Oral History Interview
with
Aryola Taylor

This is a 71-page PDF document using the Adobe Acrobat Reader plug-in. You may click on section names below to view individual parts. Use the Adobe tool bar (inside the OTAN frame) to navigate through the document and or to print a document.

To save this PDF document to your hard drive, go to the File menu, choose "Save As," and enter a suitable name, including the ".pdf" extension. (For example, if the PDF file is called "History," then you will need to save it as "History.pdf").

Cover

Table of Contents

(the page numbers on the table of contents may be different from those at the bottom of the screen)

Restrictions, Literary Rights, Quotations

Preface

Interview History

Interviews

Index

Biographical Information

OTAN activities are funded by contract #9000 of the Federal P.L. 105-220, Section 223, from the Adult Education Office, California Department of Education. However, the content does not necessarily reflect the position of that department or of the U.S. Department of Education.

California Department of Education
Adult Education Oral History Project

Oral History Interview

with

ARYOLA TAYLOR

Los Angeles Unified School District, 1965-

Project Director, Adult Literacy Instructors' Training Institute (ALIT)
1990-1995

Advisor, Division of Adult and Occupational Education
Adult Literacy/Adult Basic Education Program, 1978-1990

Project Director, Watts ABE Outreach Recruitment and Retention Program
1975-1978

Branch Coordinator, Jordan-Locke Community Adult School
1973-1975

Instructor, Jordan-Locke Community Adult School
1965-1973

October 27, 1995

Los Angeles, California

By Linda L. West

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RESTRICTIONS, LITERARY RIGHTS, QUOTATIONS.....v

PREFACE.....vi

INTERVIEW HISTORY.....vii

INTERVIEW October 27, 1995

[Tape 1, Side A].....1

Concerns about adult illiteracy and the California and national response--Need to do a better job of addressing the literacy needs of native English-speakers--Issue of workplace literacy--Economic issues of recruitment and retention--Characteristics of adult basic education classes in Los Angeles Unified School District from 1965 to 1973--Anecdotes about first teaching job in adult basic education--Full time students in a one room schoolhouse--Teacher made materials--Early efforts at recruitment--The importance of committed and dedicated teachers--Adult student characteristics in the 1960's--Anecdote about adult nonreader who worked as a sign painter--Early recognition of adult learning problems--Impact of federal adult education legislation on LAUSD--Equipment used in federally funded adult basic education centers in the 1960s--The Watts Outreach Program special demonstration project for African American student recruitment and retention.

[Tape 1, Side B].....18

Student recruitment activities--Student recognition activities--Celebrity involvement--Carryover of Watts Outreach strategies to the Adult Literacy Instructor Training Institute modules--Involvement in the National ABE Teacher Training Institute--Importance of the language experience story as an adult learning technique--Anecdote about a student who learned to read with the language experience technique--Mentoring other adult basic education teachers--Competency based curriculum development in California in the 1970s using federal funding--Description of the state funded *Reading Vocabulary in Action* curriculum project developed at LAUSD--Description of the state funded *Reading Curriculum Guide for Adult Basic Education* project--Description of the state funded Los Angeles Competency Based High School Diploma project--Description of *Project CLASS* life skills curriculum--Role on the Advisory Committee of the CBAE Staff Development Consortium in the 1980s.

[Tape 2, Side A] 35

Literacy related activities of the Advisory committee of the CBAE Staff Development Consortium in the 1980s--Issue of ethnicity of adult education instructors not reflecting student population--Efforts of CBAE Staff Development and ALIT to give field instructors statewide *opportunities as staff developers and trainers--CBAE staff development* videos produced in the 1980's to train ABE instructors--Implementation of adult student competency based assessment (CASAS) at LAUSD--Characteristics of adult students in Los Angeles in the 1980s--Growth of ESL classes and its effect on total adult program--Emphasis on life skills in adult programs in the 1980's--The need to balance use of technology with the human element for effective adult instruction--The need for Adult Literacy Instructors' Institute--Getting started with the Institute--Role of the trainers in ALIT and anecdotes.

[Tape 2, Side B] 52

Continuation of ALIT trainer anecdotes--Development of the ALIT module on learning processing difficulties--Development of the cultural diversity and technology modules--Role of ALIT in stimulating networking in the California adult literacy provider community--Staff Development Institute (SDI)'s role in continuing to deliver training using ALIT Institute trainers and modules--Perspective on failed and promising methodologies in staff development for ABE teachers--The importance of workshops in a series, needs assessment, peer coaching and mentoring--Contributions of the National Adult Education Staff Development Consortium--Role *of professional organizations in staff development--Experiences as* Region 7 Director for the national Consortium for Adult Basic Education (COABE)--Community involvement in the literacy effort--Role of business, libraries, and community based organizations--Significance of a literate population.

[Tape 3, Side A] 69

The importance of considering the human element and learning differences when implementing alternative teaching methodologies--Progress and needs in the area of improving the ethnic and gender diversity of site staff, administration, and state leadership in California adult education--Teacher education and the issue of cultural diversity.

INDEX 76

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION 78

RESTRICTIONS ON THIS INTERVIEW

None.

LITERARY RIGHTS AND QUOTATIONS

This manuscript is hereby made available for research purposes only. No part of the manuscript may be quoted for publication without the written permission of the California State Archivist or of the California Department of Education.

Requests for permission to quote for publication should be addressed to:

California State Archives
1020 "O" Street
Sacramento, California 95814

or

California Department of Education, Adult Education Unit
P.O. Box 944272
Sacramento, California 94244-2720

The request should include identification of the specific passages and identification of the user.

It is recommended that this oral history be cited as follows:

Aryola Taylor, Oral History Interview, Conducted 1995 by Linda L. West in Los Angeles, California, for the California Adult Education Oral History Project

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. As the century draws to a close, the growth and energy of California adult education in the sixties, the institutionalization of competency based education in response to the influx of refugees and immigrants in the seventies and eighties, and the innovative uses of technology of the nineties will be recorded.

The oral history project started with a small group 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. Seven interviews were added in 1994 - 95, and additional interviews are being conducted in 1995 - 96.

Significant assistance to the new project was provided by the staffs of both the California State Archives and 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
January, 1996

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Interviewer

Linda L. West

Interview Time and Place

One interview was conducted in Los Angeles, California, on October 27, 1995.

Editing

The interviewee reviewed and edited the transcript. When the tape was inaudible or when necessary for clarification, some information was added and is indicated by brackets [ ]. [any information about sections deleted and how referenced]

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 ADULT EDUCATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEWEE: ARYOLA TAYLOR

INTERVIEWER: Linda West

[Session 1, October 27, 1995]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

WEST: This is Linda West interviewing Aryola Taylor in Los Angeles, California, on October 27, 1995. I'm interviewing Aryola to record her recollections of significant events and trends in California adult education during her career.

Good afternoon, Aryola.

TAYLOR: Good afternoon, Linda.

WEST: For thirty years, you have been an outstanding advocate for providing appropriate and effective educational services for those English-speaking American adults who are marginally literate. I'm aware that you have strongly-held opinions as a result of your experiences. During this interview, we are going to discuss the details of literacy initiatives in Los Angeles, California, and the United States. Would you like to begin by stating your central concerns about the literacy problems and the state and national response?

TAYLOR: Well, Linda, I think it's very obvious that we have a problem with illiteracy in the United States, and of course in California and in Los Angeles, and that's a general problem. If we can just start here in California, my concern is that we have a very large unserved population, and that population is native English-speakers. And I think that we really have not addressed the needs of that population as effectively as we should, because the numbers prove that this population indeed has very limited literacy skills. I really just don't think we've addressed their needs to the degree that their numbers merit.

Nationally—and when you say *nationally,* you're taking in California, you're taking in Los Angeles—I don't know that we really appreciate the severity of the problem, I think because many people who are in the decision-making positions really don't understand the significance of illiteracy in the United States, and then you come back to California and then back to Los Angeles. I question whether or not there is really a real commitment to do something about the problem. I don't think that we understand that many of the social ills in our nation have as their roots the fact that many people don't have literacy skills or have minimum skills, or indeed could have no literacy skills or could be called illiterate. And

I really am cautious about using that term, because for me I don't think people who are non-literate think of themselves as *ill*iterate. Illiterate to me means you're sick. The word *ill* means there's something wrong with you; so, I don't think many people think that. But I'm really concerned about whether or not there is a commitment, and I think probably there is an attitude that says: "We put our money where our mouth is," and we haven't put the money into the literacy effort, to the degree that I think we should.

I think that now there seems to be a big thrust toward workplace literacy, toward family literacy, and I'm really concerned that maybe those areas might overshadow basic literacy, because it is basic, it's fundamental, and in order for family literacy to be effective, I think you certainly have to have basic literacy. And I'm questioning . . . I can't say for sure because I don't know, but I'm questioning whether or not the whole thrust for, say, workplace illiteracy is a reaction to business and to what their needs are and whether or not we are really addressing the needs of people. Workplace literacy addresses the needs of people, yes, but of the employer. What happens to the person who simply wants to be a better person, who simply wants to be able to read stories to his or

her child? Where does that person fit now with this new thrust in 1995? So I have some real questions about that.

I question what our priorities are. I was a sociology major, and I guess that part of me is coming out, but I really question where our priorities are when we're dealing with people. And I see that in terms of the literacy movement in our state. The person, the individual who is in need of literacy skills is not knocking on our doors and raring to get in. In many cases that person is hiding because we don't respond very well to people who don't have these skills. We say, especially native English-speakers, we say to them, "*Well, you have had access to educational institutions.* Why is it you can't read? Well, there must be something wrong with you." So people are not apt to come up and say, "Well, I cannot read." I think they are doing it perhaps more now in the 1990s than they did perhaps in the '70s and '80s, but still you don't have a lot of people who are raring to tell you that "I can't read." Sometimes they tell you "I can't spell," or "I don't know math," [rather] than to tell you "I can't read." So, unless we go out and reach them, in many cases we will never have them in our programs.

Well, that gives us another problem, because there is the economics of it all. Do you deal with people who are there at your

door, or do you spend money trying to recruit people who are not there, and maybe not get as many as you need in, in order to keep your program running? So that's the dilemma. But I remember that there was a story that there were one hundred sheep, and ninety-nine were there but one was lost, and the good shepherd went for the one. So I don't accept that certain people are difficult to recruit and difficult to retain. I think that we have an obligation to reach those people who are not coming to us. And if our society is going to function, we've got to do that because we can't go into the [twenty-first] century with so many people, millions and millions of people in our nation and in our state, who are not functioning up to their potential. We just cannot do that. So that's kind of how I feel about that.

