all states to negotiate with the federal government, performance indicators, performance outcomes with regards to the services they provide. In turn, Title II requires that the states negotiate with local providers on performance outcomes and performance levels. The performance accountability system, which is very much tied in with GPRA, is also tied in with the school reform movement of the past decade. It is just woven throughout.

CM: In the fabric of the adult education . . .

RP: In the new legislation. This office carries it out through the National Reporting System.

CM: I know that you know there have been complaints from the field about this increased requirement. To the extent that some agencies have even dropped out of the federal program because of it. Just as an example, in California, in 1999 there were three hundred and forty nine agencies that participated in the federal program. In 2000, with the beginning of the data reporting, that dropped down to one hundred and ninety. That's over one hundred and fifty drops.

RP: Are those primarily community based organizations?

CM: In 2001 it kind of maintained and went to one hundred and ninety-five. Of those three hundred and forty nine, two hundred and seventy were adult schools. In 2000 one hundred and thirty five were adult schools. Those are your public agencies that dropped half in that one year.

RP: So the most significant drop is public agencies.

CM: My question about this, and can you comment on it, is this drop common nationwide, and what's being done to help local agencies meet this requirement? It's obviously a problem.

RP: California, in this instance I think, is a special case. The drop in providers and the corresponding significant drop in enrollment, from over 1.2 [million] almost down to four hundred thousand five hundred in California is due [in part] to the National Reporting System, which removed all double counting. It's impossible to double

count under the National Reporting System. Equally significant is the pay for performance system.

CM: Okay.

RP: That California brought in.

CM: Because we are paying by benchmarks.

RP: That is correct. That is very significant. While I don't know for sure, but I believe there was a similar drop in the state of Florida when it introduced pay for performance, or by benchmarks, four years ago. There was an initial drop. In California though, we have those two factors: the National Reporting System and the pay for performance. We also, it seems to me, have a situation, and I haven't fully seen the data on this, where under welfare reform the new legislation of moving people into jobs is also a factor in the decline in enrollment. Another factor in the decline of enrollment, it seems to me, and this may be providers as well, revolves around basically the end of SLIAG.

CM: Yes.

RP: The final throes. It's over. I don't think anyone has a real picture on this. We've had dialogues and discussions with California on this, but your question was, is this nationwide. Nationwide we are seeing advances in enrollment. We are not aware of any other state where the community-based organizations have fallen off the system, and public institutions have fallen off the system, as they have in California. I have to subscribe that, in part, to pay for performance.

CM: The pay for performance.

RP: The benchmark system which went into California.

CM: Which on one hand you consider good.

RP: Yes.

CM: But you don't like the impact that it has had on the size of the program.

RP: As I said, California went right to the edge with two reforms coming in [at the same time]. The accountability through NRS [and] pay for performance, which is another accountability system.

CM: In point of fact, we are going to be doing some research on this, this fall. I've been asked to help with telephone surveys.

RP: That's wonderful.

CM: We've got to find out why.

RP: I think that will be very helpful to all of us because these questions are being asked. We certainly asked them. Until you mentioned it, I didn't realize that there was a fall off in the public sector. I knew there had been significant fall off in the community-based organizations. My sense is, and from our discussions with California recently, is that we should see this tide turning back. We will again be bringing back into the fold providers that are no longer there.

CM: That the first year around couldn't quite see themselves doing it.

RP: The first or second year, that is correct.

CM: Couldn't see doing it until it got shaken out a bit. Ron, I know you have had a very special interest in distance learning. You alluded to this in terms of need for increased access. There have been a number of both national, and state sponsored, distance learning initiatives. Tell us what you've done at the national level first, and then whatever you know about state projects.

RP: It was five or six years ago at a meeting in Pasadena where maybe ten states were brought together. It was a symposium, a workshop if you like, on prospective enrollments. At that meeting I still remember, not Jerry Kilbert but Ray Eberhard saying, on the basis of the California projections into the twenty-first century, even if California had all the resources in the world, there was no way [it] would have sufficient seats for the target population, for the bulging, burgeoning immigration [projections]. That was felt by the other major ESL states that were there. In fact all of the major ESL states were there: California, Florida, New York, Illinois, New Jersey, Texas and Arizona. The general consensus of the group was that we seriously, as a delivery system, needed to think of new ways of delivering services. We looked very carefully at the level of our enrollment, which basically said to us, in terms of our target population, we impact maybe 6 to 8 percent of that population. One could say that our intervention is at the margin, at best. Over time, we were basically sustaining that level of intervention. As we all looked out, we said we really need to look into distance learning. It was at that time that we began working with Intelecom, which is a consortium of . . .

