

## Issue No. 32, November 15, 2011

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## ANNOUNCING "ROI REVISITED"

A CAAL Blog message, titled **ROI Revisited**, was posted November 13 at [blog.caalusa.org](http://blog.caalusa.org). It offers views by legislative advisor Gene Sofer and president Gail Spangenberg on the urgent need to develop more concrete evidence than we have of successful adult education programs, especially those that aim to move adults to readiness for college and jobs. The message builds on the ROI posting in our October Blog. This new post indicates that CAAL has begun a short-term Return-on-Investment project, hoping among other things to provide at least preliminary evidence that Adult Education leaders can use with Congress and other policymakers and funders at the state and national level.



## THINK BACK, LOOK FORWARD

If you're reading this, you're probably a teacher, a student, an adult education program manager, an employer whose workers need better skills, an adult who needs training for a job or better job, a researcher, or a legislator or policymaker trying to decide just what to support in a time of scarce

resources, or maybe you are just a concerned citizen.

CAAL works to help ALL of you. That has been at the heart of our entire research and policy program from our beginning in 2001. In this, our year-end fundraising appeal, we hope you, in turn, will [help us with a small holiday donation](#). Our goal is to raise \$20,000 from individuals by the end of 2012. To help inspire you, CAAL president Gail Spangenberg is kicking off the campaign with a personal contribution of \$1,000.

Due to the tough financial climate, since 2011 we've operated on a budget a third of our usual size. But with great frugality we've found ways to stretch our funds and we've accomplished a lot. Our research and policy work is creating a stronger foundation and funding for your work. You can see the results of our national policy and research work in all sorts of ways--in federal and state policy development, more effective services, and new essential partnerships between adult education and workforce groups.

Consider what we've achieved in our publications program alone. Since 2011 we've published 9 major research reports and provided them to everyone free of charge. The topics range from certification and credentialing of students and teachers in adult education, to numeracy, to ROI from investing in workforce development, to determining adult education priorities in a time of scarce resources. We've also submitted and posted as resources nearly a dozen statements/analyses and letters to members of Congress, as well as over 20 issues of our E-Newsletter, each packed with information and analysis and essays to inform your activities and planning. Just last month we launched our new Blog. Of course, our publications program is just one strand of our work. We are active on many other fronts as well, including our participation in the [Campaign to Invest in America's Workforce](#) and our intensive efforts with members of Congress and others to advance WIA, Adult Education, and the Adult Education and Economic Growth Act.

We know many of you value our work because we hear from you, and about 4000 people spend time at our website every month. Since 2011 you have initiated nearly 150,000 sessions and downloaded more than 54 gigabytes of our material.

Many worthy organizations are seeking your contributions this time of year. We hope you will include CAAL in your group of must-support nonprofits. Please donate whatever you can to help us reach our goal!

Happy Thanksgiving! And healthy happy holidays to you all --



*or mail a check to the address shown below*



**POINT OF VIEW: THE COMING JOBS WAR**

Every now and then a book comes along that stops you in your tracks and tests the very foundations of your worldview. ***The Coming Jobs War***, by Jim Clifton, chairman of the Gallup organization, is one such book. CAAL recommends it to anyone working to preserve and strengthen America's future, including leaders in Adult Education.

Although the book was published over a year ago, and some of its recommendations and conclusions are debatable, it nevertheless offers a fascinating and powerful new framework for considering some of the decisions we make. Some prominent reviewers depict ***The Coming Jobs War***--it is written in simple everyday language--as the single most important book they've ever read. It addresses the importance of job creation, maintaining Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in relation to other world economies, and the importance of growing small business in America. It focuses on the interaction of these three phenomena as they bear on America's leadership role in the world, our ability to compete globally, and the very stability of our nation's founding principles.

Right now, according to Clifton, the U.S. is substantially stronger economically than all other countries in terms of GDP, almost double that of second-place China. But according to him, by 2030 China will overtake the U.S.--unless we create a huge increase in job growth, cut our healthcare costs by as much as half, and change our educational goals. (The chapter on healthcare is by itself mind-boggling.)

Where adult education is concerned, as the field works to "make its case" in stronger more compelling ways (e.g., with ROI evidence, a national report card for adult education, and using more fully the research findings available to us--see CAAL Blog [Thinking Out Loud](#)), it needs to take into account the harsh economic forces that Clifton's book addresses. In his view, in the next stage of our nation's development, leadership by big-city mayors and entrepreneurs will be crucial.

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Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy ~ 1221 Avenue of Americas ~ 44th Fl ~ New York, NY 10020  
Tel. 212-512-22363 ~ Fax. 212-512-2610 ~ [www.caalusa.org](http://www.caalusa.org) ~ [blog.caalusa.org](http://blog.caalusa.org)