WEST: Okay. At the beginning of your career, from 1965 to 1973, you taught Adult Basic Education (ABE), reading and math in the Los Angeles Unified School District and then became a branch coordinator. What do you remember about the classes during that period of social change?

TAYLOR: Many of the students at that time were even more unlikely to come into our center. But what we started at that time was an adult education center in the community. Before then, many, many of the

classes were held at high schools, and then the adult school had classes in the evening, and, therefore, most of the classes were in the evening for adults. I noticed during that time we started having more classes during the day, and we took the classes out into the community. So the first position I had was actually at a community location. And I think that was good for me because I really didn't want to teach.

WEST: Oh? [Chuckling] Really?

TAYLOR: I wanted to help people, and I did know what I wanted to do when I graduated from college, but I did know I did not want to teach—be a social worker or be a nurse, but definitely not teach. So, when I was approached about perhaps teaching in an Adult Basic Education class, the thing I think that grabbed my attention was the fact that it was new. Nobody knew about it, and it was a challenge. And then secondly, I was told that I would not be teaching in a school, so therefore in my own mind I wasn't a teacher because I wasn't at a school. I was just doing what I really wanted to do, which was to help people. And I liked the idea of being in a branch location, and I think that's when we began to do that. Oh, they had had classes certainly before in churches, so this wasn't a first. Many classes

were in churches, but it sort of took off where we were having more community schools.

I found that very few people knew what adult basic education was, so, therefore, I was always going to in-services trying to learn. There [weren't] a lot of materials available for us, and certainly not materials for the adult student, so you had to do a lot of developing of your own, so teacher-made materials came into being.

Another thing that was interesting about that time for me is that I taught thirty hours a week, six hours a day, eventually. I started out at fifteen hours a week and then advanced to thirty hours a week, with the same population for the entire six hours, which is different now. Because [now] in many centers students might move from class to class, or you might have one instructor who is responsible for the reading, somebody else for the math, and so forth. But for me it was really the little red schoolhouse. I taught all the subjects there: reading, math, GED, high school, even ESL. Everything was taught in that one room. And so you had to be very, very organized, but you also had to know what you were doing. And at the time, [Chuckling] I just didn't feel like I really knew what I was doing, but I suppose I had a natural knack for

[teaching]. So somehow, some way, my students learned, and it amazes me to this day how they did. [Chuckling] But they learned.

WEST: It must have been like a family in a situation like that.

TAYLOR: It was very much like a family. We loved each other. We treated each other very much like individual family members, very, very close, because any time you spend six hours a day with the same group of people you have to be very close. And I was also amazed at how they stayed with me thirty hours a week. [Chuckling] But we did. Well, then, of course, there was more contact. We knew the students more, we knew their lives, and they knew us as instructors, and, of course, they knew me.

There were, as I mentioned, very few published materials, so we had to make up our own. I remember my first day in class. I was given blank maps, and that was what I was told to teach. I had no chalkboard, no chalk. And I also was told that I could have the class if I could recruit the students. So where do you go?

WEST: [Chuckling] Where did you go?

TAYLOR: Well, I just said, "Now, what should I do?" And I thought, well, now, I should go to the newspaper. Well, that would be good, and maybe I should have flyers. And [I] was just coming out of college. I didn't know anything about that, but just thoughts came to me as

to how I should recruit the students. And it was so interesting because there were about fifty or sixty students who came in as a result of the news articles that I wrote, and only three came to my class. When they came in and found out we had business [classes] and they could learn to type, they went to the typing class, and only three or four people came to my class. [Chuckling]

WEST: Oh, they already knew how to read. [Chuckling]

TAYLOR: Typing was certainly more interesting than learning to read. I mean, everybody wanted to, because with typing and office procedures you could get a job. That's sort of how I started out. And we teachers helped each other a lot. We had informal mentoring, if you will, because we didn't know quite what we were doing, and so we had to be very supportive and be very helpful. We knew each other's students and we shared a lot because we had so little. And yet, with all of that, the students learned, the students progressed. And my students went on to the business class and went on to the community adult school in the evening to get their high school diplomas, so they did learn, which I think maybe proves that it's not *all* the materials, it's not *all* the hardware, that people can learn with very minimal things if you have commitment on their part and a dedicated instructor. Nowadays it makes [learning] a lot more fun

and quicker, but we worked with very little, and the students progressed and they learned.

WEST: What about those students? Can you characterize them a little bit? The students of the '90s are probably different, and we'll talk about that later.

TAYLOR: Well, they were different, yes. The students were a little older. My students probably were like forty, in their forties and fifties. In the case of several students, we allowed them to bring their small children, and the children kind of learned right along with the students. But yes, they were older. We had probably about half and half females to males. Many of my students at the time were working, which is unusual. Later on I had a lot of students who were unemployed or underemployed, but when I began, many of my students were actually working. I even had a student who was a nonreader who was a sign painter.

WEST: Oh, my goodness! [Chuckling]

TAYLOR: And he did not know the letters of the alphabet. He simply copied it. And he was very successful. They didn't know. He knew, of course, he came to the class, and was learning actually what the letters meant that he was painting.

WEST: Because he had a good eye for . . . was an artist, he might have learned quickly though, I would imagine.

TAYLOR: Well, he just copied. Sure, if somebody gave him something, he simply copied it. Students then were very dedicated, very conscientious. And like I said, many of them were working in the evening, and they were spending six hours in class. They came on time and. . . .

WEST: People like that make the teachers want to work hard.

TAYLOR: Oh yeah, you did that. And I also had students who now I know had learning problems. Then I didn't know what it was; so, I always thought that there was some way I wasn't reaching that person, that it was my fault that that person wasn't learning. So I just spared no work trying to reach them. And it wasn't until later in my career that I realized that there were certain people that I was not able to help. I even had one student who had real, I think, behavioral problems too, and sometimes he would sit in class for three or four hours and look out the window and not say a word, and then all of a sudden he would laugh to himself.

WEST: Oh, it sounds like he had a lot of problems.

TAYLOR: Yes, and the students really were very empathetic, very understanding, very caring, and nobody ever laughed or made fun.

They simply accepted him. And I think that's another thing that perhaps when you mention how are the students different; they were very accepting of each other. And it was a wonderful experience. Some of the best years, in terms of education, in my life I think I spent in my first three or four years teaching.

WEST: Speaking again of the '60s and the federal impact, as a part of the anti-poverty program during the Johnson years, federal adult education legislation was enacted. What impact did additional ABE funding have in the huge Los Angeles district and in California during those early years?

TAYLOR: Well, the fact that we got additional money for us meant that we could actually establish Adult Basic Education centers. And I would probably think that Los Angeles was probably the first large school district that actually had centers that were dedicated to instructing Adult Basic Education and ESL students. That's all we did, basic education. In Los Angeles we had six major centers, major adult basic education centers. Each center had a coordinator and eventually we had counselors.

The other thing, we were able to have full-time Adult Basic Education teachers. At our centers everybody there working [was] primarily full-time—the coordinator, counselors, and our

instructors—therefore, they could concentrate all their efforts on adult basic education. They were adult educators, and that's what that money . . . if nothing else, that's what it allowed us to do.

It also allowed us to buy a lot of extra materials and equipment, because again that's all we used our money for. Community adult schools had to spread [money] around. They had to take care of vocational classes and high school classes and business classes and so forth. At our Adult Basic Education centers, that's all we did was instruct students in the basic subjects, buy materials. That's all we had to do. So, our centers were very well equipped. We had the latest equipment. I remember when the EDL program brought out a lot of their equipment—the Aud X, for example, the Tach X; we were, probably in the L.A. Unified School District, the only program that had that equipment. I think probably maybe if equipment [were] used, the best they had was maybe a tape recorder or cassette player. I don't know how many had card readers at the time. They called the card readers the language master, but that [is] a brand name, but very few had that. But at our centers we were fully equipped. We had all of the equipment, especially for the EDL program because that was the core program for our centers.

That money really allowed us to be full-time centers for Adult Basic Education. And then we could do curriculum development. We had that luxury of teacher-made materials, we had in-services for our instructors, and we could have them right there at the site because the instructors were there. They were working full-time, so we either had our in-services maybe after the instructors were free. But they were right there; it wasn't like they were coming from the day job to the evening job.

We also had coordinator meetings so that we could stay on top of what was going on at the centers. And every center had its own personality, but every center was well-equipped and well-stocked. So we knew that if a person came into our program we could send them to the Venice Center, we knew that the quality would be there. We had quality control. If we sent them to Mid-City Adult Basic Education Center, we knew that it was absolutely top-drawer. Another thing, people came from all over, by the way, to visit, and we could always take them into a center and never call ahead because everybody was just top-drawer. And everybody at the time wanted to work in the Adult Basic Education program because in our district it was known as a program that was very special.

Robert Rumin at the time was over our program back there in the '70s. Before him, in the '60s, was Hunter Fitzgerald. And then Bob came through, and he was the one who spearheaded the development of the Adult Basic Education centers. And that's how we came up with the Watts Outreach Program, because the Watts Center was one of the [centers], and one of the last [centers], I think, to be established.

WEST: Expand on the Watts Outreach Program.

TAYLOR: Well, during the early '70s, we [California] received Adult Basic Education funds in the Adult Education Act. And part of that act said that a portion of the funds would be used for special demonstration projects. So an RFP [Request for Proposal] came out for projects, and of course they put certain criteria down for the projects. And one thing I think that was listed was, if my memory serves me right, something on recruitment. And it just dawned on me at that time that we in our program, in the Adult Basic Education program, were not serving certain populations. Bob Rumin, Lonnie Farrell and I sat around, and we were discussing that, you know, here and there. Well, when this project came around, I think we had about two weeks to write it, and so I think Bob had mentioned whether or not he felt we could write that

project and get it on board. And I said, "Well, if they are going to give us some money, yeah, we can write it." So we did.

Lonnie Farrell and I co-wrote the project the first year. And the objective was to demonstrate, since it was a special demonstration project, that if you had an organized and committed recruitment effort and retention effort, that you could indeed increase the enrollment of your student population and decrease the attrition. Well, we didn't have the numbers of African-American students that we should have had, based on the population. Another problem also that we didn't necessarily address, because that wasn't our target population for the project, but we were also not addressing or not receiving into our programs the white population. Because we had a population like in South Gate and in Lynwood, in [those] area[s] there, we should have had more of those students in our Adult Basic Education program also. But we just had to zero in on a specific population. And what we were saying is that "We'll do this demonstration project, and we'll prove that if you use these techniques and strategies, indeed you can increase the enrollment of students generally." But we just came up with a target population.

