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# “Oh, good, here’s someone who’s giving workshops on what to do in a classroom!”



**Linda Avitabile has been director of education at Highbridge Community Life Center for nine years.**

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*When I first started teaching GED, I went to the LAC to use the library to find materials for my GED classes. Since I fell into this field with absolutely no education or background, I thought, “Oh, good, here’s someone who’s giving workshops on what to do in a classroom!” Now my teachers have learned about the GED 2002 at LAC.*

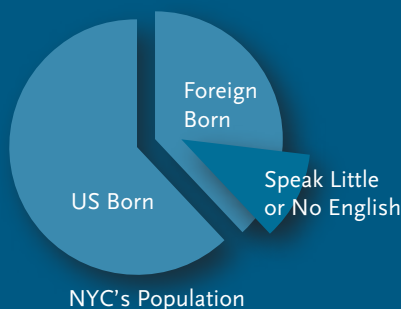
*As a program manager, I went to the Program Managers’ Series at the LAC on the Workforce Investment Act. I’ve been a program manager for 14 years and this was the first time I was in the same room with policymakers. I have to think that the points we made at those LAC-arranged meetings had something to do with some of the policy changes that have come down this year.*

*Another place where the LAC has been helpful is data assessment. Venu Thelakkat, director of data analysis at LAC, helped me use ALIES [Adult Literacy Information and Evaluation System] data to track student progress over multiple years based on a few variables. We learned that we need to follow up more carefully with first-year students who drop out before the second year. A lot of those students are poised to make great progress if they just come back for that second year.*

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*The GED in Spanish, the program Rosa took, we added as part of our needs assessment. We received a mini-grant from the LAC to develop a survey to assess student needs. We were able to collect data on the demand for classes in citizenship and Spanish GED. Without taking that assessment approach, I don’t know that it would have occurred to us that we needed to do Spanish GED.*

## English for Speakers of Other Languages



38% of New York City's population is foreign born.

1 million of these immigrants speak little or no English.

# Services and Programs for the Literacy Community

The LAC supports the work of educational programs that help New Yorkers build better lives. We provide services to programs in:

- Adult literacy
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Civics and citizenship
- GED and secondary school preparation
- Family, youth, and after-school literacy
- Workforce preparation

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## Professional Development

In the 2001–2002 program year, the LAC Adult Literacy, Youth and Family Literacy, and Instructional Technology units

provided 65 professional development opportunities at our site at 32 Broadway. Over 1,800 literacy program staff and volunteers attended these workshops.

Our staff had planned an ambitious curriculum of professional development events for the program year that began in September 2001. Workshops that met monthly as a series and institutes lasting 2–3 days were to be the vehicle for in-depth training, which would have a lasting impact on learners' lives.

*And then the world changed.* Our September events were cancelled, including the opening workshop in our GED 2002 Series that was to take place on September 11. Because our building was closed, the professional development staff worked from their homes to prepare a forum entitled “Addressing the Impact of the World Trade Center Crisis,” which was delivered on September 28. In light of the devastating impact September 11 had on undereducated and immigrant New Yorkers and the programs that serve them, we decided to rethink many of the emphases we had planned for the year.

In October, we went forward with our curriculum. However, in many cases we added new sessions and new emphases to deal with the city's crisis. Below are a few of the highlights from last year's professional development efforts.

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## Adult Literacy

**GED 2002.** A new high school equivalency test took effect in January 2002.

The GED 2002 Series walked teachers through the changes in the test and showed them how to teach the more rigorous content and the higher-order thinking skills required by the new test. In the wake of September 11, we also added a special session on Lesson Planning in the Context of Current Events.

**Program Managers' Series.** Initiated in spring 2000, the Program Managers' Series continued in 2001–2002 with an emphasis on the new state and federal requirements for reporting student and program outcomes. Managers of literacy and ESOL programs discussed the impact of the new rules on their students, their staff, and their funding.

## ESOL/Civics

**Culture in the Classroom Institute.** After September 11, many teachers found themselves dealing with cultural conflicts, stereotypes, and prejudice in the classroom.

This two-day institute explored how the cultural backgrounds and assumptions immigrant students bring to the classroom can affect their learning.

**Popular Education.** A grassroots approach to problem solving, popular education empowers adults with the ability to tackle local issues as they build their communication skills in English. This two-session workshop allowed teachers to experience popular education techniques as if they were classroom participants.