**One-to-One**
Volume 5, Issue 2

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**Dear Colleague,**
Welcome to the November edition of the AALF newsletter. This month's issue is focused on Communication. AALF President, Bruce Dixon writes about re-thinking research to support innovative teachers; Susan Einhorn, Executive Director of AALF, shares her thoughts on communication as a means to build community; and, Karen Ward, Manager of Coaching/Consulting Services, addresses communication as an essential learning component for classrooms today. Deb Socia, Principal of the Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School, shares her experience on how a focus on home-school communication has increased parents' participation in their children's educations. Dr. Donna Lenaghan, Director of Technology at the Miami Country Day School, discusses how virtual whiteboards have changed the learning environment in her school. Finally, you will want to be sure to read the highlights of our AALF Anytime Anywhere Learning and Teaching Academy, which was deemed a great success!

Enjoy!

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**President’s Message**

**Researching What for Why?**

By Bruce Dixon, President
Anytime Anywhere Learning Foundation

I enjoy research. I spend much of my time reading it. I also often find myself in sustained and vigorous conversations with colleagues from some of the leading research institutions from around the world...and it’s time that I value very much. Indeed, the Foundation maintains a register of some of the leading research...
around 1-to-1 on our site....however, I am also sick and tried of the unrelenting practice of political leaders and educational policy makers who continually seek to justify inaction and limit the scope for innovation in the name of research.

One only has to review the mountains of literature around the most effective ways to teach reading and the efficacy of small classes to conclude that too much educational research is based on loose assumptions, inappropriate methodologies, a blatant lack of rigor and ideological bias. Too often the funding base for educational research creates preconceptions about the outcomes, real or perceived, and the volume of research that swamps the education market seems to be more related to tenure or the attraction for doctoral topics, than a genuine need. It really is about time we took stock of the situation.

For more than three decades we have seen an increasing stream of research that has targeted our use of technology in schools. What purpose has much of it served, other than to often significantly distract educators from continuing to develop innovative practice, and seek new ways to engage young learners.

How can we support innovative teachers taking risks, if every move is covered by a researcher measuring outcomes? Where was the research to back so many of our current, dubious, practices in education? How indeed did all the mountains of research around computer use in schools in the 80's and 90's not condemn the grossly ineffective use of computer labs, instead of working on the assumption they were inevitable? Where is the parallel to our leading corporations, where good ideas, are keenly sought, encouraged, incubated, and then reviewed for their effectiveness and impact? When we are in midst of a time of potentially enormous transformation in our schools, not least through the integration of technology, it is time that we reflected more closely on the purpose, effectiveness and impact of much of the research that is being carried out.

Why don't we start by working on the culture of our schools, and encourage those that are seeking to create a culture of innovation. Why don't we start thinking carefully about what it really means to support risk-taking in our schools; it seems the only risks people are interested in are about the evils of the net and beyond...how about we support our educational leaders who are creating new agendas for learning within their schools, and seeking to genuinely leverage technology within an immersive environment to truly create worthwhile, authentic learning opportunities.

To do this, they must make mistakes, and we don't need research to identify every single one of them. What we need is a dynamic, constructive culture in our schools that builds reflective practice into innovation; that sets action research that is embedded into daily practice, and that seeks to continually improve the opportunities offered to young people.

With that sort of confidence in the teaching profession, with the sort of freedom that truly reflects the professional teacher, the research that will follow will at last be of real value to the lives of the students in our classrooms.

Interested in your thoughts...regards.

Best!

Post your comments to the AALF web site or mail them to seinhorn@aalf.org.

AALF Leadership: Executive Director News and Thoughts

Communication to Build Community

By Susan Einhorn, Executive Director
This month's newsletter is focused on communication and how we communicate with our colleagues, our students, our parents, our community.

It’s easy to hear that the word “community” and “communication” each come from the same root - “communis” - meaning common. One of our goals at AALF is to build a community that shares knowledge and experience and supports other community members. How can we best do this? By asking you, the members of the AALF community, to assist each other by sharing your stories, both of your successes and your failures, in the AALF newsletter, by participating in online discussions on the AALF web site, and by adding your school to the One-to-One Database.