We used the Watts Adult Education Center because that's where I was the coordinator, and so that's what we did. I think we started out with [an] initial enrollment [of] about 342 people, and we said one of the objectives was to double the enrollment at the end of two years of the project and to decrease the attrition rate, I think, by 20 percent. Well, after two years, we had more than doubled the enrollment and we had decreased the attrition rate by 25.5 percent—I think that's what it was.

I guess I sort of looked at candidates who run for office, I looked at advertisers, and I said, "How do candidates come into an area?" And at the time, we had a person who did that, [came] into an area unknown, and all of a sudden we [knew] about that person. What happens? What does that person do? How is it that we know about products? What do advertisers do? And then with those thoughts in mind, we began to just list things that they do. Well, they publicize. And how do they do that? And so we came up with different strategies.

But I think probably the main things that made the project work were our commitment, our fierce dedication to it, the fact that we refused to accept that we had to have half our people drop out; and then the second is that we indeed incorporated certain

strategies, but we did it [in] a very consistent and an organized way. And it's almost like you could use many different strategies, not only the ones we used, but it was the commitment and the dedication. We just refused to accept half the students dropping out. And so we plunged along. And we did just many different things.

WEST: What were some of the things that you remember that you did?

TAYLOR: Well, we had bus bench ads.

WEST: What?

TAYLOR: Yeah, we got people to donate that. We got a lot of donations. We had bus bench ads, we had flyers, and we color-coded them, we had an artist who developed a flyer so that if it went into a home of person[s] who couldn't read, they would be able to determine from the flyer that it was a school, and it was a school for people who could not read. We also had a professional mailing service to mail our flyers to our target area, and, like I said, they were color-coded. Our flyers went out on a schedule. We went to the newspaper publishers, small neighborhood publishers in our area.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

TAYLOR: We set up recruitment tables at local hospitals, medical centers, at DPSS (Department of Public Social Services) and the Department

of Vocational Rehabilitation. Wherever people gathered, we set up recruitment tables, and we just sat there and we talked to people. We also had a representative from EDD, which is the Employment Development Department, to come to our center once a week to talk to our students about employment opportunities. We had tables set up at EDD. We went and talked to people, the counselors at the Department of Public Social Services and the Employment [Development] Department to advise them what kind of services we were offering and to solicit their assistance. We had marquees, we went to churches, to their services, even took money so we'd be sure to have our collection. . . . [Laughter] We even participated in the local Christmas parades. We had a bicycle brigade where we put big signs on our backs as we were riding in the parade, and then our other students came right behind us on either side, and they were passing out flyers as the bicycles were going through. We had our students to go with us on door-to-door campaigns. We got their commitment, because I used to tell the students that they had an obligation to help others, and so they really felt that they did. [Chuckling] Those who didn't go door-to-door would help us with the lunch. We got a lot of student support that way. But that's just a lot of things we did.

Now, then for retention, we had prizes that we awarded for perfect attendance. We had at the end of the year the Student Recognition Breakfast, which really became really famous all over the state, I suppose. When I thought of that, I thought about the Academy Awards and how wonderful it would be for students to receive awards from celebrities who would just come and honor them for improving in their reading or improving in their math. So we established the Student Recognition Breakfast. We went to a hotel and we booked the hotel. We got donations from people to pay for the breakfast for the first year. Because I wanted to show the students what they could do, and I didn't feel they might pay for the breakfast, so we got donations to pay for the breakfasts. We also got the hotel to give us a deal. Our first breakfast was $3 per person, and then we had arranged with our district, with our Adult Basic Education office, to send buses to take the students to the hotel. For many students, this was their first time being served in a large banquet room with linen tablecloths and flowers on the table. [With] part of the donation, we had door prizes for the people who brought the most persons there. We had beautiful flower arrangements on the table. It was just first-class, and we also

allowed the students to invite their friends, and all the breakfasts were paid for.

Well, I can't remember right offhand who was our first celebrity, but we had persons like Raymond St. Jacques who was there, we had . . . oh, Linda Hopkins who came and participated with us. She came at the same time that Alex Haley came, and both of them were there and presented awards. Oh, we had a number of celebrities that really participated with us. Marilyn McCoo, Billy Davis—the singers—were presenters one year. And then we had politicians who came. Mayor [Thomas] Bradley came at the time he was mayor and presented awards. City council persons.

We also had achievement certificates from the local politicians to many of our students. And we gave awards for simple things like perfect attendance, like students who had improved personal development. Then we gave awards for reading and math. Because a lot of people were getting the diploma if you finish high school—that was the biggie—but many of the students who had improved in their grade levels were not getting recognition. So we gave recognition to people who had improved in math, who had improved in reading. And at our center we had a homemaking department, so we gave homemaking awards and certificates.

Certain people got certificates, but the special person got a plaque, and that was the person who was awarded the plaque by the celebrity. And the way we did it was to read some information about the person, but the person never knew that he or she was going to get the award. We would start out by reading, "This person came to the center at such and such a time, and this person did . . ." and so forth, and we would keep going. Eventually as we would keep going, then the audience would begin to know who the person was. The family would get very excited, and they kept saying, "It's you, it's you." And then finally we would say, "And now, ladies and gentlemen, we would like to present this award to . . ." and we would call the person's name. That person would come up and then the celebrity, like an Alex Haley, would present the award. And it was really super-special for the person. And we did that year after year for just a number of years. On the third year, I think it was the third year, we said to the students, "Okay, now you pay." After the third year, then the students paid for the breakfast.

WEST: It became more their tradition.

TAYLOR: Yes. But they saw how important it was and how special it was. So, after that time, they did pay. But we still always got donations from

businesses and from private individuals for our door prizes, which would be television sets and. . . .

WEST: Oh my!

TAYLOR: Yeah, for bringing the most persons there, bringing the most guests. Or we would have like a cassette player and just really wonderful things. And we always needed those donations to pay for our plaques and our certificates because our district did not pay for that. After the project ended, we did not have money for that. After the Watts Outreach Project ended and I left, then Pearl [C.] Baker became the coordinator, Pat Williams was the counselor. Pearl and Pat kept the tradition going with the breakfast, and just expanded it, and our numbers grew. But the basic Watts Breakfast of honoring the students for their achievement, having celebrities come to present the awards, getting donations for our centerpieces and for our prizes, all of that just stayed the same.

WEST: To today? They're still doing it?

TAYLOR: They are not doing it today. I think it's been about two or three years since they've had the breakfast.

WEST: Oh, but that was a long time though, if it was only two or three years ago they stopped.

TAYLOR: Oh yeah, probably about sixteen years maybe, fifteen or sixteen years.

WEST: That's tremendous.

TAYLOR: It was a number of years.

WEST: That's great. Well, the project is very well known still. Even though it was in '75 to '78, it's still a very well-known project. I know it influenced a lot of other projects.

TAYLOR: But may I just add to that, when we think in terms of students who are difficult to recruit into our program, we had a successful project that proved that you can bring them in. Now all we need is the commitment to sort of implement what we did in the Outreach Program. And we're still giving workshops, and in the project that I direct at the ALIT [Adult Literacy Instructor Training] Institute. One of the modules was "Student Retention, Motivation, and Instructional Strategies," and we use many of the ideas from the Watts Outreach Project in the ALIT Institute.

WEST: You built on those ideas.

TAYLOR: Of course.

WEST: Great. Before we leave that early period, let's talk about the National ABE Teacher Training Institute. What was your

involvement in that, and what do you remember about that program?

TAYLOR: Well, that was really, I think, a lot of fun, especially for a new instructor. What we did, and I really don't know how I became involved, but I think what happened was there were institutes set up yearly, for about three years at least I know about. The idea was to bring in a representative from every state in the union, train that person, and that person then became a trainer of trainers. That person was to go back to his or her state and train other instructors. I attended three. The first one was in Portland, Oregon, the second one was in Kansas City, Missouri, and then the third one was in Albany, New York. I can really say, especially the one in Portland because I was a very new teacher then, that those institutes really helped me develop as an instructor.

[tape turned off]

I think that my teaching really took off. I really then began to feel that I was an instructor, I was a teacher.

[tape turned off]

The institute that I really liked the best was the one in Kansas City, Missouri. First, I loved being in the state, one, and, two, one of my instructors, Dr. Donald Mocker, was just so special for me. I think

that the other one I had was Dr. Leibert, I believe is his name. They were just so wonderful, and I always said that after Kansas City I really think I became a *good* instructor.

A lot of things I suppose I've forgotten, but perhaps the things I most remember that I have used in my career as an instructor that really come to mind are: the use of the language experience story and how powerful that could be in instructing students, especially students who had low literacy skills. I didn't realize that something so simple could be so powerful. The thing that happened for us there was we did everything. We were there five weeks, so it was like a laboratory. We tried everything. We practiced, we had homework. It was just great. And the next thing, the importance of using informal evaluations and how we could develop them. I remember when they introduced us to the Cloze test and how you develop that. That was very unique for me. I remember those two things because I came back and I immediately began to use those.

I think a little bit after I came back from Kansas City, I had in my classroom a student who was a nonreader. He had been blind and had had surgery, had regained his sight, but he still was a nonreader. And at the time, we didn't have a lot of materials—we

still don't have a lot of materials now---for the nonreader. So I reflected back to Kansas City, decided we're going to do the language experience story. That was all I used for this student, the language experience story. When we finished, he had about a three-inch binder that was full of his stories, with accompanying pictures, his vocabulary lists. He had his language master cards developed, he had flash cards, he had stories he had copied. We had all of the reinforcement exercises we had done with the phonics that accompanied his stories. Everything was in his notebook. And he would go from the beginning and read through his stories and go through his cards. And I would imagine that . . . I can't remember how many cards he had, but I think the stack would be probably about five inches high of single words.

WEST: My goodness.

TAYLOR: After a little bit, oh, I can't remember how long the student was in my class, maybe about two years or so, he was able to take the test for the Los Angeles Unified School District, pass it, and get a job.

WEST: Wonderful!

TAYLOR: And all we used was the language experience story. The thing that I think happened to him as a result of that, but everything else that went on in the class, was that he felt empowered, that his education

was in his hands. He had five children, and I found out he went back home and he would tell his children that "I have homework, so I'm sure you should have homework. No television. Let's eat, clear off the kitchen table," (or the dining room table, wherever they would be). "I'm doing my homework, so you're going to do your homework." He went to school, he went to the PTA meetings, he went to the open houses at school, and then he would come back and say, "Miss Taylor. . . ." (And we were on Mr. and Mrs.) He would say, "Miss Taylor, I went to this class and I asked my son's teacher 'Why don't you have. . . ?'" and he would use some of the materials we had that he had seen in class. But he was empowered. He was then in control of his own education, more in control of his environment, and more in control of his children's learning. And it all happened with the language experience story. There were so many experiences that he told me about, and in some cases there were tears, but it was such a wonderful experience. So I always say, "After Kansas City I really think I really blossomed as an instructor."

