

# REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF THE LITERACY INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM (*LINCS*)

The National Institute for Literacy has begun a comprehensive evaluation of the *Literacy Information and Communications System (LINCS)*, a project designed to meet the teaching and learning needs of users in the adult education community by providing a single point of access to literacy-related resources, knowledge, expertise, and training and technical assistance. The Institute developed *LINCS* under the Workforce Investment Act, which authorized the Institute to “establish a national electronic database of information that disseminates information to the broadest possible audience within the literacy and basic skills field.” The *LINCS* network currently includes more than 9,000 catalogued literacy resources in 11 special collections, 12 public online discussion lists, a comprehensive calendar of events, and a national grants database. The *LINCS* system operates with the support of more than 45 state and national partners, including five regional centers that provide technical assistance and 12 content development grantees.

*The evaluation will determine whether LINCS is fulfilling its Congressional mandate, determine the extent to which LINCS content is based on scientific research, and determine what needs to be done to ensure that LINCS disseminates high quality information.*

This evaluation will provide a comprehensive picture of the *LINCS* system focusing on the following dimensions.

- The **impact of *LINCS*** on a wide range of audiences in the adult literacy field including researchers, policy makers, practitioners, and learners; the contributions of *LINCS* to **professional development** will be a key focus
- The effectiveness of the overall **design and architecture** of the *LINCS* site, including ease of use and navigational qualities of the site
- The degree to which materials and documents offered through *LINCS* resource **collections** are grounded in **scientifically based** research
- The overall **administrative and organizational structure** for operating the *LINCS* system
- The **cost effectiveness** of the site
- The ways in which *LINCS* **discussion lists** are used and their role in meeting the adult literacy field’s information needs
- The relevance, use, and scientific basis of an adult reading **profiling tool** featured on the site
- The effectiveness of **America’s Literacy Directory** in providing an up-to-date and unique list of literary services nationwide

To achieve the goals of this evaluation, which include such diverse tasks as measuring user

satisfaction and systematically examining the fidelity of content to scientifically based principles, the Institute’s evaluation contractor, RMC Research Corporation, will use a variety of methods including expert reviews of *LINCS* resources, surveys and interviews with all types of users, interviews and focus groups with critical stakeholders to discuss the content and structure of *LINCS* site and suggest potential improvements, and tracking visits to *LINCS* to articulate and characterize use.

The evaluation will be guided by a panel of advisors composed of experts and practitioners in the fields of adult education, Web-based and distance learning, evaluation, dissemination, and Web site operation. The panel will review and comment on the methods and instrumentation used for the study, review analysis plans and draft reports, and make recommendations for enhancing services to the field through the *LINCS* system.

To view the *LINCS* Web site, access [www.nifl.gov/lincs](http://www.nifl.gov/lincs). For more information about the *Review and Evaluation of the Literacy Information and Communications System (LINCS)* contact:

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