CM: Community colleges.

RP: Community colleges in California. [Intelecom is] an industry leader in the development of distance learning products, [especially] at post-secondary level. Intelecom was at the meeting. In fact, they were sponsoring this symposium. Over time, and it took us about two years, we worked out a very unique collaborative process of leveraging resources among five of the six major ESL states. [Subsequently, we] launched what became known as *Crossroads Café*, [followed by]

a civics program, *On Common Ground*. We are now into a third wave, which is family literacy, *Madison Heights*. The department is funding a special documentary that will accompany *Madison Heights*, or can be used as a standalone. [It is called *Lifelines*.]

CM: That's for family literacy?

RP: Primarily family literacy, yes. Although *Lifelines* can be used in almost any dimension. In fact we've seen some of the takes and they are so powerful. They are going to be wonderful recruiting tools, especially to show incoming adult learners, who have a sense that this is only my problem and I'm alone in this. They will be able to identify [with others], and I think it's going to be a powerful [series]. [The case histories are] powerful stories told beautifully in a depth I've never seen before. I give five stars or kudos to Intelecom. They are very, very good and they know their business, not only in the development of the sitcoms, but also in the documentary. So there's been that activity.

CM: That's been a collaborative between the states and the federal office?

RP: Between the states and the federal office. The federal office [provided] evaluations. We [contracted] for formative and summative evaluations by the University of Michigan. Subsequently, we funded a national evaluation of the use of *Crossroads*. A pilot that substantiated the results, whether it's used in the classroom, in the hybrid form, or exclusively within the home environment. This is very important information. I think we will continue in this. There are other products that we've been involved with under the Star Schools [Program]: workplace essentials, and the GED (General Educational Development) online. We've been involved very much in

the ALMA (Adult Literacy Media Alliance] project out of New York, which is TD411, and then we had our own Cyberstep project.

CM: Yes.

RP: [Cyberstep is a] West Coast and East Coast collaboration, [which has] developed *English for All* that's at a lower level than where . . .

CM: *Crossroads Café.*

RP: I think it's very promising. What was interesting, we showed this [new product] at a recent [ESL] symposium we had here in Washington to some of our best ESL teachers in the country. I just loved the reaction because it didn't matter whether you liked it, or you disliked it, there were so many instructional moments in it. If you dislike it, then use it as an instructional [case study] within that context. You can use it anyway you want. It works beautifully. I'm very excited about it.

CM: Those were the materials developed under Cyberstep in Los Angeles?

RP: The Los Angeles Unified School District, and I think they've done a beautiful job. My hat is off to them. I know they are going to be developing work text materials and teaching materials to accompany this new series. Because we paid for the whole project, it's going to be provided free.

CM: Public domain?

RP: Public domain to all states so they can get it into the system. We are very excited about it.

CM: ALMA basically had the basic skills section of that big project, and CD-ROMs are being developed?

RP: Are being developed.

CM: With these materials?

RP: It's going to be a [nice] package when we get this all together, yes. What we've discussed here is really our first wave of looking at technology. It's interesting. I have to give the field a great deal of credit for coming together, and it was pulling teeth. You spend a California dollar for something that might benefit someone in New York. That's unheard of, or vice versa. We got over that, and we came together and I think it was with the realization that it's only when we come together, when we can leverage funds, federal funds and state funds, that we can create a critical mass [to] develop products that really are very high quality. Otherwise, we are into development of products that won't take us very far. We have a long way still to go in our evaluation. I think the next stage is the development of an infrastructure so that these products can [be] delivered in our system.

CM: Are you familiar with the California Distance Learning Project (CDLP, Dennis Porter, Director)?

RP: Yes. Out of the 5 percent*?

CM: Yes.

RP: Yes, and I've seen some of it.

CM: They kind of sponsor the 5 percent projects in California.

RP: I am somewhat conversant with that.