I think these institutes were very effective, and, really, I would like to see something like that again. Because it was really important for us to come from different states to see how everybody was doing things, to have three weeks, to have five weeks, just

totally immersed in what we were doing, [no] outside [influences]. We made our own entertainment. They didn't entertain us; they simply gave us the instruction, and we entertained ourselves. [Chuckling] But it was just wonderful.

So, when I came back, from Kansas City especially, I did what my agreement was, and that was to train instructors, which I did. Don came out to help me in my training. All of us went back to Kansas City—no, we went back to St. Louis—for a follow-up to report on how well we had all done when we went back to our states. But now isn't that staff development?

WEST: It certainly is, yes. And they don't have anything like that today, as far as you know?

TAYLOR: To my knowledge, no. And I'm sure it's costly, but we spend money on other things. [Laughter] But it's cost-effective, you see, because then you have a person trained, you come back, and locally that person can train others.

WEST: That's right. That's right.

TAYLOR: It was really special.

WEST: In the 1970s, competency-based adult education was becoming a national movement, and California encouraged curriculum

development efforts. What local and statewide curriculum development efforts do you know about?

TAYLOR: Well, in Los Angeles Unified, right at the time we had the Outreach Program, at the same time we wrote for that project and we were funded, simultaneously we wrote for another project. It was a writing project, reading and writing project, and it was called Reading Vocabulary in Action. We always called it RVIA. I know at that time Joan Ririe was the consultant in the Adult Basic Education office who spearheaded that project, who helped with the writing of it. She didn't conduct the project but she worked with other instructors, I guess, in writing [it].

The thing I liked about [RVIA], and I think some of our instructors might still be using it, was that it was a self-contained program. There were tapes, there was an instructor guide. It was written on six different levels, and it was life skills-oriented—before the buzz word *life skills* came about. It was life skills oriented, and I think that was what made it a successful program and the reason instructors are using it now. It incorporated reading and writing. There was one time when we went through a phase, okay, we teach reading, then we teach writing. But now there is a marriage between the reading and writing because writing is an extension of

reading, reading is an extension of writing, and so forth. They go hand-in-hand. And at the time that this project came about, I don't think that that was vogue then; it's just that there was reading, and writing really didn't have a lot of importance. Primarily you had writing in the high school program, where you'd do the grammar and then you had, I guess, paragraph writing. I don't think there were even writing programs. It was just part of English, that's what I'm trying to say. It was incorporated in English, so you learned grammar, and then you wrote a few sentences, then maybe a paragraph or two here or there. That was the writing program. Here you come with Reading Vocabulary in Action. The title is Reading Vocabulary in Action, a Writing Program. So I think it was very successful at the time.

I also worked on another one that was called *A Reading Curriculum Guide for Adult Basic Education*, which happened so many years ago [Chuckling] that I don't think I can remember everything. But Juliet Crutchfield and I worked on that project, and what we did was sort of divide reading into various areas. Yes, Joyce Crawford was another person who worked on that. I think the idea was that an instructor could take this curriculum guide and have lessons that had been prepared. The lessons had the objectives

and they had what instructional aids you would need for that, student activities, what the teacher activities would be, and evaluation. And if you look at this, and look at the ESL Teacher Institute modules and look at the ALIT Institute modules, it sort of follows in many ways sort of what we were doing back then in 1972. Once we [developed] the guide, it was available to instructors so that they could actually have lessons already planned, and all they would have to do would be to then use whatever books that were available, as well as, I think we also included, actual lessons, teacher-made lessons. I know I did. . . . I had a spelling project that I was doing, and it was a spelling program for my students that I had put together myself, and that was included in the *Reading Curriculum Guide*. So it was really a self-contained guide.

WEST: And that was done, was it, as a part of the statewide effort with the federal money, the federal ABE money, probably?

TAYLOR: I should think so, but I don't know that it was a [309 project]. I'm not sure about the funding of it, but I'm sure it was done. . . . I know it was coordinated by John [H.] Camper, who was the consultant at the time.

WEST: Right, and that was as a part of the state ABE program.

TAYLOR: That was fun to do because we met a lot of different people, and we actually came up with lessons that instructors could actually use. They didn't really have to develop them; we had lessons included that [instructors] could actually go back and use.

And there were other projects that went on. In Los Angeles Unified School District we had the CAPS, which stood for Competency Based High School Diploma Project, and there we used life skills to develop a high school program. I'm not that familiar with that one. And I know also in the state we had Project CLASS [LifeSchool was the commercial name of Project CLASS], and later on those instructional packets were either sold to Pittman [publisher] or Pittman purchased them and then published them in about four, I think, large notebooks. They were self-contained lessons, life skills-oriented. The thing that was nice about them was that the instructor could use those lessons with ESL and literacy students; and they also had for the literacy part, what kinds of activities an instructor [could] have for the low-level student or for the higher-level student and for the ESL student.

WEST: So if you had a mixed group. . . .

TAYLOR: So if you had a mixed group you could use them, and they were divided . . . I think one had to do with occupational knowledge,

that's one, and I think my memory fails me for the other ones, but they were really based on the—

WEST: I think they had the health and the government.

TAYLOR: Health, yes.

WEST: Yeah, the APL [Adult Performance Level] grouping.

TAYLOR: Yes, that's [correct]. They were done. Because at the time, APL had done a study on the major life skills areas.

WEST: Adult Performance Level.

TAYLOR: Right, and these notebooks, this packet of lessons, were following along the APL listing of life skills.

WEST: Yes. With curriculum development sort of in hand in California, in the 1980s the state efforts in support of CBAE focused on staff development, and you were one of the leaders in that effort. What can you tell me about some of those things?

TAYLOR: Well, the Staff Development Consortium from San Francisco State was headed by John [W.] Tibbetts and Dorothy Westby-Gibson, who has since passed away. But anyway, they invited a number of us to serve on an advisory committee. Well, that was the hardest-working advisory committee I. . . . [Chuckling] We didn't do advice, we worked! [Chuckling] Very hard on that [advisory committee]. And one of the things that came out of that was "Teaching CBAE

Reading," which was a video program with an accompanying handbook that I worked on. The handbook, Juliet Crutchfield, Lydia [A.] Smith and I co-authored that handbook; and I then worked on the two videos. And I remember it was Cuba [Z.] Miller who had suggested that we do a video to accompany the handbook. I always say Cuba always gets me into trouble because she's always coming up with additional things to do. [Chuckling] But they turned out to be excellent. One of the teachers on the video (we did one on teaching; it was a life skills video on using coupons) was Pat Williams, who at the time was an instructor at the Watts Adult Education Center. Then I did a video on teaching the language experience story. I used a student, an actual student, to demonstrate how you would do a language experience story.

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

TAYLOR: Anyway, on this CBAE Staff Development Consortium, as I mentioned, we really worked hard. . . . [Chuckling] I thought we would be advising, right? I didn't realize we would be really working. But another nice thing about that project, we ended up with a lot of advanced staff developers. And it was like a list of [trainers] who people all over the state could contact in case they

needed people who had expertise in certain areas to conduct workshops, and I thought that was significant.

What I did mention when I came on the committee was that I didn't think we were doing enough in literacy. And at the time, many of the workshops we went to were primarily ESL, and literacy instructors did not really feel that the conferences we had were really addressing their needs. So, [I mentioned] that on a number of occasions. As we began to have the yearly conferences, the CBAE conferences, literacy was more and more on the agenda. We had advanced staff development, advanced staff developers who also were in literacy. But it's always been a struggle trying to give literacy its place in the state. I think that a lot of that has to do with the fact that we have so many ESL students and ESL students who are taking advantage of programs, and fewer literacy students who are. And we have fewer literacy instructors.

WEST: Definitely.

TAYLOR: So many programs, if you only have one or two literacy instructors, then who are you going to have staff development for? You have staff development for ESL instructors or high school instructors, vocational instructors. Well, literacy instructors were just out there without anything. And one of the things they said about having the

ALIT Institute was that finally we have something that is our own, that is addressing our needs. So, with the CBAE Staff Development Consortium, we did begin to address the needs of literacy instructors. I would have liked to have seen more, but, of course, Aryola is like that. [Chuckling] I would like to see more. I found that that was a good way, with the advanced staff developers, for people to move into more responsible positions in the state. I would like to have seen more in that area. I would have liked to have seen us reach out, especially to instructors in the state who were not represented, especially African-Americans, Hispanics and Asians. Many of those instructors were not involved on the state level, and I think that's a problem even today. We just have not reached out to those instructors.

As an aside, I feel that our instructors and what we are doing in the state should reflect the population we serve. If we look at the students we serve and if we look at the persons who have leadership, we are just not reflecting our student population. So I mentioned that even in the Staff Development Consortium.

And another thing I wanted to see done, and we mentioned it (and I think made an effort to do that), was to involve more people who hadn't been involved before. Because I felt that there was just

maybe a certain group of people who were able to do certain things on a statewide basis. Well, if you don't train people and allow people to develop, like through [serving as] staff developers or through trainers, then when it is time for opportunities to open, these people are not qualified because they haven't had an opportunity to serve. And that has always been a concern of mine, that you have to give people that opportunity. Then we say, "Well, we can't find people or we don't have people." Well, in many cases we didn't allow them to be trained and allow them to get the experience. So we have to open up that door. I mentioned that in the Staff Development Consortium, and that is what we tried to do in the ALIT Institute. We tried to open up a door for people who hadn't, before then, had an opportunity to serve in the state. Many of the trainers that we had who are now being used by SDI [Staff Development Institute] didn't even know anything about the state. Some of them didn't even know who the state people were and hadn't attended workshops because many of them felt that the workshops didn't address their needs. We had some people certainly who were active in the state, but many of our trainers were not. And we gave them an opportunity to become active. So now when they need literacy persons, they have a cadre of people to call on,

and they don't have to call on the same people, like calling on myself or calling on Juliet Crutchfield or perhaps to Lydia Smith. Now we have a cadre of people who can then get involved, and hopefully those people will reach down and bring in other people outside in the field so they can get experience. Then we can expand it so that we have more people involved and not the same people involved continuously. That was something that I had mentioned that I wanted to see in the Staff Development Consortium. And to a degree, I think some of my concerns were met. As I said, not as much as I would hope, and I'm always pushing for more in that area.