The editorial calendar for upcoming newsletter issues includes International 1-to-1 Implementations: Curriculum Shifts (December), Peer Coaching: Effective Strategies (January/February), Games, Learning, and 1-to-1: How Do They Go Together? (March), Partnerships to Build 1-to-1 (April), Web 2.0 Applications in 1-to-1: Beyond Blogs (May), Rethinking Professional Development in 1-to-1 Environments (June), Lifelong Learning for Learners of All Ages (July/August). If you would like to share your story and feel it's appropriate for one of these issues, please contact me at seinhorn@aalf.org. As you tell your story, describe at least one area in which you faced a challenge and how you solved or attempted to solve that issue. It’s equally important to share failures and understand why they happened as it is to share successes.

Both communication and community building were central themes at the Anytime Anywhere Learning and Teaching Academy held recently in Pennsylvania as participants shared ideas on how to rethink their curriculum using a project-based and inquiry-based approach. Well-known educational consultants Bernajean Porter, Gary Stager, and Will Richardson spent time working one-to-one with different school teams as they developed essential questions and designed and developed projects to bring back to school. Read more about the event below.

Live community building events, such as the Academy and our 21 Steps to 21st Century Learning Institutes, help us recharge our batteries and build our knowledge. But sharing - communicating - with the AALF community through online discussion and the newsletter is also an important part of building our anytime, anywhere learning community. We look forward to hearing from you.

Until next month,

Susan

AALF Coaching and Consulting

Engaging Students in Learning-Communication

By Karen Ward, Manager of Coaching and Consulting Services
Anytime Anywhere Learning Foundation

Technology has changed the way people communicate. This is a simple (and overused) statement and yet it is at the core of important changes that must take place in laptop classes. In his book Leonardo’s Laptop, Ben Shneiderman states that, the old computing was about mastering technology; the new computing is about supporting human relationships...teachers no longer cover the subject matter, instead they guide learners to discover it. Communication technologies empower students to not only discover new ideas, concepts, and beliefs but students are also empowered to communicate those new discoveries with others—to donate their unique insights to others. Two key questions for we educators:

- Are we structuring student learning and engagement to emphasize critical analysis of text and collaboration?
- How are we structuring student learning and engagement to emphasize collaboration and communication skills?
How are identifying the discrete and complex skills associated with this critical analysis of text and collaboration?

A large number of our students today are very comfortable living in the virtual world of communication. As they mobile text, Facebook, Ning and Twitter (to mention just a few) their way through each day, they have also pushed the envelope of what many believe is the traditional way of communicating with one another. Although it is important for educators to stay abreast with new communicative technologies, it is vital that we understand why these new developments will support content and student learning at the same time. We must be mindful that our teacher academic contribution to our students’ lives aligns with communicative technologies and powerful learning and student engagement activities. When we start with this as one of the core essentials for our classes, I know we can teach our students how to think, read, write, relate to life as historians, mathematicians, scientists, novelists, poets, etc. If we do not start with this core we risk engaging students with work, but research shows us that it lacks rigor or critical analysis of text.

We have examples all around us showing the power of student communication. Let me share one with you. Recently I had the opportunity to observe laptop classes at a large urban middle school campus (years 7 and 8 student body). This has been an election year in the U.S. (you would have to be living on another planet to have missed this fact!) and a year 8 student was wearing a homemade political button on her collar with a message endorsing a state proposition. One of her teachers complained about the impropriety of this button at school. Administrative leaders assured the teacher that the political button was within the student's first amendment right of free speech. I spoke with the girl for a few minutes and asked her why she was endorsing the proposition, how much she knew about the proposed changes, and from whom she had received information about the proposition. She told me that her parents had been talking at home about the proposition but that she had really gotten most her information from three key sources: her friends (f2f and virtual) on Facebook, news and press release sites her history teacher had required they find and share with other students in class, and from political blogs she had found herself. She said that her parents had an influence on her beliefs, but that by reading, writing and communicating with other students and experts about what she was learning she had been able to clarify her thinking and reasoning. This was accomplished through social networking, synchronous discussions during class, and by posting questions to several blogs.

So, how do we do this?