CM: Then they also [develop] and post lessons online.

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* Upon application to and approval by the California Department of Education, 5 percent of an adult school's total program can be used for alternative methods (other than classroom based) of delivering instruction.

RP: California has been a real leader in this. California has a real need to have it succeed down the road. Still I don't think California really has yet the evaluation that it needs as to what works, and how best to make this work.

CM: Why does the evaluation component always fall through the cracks?

RP: Well.

CM: Cost is probably one thing.

RP: Cost is a factor. It's also not really in the forefront of designer's thinking. I would say every project that we have, and I think we are coming to this conclusion, every project that we fund should have also included an evaluation and dissemination component in it. Right now we are struggling with Cyberstep. We did not build in dissemination.

CM: Yes, the dissemination.

RP: Here we've got this wonderful product, but we did not build [dissemination] into the plan, and that's a shortfall on our part.

CM: That moves into another question I had, Ron, about the need for better dissemination, and what needs to be done to facilitate that?

RP: We are sponsoring this week, as a matter of fact, a conference on research to practice. We are bringing into town some of the leading researchers in our field, and in K-12, who have both a current, and historical perspective, on the development of educational products. We'll question them about educational products and adult education. We'll be evaluating past and current dissemination models to try to see if we can tease out, or discern, what works and what doesn't work. You don't have to go very far in our field to talk to practitioners and know that they are not in any

position to read research studies. They are not about to read research studies. They do not have the time. They need to have it presented to them in a very special way. There are a number of models out there that I think we need to hone in on, and then really work at it. We no longer have the old NDN.

CM: National Diffusion Network, yes.

RP: It's not with us any longer.

CM: Maybe you could get one started just for adult education.

RP. Yes, just adult education. This is very, very critical.

CM: Yes. At one time California had a dissemination project modeled after the National Dissemination Network. Dissemination Network for Adult Education (DNAE, Jane Zinner, Director) is what we called it in California. It went on for seven years.

RP: Seven years?

CM: Yes, 1980 to 1987.

RP: So this is where you'd be sponsoring, through technical assistance, the best practices?

CM: There was a catalog that came out a couple of times a year with the programs that had been evaluated and judged exemplary.

RP: This is very critical, especially as we move more to the Internet, or online, programming and training. I think our teachers need to have some assurance that what they see has gone through some criteria of evaluation and effectiveness. Right now you can find out just about anything you want, and it's not necessarily effective.

CM: What's really key here . . .

RP: This is a job for OTAN.

CM: . . . is that the training goes. It's not just dissemination of materials, but the training that accompanies the dissemination.

RP: Absolutely.

CM: Or, it won't take hold.

RP: In both the narrow sense of new products and training, and the larger sense of training for our field, it's probably the biggest issue we have. We need the resources to be there to help and make sure we have that training.

CM: Um.

RP: We saw that in distance learning, by the way. It was a wonderful study that was done by City University of New York. It was at the same time we were doing a study on *Crossroads Café* through Development Associates. That was a unique [opportunity] where the state was sponsoring a City University of New York study, and we were sponsoring Development Associates' study of *Crossroads*, and because of that we were able to jointly kind of meld them together as well. They were interconnected in design, which only enhanced the overall product. One of the fascinating things about the New York side that I loved, it was very revealing. They were working with their best ESL teachers. Put that in quotation marks. They divided them into two groups. There was a group who really went through training on the use of software. Lynn Savage came out and trained. They were trained in the use of these products, and there's a wonderful training package that goes along with it.

CM: Package that goes along with it.

RP: The other group of top ESL teachers were given *Crossroads* [without training].

CM: Nice package.

RP: This is a nice package and you use it anyway you want. The latter group just failed. Everyone said sure I can handle this. It's not that easy. There's an art to this, and there is a knowledge basis that comes with this. For the group that was trained, it went beautifully. It just went remarkably well. That's a lesson, a very significant lesson for us. We just don't develop these products and push them out. That's my concern right now with *English for All*, the Cyberstep . . .

CM: The Cyberstep English [materials]?