We did do, on the reading video, to back up again, I think we did two videos—I think I mentioned that. And the one video that I did [was] the language experience story with a student, Ivory Jones. The interesting thing, I think, about that video was that we wanted to show that a language experience story could be conducted with any student. So I met Mr. Jones one week, I explained to him what I would do, and the next week we came and videoed it. So it was authentic. Now we have literacy programs and library and community-based organizations who are using that video today.

WEST: Yes, I know.

TAYLOR: And I think that was very successful, and certainly our thanks go to the Staff Development Consortium for forging ahead and encouraging us to do that. And I certainly have to thank Cuba. [Laughter]

WEST: There was another piece of CBAE, and that's the assessment piece. Beginning in 1980, California funded an assessment system designed to match its competency based classroom programs. You were involved in coordinating CASAS field testing for LAUSD. What can you say about the role of CASAS in your district and statewide?

TAYLOR: Well, I sort of helped with it. I don't know that you can say I totally coordinated it, but I assisted with it. What we did in the beginning when CASAS was being developed was to contribute test items, and also to field-test certain test items that were being developed. Bill Ririe at the time was very involved in that, and basically I kind of set up meetings and coordinated in terms of getting people together and making sure that they had the items and that they were field-testing them and sending them back and so forth on time. That was primarily my role, but Bill was a lot more involved in that than I was. We were sort of on the ground floor, in terms of contributing the items that were going to be tested.

WEST: You were a member of the original consortium in CASAS?

TAYLOR: Yes. I wasn't on that, but Bill was. And there was another person who was there, Rosemary Dawson.

WEST: Yes. Yes, I remember her.

TAYLOR: Actually, she conducted a project with Bill. She was the project director and then later Bill assumed her responsibility. Rosemary and Bill were really very active and involved with CASAS at the time.

WEST: What do you think is really the significance of the assessment produced there?

TAYLOR: Well, I think assessment took a different turn. Whereas we used grade levels before, which didn't make a lot of sense for adults.

WEST: It didn't match the instruction, really.

TAYLOR: It didn't match, and all of a sudden we say, "We're not going to be using grade levels. We're evaluating them on a scale." And I think a lot of people still have trouble in the state dealing with that. I think a lot has to do with publishers and how they publish their materials. I think a lot has to do with the public. I think more and more agencies are willing to accept that 6.5 tells them nothing about a student. But that's very difficult because even [today], I just attended a class of adult instructors who were going for their credential, and one of the students asked me something to the effect

of "What do you do with a 6.0 grade level reader?" And then I mentioned to him, "Six-point-oh, can you equate a student in the sixth grade with an adult?" And then he began to see what I was referring to when I mentioned that.

WEST: Right, it's a difference in life experiences and what you do with it.

TAYLOR: It's a difference in life experiences, and so a sixth-grader is not the same as an adult. Anyway, I think assessment took a decidedly different turn in the state as a result of CASAS, and I don't know that assessment will ever be the same again.

WEST: Right. [Chuckling]

TAYLOR: And I think that's [a] compliment [to CASAS].

WEST: Also during the 1980s, you assisted in the administration of the largest adult basic education program in the nation. How are the students in programs different and similar to those when you began in the '60s [who] you were talking about?

TAYLOR: Well, we mentioned a few things earlier, but we have fewer native English-speakers, at least in Los Angeles in the Adult Basic Education program, than we had when I started. We have a ballooning ESL population. And I think what happened, there [are] demographic changes, but just from my observation, at our centers when we got a flood of ESL students into the centers, in many cases

some of the students who were native speakers couldn't understand the language, and they felt a little displaced; so, many of them then dropped out of the programs. Then we had more and more ESL classes and fewer and fewer of the literacy classes, because you can only have so many because of those budgetary considerations. So you have a tendency to go with where your population is, which is with ESL students, and you had fewer classes for literacy students; so, eventually they began to drop out of the program. And I saw our Adult Basic Education centers, where we would have more of the native-speakers but still have a balanced kind of program, [go] to programs that were just top-heavy with ESL students and very few literacy students, and to a lesser degree GED, if the district was kicking in the funds. I saw that change. That's also reflecting of the population, I think, if we're talking about Los Angeles, in the city of Los Angeles. I think the population has changed greatly, and so we are seeing that happening in our schools. There was more of a focus on the basic skills. We didn't have—quote, unquote—life skills, but it was just part of my curriculum. I didn't know it was life skills; I just knew it only made sense to teach people to do the things that they needed to know how to do.

WEST: And that was in the '60s?

TAYLOR: And that was in the '60s and the '70s. But in the '80s, late '70s and '80s, we put a tag to it and said *life skills*. Well, it also helped us to focus more because many instructors did not [incorporate life skills]. You taught phonics, you taught them how to read, and that's it. You taught multiplication tables, to multiply, and that's it. And there was no "How does this affect my life? How do I apply it to my situation?" And I think [incorporating life skills] was very good, in terms of getting us to refocus on how we were teaching.

WEST: So there was a positive change there.

TAYLOR: Oh, I see that as a very positive change. The publishers got involved. They got themselves together, and we had more adult-oriented materials that were good. We still need some at the lower levels, but we did have very good ones. Then, of course, now we are dealing with computer-assisted instruction. We talk about Distance Learning, and we're doing all of that; whereas in the '70s and in the '80s and in the '60s you would have to come to the building, the class didn't come to you. Now we have classes on your work sites. And I think all of those changes are very positive.

What I would like to make sure that we don't do, and that is with all of the computer-assisted instruction, with all of the Distance Learning, that we don't forget about the person, and that the human

element is not lost in our thrust for the [twenty-first] century. Because, after all, it is in many cases the instructor sitting with the student and saying, "You did a fine job," that causes that person to excel. Sometimes what the person needs is not the phonics, it's just someone saying, "I care." I used to tell my students, "In this situation in the class right now, I'm only responsible for 50 percent. I instruct, I facilitate the process. I bring you books, and I help you. I don't learn. In certain other situations I do, I may learn from you. But when I put a book before you, I'm not learning. You are doing that, I'm instructing. So I only do half." But part of my half was to tell the person, "You are doing such a fine job, and I care about you and you doing a good job." And somehow that translated in a way that computers can't.

WEST: Now, with the computers, [what happens is] that you feel you're succeeding by moving on and ahead, and the computer can automatically tell you that you're doing well, but the human element, as you say, is lost sometimes.

TAYLOR: That's good, and we need that. And while the person is going ahead and the computer is saying "Fine," we just need the tap on the shoulder that says "Great!" But the human element *must be there*. I hope we don't lose sight of that as we move to the twenty-first

century. Because I think we see in our society some of the problems that we are experiencing simply because we don't care and the human touch is being lost.

WEST: Yeah, that computer needs to be a tool for the teacher to be able to do a better job and be more focused on the individual, not instead of.

TAYLOR: Right, but there are situations also [in which] a student is not going to be in the class, so that's the only way that you can reach that person. And that's fine. You need it; I just don't want to see us not remember what it is, and that it is a machine. Because, you know, they are saying that if a baby, if a newborn is left in a hospital, is changed when he or she is supposed to be, fed, everything is done for that baby, but if you don't touch that baby, it'll die in a year.

WEST: Yes, I've heard that. We have to have that contact.

TAYLOR: We have to have that contact. And I think that's what the instructor in many cases does. Like I said, at the beginning of [my career], I [didn't] know how my students learned. A lot of things I didn't know, but it's like telling a person that you can. And so when we look at successful instructors. . . . When I used to visit classes, I had one person, for example, an instructor, (and my job was to sort of go around and try to encourage that person to upgrade his or her

skills and so forth) . . . I would go in this class, and the person just was not teaching the way *I* really wanted to see the person teach, right? But the students loved the person. Just the person wasn't *using the strategies I thought should be used.* And eventually I looked at this situation and I said, "This person is successful," because the person didn't need the skills, the person simply inspired and encouraged those students, and the *students* learned.

WEST: Right. [Chuckling]

TAYLOR: And that's what that instructor did. And I looked at that and I said, "Wow, this is great. Let me step out of the way." So I'd just come in and say, "Hello, how are you? Everything looks great." [Laughter] And then I left it. That was what my job was, to encourage the person and say, "You're doing a fine job. Your class looks great, the students are learning, they are happy, they love you, and I'm happy. So we're all happy." [Laughter] So, if you don't do all those other things, fine.

WEST: Right. Well, we're kind of taking a chronological approach, and I think we're ready to talk about the ALIT Institute. From 1990 to 1995, you were the director of the federally funded Adult Literacy Instructors Training Institute. What was the purpose of the institute and its accomplishments?

TAYLOR: Well, the state, I think, recognized what I've mentioned earlier, that there was a population here in the state of California—or *there is* because the population is still existing—who was not really being effectively served in the state, in terms of literacy services. These persons were primarily native English-speakers, but indeed [taking into consideration] all people who were in need of literacy services, our program, in terms of numbers, did not reflect the numbers of the people who we felt needed the services.

So the ALIT Institute, and it was called at that time Adult Basic Education Institute, was funded. Now, an RFP was let and Los Angeles Unified School District applied and we were funded to address the needs . . . well, to actually train instructors and administrators and coordinators to more effectively meet the needs of this target population, but all students generally. That was sort of our mandate, if you will, and we had a wonderful staff. Pearl Baker served as the assistant project director; Lydia Smith, the curriculum technology consultant; Nelita [A.] Vallido served as a technology consultant; and Venessa [E.] Moore was our office assistant. It was all of us that took what was put on the printed page and made it reality.

Now, we did have the ESL [Teacher] Institute as a model, which was great, because it's always good not to have to start from scratch, but we did have to then decide on what would this project look like. So we did a statewide needs assessment. We thought we knew what instructors needed because we had conducted workshops, and people had been telling us all along. But we conducted a needs assessment, we then got trainers from all over the state to be our teacher trainers, and we proceeded to write the modules.

And we had wonderful trainers. Oh! they were some of the finest people that really I have met. Pearl Baker and I were talking in June at our last colloquium. We were walking together, and we were just saying that it's so rare that you can meet strangers, bring them together, and these people work in a cooperative way to put together something like our ALIT Institute, people who didn't know each other but who bonded together and created the Institute. It was our feeling at the very beginning that everybody involved would have a say in how we ran the Institute. We had a statewide advisory committee. We also tried to make sure that we had representation from all over the state, different areas of the state, gender representation, and ethnic representation. That was very important, to be sure that we had all kinds of people. We really were going for

the rainbow coalition. I think the thing that was so wonderful, and I think the trainers really felt that they had a say [in] how we ran the Institute and what we did.