First, we must teach students how to think about the text they will be encountering through their communication. This can be accomplished in simple ways:

- Teach them what text is. Text is more than just words like these you are reading. David Hyerle tells us: *Text are patterns of information, layered, found in many forms, and requiring interpretation.* (A Field Guide to Using Visual Tools).
- Teach them that all text has a message that requires interpretation on their part.
- Teach students to routinely ask questions about the text they are encounter; questions like, "What is the author's purpose for creating this text?" and "How does this text connect to others I have encountered?"
- Teach them to look for answers to their questions within the text and through other sources available online.
- Teach them to identify components of bias in the text they encounter and to categorize this as appropriate or inappropriate bias.
- Teach them that they too must be effective producers of text.
- Provide weekly (daily?) opportunities for students to communicate with one another about their learning.

Second, we educators must be learners ourselves by participating in new collaborative learning experiences with recognized experts. In the next month AALF will begin providing online opportunities for teachers and leaders to learn about 1-to-1 teaching and learning from expert practitioners. These
expert history, math, science and English teachers will lead virtual sessions for partner schools or districts that have established coaching contracts. Others are invited to participate for a small fee. Please contact me for more information about learning from and communicating with these experts (kward@aalf.org).

I close by extending to you this challenge: If technology (and laptop learning) really have changed the way people relate and communicate, what are you doing to develop your understanding and pedagogical practices to reflect these changes? I look forward to hearing your feedback and ideas.

Have a great November!

Karen

Leonardo's Laptop by Ben Shneiderman.

1-to-1 Leadership and Learning

Technology Goes Home at Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School

By Debra Socia
Founder and Principal of the Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School

On a recent evening at the Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School, parent's joined with their children to learn from the school's teachers. The content of the evening's training - how to sign up for and use g-mail and g-chat and how to access the school's on-line grading software. At "The Frederick", parents come out in huge numbers to attend events, they communicate freely and regularly with teachers, and they become full partners in their children's education. This is a school where the parents comfortably use technology to stay in communication with teachers, to check on their child's school success, and to encourage their child to participate in enrichment/acceleration activities that can improve academic achievement.

The Frederick is moving into year two of a groundbreaking 1-to-1 (one laptop for every student and teacher) wireless learning initiative. Located in the Grove Hall neighborhood of Boston, this area is considered a hot-spot for gang violence and has been targeted for intervention by the Mayor's office through its Violence Intervention and Prevention program (VIP). Because of the physical risk to students, school-based laptops cannot leave the building. The Frederick's students have anywhere/anytime access during the school day, but from the start of the planning, the building leadership, community stakeholders, and neighborhood leaders were unsatisfied with the inequity - simply put, they wanted to ensure that 1:1 would extend the learning time and provide truly ubiquitous access both in and out of school.

To solve this critical equity and access problem, LGF turned to Mayor Thomas M. Menino's award winning Technology Goes Home @ School Initiative. Through Tech Goes Home, students and their family members participate in 25 hours of after-school "training" and receive hardware and home access upon graduation from the program. While a typical Boston city school might serve two to five percent of their families through Tech Goes Home, LGF is now serving over 1/3 of all families each year with the intended goal of providing true anywhere/anytime access for ALL families by 2010. Imperative to ensuring that everyone can access the resources is the school's ability to provide the instruction in the home language. Currently, the program is offered at LGF in English, Spanish, and Somali.

TGH offered opportunities for families to feel more comfortable engaging in school-based efforts as well as developing skills in the use of a variety of communication tools. As a result of this effort, parent participation has dramatically increased. Parents, children, and teachers at the Frederick communicate regularly through the readily available technology. Chatting in real time with a teacher or administrator, emailing concerns, checking grades and attendance, and encouraging students to use appropriate
applications to enhance learning has become typical and expected.

The training experience helps to improve the parents' technical skills -- but more importantly -- gives parents a sense of comfort, ease, and trust with the staff at the school. Parents, through their exposure to the school, the teachers, and the technology, were able to use the training as a means of breaking down barriers. As parents and children and teachers work together to master the tools, the relationships developed allowed for much more meaningful interactions and a much deeper level of trust.

The Frederick is on the leading edge of exploring what it can look like when parents have a safe environment and a solid platform for communication. Empowered by the experience, parents are deeply committed working in partnership with the school and the community to ensure student success. As a team, parents, teachers and students are building a platform on which trust and communication become the norm.