RP: We are going to distribute it everywhere, but we aren't accompanying it with a national training system for our master teachers, like we just did with the GED, which we did in [alignment with] the training materials. Now there is an interesting thing on the horizon. We are going to be meeting in Michigan, in a month or so. Twenty states basically came to the department and said, "We need to be brought together in an institute, can you do that?" Can you bring us all together where we can talk about how to develop an infrastructure in the use of distance learning materials? How to put into place pilots where we can get some evidence on effectiveness or lack of effectiveness and how to get technical assistance? Technical assistance [is], in the first instance, our master trainers who need to be trained to carry out [new programs]. We are going to have this conference. It is, I think, a serious effort on the part of our field [to be responsible in using distance learning materials].

CM: Those twenty states that led to the conference you are having this week on research to practice?

RP: No. [This week's conference is primarily for researchers.]

CM: No? Okay.

RP: This week's conference we did through another [venue]. This came out of our national leadership activities account. It actually came out of [a recommendation by] the state advisory group that we have. The department needs to seriously look at what works, and what doesn't work in dissemination. We think it's a very big issue and we don't have the answers so we need to bring some people together to talk about it.

CM: Briefly, Ron, a little bit about the relationship between your office and the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) and kind along with it, because I think you can address both of them at the same time. Periodically other legislation that impacts adult education doesn't come out of your office, such as the welfare legislation and the amnesty legislation that was managed by [Health and Human Services].

RP: ESEA [Elementary and Secondary Education Act] and Even Start.

CM: The job training legislation.

RP: All of that.

CM: It impacts adult education, but you don't have the responsibility for implementing them. The same thing for the National Institute for Literacy, that's not under your wing. Can you talk about the relationship between these other programs?

RP: The National Institute of Literacy, of course, came out of the 1998 legislation, the reauthorization of the Adult Education Act. Actually the institute came . . .

CM: It came out in 1991, the twenty-fifth anniversary.

RP: That's right, that's right. I'm off a decade on that.

CM: Yes.

RP: It's a governmental agency, with semi-autonomous status, and it's overseen by three agencies: The Department of Education, HHS (Health and Human Services] and the

Department of Labor, and it's basically governed, if you like, through a White House appointed advisory board. The mandate to the National Institute for Literacy is one of advocacy, public awareness and information dissemination. There is research built into its mandate, but it came into being, in large measure, to bring about better coordination between what was going on in the Department of Education in the area of literacy, and literacy related activities, what was going on in the Department of Labor in literacy, and literacy related employment and training activities, what was going on in HHS, for example in health literacy and Head Start. It was maybe fifteen years ago we did a study on all of the federal programs that have an adult education and literacy component to it. There were multiple programs out there we worked with. The National Institute for Literacy came into being to try to better coordinate these various strands. It also identified itself very quickly with the [volunteer and library-based] literacy components of adult education, as opposed to the state administered grant program. They've tried, in some ways, to rectify [through a liaison relationship, the fact that] the Council of State Directors [is not represented on their Board]. Our office has had a very mixed relationship, but [it has improved] over the past three or four years by both sides developing projects in common, working collaboratively, and in many ways furthering each others' objectives. We were very supportive of the work of the Institute in developing an Agenda for Action and subsequent strategies for implementation of the Agenda. We are working with the Institute on joint projects, which tries to bring the National Reporting System into some relationship with the Equipped for the Future, which is a major project of NIFL.

CM: Of NIFL.

RP: NIFL's most major activities have been the LINCS system, its information systems, and we support three of their informational centers: one on assessment, one on learning disabilities and one on performance objectives. They have about twelve of them now. This is a resource base, which, in large measure, OTAN is kind of a prototype for all that's going on. We do not have a really good evaluation, or a good reading on how effective that is, on who uses the system, but we all think we ought to be working [on this], and we are. NIFFL has clearly played an important advocacy role for adult education or literacy on the Hill, and with other agencies. It's an important body, which needs to be supported, and we certainly support it. It's able to perform certain things that we are not able to perform.

CM: We've talked about a number of specific things, Ron, and you've made some very gracious statements about California adult education programs. Do you see areas . . .

RP: Do you want me to make some bad statements? (laugh)

CM: Well, no. I'm couching this in very diplomatic terms. Do you see areas of improvement that are needed in California?

RP: I understand the pressures in California, being almost entirely an ESL state. It's not quite that, but [California is] at the 80 percent mark in terms of ESL services. We have had discussions with California twice, I believe, over the [fact that] the system is not serving its Black or Caucasian populations proportionally. We understand the ESL pressures in California, however.