I remember one trainer came up and said she had an idea of a module that she wanted to do. I remember so well when she mentioned it to me, I didn't even understand what she was talking about. [Laughter] I couldn't figure out, you know, what [was] she talking [about?] What is that? And she was so excited, and she went on and on about what we could do. And I just looked at her and I said, "Oh, it sounds great. Let's do it." And she and another colleague, as they were driving back down to San Diego, began to write this module. Then when we had our next colloquium, I asked her to report on it. Actually, I wanted to find out what it was all about. But I think the thing was that [the Institute] was open, that if you had an idea, I didn't have to always understand it. It was okay if you were excited about it and you felt you could pull it off and write it, then fine, let's go for it. Let's do it. And we sort of had that kind of attitude.

But we had, as I said, some of the most wonderful trainers that I just had the experience of working with. And there was such a cooperative spirit, and there was a caring. I remember one time at

the beginning of our colloquium we would always go around the room and have our trainers tell what had happened to them during the interim time. And just to digress, a couple of our trainers used to say, "Coming to the colloquium is like a holiday. We look forward to being with our colleagues and to being here. It's just like a holiday." So we would go around and find out about every person's experience. And I've been in a lot of meetings with a lot of people, but that particular colloquium has really remained with me because we had people who expressed very deep personal concerns about their personal lives and experiences that they had. We had many of our trainers, I think for the group, for the numbers we had, we had so many trainers who lost parents in that five years. At least . . . almost half of our trainers lost a parent. And we're not talking about older trainers, we're talking about relatively young or to early middle-aged trainers who had lost parents. So we experienced and we went through those deaths with each other.

I remember that one of our trainers was very new, and just two or three months before, she had lost her husband. And she was able to express how she was feeling. And everybody there—I mean we were all in tears—but everybody there just sort of grabbed hold of her. And I think one of the first outings she had after this death

was with another trainer. She went with this other trainer, two females, this other trainer took her . . . what do you call the dancing?

WEST: Line dancing.

TAYLOR: Line dancing! Yeah.

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

TAYLOR: But anyway, I think we just had a lot of wonderful experiences together. And we went through sickness. We supported one of our trainers who had some major health difficulties. We supported [those] person[s] and we supported each other, and I think that's what made the Institute really very special. Around the state people mentioned that finally, especially the literacy people, finally we have something that's ours. And we tried to address their needs as best we could. I think we were very successful in doing that.

We tried to tackle difficult things. For instance, one problem that literacy teachers are experiencing always is what do you do with that student who has a learning difference, if you will. And I mentioned to you what happened to me when I was starting out. I had students and I didn't know what was wrong. So we really tried to tackle that problem. And two of our modules, our very successful

modules, were written on teaching students with LPD. We coined that as "learning processing difficulties." We didn't feel like we were qualified to say "learning disabilities." Plus, that means that that's a sickness. Or "learning problems." But how does the average instructor in the classroom deal with a person who has a learning difference? And how do you successfully incorporate that student into the classroom? What do you do?

Now, people who are professionals in the area have all these skills. In many cases, professional services are not available to the adult education instructor. You're just given the students, given the class, and you teach. You don't have all of these other supportive services available to you. So, as instructors then what we did was say, "All right, we're instructors addressing instructors' problems." And that's what we did with those two modules, and they were very, very successful, and I think very well received.

We also tackled the topic of "Cultural Diversity in the Literacy Classroom," and I was very proud of that one. And then also "Using Technology in the Literacy Classroom." Our needs assessment showed that our instructors wanted that, and we had two instructors who came in and who were very excited about technology, and wanted to do something interesting. The first day they came in, they cornered me and said, "We have an idea." I said,

"Well, okay, let's see if we can get some additional funding to do that." We were able to ask for additional funding, and received it to develop that module: "Technology in the Literacy Classroom." And I'm cautious about not using names because I don't want to call one trainer's name and then not mention the other trainers' names. But I'm sure our trainers know who they are, and they're all in our final report.

WEST: All those names are in your reports in the archives, right.

[Chuckling]

TAYLOR: Yes. So, another thing that I think the Institute did was to stimulate networking. We had an awful lot of people from community-based organizations, library literacy programs who attended our workshops. We went into corrections, and we had a lot of people from corrections attending, and we indeed had workshops in correctional facilities. We actually went into the facilities. In one case we had one of our trainers who was so interested in knowing what they were doing in corrections, went and visited one of our participants, on her own. The trainer went to visit a participant in a correctional institution to see what was going on in the classroom.

So, I was really proud of that, and the fact that we communicated personally with probably in the neighborhood of

about 3,000 persons all around the state. We sent our announcements, yes, to the schools, yes, to the facilities; but we sent them to their homes because we didn't want people saying, "Well, my administrator didn't give it to me." We made sure that we communicated directly as much as possible with literacy providers and literacy instructors.

Then, probably finally another point, that with all of that, many, many, many of our instructors who attended were ESL instructors.

WEST: After all of what we're talking about, with the need for the. . . . [Chuckling]

TAYLOR: Yes, and the literacy teachers did too, of course, but we had just a lot of support from our ESL instructors. And we made it very clear who the workshop was for and our target audience would be students who had facility with the language. The strategies we were giving, the practices were for instructors to deal with students who had facility with English; but the instructors were able to take back and use many of the strategies in their classrooms, and so we liked that, too.

WEST: And even though the development part of the Institute is over now, the modules will be continued to be given under the umbrella of the Staff Development Institute?

TAYLOR: Yes. The trainers that we had for the ALIT Institute are the trainers [who] will be conducting the workshops for SDI. Again, like I said, with the trainers there is a cadre of people, literacy instructors who have been trained, because we had three colloquia each year for five years, fifteen of those. And so we had a group of professionals before they came to the ALIT Institute who have indeed developed their skills to even greater lengths. So I think the state has truly benefitted, and it has been money well spent. [Chuckling]

WEST: Right.

[tape turned off]

WEST: From your thirty-year perspective on staff development to improve the preparation of ABE teachers, what do you think are failed methodologies and what has promise?

TAYLOR: Well, I think, generally speaking, that staff development, I know in the past and then to a large degree even now, is just sort of based on instructors attending a workshop, getting some information and going back, and hopefully they do it. Or you go to conferences and

you collect all of the handouts and everything, and then you go back on Monday morning and you say, "What is all of this?" And you don't understand it, so you put it aside, and then eventually you throw it away because it's collecting [dust]. So I think that the one-shot workshops certainly beat not having workshops and in-services at all, but I think that they are probably the least effective. I think more effective is a collaborative kind of staff development, where persons who are receiving the services have input in terms of what they receive. They are not forced to attend workshops that really don't meet their needs, or that an administrator has decided that this is what the people need and so we're going to have this kind of workshop and so you all come.

I think workshops in a series are more effective. The ESL Institute showed that. I think we see that in the ALIT Institute following [the model], that when people have an opportunity to come and are presented with strategies, can go back and practice. When they have an opportunity to practice in the workshop itself, they can go back and practice with them in their classrooms and then come back and report on how well they did or did not do, receive information, receive inspiration, if you will, from their

colleagues, I think behavior is more likely to change than, as I said, in the one-shot.

I think it is important for people['s] needs to be identified. So people need to say what it is they need and what it is they don't need. Somewhere along this, when we talk about what people need, and I don't know where it fits, but I think that in many cases we've lost sight of the student. We're so busy training the teachers, and administrators are so busy administrating, that we've lost sight of who we serve. Maybe if instructors are doing more self-evaluation, are allowing the students to have more input into the classroom, then maybe the staff development can reflect that. That is, if instructors are [open], and if their egos can take it. [Chuckling] They become more and more aware of how successful they are, what they need to do to improve, and then they can say, "Well, this is what I need to do," and staff development helps them in doing that or improving in that way, then maybe staff development is even more effective.

I think a lot of the new things that are coming out, like teleconferencing, peer coaching, [and] mentoring are all very effective. I think sometimes people don't operate well in a large group, that sometimes two people who have like interests can come

together and can help and support each other in a non-threatening way. I think that's effective. I don't know that the administrator coming in with a clipboard and checking off what you're doing or not doing in your classroom is effective. I think sometimes people who are not doing a good job, somehow we need to find out who they are, help them to improve, and if they don't improve, then we need to maybe tell them that "Maybe teaching is not your profession. Maybe there's another profession that's more conducive to your style." I do think that people change their behavior when they want to change and when they see a need to change, and somehow our staff development has to reflect that.

So I think we're heading in the right direction. I would hope with the state that we don't revert back to the single-topic workshops again. Because like I said, the ESL Institute and the ALIT Institute had our workshops in a series, where people had an opportunity to try techniques and then come back and report. I think that is successful, and I would hope to see that continue.

I think that more research needs to be done on more effective methods of staff development. I think the National Adult Education Staff Development Consortium is probably good in that area. I haven't been as involved in that, but anything that talks

about research and development, in terms of staff development, I think is good. We did have four of our trainers who attended the workshop in Washington, D.C., the first workshop in Washington, D.C., where they introduced about seven modules that they worked on. Then they had a follow-up in Phoenix, Arizona, I think. We had trainers who attended that, and we had access to their modules, and that's on the national level. I think that's very positive, and it was very positive for our trainers to have an opportunity to visit and interact with people all over the state—all over the country actually, not the state, because this was a national project. So I think all of that is very important, too.

One other thing I might want to say, too: It's good for us to have AAACE, which is a national organization, the American Association of Adult and Continuing Education. Then we have our statewide organizations, CCAE, California Council for Adult Education, and we have ACSA [Association of California School Administrators], and I think each one of them is good for what it does. [One gives] a national perspective and the [others address] state issues. I think it's important to bring it down to the local level, because that's where you're going to get the change in behavior in terms of the classroom. I think people need to see, the instructor

needs to see the state, where the state is going, the state's direction, the state's philosophy about education, about adult education; where the nation is going, the national perception, and then to use all of that within the local school district, within the classrooms. I think we need all of those elements.

WEST: You mentioned several of the professional organizations, and I know you've been quite active. One of the others that you haven't mentioned yet is COABE, [Consortium for Adult Basic Education] where I believe you were a director.

TAYLOR: Yeah.

WEST: Would you like to mention anything about COABE?

TAYLOR: I was Region 7 Director for COABE. I think COABE is really just a wonderful organization, especially for practitioners. The workshops at the conferences, the national conferences put on by COABE, which is COABE/AAACE, really have excellent workshops for the instructor in the field, for tutors; whereas AAACE saw things from a national perspective, whereas COABE sort of went right to the practitioner, to the instructor in the classroom. And I like that and found it really exceedingly helpful. I also like the idea that it was concentrating on one particular area, and that is adult basic education. It was a good experience serving as the Region 7

Director because I had a chance to meet people again from all over the [country] to see how programs differ and how they were similar, and I had a chance to correspond and communicate with persons who were in Region 7, which included states such as Washington and Oregon and Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Guam, which I never got to. [Laughter]

WEST: Hawaii?

