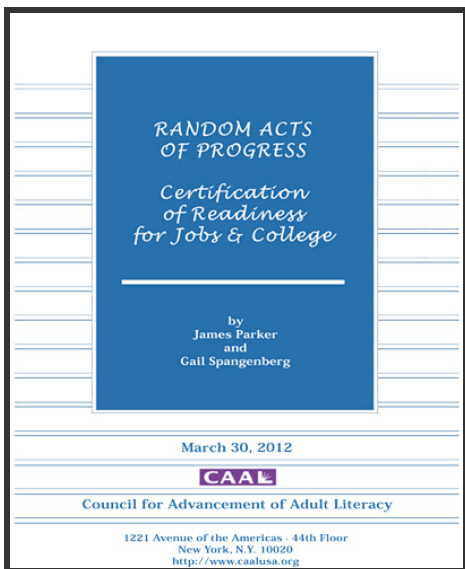


Issue No. 26, March 30, 2012

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~ As Spring bursts forth, please consider a much-needed blossom for CAAL ~



## RANDOM ACTS OF PROGRESS

CAAL today issued the final paper in its 2009-2011 series of Roundtables. [\*\*RANDOM ACTS OF PROGRESS: Certification of Readiness for Jobs & College\*\*](#) reports on a project to examine the issue of adult learners' certification, including a September 2011 Roundtable of two dozen state and national leaders. Written by two CAAL principals, Policy/Research Associate James Parker and President Gail Spangenberg, it reviews exemplary activities among four states (AR, CA, GA, OH) and looks at key features of the major national certification programs. It also summarizes the findings of four major research reports on certification and discusses unresolved hard questions and issues in this complex area. It concludes with next-step recommendations for building awareness, improving data collection efforts, and conducting research needed to guide understanding and further development efforts.

**RANDOM ACTS** is introduced by Mary Ann Corley, principal research analyst at the American Institutes for Research, and Mark Musick, president emeritus of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and Founding Chair of Georgia Work Ready Regional Industry Network. Ms. Corley

speaks of the report as "a call to action" and notes that "implicit...is the challenge to consider certification in the context of system-wide reforms" to prepare students for jobs and college. Mr. Musick says that "Mark Twain and CAAL are both right. Twain warned us that it is not just the things we don't know that cost us most dearly, it's the things we 'know' that aren't so. CAAL'S **RANDOM ACTS OF PROGRESS** grabs us with a bit of a reverse twist on Mark Twain's message. CAAL says that it's not that we don't know what to do about certifying American's readiness for jobs and college...we know a lot...but not for sure, because our impressive efforts are in their early stages, largely disconnected, and unevaluated. This is not a formula for success. But it can be a foundation on which to build."

The report's authors conclude with this observation: "Developing return-on-investment evidence is stressed as a priority in various ways in this report. But we should point out that return on non-investment may be even more crucial. The cost to our society and our economy will be staggering if we do not provide the basic and other workforce instructional services called for in study after study [including [Reach Higher, America](#) of the National Commission on Adult Literacy], if we fail to meet the needs of our large and growing ESL population, if we do not find ways to more fully engage the business community, and if we continue our haphazard approach to college- and job-readiness certification."

The report is available from the CAAL website at <http://www.caalusa.org/RandomActs.pdf>. Hard copies are available for purchase. Contact [bheitner@caalusa.org](mailto:bheitner@caalusa.org) for details.



## NEWS IN BRIEF

On March 20, U.S. Representatives John Tierney, George Miller, and Ruben Hinojosa introduced a House Democratic bill (HR4227), the Workforce Investment Act of 2012, to reform and reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. This bill takes the bipartisan Senate WIA Draft as its starting point. It is the Democratic alternative to the Republican's Workforce Investment Improvement Act of 2012 (HR4297) introduced just yesterday (March 29) by Rep. Foxx on behalf of Reps. McKeon and Heck. Rep. Foxx chairs the Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. As the process unfolds to merge these two bills, CAAL will help as it can to press for sound provisions and policies for Adult Education as part of an integrated adult education and workforce skills development system. In the meantime, on March 27, CAAL sent [letters of support and appreciation](#) to Reps. Tierney, Miller, and Hinojosa. We have not yet reviewed the new Republican bill, which combines three earlier bills by Reps. Foxx, McKeon, and Heck.

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