CM: You understand who shows up at the door?

RP: I understand that. We have said to the state there needs to be a balance. It was California that really launched a very significant assessment system.

CM: Yes.

RP: CASAS. In California though, [originally] they only partially implemented that in the state. You had a significant sector of the state that was never a part of it, so you had to use [adjustment measures]. Now it's gone over the whole state, and it's a struggle. It's a major undertaking by the state when we say, "I'm sorry folks, you are all going to have to be a part of this now." I support that, but originally...

CM: It was a federal program.

RP: It was just a federal program.

CM: Now it extends to all the agencies.

RP: All the state, the whole program. The wonderful thing about California is that you have everything there. You have [some of] the most exemplary programs in the nation, and you have some others that are just on the margins at best. That's the wonderful thing about California. I think one of the issues that is going to be with you for a long time is how to work effectively with the volunteer sector. How to work more effectively with the community based organizations, which are significant in numbers and can be a significant force, without diluting the delivery of services. As I said, I think California has done wonderful things in trying to raise the quality of services, in every respect. On the other hand, there's this pull [as to who will deliver services and] we're not sure of the direction we are going to go. Those are some of my observations.

CM: Just a couple more things, Ron, and we'll be through here. What do you see as future directions for adult education? Where would you like to see the federal program go, what's needed and what's feasible?

RP: First of all, I'll deal with the subject that always comes to mind, in any adult education discussion, and that is there needs to be a significant, significant increase in resources for us to accomplish the task that we have before us. Related to that, it seems to me, is that there needs to be recognition given to the adult education and literacy delivery system as a national delivery system. It is a major delivery system. Adult education is one of the best-kept secrets in this country. For it to do what it is being asked to do, and this is one of things that is so incredible about this system, we are being asked to play a significant role in employment and training, welfare reform, in working with adult and special populations at greatest risk, in working with corrections.

CM: Working with immigrants.

RP: Working with immigrants, and the more recent area, which is going to really emerge, is working with seniors, and working on health literacy. I don't know a sector in this country, in terms of individuals that are in need, where literacy isn't a component. We are in all of those areas, [and] as you said, [immigration as well]. Someone said to me the other day, maybe you ought to confine your work to first level readers* in this country. I said, "What's the implication to that?" [Would this] really serve immigrants well? Where is there an alternative system? There is not another alternative system. So, recognition [of adult education's mission] is very important. I'd like to see something happen here that is happening today in the United Kingdom, where the [U.K. is implementing the recommendations] of a national commission that explored literacy needs in the U.K. The government has launched a comprehensive

* This refers to the lowest level of readers identified by the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS)

initiative to shore up the services, to provide the resources, both in terms of the content and the services to serve [adult learners]. It's a wonderful initiative. If I look at where we are today, we've [made progress] percentage-wise over the last seven or eight years. Since I've been here, [we've increased] our level of authorization from under one hundred million to over half a billion [dollars]. [Yet, we have not effectively] galvanized the nation to address the level of risk [in not dealing with issues of] adult learners. My hope is that down the road, we can commission a study by a national commission [with the clout to attract] policy makers at the federal level. Our agenda for action that the whole field worked on for a couple of years hasn't [attracted much attention]. It's more or less the field speaking to the field. We need [a report of the kind that] preceded the National Literacy Act in 1991. I've talked about resources; I've talked about raising public awareness. My sense is that we're just beginning. We have a wonderful opportunity to develop new [ways] for delivering services. Some of them we don't even have in our consciousness yet. I think technology is going to be a powerful tool for us, but we are still at the beginning stages of this.

CM: You need to bring John (Fleischman) out here to work out of your office.

RP: I think having John in here would be absolutely wonderful. I would agree with you on that.

CM: Because he is the most knowledgeable . . . .

RP: He is an absolutely wonderful man. I've indicated I think we are making inroads for the first time in looking at the issue of adults with learning disabilities, which is a significant portion or percentage of our adult learning population. We have not really

[dealt with this issue], we have not given it the attention or the resources that it is due. I've mentioned health literacy as an emerging area. One of the great drop-dead statistics has been given to us by the medical profession. [In a recent study], medical researchers [found a correlation between] low-level literacy [and health costs] in this county that is costing us annually seventy-three billion dollars

CM: In health services?