TAYLOR: Yeah. Yeah, I'm not sure if Hawaii was included. I know Guam was. It's West, but . . . I think Hawaii might have been one of my states. I'm not sure about that.

WEST: I would have thought you would have figured that one out. [Laughter]

TAYLOR: Well, no, I got Guam. [Laughter]

WEST: I mean, just to be able to take a trip there. [Chuckling]

TAYLOR: Yeah. But anyway, sitting on the board. . . . It was also very interesting, just as an aside, to find out how you put on a national conference, and the work that's involved and the strategies that are used in order to put on a national conference. And so, from just that perspective it was also very exciting. Again, that was one where Cuba got me in trouble there. She really suggested that I run for

Region 7 Director. And I really didn't think that I would win because I figured—

WEST: That's a dangerous thing. [Laughter]

TAYLOR: It's a national organization and I didn't think I was known nationally, you know, so I figured: "Well, all right, what the heck, I'll run." [Chuckling] And when she told me I won, I was truly surprised. I really didn't think I would win! I really did not think so. So again Cuba was correct, and I really enjoyed staying there, being on the board.

Another thing that I had suggested and would like to see, in terms of the board, is that they get more involved, in terms of the instructors, that they in some ways are more involved financially. Now, they have set up some mini grants for instructors. I think they're about $750. I would have liked to have seen more, and hopefully next time around they will have more money for practitioners.

WEST: So they can participate in this.

TAYLOR: Yes, and so that [instructors can be supported when] they have ideas that they would like to try out in their class, and sometimes you only need $500, $700, $1,000 in order to do it. I think that COABE could fill that gap, and I would like to see them become more

involved. They also had awards for students, and I think that was good too, but I'm always just pushing for more in terms of the instructor. I think when there is budget, then let's see about using it.

WEST: It's been said that it takes a whole community to raise a child, and the same might be said of teaching an adult to read. What can you say about community involvement in the literacy effort?

TAYLOR: Well, literacy is everybody's business, and I think it is up to us as educators to constantly keep that in the forefront, in terms of the community. I don't really know that the public really understands the seriousness of the problem. I don't really think so. Certainly, I don't know that our power brokers do, because they can read and the people they know can read. So people don't really realize how serious it is. The person who's having problems or who has minimal literacy skills doesn't wear it as a badge. He looks ordinary, just like everybody else; you have no way of knowing, and so the public just has a tendency not to believe that there are people who cannot function. Well, when they did the NALS, the National Adult Literacy Survey, I think there was a portion of it where people who were on the lower levels of the NALS did not see themselves as being there. See? So, if people who are there don't see themselves

as there, what about the public not really understanding and comprehending the problem?

Probably people in business know more than they let on, but who wants to say that "Many of my employees have low literacy skills"? Well, then you go to the public, with the public not trusting you and so forth, so you're not going to have people just eager to say that. But I do know that we all have a responsibility. I think some businesses probably, and maybe rightly so, say, "Well, it's not up to us to educate. You educate, we hire." But the reality is they're going to have to educate, and are doing it, and spending a heck of a lot of money doing it.

So we need to hook up together, hook up more. We need to come together, I think, more. I think a lot is being done. We have workplace literacy. I know in the Los Angeles Unified School District we have partnerships with industries, we are conducting classes for them, and in many cases, or some cases at least, they are paying for the classes; so, we're working in a cooperative way. We just need to do more of that. We need to work more cooperatively with the libraries.

There are enough people who don't have literacy skills to go around, so we don't need to claim to be afraid that somebody is

going to get our students. There are *millions* of people, so there are enough people to go around. The libraries do a wonderful job, community-based literacy programs do a wonderful job, school systems do a wonderful job. We can all do better, and we've got to do better. So why not just harness this energy and come together more? In L.A. Unified we put on at least two major conferences with community-based organizations and libraries, where we [had] workshops for our instructors, our literacy instructors, and [community-based organizations] have workshops that would address the needs of their tutors. And we worked cooperatively together, and those were wonderful. I think we need to respect more what each does. Community-based organizations have their role, and they do a good job.

I always tell people that if, and it may sound like heresy, but if a person just on his or her own decided that every day at a certain time, for two or three hours a day, that person was just going to read, and read a little more and read a little more, that person would be a good reader. I had too many students who came through my class that didn't have the grade level. They might have only gone through the seventh or eighth grade in school, and yet they were very good readers. Maybe poor in math, because that's

why I had them, or spelling or something, but in some cases pretty good readers. And every time I looked and I saw that this person only went to the seventh grade or eighth grade, and I see from the evaluation that this person could read, I know immediately why they can read, because they read.

WEST: Yes. [Chuckling]

TAYLOR: And you can always say, "Oh, you like to read?" or, "Do you read a lot?" And the answer is always yes. So, if you have a tutor who is giving them encouraging words, the warm fuzzies, and sitting there and working with the person and allowing the person to practice the skills and read, that tutor doesn't have to have all of these other strategies. It's good if [he or she does], but they can help people to read. They do it every day.

WEST: That's right.

TAYLOR: So why don't we work together, because there are things that we can do. We can help tutors with other strategies. We can help broaden their repertoire of things that they do, you see? I think we can work more effectively, and should do that. The businesses, in many cases, have money that sometimes a school district [doesn't]. We're restricted in terms of what we can spend money on, and sometimes it takes so long to get it spent, by the time it goes through the

structure. Businesses in some cases can come right in, and it's mutually beneficial for them to come right in and put in computers or give materials, and they can be very helpful, and in turn we can train their employees as we do in workplace literacy programs. But maybe they can have programs in schools so that we can have more access. I mean, there are a lot of things I'm sure we can do.

I guess my point is: Yes, it does take our whole community in order to raise people's literacy levels. Because when we don't do it, we see the effects of [illiteracy], in terms of persons who are getting public assistance, we see it in terms of our correctional institutions, we see it in terms of children on the street who come from abusive families, we see it in poverty. We see it in so many different ways. The NALS Study, if you just look at the results, and I haven't read it detailed from cover to cover, but all the way through it people who were scoring at the lower levels of the NALS test were making less money, were either un or underemployed, more apt to be getting public assistance, not involved politically, not voting.

WEST: Not taking advantage of citizenship.

TAYLOR: [Not] taking advantage of citizenship, thank you. We show that right along. So what else do we need to tell us that literacy is

important to the very fabric of our society, that much of the root of what we are experiencing stems from people not being able to take advantage of what they see on television because they don't have the skills to? So what are we going to do when we get into the year 2000, when you have millions of people who can't do simple math or write a decent sentence? I was going to buy some nuts. I love nuts, but I don't eat them so much anymore. [Laughter] But I like them. But anyway, I went in and I asked the young lady for a quarter of a pound of nuts, and she said, "Oh, I'm sorry, we only sell it . . . the smallest we sell is four ounces."

WEST: Oh, poor thing.

TAYLOR: There's something wrong when we have that happening.

[End Tape 2, Side B]

[Begin Tape 3, Side A]

WEST: You talked a little bit about alternative methodologies that are being explored to improve student instruction and reach more students. Do you have anything to add to that discussion of computers and Distance Learning that we began?

TAYLOR: Yeah, I do have one thing I'd like to add, and it's just, I guess, a caution, and that is: When we talk about these alternative methodologies—and they are great, computers are wonderful,

Distance Learning is in vogue now and I think it's important—that we do have a large percentage of our literacy students who are learning disabled. And so we must not lose sight of that population when we talk about alternative methods. And that's actually the main thing. And indeed maybe computer-assisted instruction may be very good for persons who have certain learning differences, and that's great, but when we are thinking about it and getting all excited about it, as I mentioned before, that we just don't lose sight of the human element, which I stated. Then we remember that we do have some people who have learning differences, and that maybe all of these great, wonderful things that we're doing may not work for them. And we still are probably back to the old-fashioned classroom. [Chuckling]

WEST: You also talked a little bit about ethnic diversity issues. Historically, in California adult education, site staff, administration, and state leadership has not reflected the ethnic diversity of the student population. Do you think any progress has been made in addressing this issue, and what still needs to be done?

TAYLOR: Well, I think that there has been some progress, not enough, not soon enough. I think people tend to be resistant to change, because once in certain positions I think we tend to want to keep the status

quo. So, when you talk about ethnic diversity, that means opening up; and that means if we open things up, then somebody may have to give up something, and most people don't want to change. I personally would like to see, as I mentioned, with our state projects when we have advisory committees, when we have trainers, I think that where we have groups of people selected to serve, they should reflect the student population that we serve. And I think this needs to be done nationally, because I see the same problem nationally, I see the same problem statewide. We're making headway, in terms of our local district and in terms of the Los Angeles Unified School District. When I came in, in the late '60s or early '70s, I think the faces have changed from the time that I came in. I see that we might be backing up and maybe not making as much progress as we need to make, and as we had been making before, but I would like to see a concerted effort made to address the issue. And it really does not require a lot of work. It just requires opening it up and doing as we did with our advisory committee: We just had a rainbow coalition. We had different ethnic groups represented. But we made an effort to be sure that that happened.

And then gender is important, also. I remember one day when Dr. Robert Rupert, who was our assistant superintendent at

the time, mentioned that when he appointed principals it was going to be—and I remember so well in the staff meeting he said—"Boy, girl, boy, girl, boy, girl. . . ." [Chuckling] He was opening it up so that we would have women represented as well as men. Because when I first came into the district, it was primarily men.

WEST: I spoke to Lois Hotchkiss, who was the first woman [adult education] principal in L.A. Unified, and for a long time the only one.

TAYLOR: Yes, that is very correct. And so now we do have not only women principals, assistant principals, but we have diversity in terms of the principals, assistant principals. So we have—

WEST: And the top administration in adult education.

TAYLOR: Yes. We have Hispanics represented, we have African-Americans, we have Asians, and right on through with our administrators. And starting at the top as you mentioned, we have ethnic representation there. Jim [James A.] Figueroa, who is our assistant superintendent, and we have Lupe Reyes, who is one of the administrators, Loretta Walker, who is African-American and is one of our administrators. Lupe Reyes and Jim Figueroa are both Hispanics. Trusse Norris, who is another one of our administrators who is African-American, and right on down the line. In our adult basic education program,

when I was there five or six years ago, we had Greta Kojima [who is Asian], who was part of our program. So I think we're making an effort, but there is still work to be done.