Deb Socia is Founder and Principal of the Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School, and has previously held positions as Dean of Curriculum and Program at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, as a district level Curriculum Director, as a Professional Development Consultant/Coach, and as the Program Director for the Coalition of Essential Schools - Massachusetts. Her passion in education is specifically in ensuring equity of access and parity of resources for those families living in urban settings.

The Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School accommodates students from grades six to eight, and is located in Dorchester, Massachusetts. It launched its 1-to-1 wireless initiative in March, 2007. The students of the Frederick school neighborhood were the first to utilize Boston's new Wi-Fi system, allowing them to continue their learning at home.

1-to-1 Learning and Teaching

Virtual WhiteBoards: The Ultimate Anytime, Anywhere, Anybody Tool

By Dr. Donna Lenaghan
Director of Technology for Miami Country Day School.

Four initial confessions by the author, 1) I am not an early adopter but somehow I forgot that and it's one of the best things I've ever done, 2) I believe in 21st Century learning now; 3) I advocate that schools should reflect the real world; and 4) I know that necessity is the mother of invention.

Four questions for the reader; have you ever 1) had your boss request the impossible? 2) thought that multimedia projection is one of the most important steps for effective technology integration? 3) recently seen a professional presentation (outside a school setting) where the presenter wrote on a board? or, 4) heard the saying "teachers, never turn your back on your students"?

If my confession and questions intrigue you, read on to find out why and how we did what we did at Miami Country Day School.

In June 2007, Miami Country Day School's (MCDS') visionary Head of School, Dr. John Davies, asked me to recommend a strategy to "warp speed" MCDS' integration of technology into the curriculum. MCDS was a 1-to-1 school and a few teachers were using tablets. Since I knew that the major reasons teachers do not integrate were: a) equipment not reliable and available, b) lack of training and support, c) lack of time to develop meaningful lessons with technology, and d) lack of incentives, I was confident that 'b' & 'd' were "no problem" because this was an initiative from the boss. Thus, MCDS and a few courageous and patient partners (Toshiba, SoftChoice, and CreativeTechnologies) started on the road of invention toward virtual whiteboards.

A virtual whiteboard is a tablet PC with wired and wireless connectivity to a projector and a multimedia
A virtual whiteboard is a tablet PC with wired and wireless connectivity to a projector and a multimedia podium with a docking station. MCDS added a sound system with ceiling speakers to enhance the learning experience.

Since I was not an early adopter, there had to be a really good rationale for me to produce "out of the box". I found several compelling reasons. Firstly, the virtual whiteboard solution costs several thousand dollars less, per room, than an electronic whiteboard solution. Secondly, I have often cringed in faculty training sessions and classroom observations when teachers spoke to the board not their students, or appeared to be cemented to one spot in the room (sometimes the back of the room due to the junction box location). In some cases I have seen teachers needing to wear sunglasses or a ball cap to protect their eyes from projector bulb blast.

The motivation to find an alternative to electronic whiteboards was fueled by a passion to consistently provide reliable, realistic, and effective teaching and learning environments and our philosophy of education. The electronic boards constantly needed resets, pen replacements, and supplies. Twenty percent of our help desk calls were electronic boards. The virtual white board was more consistent with MCDS’ student centered learning environment, wherein teaching and learning is a face to face, dynamic, human interactive processes. Virtual whiteboards enable teachers to explore and capture teachable moments with two way communications and shared power.

21st Century learning mandates the TC6; technology literacies, communication, collaboration, critical thinking, citizenship, content master and career preparation. The virtual whiteboard concept is very consistent with TC6. Tablet/laptop projection is used in most workplace settings (more than electronic boards). It is a natural medium for collaboration since students and teachers can pass, or gather around, the tablet. A tablet provides immediate group editing and visual reporting capacity during creative and critical thinking sessions. An unexpected benefit of whiteboards is the manner in which they have transformed the outcomes and process of our administrative and community meetings by means of collaborative functionality. In essence, virtual whiteboards sessions have replaced flip charting sessions.