RP: In health services. Now that is a figure that should be a wake up call to everybody.

CM: It didn't come from educators, it came from the medical profession.

RP: The medical profession is concerned about it and concluded last month a wonderful symposium on this issue. We brought medical folks together with our adult educators. [Finally, I can] visualize a time when the workplace is a learning environment, in the finest sense, and it's life long learning in that respect. Business and industry and unions could join with us, and make a partnership of it.

CM: That's where Germany has been strong.

RP: Oh, very strong. One of my great disappointments [is in the area of workplace education]. It's [an instructive] lesson in politics. In 1988 two interesting discretionary grant programs were funded at the same [time and] level. One was known as Even Start and the other was known as National Workplace Literacy. If I had placed my money at that time on the one that was going to take off it, would have been the National Workplace [Literacy program]. Labor was talking about global competitiveness, they were beating the drum, business was talking about it, and we wre all in agreement. This one is going to take off and fly.

CM: It was just the opposite.

RP: It was just the opposite and eventually it was zero funded. The one that has taken off and grown into a hundred and fifty million dollar state administered grant is Even Start or Family Literacy. What were the dynamics behind [Even Start's success]? What brought about success here and [not with Workplace Literacy]? That's another story.

CM: That's another story. Okay, Ron, I know you need to go. Is there anything else you want to say before we bring this to a close?

RP. The only thing I would say, and I think I established at the outset of this discussion, I'm an impressive bureaucrat here. I've been here thirty-three years, I've been involved in all sections of the department: higher education, elementary and secondary, the legal side, time evaluations, and special education. I've seen all of it.

[end tape two, side A; begin side B]

October 2, 2001

RP: As I said, I've [worked in most] sectors of education. I'm delighted to be here with the adult education folks. Adult education is, as I suggested, a tertiary priority in this department. It's not a primary area of concern as is K-12, or higher up, but there [has always been] something dynamic that goes on in this field that sustains it. How else could something that operates on a shoestring have lasted for over a quarter of a century, or even longer? You could go back historically. This country has had adult education right from the beginning. That's the wonderful thing about this field, it's the people. The people who work in [adult education] not only give a great deal, they receive so much. The synergy that takes place between adult learners and our adult teachers is real and wonderful.

CM: And nearly everyone who works in the field feels the same way. It's what is really gratifying.

RP: Very gratifying indeed. So it's gratifying [for me] to be in this field.

CM: Thank you Ron for this interview. Not only for the interview, but for the years of leadership that you've provided to adult education, both nationally and in California. I very much appreciate the time given for this.

RP: Thank you for this opportunity. It's been wonderful.

CM: Good.

RP: It's been fun.

CM: This interview was completed as part of the California Adult Education Oral History Project.

END OF INTERVIEW

Ronald S. Pugsley

SUMMARY

National Director of the State-administered grant programs in Adult Education. Responsibilities include administering programs authorized by Title 2 of the Workforce Investment Act, *Adult Education and Family Literacy Act*. These programs include: Adult education and literacy services, including workplace literacy services; family literacy services; and English literacy programs. Responsible for administering evaluation and technical assistance activities funded under National Leadership Activities of the Act. The State-administered grant program was funded at $540 million, and evaluation and technical assistance at $14 million in 2001. These programs serve approximately three million adult learners annually. Responsible for administering of Community Technology Centers Program (CTC). Over 300 CTCs were funded in fiscal year 2001.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1968 – 2002	United States Department of Education
1984 - 2002	Director, Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL), Office of Vocational and Adult Education, US Department of Education
	Acting Director, Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL), Office of Vocational and Adult Education, US Department of Education
	Chief, Program Services Branch,
	Strategic Planning

HONORS AND RECOGNITION

Presidential Exchange Executive
Senior Executive Service, Department of Health, Education and Welfare
Senior Executive Service, US Department of Education
GED Testing Distinguished Service Award

BOARD AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Member, Interdisciplinary Journal for Adult Literacy Educators
Member, Window on the World of Family Literacy
Advisor, Adult Literacy Media Alliance (ALMA)
Advisor, *Crossroads Café*
Advisor, Literacy Link

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