I'm seeing that, especially in the Los Angeles School District, we are losing a lot of our African-American students. We are losing them all over the state in our adult programs. Well, I speak for L.A. Unified because I know that, and I think that that's a population that we need to recruit because the population is there. Well, there used to be pockets of African-Americans, and now they are moving to various other areas of the city, and they're moving east in Los Angeles, and they're moving north. But we still have a large population in the central area of Los Angeles, and I don't think we are reaching those persons; and it is a concern of mine, and I think we need to do that.

What we tried to do with the ALIT Institute, and I come back to that because I believe that you lead by demonstration, and I've discussed this issue. When there was a time for us to have an opportunity to make a difference, we did. And like I said, it wasn't real hard, it was just a matter of making sure that it was done. And there is no reason why it should not be done, and I just think we need to do that, and accept no excuses.

WEST: What about teacher education and the issue of cultural diversity?

TAYLOR: Well, and I'm glad you raised that, because that's another concern of mine. I think teachers who are receiving credentials, all teachers receiving credentials, and particularly adult education teachers, should be required to take a course in cultural diversity. I think we see today that we still don't understand each other. We have to live on this planet together, and we have racial groups that really don't understand each other. And if we don't address it in the schools, where is it going to be addressed? I mean, it should be addressed all over, in religious institutions and all that, but the schools have a vital role to play with our young people and we have a role to play with our adult students because in schools we can make a difference. But if instructors don't know what to teach, and they themselves don't understand other groups, they can't teach it.

WEST: Right.

TAYLOR: And they need to be made aware of the importance of it, and many times they don't. So that's one of the reasons we had the cultural diversity module in the ALIT Institute. But I do believe that a course should be required of everybody coming out to teach. Again, that's demonstration by example. [Chuckling]

WEST: Right. This concludes the questions I have. Is there anything you'd like to add?

TAYLOR: Well, I think I've talked about enough. [Laughter]

WEST: Okay.

TAYLOR: It has been a very interesting experience to sort of go back to when I started, to reflect back and to think of the students and the circumstances and situations that I've come through and to bring it up to 1995. I think it has just been a delightful experience, and a joy, and kind of sentimental too. In my mind's eye as I've been talking to you, I see some of the people that I have taught and people I've had contact with, my colleagues, and even when I mentioned about the Watts Outreach, I saw the center and my classroom and my first classroom when I first taught. And it just has been a delightful experience to sort of go back and reminisce.

WEST: Thank you, Aryola. This interview was done as a part of the California Adult Education Oral History Project.

INDEX

Adult Basic Education Program (Los Angeles Unified School District), 5-16, 42-47
Adult Education Act, 12-15
Adult Literacy Instructor Training (ALIT) Institute, 24, 32, 37, 38, 47-56, 59, 73, 74
Adult Performance Level (APL), 34
American Association of Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE), 60, 61
Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), 60
Aud X, 13
Baker, Pearl C., 23, 48, 49
Bradley, Thomas (Mayor of Los Angeles), 21
California Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS), 40-42
California Council for Adult Education (CCAE), 60-64
Camper, John H., 32
CBAE Staff Development Consortium, 34-40
Competency Based Adult Education (CBAE), 34, 40
Competency Based High School Diploma Project (LA CAPS), 33
Consortium for Adult Basic Education (COABE), 61
Crawford, Joyce, 31
Crutchfield, Juliet, 31, 35, 39
Davis, Billy, 21
Dawson, Rosemary, 41
Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), California, 18-19
Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, California, 19
EDL program, 13
Employment Development Department (EDD), California, 19
ESL Teacher Institute, 32, 49, 57, 59
ESL, 7, 33, 35, 42-43, 55
Farrell, Lonnie, 15
Figueroa, James A., 72
Fitzgerald, Hunter, 15
Haley, Alex, 21, 22
Hopkins, Linda, 21
Hotchkiss, Lois, 72
Jones, Ivory, 39
Kojima, Greta, 73
LA CAPS. *See* Comptetency Based High School Diploma Project
language experience [instructional strategy], 26-27
Leibert, Dr., 26
LifeSchool. *See* Project CLASS
Los Angeles Unified School District, 5, 12, 33, 40, 48, 65, 66, 71-73
Los Angeles, California, 1,2, 42, 73
Lynwood, California, 16
McCoo, Marilyn, 21

Mid-City Adult Basic Education Center (Los Angeles Unified School District, 14
Miller, Cuba Z., 35, 62-63
Mocker, Donald Dr., 25
Moore, Venessa E., 48
National ABE Teacher Training Institute, 24-28
National Adult Education Staff Development Consortium, 59-60
National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS), 64-65, 68
Norris, Trusse, 72
Pittman (publisher), 33
Project CLASS, 33
Reading Curriculum Guide for Adult Education, 31-31
Reading Vocabulary in Action (RVIA), 30-31
Reyes, Lupe, 72
Ririe, Bill, 40-41
Rumin, Robert, 15
Rupert, Robert Dr., 71-72
San Francisco State University, 34
Smith, Lydia A., 35, 39, 48
South Gate, California, 16
St. Jacques, Raymond, 21
Staff Development Consortium. *See* CBAE Staff Development Consortium
Staff Development Institute (California), 38, 56
Tach X, 13
Tibbets, John, 34
Vallido, Nelita A., 48
Venice Center (Los Angeles Unified School District), 14
Walker, Loretta, 72
Watts Center (Los Angeles Unified School District), 15
Watts Outreach Program, 15-24, 75
Westby-Gibson, Dorothy, 34
Williams, Pat, 23, 35

ARYOLA TAYLOR

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Project Director- Adult Literacy Instructors' Training (ALIT) Institute, operated under the auspices of the Los Angeles Unified School District, Division of Adult and Career Education and funded by the California Department of Education (1990 to 1995)

- Coordinated this statewide project involving setting up workshops statewide to help literacy instructors, adult education instructors, tutors, and administrators more effectively address the needs of literacy students especially native English speakers
- Wrote and/or edit training modules with facilitator guides.
- Wrote, edited, photographed instructional and informational videos
- Wrote programs on student recruitment and retention.
- Conducted workshops locally, nationally and statewide
- Edited reading materials for New Readers Press
- Served on Board of Directors for Literacy Network of Greater Los Angeles
- Edited statewide literacy newsletter

Advisor - Division of Adult and Occupational Education
Adult Literacy/Adult Basic Education Program (1978 to 1990)

- Assisted in the administration of the Adult Literacy/ABE Program, including advising and assisting over 150 literacy teachers, coordinating resource teachers, organizing and directing administrators with their programs, ordering materials and equipment, completing state reports, interviewing teachers, writing proposals
- Consulted with Steck-Vaughn publishing company in the writing and editing of the two series Reading for Today and Reading for Communication

- Consulted with the Los Angeles Times newspaper in developing the curriculum for the Reading for Life program that uses the newspaper to teach reading in a life skills context

- Presented workshops for teachers individually, in small groups and in large groups

- Coordinated staff development activities

- Coordinated second literacy conference (1990) that was co-sponsored by the LAUSD, Library Adult Reading Project (LARP), Los Angeles Times newspaper, United Way's Literacy Network for the Greater Los Angeles Area, and The Discovery Series, Office of the Mayor of Los Angeles

- Served six years as member and advanced staff developer on the CBAE Staff Development Consortium

- Served as author and editor of the Teaching CBE Reading Video Staff Development Trainer's Guide funded through the CBAE Staff Development Project, San Francisco State University (Section 310) and LAUSD's expanded guide and reference manual

- Wrote, edited, narrated, and participated in the video portion of the CBE Reading Video Staff Development Trainer's guide

- Assisted with revising the LAUSD's Reading Teachers Manual

- Coordinated field-testing of CASAS instruments

- Attended workshops and participated in the administration of the Teaching Improvement Process (TIP)

- Attended training and participated in administration of the Institutional Self-Assessment Measure (ISAM)

Project Director - Jordan-Locke Community Adult School (1975 to 1978)

- Served as project director for the Watts ABE Outreach Recruitment and Retention Program, a special demonstration project funded through Section 309

- Organized recruitment and retention activities such as: preparing TV and radio spot announcements, news releases, flyers, brochures, and bulletins; designing a slide-tape presentation; maintaining liaison with community agencies; developing students incentives; developing a student contact plan

Branch Coordinator - Jordan-Locke Community Adult School (1973 to 1975)

- Supervised certificated and classified staff
- Counseled and tested students
- Ordered and maintained equipment and supplies
- Scheduled classes and students
- Established and maintained contacts with community agencies

Instructor - Jordan-Locke Community Adult School (1965 to 1973)

- Developed math and reading curriculum
- Selected as evaluator for University of Missouri-Kansas City
- Selected to represent California at three national teacher training institutes for ABE teachers sponsored by the federal government in New York, Portland, and Kansas City
- Assisted in writing ABE reading curriculum for State Department of Education
- Served as model teacher for new teachers

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION (1985 to present)

- Elected Region 7 Director for the Commission of Adult Basic Education (COABE) of the American Association For Adult and Continuing Education.
- Chaired literacy committee for United Way Literacy Task Force that developed the Literacy Network for the Greater Los Angeles Area, a literacy office. Served on the Board of Directors.
- Chaired advisory committee for Literacy Network for the Greater Los Angeles Area
- Chaired Literacy: A Good Investment, literacy conference for business leaders in the greater Los Angeles area
- Served on the Los Angeles County Literacy Task Force

- Served on the Project Literacy U.S. (PLUS) Task Force
- Served on curriculum committee that advised KCET-TV, a PBS station, in the development of a 30-minute pilot aimed at teaching adults to read
- Consulted with the Discovery Series, Office of the Mayor of Los Angeles
- Served on the advisory board of the Library Adult Reading Project (LARP)
- Give literacy speeches locally, statewide and nationally

EDUCATION

Master of Arts, Sociology
California State University, Long Beach

Bachelor of Arts, Sociology
California State University, Long Beach

CALIFORNIA ADULT EDUCATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

RELEASE FORM

For and in consideration of the participation by the *California Adult Education Oral History Project*, funded by the *California Department of Education*, in any programs involving the dissemination of tape-recorded memoirs and oral history material for publication, copyright, and other uses, I hereby release all right, title, or interest in and to all of my tape-recorded memoirs to the *California Adult Education Oral History Project* and declare that they may be used without any restriction whatsoever and may be copyrighted and distributed by the *California Department of Education*, which may also assign said copyright and publication rights to serious research scholars.

In addition to the rights and authority given to you under the preceding paragraph, I hereby authorize you to edit, publish, sell and/or license the use of my oral history memoir in any other manner which the *California Department of Education* considers to be desirable, and I waive any claim to any payments which may be received as a consequence thereof by the *Department*.

PLACE Los Angeles
California

DATE 10/27/95

Angela Taylor
(Interviewee)

Linda L. West
(Interviewer)
(for California Adult Education
Oral History Project)