When the power of wireless projection from anywhere in the room is combined with the inking function in tablets and Microsoft Office, handwritten notes formerly placed on a board can now be created anywhere in a room and be immediately captured, saved, re-used, and distributed to those absent. Free specialized programs such as Equation Writer, Flash Cards, Snipping Tool, Ink Desktop, Physics Illustrator, Writing Recognition, and Web Search are valuable assets for teaching and learning. In addition, one of the software interface programs that controls many electronic boards works with the tablet as well as its specialized tool bars and voting devices. Furthermore, the newest generation of tablets is touch enabled. When these features are combined with a multimedia podium and a docking station, a teacher can effortlessly move from a wireless brainstorming session into a docked streaming video presentation. The entire learning experience is dynamically transformed.

A final, most compelling, reason to use a virtual whiteboard is the dynamic shift of power that occurs when the student's tool of choice (tablet) not teacher's (board) becomes a pivotal variable in the learning process. Describing this dynamic, one teacher remarked, "The kids love it so much because they can write on it. It makes it more fun to work that they don't even realize they are learning" and "I find that it helps the students focus more and the kids really gravitate to it as if it's second nature to them."

With these motivators in mind, MCDS, after an initial pilot in a few classrooms, launched the three year mission to make every classroom and conference room a multimedia learning space. In the first year, ceiling projectors were placed in each room. Over two years as a part of our refresh cycle, all teachers were issued tablets instead of desktops. After the three year period, as the leases on the electronic boards expire, a multimedia sound system and teaching podium (provides wired and wireless capabilities) will be installed in all classrooms.

Most teachers are thrilled. However, a few fondly remember the "good old days" of electronic boards and strongly regret the change. For every regretter, we have dozens of teachers who are creating
Learning magic with this new technology.

"I love being interactive with my students. It happens so often it seems like they use it more than I do. It also allows me to learn new ways of teaching to reach my kids." "We love how much the kids can participate with the tablets. Sometimes the kids get bored with traditional learning methods and this helps to get them more involved."

With virtual whiteboards, MCDS is very 21st Century!

Dr. Donna Lenaghan is a creator of learning environments with technology who advocates the effective, efficient and ethical use of technology in teaching and learning. She is an international speaker, consultant on technology infrastructure and educational integration, and Director of Technology for Miami Country Day School.

Miami Country Day School is a private, non-denominational, co-ed JK-12 college preparatory school near Miami Shores, just north of the city of Miami, Florida. It was recognized by Toshiba for the Tablet Integration with Projection (TIP) Innovation and Intel for its technology integration into learning. Each classroom at MCDS is equipped with desktops, laptops, and tablets for students to use. Technology classes are required for students from kindergarten through seventh grade.

Coaches' Corner

AALF Coaching

The goal of AALF is to ensure that all children have access to unlimited opportunities for learning anytime and anywhere and that they have the tools that make this possible. AALF coaches provide support for educators at all levels in achieving this goal. Working either individually or in expert teams, coaches and consultants support educators and policy makers at every phase of their 1-to-1 initiative. This includes creating a vision, designing appropriate goals, translating plans into action, choosing the most effective technology tools and designing technology support, providing professional development opportunities, and using data to reflect on the effectiveness of their program.

Working with individual leaders and teams of educators, AALF coaches incorporate:

- Face-to-face and additional communication sessions
- Online learning opportunities
- The use of Web 2.0 online collaborative communication tools such as blogs and wikis
- Professional development support with AALF associates who are currently working in highly effective 1-to-1 schools.

For addition information regarding AALF coaching support go to www.aalf.org or contact Karen Ward at kward@aalf.org

AALF Worldwide Networking

Contributing to AALF

Our AALF worldwide newsletter readership continues to grow. In the past year our foundation enrollment and readers have grown to over 2,500 members. This is exciting news and certainly provides evidence about the relevance of 1-to-1 learning across continents! As our audience and support continues to grow, we are anxious to provide timely and relevant information regarding 1-to-1 learning and schools around the world. With this in mind, I would like to invite foundation members to get involved with the production of this monthly publication. There are several ways you can contribute to this important work:

- Get involved with a RTA group (Research-to-Action); these groups will continue to contribute to the '1-to-1 Leadership and Learning' column which explores 'best pedagogical practices'...
the ’1-to-1 Leadership and Learning’ column which explores ‘best pedagogical practices’

- Volunteer your school to be a ’1-to-1 Global Storybook Spotlight School’; this column provides an in depth look at 1-to-1 schools from the perspective of leaders, teachers, and students
- Volunteer to help with production of the newsletter; editors are needed as our publication continues to grow in breadth and depth; or submit an article to an upcoming issue.
- Volunteer your unique suggestions; suggest columns or ideas you think would benefit 1-to-1 educators around the world

Please contact Susan Einhorn (seinhorn@aalf.org or 425.223.3763) if you are interested in any of these opportunities.

Conferences, Institutes, Academies and Events

The Anytime Anywhere Learning and Teaching Academy-- A Huge Success!
By Justina Spencer

The Anytime Anywhere Learning Foundation launched its Anytime Anywhere Learning and Teaching Academy on October 22nd. Teams from schools and districts across the US and Canada gathered for a three day, intensive workshop that focused on building an inquiry-based and project-based curriculum. In addition to gathering educators from across North America, the AALF Academy assembled a broad range of master teachers, consultants and coaches to facilitate discussion and share new ideas concerning 1-to-1 learning.

Each day the academy participants were involved in an open dialogue with the academy facilitators during a morning conversation. This open forum fostered a wide range of questions and issues that were carried into the day's sessions. Afterwards, sessions were held by Academy facilitators that touched upon such issues as Web 2.0 classroom integration, effective skills of peer coaching, and project-based curriculum requiring laptops, but not necessarily the internet.

In a stimulating session concerning the creation and assessment of good projects, Bernajean Porter presented a number of multi-media student projects and asked participants to assess them. Lively discussions ensued as everyone began to rethink how to engage students with technology, and develop essential questions. In another workshop, Nils Ahbel had participants stand up and mill around as if at a cocktail party, while discussing the mathematical meaning behind food labels on everyday grocery items. As people moved about the room discussing and debating the mathematical issues, they were not only surprised by their findings, but impressed by how a change in the structure of the learning environment impacts the flow of ideas.

The Academy was deemed a great success by participants and facilitators alike. As Joy Fasshauer from the Catherine Cook School in Chicago remarked, "This was the best PD I've ever attended." Doris Lewis, elementary teacher from The Study, Montreal, agreed, adding, "the fact that we could come as a team was great. This isn't over -- we're going to continue to meet regularly once we get back to school so we can share ideas and build on the work we've done here."

Upcoming Events

Check Events on the AALF website regularly to learn of other events at which AALF leaders will be speaking or leading workshops. We look forward to seeing you there.

November 18, 2008
November 18, 2008
SETDA 2008 Leadership Summit
AALF President Bruce Dixon will participate in the Education Forum: Bold Steps for America's Students roundtable discussion entitled '21st Century Skills.' Washington, D.C.

November 20, 2008
Florida Council of Independent Schools (FCIS) Convention. AALF President Bruce Dixon is a featured speaker. Orlando, FL.

November 25-26, 2008
21 Steps to 21st Century Learning Institute. Adelaide, SA, Australia

November 27-28, 2008
21 Steps to 21st Century Learning Institute with Education Queensland. Mackay, QLD, Australia

January 22, 2009

January 23-25, 2009
Educon 2.1 Organized by Christopher Lehmann. Will Richardson and Gary Stager are featured speakers. Philadelphia, PA.

Do you have an upcoming 1-to-1 event you would like to share with other newsletter readers? Contact Susan Einhorn (seinhorn@aalf.org) for information on posting these events.

Answering Your Questions

Questions & Answers

Here is a question AALF received from Susan Harley in Australia:

"I am looking for a survey to be given to upper primary students that established some base line data in relation to their ICT capabilities. I want to do this prior to the students receiving their one to one device in 2009."

Please send your answer or suggestions to Susan Harley at: harley.susan.m@edumail.vic.gov.au, or write to Susan Einhorn: seinhorn@aalf.org

Are you implementing a 1-to-1 laptop program and struggling with a specific issue? Do you have questions about policies, communicating with parents or the community, AUPs, professional development, or any other issues that you are facing in implementing anytime, anywhere learning in your school or district?

If your answer to that question is yes, let the AALF community help.

Send your questions to the AALF team, and we'll look for members of the AALF community who are knowledgeable in this area and are willing to share their expertise and provide some insights and suggestions. Although we may not be able to answer all your questions, we'll try to answer as many questions as we can. Send your questions to me at seinhorn@aalf.org.

The Foundation thanks its partners for their support: