



TEXAS Adult & Family Literacy QUARTERLY

Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy & Learning

National American Graduate Initiative Featured at Brazos Valley Event

American Graduate is a public media initiative highlighting solutions to the nationwide issue of high school dropouts with the goal to raise high school completion rates. (See www.americangraduate.org/.) As part of that initiative, The Brazos Valley Council of Governments (BVCOG) and Texas A&M University's public television station KAMU-TV hosted a community luncheon in September to highlight adult basic education needs in the Brazos Valley.

In the Brazos Valley, 35,648 adults lack a high school diploma or GED® certificate. This community forum emphasized the importance of those adults earning a GED® certificate and how community partners can enhance efforts to target this underserved population while building a dialog of re-engaging adults and youth who are no longer in public education.

The program included a screening of excerpts from the TEDTalks Education special aired by public television in May. Also on the program was a speaker from a public school that has been successful at keeping borderline students in school (i.e. what the school is doing that works). From Blinn College, a speaker who described how they engage recent GED® graduates in continuing their education. A public assistance program speaker discussed enlistment and outreach to government-assisted families. And two recent GED® graduates shared their personal stories. Read those accounts by Ethel Love-Craig and Monica Hernandez beginning on page 3.



Monica Hernandez



Ethel Love-Craig



Visit this link for a regional video-conference follow-up.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7XrLZ9fw8M>



Read more on this topic at
<http://gedintexas.wordpress.com/2013/09/12/american-graduate-initiative-in-brazos-valley/>



IN THIS ISSUE

National American Graduate Initiative Featured at Brazos Valley Event 1

36-year Journey Transforms High School Dropout to College Student
by Ethel Love-Craig 3

15 Years After Dropping Out, GED Graduate is Now Studying to Help Students at Risk
by Monica Hernandez 4

“12 Impacts of the 12th Man” Highlights TCALL’s Work in Support of Adult Literacy Skills for Sustainability 5

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT
A Rubric for Supervising Instructors
by Joshua Gahr 6

ADULT LEARNER TRANSITIONS TO WORK AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

A Green Solution at the Adult Reading Center
by Alvin Le Blanc 9

Preparing Students with Essential Job and Career Readiness Skills
by Jennifer J. Osborn and Kimberly Bredvad Vinton 11

Workforce Development, Adult Learners and Their Emotions
by Anthony Gabriel 12

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, MOTIVATION & GOAL SETTING
A Perfect Fit!
by Irene Ramos 14

Utilizing Community Resources to Give Hope to the ESL Population
by Ruth Larson 15

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
New TCALL Webpage Offers “One-Stop Shopping” for Online Professional Development
by Ken Appelt 16

SUCCESS STORIES
Can You Start a Career with Your GED®
by Rigoberto Enriquez 17

Determination and Perseverance
by Roxanne Burnett 18

I’m Hitting a Homerun!
by Maria Rodriguez 19

Student Overcomes Language Barrier to Job Advancement
by Stacia R. Roberts and Juan Carlos Murillo 20

Yes! I’m a Cook!
by Stacia R. Roberts and Julio Garcia 21

WELCOME TO OUR LIBRARY 22

READ IT ONLINE OR FREE BY MAIL 24

36-year Journey Transforms High School Dropout to College Student

by Ethel Love-Craig

Student Speaker at Brazos Valley Graduate Forum,
September 2013

My name is Ethel Love-Craig. I am 52 years old and I was born in Navasota, TX. I dropped out of high in 1977 at the age of 16 because I got pregnant with my second son. I was not doing as well in school as I should have been doing and I couldn't handle raising two kids and going to school at the same time. I didn't return to finish my high school education because after having my second son, I had to get a job to help my mother take care of my kids, because their fathers weren't around. But without a high school education, you can't get a job anywhere except for fast food. So I ended up on public assistance.

After dropping out of high school, I had two more children. I couldn't get a job other than fast food, and all the money from my job went to pay for a baby-sitter for my kids. So I decided to move to Houston to try and get a better job in 1987. I was able to get a job at a doughnut shop but after that, I was introduced to "crack cocaine."

For over twenty years, I struggled with an addiction to crack-cocaine. It was the biggest mistake of my life. Thanks to God and my family, I've now been free of drugs for just over four years.

Without a high school education or GED® certificate, I felt worthless. I couldn't provide for my kids and I couldn't be a good role model for them. If only I had stayed in school and finished my high school education, I would have been a better example for my kids and better equipped to provide for them. I would have also had the knowledge I needed to stay away from drugs.

If I could go back and tell myself one thing before I dropped out, I would say stay in school, no matter how hard it gets. It will all pay off in the end, and you will make yourself and everyone else proud of you.

What people don't understand about not having a GED® certificate or high school diploma is how hard it is to get by out there without it. This world will swallow you up, and you cannot get any job without a one. If I could go back, I would do everything differently. I would stay in school, go to college, and get a job that I could be proud of.

In June 2010, I decided to go back to school because I had always wanted to finish my high school education. I started with Mr. Henry at the Workforce Solutions office. After the class with Mrs. Erica Park became available, I moved to her class.

The experience of getting my GED® certificate was great. I knew I had it in me to do it, but just making that move to get started was the hard part. I thought people would laugh at me and say, "Why is this old lady here?"

Nevertheless, I put all that aside. I wanted my education at any cost.

Mrs. Park, my teacher, was stern, but fair. She helped in any way she could. The other students were encouraging, helpful and kind. I didn't know too much about algebra, but the instructors were very helpful.

A year and a half after starting my GED® class, I took the test in November and earned my GED® certificate on December 14th, 2011. This was the proudest day of my life. Thirty-six years, two months and 13 days after dropping out of high school, I am a high school graduate!

After I passed my exam, I enrolled in Blinn College to study psychology. Once accepted to Blinn, I went through a six-week Intensive College Readiness Program, which helped me to get ready for college, walked me through the FAFSA, and also paid for my entrance exams. The incentive of the program was that if I passed my first semester of college, I would receive a free laptop. I'm proud to say that I typed this article on my laptop.

In closing, I want to thank God first of all for delivering me from drugs. I want to thank my husband for encouraging me to pursue my dreams, my family for not giving up on me when I was in the midst of the storm, and to all the instructors that helped me to get where I am today.

And lastly, my advice to all high school students currently in school is to follow your dreams. Finish your education. It may get hard or tiring, but keep pushing... it will all pay off for you.

15 Years After Dropping Out, GED® Graduate is Now Studying to Help Young Students At Risk

by **Monica Hernandez**

Student Speaker at Brazos Valley Graduate Forum,
September 2013

My name is Monica Hernandez. I'm 34 years old and was born in Houston but raised here in Bryan.

I dropped out of high school in the 10th grade at the age of 17. About eight years ago I was tired of living and ready to put an end to my life. One of the things I was tired of living with was my past failures. I lived a life filled with abuse, fear and shame. So at a young age I began to think it was me against the world. I began associating with gangs, drinking, using drugs, running away and stealing.

And even though education was the last thing anyone ever talked to me about, I still attempted 10th grade for three years in a row. The first year, I was kicked out for fighting and was denied enrollment at SOS (Special Opportunity School), because they said I was dangerous and had a criminal behavior. And they were right. I was very insecure and I used argumentative and abusive behavior to cover it up. I dropped out of high school because I didn't have the accountability or encouragement that I needed to stay. I didn't return to school after that because I became pregnant and had no one to care for my child.

After dropping out of high school, I got married and had two more children by the age of 22. Without a high school education or GED® certificate, I was unable to get a good paying job to help my husband provide for us, which led to us losing our home. What people don't understand about not having a GED® certificate or high school diploma is that you're basically at a dead-end street, with little to no options except to go back to school.

If I could go back and tell myself one thing before I dropped out, I would say "Keep trying Monica! Giving up is easy but anything worth having is worth working hard for and you can do it!"

For about a year my husband encouraged me to go back to school and get my GED® certificate. He wanted to know that if anything ever happened to him,

I would have the education I needed to get a good job to provide for our children and me. I didn't think I could do it because it had been 15 years since I had been in school but my husband kept speaking life into me. In March 2013 I attended my first GED® class at the Brazos Valley Council of Governments. Four months later in July 2013 I'm proud to say I received my GED® certificate! With the grace of God I passed my test on the first try! My teacher was Mrs. Park and one thing I loved about her was her willingness to help you achieve your goals. Whatever level you were at, she met you there and walked along side you.

The experience of getting my GED® certificate was so exciting! I couldn't take my eyes off the test results. I even had my husband look to make sure it said I passed! Life didn't deal me a good set of cards but I am here today only because of the healing and restoration God has done in my life and I give Him all the glory. I achieved something statistics said I would not. I achieved something no one could ever take away from me.

Getting my GED® certificate gave me the desire to want to continue my education. I recently applied to Blinn College in hopes of getting my Associate's Degree. My dream is to work in the schools so I can have the opportunity to encourage and motivate at-risk kids there, to cheer them on, believe in them and to walk alongside them.

In closing I want to thank God for bringing me a mighty long way. I want to thank my husband Michael for encouraging me, supporting me and cheering me on when I didn't think I could do it. And I want to thank my kids for helping me study. I also want to thank Erica for always making herself available to me with whatever I needed help on. My advice to all high school students currently in school is, don't give up! It is in your best interest to finish school. Keep trying and remember giving up is easy but anything worth having is worth working hard for. You can do it!

“12 Impacts of the 12th Man” Highlights TCALL’s Work in Support of Adult Literacy Skills for Sustainability

by **Chauncey Cox**

While most sustainability issues are discussed in terms of environmental efforts, it is equally important to ensure that adult citizens possess the basic literacy skills to be self-sustaining throughout their lifetimes. To support those efforts, the Texas Center for Advancement of Literacy and Learning (TCALL) in the College of Education and Human Development at Texas A&M University works with a variety of state and local entities to support literacy programs including family literacy.



Literacy program leaders and TCALL staff attended a statewide Adult Education Administrators' Summer Institute in Galveston.

According to the National Research Council in 2012, 43 percent of the adult population in the United States only has basic and below-basic literacy skills. These individuals can perform only the most basic literacy tasks and therefore may not function well in the workplace or as partners in their children’s education. In Texas, recent changes in the adult literacy field will focus more on workforce initiatives to help increase the functional literacy of adults in the state. In 2013, the Texas legislature transferred the Adult Basic Education system from the Texas Education Agency to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). With that change, efforts are being focused on building sustainability among adult literacy learners by focusing on integrating career awareness and workforce preparation. The overall goal is to prepare adult citizens with literacy skills for career mobility and sustainability so they may continue to work in an ever-evolving workforce with new job demands and qualifications.

“As adult education has moved under the Texas Workforce Commission and new and exciting partnerships with workforce centers begin to develop, TCALL is in an excellent position to continue serving the needs of Texas adults and support the TWC in its efforts to enhance workforce skills,” said Federico Salas-Isnardi, literacy specialist and TCALL program coordinator.

Today, TCALL is the resource and information hub that supports all publicly funded or community-based non-profit adult literacy programs in the state, and several state and federal professional development initiatives for adult educators. As the state literacy resource center, TCALL works to connect adult literacy learners to literacy programs and services statewide. The center works to ensure that adult literacy educators have access to GED® test preparation, English language learning curriculum, professional development and other materials to help adult literacy students learn the basic skills to advance in life.

TCALL’s services and resources are available to the many adult literacy educators who are volunteers in non-government-funded programs. Access to professional development workshops and training, educational materials and statewide-developed curriculum to teach adult literacy learners is essential for best practices.

“Once we are contacted, we start to assess the needs of our adult literacy programs and educators,” said Salas-Isnardi. “We have to make sure they are prepared to teach adult students. For example, one common request is for materials to teach adult students high school math skills, because not everyone has experience teaching adults.”



Federico Salas-Isnardi, Mary V. Alfred and Harriet Smith

Salas-Isnardi works with center Director Harriet Smith and Mary V. Alfred, principal investigator, to coordinate efforts between TCALL and literacy programs. The staff at TCALL also maintains an online state-wide directory of literacy programs and a mail-order library, publishes a quarterly newsletter and operates a toll-free literacy hotline. Adult educators can also network within the field to stay current with literacy trends through the TCALL website www-tcall.tamu.edu.

“Staying current in our field is very important. Right now, we are preparing for a big change in the form of the GED® test, as it becomes a computer-based test in 2014 for the first time,” said Smith. “This is a pivotal change because it begins to familiarize adult literacy learners with using a computer, which they may also have to use at work,” she said.

Literacy concerns in Texas range from undereducated adults, different economic disadvantages, large gaps between education periods or challenges unique to English language learners. In 2011-2012 literacy educators connected through TCALL helped literacy programs that served more than 91,000 adult learners and nearly 47,000 English-as-a-second-language learners in Texas.

“TCALL helps the state serve the educational needs of a population that otherwise might not be reached by any part of the university — adults who may have fallen through the cracks of the K-12 system or who received limited education in other countries before immigrating to Texas,” said Smith.

This article is reprinted with permission from 12 Impacts of the 12th Man.

12 Impacts of the 12th Man is an ongoing series throughout the year highlighting the significant contributions of Texas A&M University students, faculty, staff and former students on their community, state, nation and world. To learn more about the series and see additional impacts, visit <http://12thman.tamu.edu>.

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Program Improvement

A Rubric for Supervising Instructors

by Joshua Gahr

At its worst, supervision causes the eyes to water. Done poorly it is perfunctory and professionally enervating. However, at its best, supervision is meaningful and even transformative. Supervision, when practiced thoughtfully, can cease to be a burdensome mandate or mere reaction to performance miscues and become a forum for healthy communication that leads to the improvement of individual and organizational performance. That is the important truth that is the thesis of this article; supervision *should be* a meaningful practice that: 1) enhances communication among staff, 2) assists clients to successfully reach

their goals, 3) maintains accountability, and 4) develops the talent and potential of an organization's staff.

Supervision Should Enhance Communication

The ultimate litmus test for any supervision practice is this: does it enhance or diminish communication among staff and program components? For those new to supervision, the first rule to creating practices that enhance communication is to both *normalize* and *regularize* the practice. The term “normalizing” means giving the practice a consistent structure or form, by instituting a rubric, standardizing the location of meet-

ings, defining what is pertinent information, and creating a framework for an unburdened exchange of that information. “Regularizing” refers to establishing a consistent time and frequency of supervision encounters or meetings. By normalizing and regularizing meetings, supervisors will reduce the burden of calling and scheduling a meeting as well as formulating an agenda from scratch each time. The communication is then centered on achieving a desired outcome and becomes a forum for clarification, reinforcing expectations, celebrating milestones, and heading off circumstances that cause conflict.

Supervision Should Lead to Student and Client Success

Do supervision practices enable or inhibit my staff/instructor’s ability to provide the clients with an experience of success in the program? Perhaps supervisors’ most common error is to believe that clients and students will achieve academic or vocational success through “passive acquisition,” by merely interacting regularly with their instructor and listening attentively. Instead, supervision practices should press staff members to track students, accounting for their successes as well as what may be obstructing their achievement. The *Goal-Obstacle-Success (G-O-S)* rubric can be folded into present practices and offers a concise means of exchange between supervisor and frontline staff intended to ensure that no students fall through the cracks. Using this simple rubric, supervisors can sit down with instructors and quickly survey *each* student along three dimensions:

Goals. Students’ goals are the measuring sticks by which students measure whether classes and programming are ultimately beneficial. If an instructor cannot identify a student’s goals, he or she cannot tailor classes to meet needs, motivate, or develop meaningful relationships.

Obstacles. Most students will encounter significant impediments prohibiting the achievement of goals. Some obstacles are beyond the scope of reasonable staff engagement. And yet, staff can assist in mitigating if not completely neutralizing a surprising number of obstacles.

Successes. Because the experience of success is the catalyst of personal efficacy and agency, it must be celebrated. Instructors should become collectors of narratives of success. These narratives give us valuable data for examining what is being

done well and what programming tweaks may yield disproportionately large benefits.

Supervision Should Drive Projects Toward Completion

Does this practice drive projects to the desired outcomes or impede timely completion? The answer to this question will likely hinge on the organizational skills, initiative, and competence of the team members that are tasked with projects. Well-organized staff members and instructors may need little more than a check-in. Less organized staff will need more structure, making it advisable for supervisors to assign and review specific action items, timelines, and milestones. Whether a check-in or a walk-through, supervision meetings should be an opportunity to drive projects forward in a step-wise manner, stay abreast of progress, and identify resources that can assist staff in reaching project outcomes. Documentation of this type of progress will be invaluable for later reference. This is certainly true in the adult and family literacy arena where there are so many “moving parts” and so much information to collect, evaluate, exchange, and act upon. *Project drivers* or *action items* will vary depending on the nuances of the positions being supervised and the types of projects or programming being enacted. Common action items for instructors might center on:

Lesson Planning / Class Content. Is planning adequate and documented? Do adjustments or additions need to be made to lessons? Is the scope and sequence of classes coherent?

Class Management. Are students adequately informed of their advancement and areas for improvement (feedback loop)? Are instructors conducting student or parent conferences? Are students being celebrated, encouraged, challenged, and supported in class?

Administrative Duties. Is the instructor collecting adequate and relevant data? Have inefficiencies and holes in reporting been minimized? Is the instructor complying with wider agency and human resources policies and procedures?

Supervision Should Develop Instructors and Staff

Do supervision practices actively create an atmosphere and incorporate opportunities for instructors to thrive or languish? Adult and family literacy cen-

ters are in the “business” of transforming individuals through learning. Adult, early-childhood, and parenting education practitioners should not be exempt. Their experience should be equally transformative. Supervision should allow for encounters in which coordination level staff sincerely focus on the professional and personal development of their frontline staff. After all, the best way to retain talented and motivated individuals in the field of family literacy is to create environments in which staff are celebrated, developed, and encouraged to thrive. Supervisors should assist supervisees in identifying professional goals and areas for vocational growth. These opportunities may include professional development workshops, but they may also go beyond. Supervisors should be on the constant lookout for other creative means of promoting professional development. That may include encouraging staff to reflect on, articulate, and document successes, failures, and best practices. It may be staff “circulars” in which concise, on-message memos or articles circulate in office. By seeking to ensure that staff members

are thriving and growing professionally, supervisors engender a sense of vocation, reminding each person that they are engaged in an honorable trade that provides unequivocal value to the community:

A Launching Point: A Flexible Rubric

Included here is a concise, one-page supervision rubric that aims to provide a framework for enhancing the communication *exchange* between supervisor and supervisee. The headings are meant to guide regular supervision encounters along the dimensions outlined above: *Student Tracking*, *Professional Development*, and *Action Items*. The section entitled *For the Good of the Order* is a prompt to “pass the gavel” to the supervisee to speak freely outside of the demarcations of the rubric to raise concerns, revisit issues, or seek clarifications.

About the Author

Joshua Gahr is an ESL instructor and group process consultant in Austin, TX.

Instructor: _____		Date: _____	
Supervisor/Coordinator: _____		Day: M Tu W Th F am / pm	
<i>Everyone Experiences Success through Learning!</i>			
Student Tracking Goals-Obstacles-Successes 1) _____ _____ 2) _____ _____ 3) _____ _____ 4) _____ _____ 5) _____ _____ 6) _____ _____ 7) _____ _____ 8) _____ _____ 9) _____ _____ 10) _____ _____		Reflection & Contribution to Vocation Goal & Performance Review	
For the Good of the Order		Notes & Action Items INSTRUCTION: Lesson Planning / Curricula / Theme <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> CLASS MGMT: Feedback / Assessment / Attendance / Conferences <input type="checkbox"/> ADMIN: Intake / Orientation / Reporting / Agen HR <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Professional Development Review of: • Literature • Presentation • Workshops			

Adult Learner Transitions to Work and Postsecondary Education

A Green Solution at the Adult Reading Center

by Alvin Le Blanc

The *Roots of Success*, an environmental literacy curriculum for social entrepreneurs developed by Dr. Raquel Pinderhughes, is a great addition to the employment-based education services that we provide at the Adult Reading Center in Pearland. Green jobs pioneer Van Jones said, “Roots of Success is the missing ingredient in the green collar jobs landscape: an accessible curriculum that helps people break the cycle of poverty by providing needed job and academic skills while empowering them to improve environmental and public health conditions in their communities” (Roots, 2013).

This past summer, we implemented a ten module, green jobs curriculum that provided participants with the knowledge for understanding the dynamics of green business: their principles, concepts, methodologies and certifications. We thought that offering this course would stimulate greater insight and opportunity, as these relate to the emerging green economy, for those individuals seeking to add value to their choices of careers or self-employed businesses. Our aim was to provide the students with the critical thinking skills, imaginative foresight, and leadership principals that are needed to access their fields of interest and become successful as income earners. A number of the adults that attend classes at the Center pursue employment and enterprise in sectors of the local economy that are in need of individuals who can apply innovative and practical solutions when solving the natural and built environmental problems that challenge those who aspire to “go green.”

Our students are landscapers, construction workers, material transporters, food industry workers, health care providers, and merchants attempting to forge out family sustaining incomes within or near communities that contain the availability of large industries, thus a myriad of jobs, but they are sometimes under-skilled or lack the educational base that is required when making progressive employment transitions. In counties like Brazoria, Harris, Galveston, and Fort Bend, the idea

of social entrepreneurship, one of the many themes focused on in *Roots of Success*, is a constructive relief strategy for the burn-out of under employment. We understand that our students would like the chance to enhance their occupational knowledge base to forge a lucrative advantage in the competitive free-market economy that southeast Texas provides, and companies, as well as private individuals, want to benefit from these individuals of high aspirations in return. Thus, we wanted our learners to be able to analyze and articulate the core particulars of environmental soundness. We anticipated our training would aid them in using “green” paradigms to processes the questions that are asked of them by businesses seeking to hire individuals who possess this capacity and the intellectual confidence to convey their understanding of the green solution applications to any given stakeholder. This would equip them with another marketable asset.

The invitation sessions began on June 24th. Two orientation meetings were held to sign-up candidates, furnish them with the assigned textbook, and render introductory information about *Roots of Success* core objective. Enrollees were also given course expectations and classroom rules. From these two sessions, we were able to recruit 9 interested individuals. All, but one, were from the current student pool formed by our



Alvin Le Blanc and Pete Garza

ESL, ABE, and GED® classes. The group comprised mostly of GED® candidates, largely Hispanic, and just about evenly populated: male to female. Only one candidate documented as twenty-one or under. The majority of them were over thirty years of age. Over half of them made less than 20k in a year's time. Almost all had less than a high school diploma. Each was employed, but none of them were in supervisory or managerial positions. Participants stated that they decided to take the class because they wanted training that would foster better resumes. After the orientation sessions, we started class on July 8th.

The instruction spanned five consecutive weeks. We scheduled four hour sessions on Tuesday and Thursday of each week, at 5:30 P.M. The modules were taught using the suggested linear sequence that appeared in the instructor's manual. The Fundamentals section first and so on. This made management of the dense topic less demanding on students by providing them with a straightforward presentation that appealed to their learning modalities. This strategy also improved the information integration accomplishments of the learning group. It prepared the student to think critically about environmental problems and solutions, and strengthened their academic and labor market skills by using project-based activities. Students were responsible for learning the vocabulary and concepts in each training module. Each student was expected to participate in all reading, writing, and reflective discussions charged to the group.

Every session ended with a quiz assessing their overall comprehension of material. If a student did not achieve the minimum level of correct answers, 75% of the battery, that student would be asked to retake the quiz until an adequate score was reached. All of the students reached or exceeded the sufficient score levels. Repetitive assessment showed a positive correlation to information retention. Some students retook the tests to make sure their improvement was to be long-term. The modules also had group and independent exercises that focused on contextual and project-based learn-

ing so as to broaden their respective skills for problem solving. One such activity was planning a community with a heterogeneous population and providing it with modern resources. We learned a lot about city planning and development that day.

Overall, the modules were a great addition to our summer schedule. Students were motivated to become individuals who thought of creative solutions for themselves and the world around them. These solutions centered on lucrative and environmentally suitable endeavors. Some students have already used the information provided in this course to improve their position at their current place of employment. One has become a safety supervisor, and another has become the orientation coordinator for a local waste management company. This resulted in an increase in salary for both. Their respective employers have gained enhanced workers. This makes labor beneficial to all parties. Everybody wins. Work is completed and checks are issued. What fun! It is our aim to provide this opportunity to our learners again. We hope that it can continue to be useful as a grooming tool for those seeking preparation for green jobs in the "green economy."

Reference

Roots (June 2013). Green jobs pioneer Van Jones praises Roots of Success. [Web log comment Roots of Success Curriculum]. Retrieved from <http://rootsofsuccess.org/2013/06/14/van-jones-on-roots-of-success/>

About the Author

Alvin Le Blanc is an adult educator currently providing GED® instruction for the Adult Reading Center in Pearl and. He is a Texas Adult Education Content Standards training specialist and a member of TALAE (Texas Association for Literacy and Adult Education). Alvin enjoys coaching learners of any age. He has been practicing the craft for more than ten years. Two of his major interests are information integration and the unique "student as a brain" approach to teaching. Al picks mathematics and science as his favorites subjects to teach.

TALAE 2014 Annual Conference

Fostering Partnerships in Adult Education: A World of Possibilities

Corpus Christi, Texas

Pre-Conference: February 5, 2014

Conference: February 6-8, 2014

This year's Pre-Conference is NOT a closed business meeting. It is open to all Adult Education and Workforce Development program and instructional leaders and stakeholders. Pre-Conference Topics will include Career Pathways; GED® 2014; and Principles, Practices and Ideas for Effective Program Planning and Instructing Adults.

See details including Tentative Agenda on the TALAE Conference website.

<http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/talae/conference.htm>

Preparing Students with Essential Job and Career Readiness Skills

by Jennifer J. Osborn and Kimberly Bredvad Vinton

“Change is a shift in one’s situation: relocation, promotion, a new position or boss, a new retirement plan, or new technology. Transition is the psychological process of disengagement from the old, beginning with the new, then embracing and identifying with the new” (Bridges 157). It can be challenging for adult education students to transition from adult education to the workforce. It is our role to help them discover what they want and are able to do, what type of education or training they need, where they want to work, what type of work schedule and benefits they are looking for, and whether that type of work is in demand. In addition, in order to find and retain a job, it is important to have the foundational skills of math, reading, and writing in conjunction with job skills.

During orientation in my GED® and College Prep classes, my curriculum integrates career awareness and job readiness skills into five modules that focus on reading, math, and writing. I utilize multiple learning modalities to integrate as many subjects and concepts into each activity as possible. This strategy enriches the material presented, takes my students’ critical thinking to a more advanced level, and challenges them to apply and synthesize what they are learning. I center lectures on preparing students for what awaits them post-GED® and/or pre-college by giving them the necessary marketing tools and knowledge in career exploration, job readiness, and job retention strategies.

Orientation begins with a career inventory that assesses work values, types of jobs that may be of interest, and the students’ current skills. Career exploration is critical during orientation because I learn about their employment history, career and educational goals, job skills, and outside interests. Time management is another pertinent topic we address in orientation, so students can begin thinking about study time, work, and family/personal time. Surveys help students evaluate how they spend their time now versus how much time they will need for studies, jobs, and personal/family time and provide a realistic snapshot of what factors to consider in the future.

After career exploration, we begin the first module:

Learning about Your Job. Students use the Internet to begin researching fields of interest, job demands, salary, education, and necessary skills. They write summaries to help them establish a general time-frame for personal goal setting and begin considering the level of commitment needed to succeed using technology, research, reading, and goal setting within the first two weeks of class.

In the second module, **Getting Started**, we build professional portfolios so all pertinent information is organized when applying for jobs, college, or trade school. Students are given rubrics listing all items and tabs that will be in their portfolio at the end of the semester. Items in the portfolio include: resumes, generic cover letters, recommendation letters, professional and personal references, writing samples, a biography, and any occupational licenses or certificates they have. We practice uploading cover letters and resumes in class. If students are not looking for a job, they observe another classmate to keep the whole class engaged.

In the third module, **Getting the Job**, students prepare for positive interview experiences. We have mini-lessons on interview tips, attire, asking the right questions, and types of questions to expect. We spend more time on this module to cover personal circumstances that students have encountered previously. Students are placed in groups of two to three and practice group interviews being interviewers and interviewees. I conduct a group interview and students are ranked on interview skills, professional appearance, communication skills, and types of questions asked. Rubrics are completed and individually discussed with students on positive attributes of their interview presentation and areas for improvement through constructive feedback.

In the fourth module, **Keeping my Job**, we focus on: dos and don’ts in the workplace, dependability, conflict and negativity, effective communication, working with difficult people, the importance of being a team player, and upholding integrity in the workplace. Scenarios and personal experiences are shared to provide examples and help them become better team

members and enhance leadership skills.

In the fifth module, **Math and Careers**, students engage in individualized lessons for each career/job focusing on the concept that “math does not go away.” When we reach our fifth module, students have an idea on what career path they envision for themselves. Students are grouped by job/career interest and given a lesson to work on as a team. In one hour they are challenged to be creative and collaborate on a lesson to present to the class. Students have had fun and become quite creative utilizing their acting and role playing skills to create scenarios, plays, dramatic scenes, PowerPoint presentations, and even rap songs to show how math will be used in their specific careers. This provides exposure to different aspects of math and is an excellent way to reteach math concepts using research and prior knowledge to wrap up the class!

Career readiness helps students explore new beginnings and prepare for the inevitable changes that occur in life. The concepts we cover help students with a step-by-step learning process, so they can embrace new beginnings and move into hopeful futures. Critical thinking and problem solving skills are best learned through real-world examples and settings because they help students connect new knowledge to what they know and what they can do while allowing

for the conditions that make curriculum mapping successful.

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About the Author

Jennifer J. Osborn is a native of San Antonio and has worked as an Adult Education Instructor for Education Service Center, Region 20 for four years. Jennifer received her Bachelor of Arts from Our Lady of the Lake University with a dual concentration in Math and English and a minor concentration in Psychology. She received her Master of Arts in Administration and Organizational Development from University of the Incarnate Word.

About the Editor

Kimberly Bredvad Vinton is the Educational Specialist Supervisor for ESC-20 Adult Education. After completing her MPA in NonProfit Management six years ago, Kim began her career in adult education as a part-time GED® instructor and was promoted to Supervisor and her current position.

Workforce Development, Adult Learners and Their Emotions

by Anthony Gabriel

Work is an extension of personality. It is achievement. It is one of the ways in which a person defines himself, measures his worth and his humanity.

Peter F. Drucker

If you have ever been in the unfortunate position of being unemployed, efforts to find employment can be a difficult and emotionally draining experience. You begin questioning your own worth and value to any employer. You go through a period of introspection examining your life and work accomplishments or lack thereof.

For many adult learners who are trying to better themselves by learning a second language, finding

training, or obtaining a GED®, the above concerns are magnified exponentially. Some learners may not have worked in years or even held a job in their lifetimes, so the process of having them become workforce ready starts at a more elementary level.

How then does a workforce development program or non-profit that seeks to develop workforce ready adult learners effectively manage their clients’ immediate needs for simultaneous employment and educational improvement? This is a difficult question to answer because of the number of variables that are involved in working with multiple barrier adult learners. What has worked for me is to help them focus on three main points: 1) they must first clearly understand

and identify the talents and skills they possess; 2) they must learn how to sell those skill sets to meet market demands; and 3) they must learn to become emotionally proficient in dealing with the challenges of successfully negotiating workplace behaviors and culture.

While all three focal points are important, the one I find most critical is the emotional proficiency aspect of workforce development. As workforce development specialists, educators, tutors, facilitators, program directors, and administrators, it is imperative that we find ways to assist our adult learners in managing their emotions which leads to changes in behavior and increased opportunities for employment. Ultimately, education, language acquisition, training, or employment boils down to how emotionally mature and committed our learners are to making changes, learning new skills, and adjusting to new environments. It makes sense that we help them navigate the workforce development system, while at the same time help them investigate their emotions and how emotions affect them as well as others around them. This awareness then becomes a tool they can use toward reaching their goals of educational advancement and employment.

However, the realities of life, the emotional and educational struggles adult learners face, and the time sensitive nature of grant outcomes and performance deadlines do not always allow learners or programs effective or consistent opportunities for success. Learners are sometimes forced to take lower paying or non-family supporting jobs because their needs are so great. Some choose to work two or more of these types of jobs at the expense of improving themselves. Because many of their learners' grade levels are so low, adult education and training programs often advocate the need for grade level or incremental increases versus GED® attainment as a more realistic outcome for many of their learners. Additionally, with the coming changes in the GED® 2014, and an emphasis on more technologically demanding jobs, I am even more concerned that a certain segment of adult learners will be effectively locked out of the job market and pushed into low-paying employment positions, unless we find cost-effective and client-focused ways to assist them.

According to Carnevale, Rose & Hanson as quoted in *The Working Poor Families Project* policy brief (Clymer, 2012), "The upcoming changes in the GED® have profound implications for low-skilled adults' ability to continue their education and attain the postsec-

ondary credentials needed to access good jobs" (p. 1).

Some remedies to help students mitigate these challenges have taken a number of incentive driven forms from full to partial stipends as compensation for students to attend class, to rewarding students based on various goal attainments, to offering transportation and child care assistance, or to giving preference in job-readiness/placements based on class attendance and performance. While these incentives are a help to adult learners, they still become secondary priorities when life issues demand that learners find quick ways to obtain income to support their families and themselves.

Consequently, the elements of emotional proficiency and maturity as well as support become vital tools in working with adults facing workforce and educational deficiencies. Successful workforce development for adult learners requires a framework that teaches them how to handle their emotions and barriers. This begins by helping them understand the relationship between finding and keeping a job, to their own understanding of how to control their emotions. Adult Learners need choices, education, understanding, and opportunities, as well as community champions and advocates interested in their workforce success to help them effectively tackle the workforce development system.

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About the Author

Anthony Gabriel is the owner/operator of GABRTEACH/GABRWORKS, an educator, consultant, trainer, and activist deeply committed to Adult Education, Workforce Development, Emotional Literacy, and Fatherhood Advocacy. You can email him at gabrteach3831@gmail.com or gabrielliteracy@gmail.com

Recruitment, Retention, Motivation & Goal Setting

A Perfect Fit! How the Use of Screening Tools Can Lead to Improved Program Success

by Irene Ramos

Does your program have an interview guide, student survey, or program application that program staff can use for registering and interviewing students prior to enrollment? Most programs enroll students using the “first come, first served rule” with staff filling out “intake/enrollment” forms for students. In reality, applications are a pretty good idea as an initial gauge of a student’s literacy level. Although no one likes the idea of “turning students away” during class registration, nor do we like to think that we are “creaming” for certain individuals to help program data look good, the use of student surveys and other screening tools can be helpful not only for the program but also for the student. This can be especially true when classes are designed with a particular outcome; therefore, it becomes necessary to “screen” students to ensure that the student is a good fit for the program and that the program suits the student’s educational goals.

Why Screen?

Every program, site, and teacher can list a number of issues that are consistently on the continuous improvement list, such as: creating a positive learning environment, connecting students to support services, managing the multilevel classroom, and ensuring **retention**. Many instructors have come to expect that they will “lose” students after the first day or week of class. Often there are students who enroll in classes that may never show up again. These are issues that make enrollment decisions difficult as a program decides the exact time to close enrollment.

So, how do you gauge the applicant’s ability to follow through on the commitment when they enroll in a class? The only way to find answers to many of the real questions you need answered is to ask the student. You can’t know the availability of a student if no one has asked them about their schedule. A simple

application or student survey can provide information that assists programs in planning course offerings. There may be very specific circumstances in a student’s life that are tenuous and certain life events could happen overnight preventing them from returning to class. Issues like childcare, transportation, family illness, or employment related changes could be fleshed out early with a simple survey question, which asks the student to list anything that might prevent them from coming to class. Becoming aware of these issues early, will help students begin to problem solve and find resources that will help stave off last minute conflicts.

Using Screening Tools

Some classes in particular have specific outcomes or expectations for students. As we create more opportunities for contextualized course offerings, the need for screening students through the use of an interview, survey, or both, becomes more essential.

For example, students showing interest in enrolling in the SAISD fast-track GED® Prep Course (called Career and College Ready) may not realize that the class meets every day. By missing a single class session of the rigorous instruction, they could easily fall behind. During the pilot stage of this course, it became necessary to create a student survey. This allowed program staff to gauge the student’s ability to make the commitment as well as determine their education and employment goals. Often students would be adamant about participating in the course which was designed to serve higher level students with very high reading ability (as determined with TABE), yet after completing the survey, they would realize that the course was not a proper fit for their schedule or goals at that time. In this manner program staff can better ensure that the students entering the course are able

to make the full commitment to the course thus increasing retention and student success rates.

Face-to-face interviews:

As part of the goal-driven training, Adult Educators are introduced to the initial interview as an early goal setting activity. This is also a screening tool because the questions asked can help the student decide if enrollment into the class is going to fit their schedule and their particular needs at that time. Besides the standard interview questions asked for intake and enrollment, staff must reflect on the interview process and consider whether they are addressing the following:

- Do you ask applicants about their reasons for applying?
- Do you use the interview to follow-up, as necessary, with students about their interest in and expectations about the course?
- Do you let them know, during the interview, about

any areas of concern regarding their “eligibility” or ability to make the commitment?

- Are the prospective students encouraged to ask questions?

Creating a standardized interview format can assist the staff in conducting consistent initial interviews for identifying students who are best prepared for the course and have fully considered the implications of the commitment it requires.

If your program isn't using some form of screening tool, you should consider reviewing the enrollment process and including an application, a survey, or an interview. It will benefit both your program and your students.

About the Author

Irene Ramos works with the San Antonio Independent School District and is an independent education consultant.

Utilizing Community Resources to Give Hope to the ESL Population

by Ruth Larson

In a perfect world, our grant funded ABE programs would be able to successfully serve all students, but we all know this is not the case. Here at Region 16 ESC ABE, we try to fill every chair that we have in our buildings, but there never seems to be enough chairs available to serve every student. This overflow of prospective students provides us an opportunity to be “selective.” We look for students that really fit the profile of our program—but what about those students that do not fit? That is the rub, the thorn in our side that leads us to sabotage our own programs because our hearts are too big. But, the good news is that it does not have to be an issue if you collaborate with your community.

For the past three years, we have invited our community ESL/Literacy partners to our ESL orientations. The community partners are a vital part of our orientation process as they help our program to ensure that no student walks out of our building without a class or teacher. This is beneficial in many ways: it helps our heart, enables us to be more selective in our student population, gives students the very best fit for their

needs, and supports our community programs by sending students their way.

The actual process of sifting students to find their niche is done very early in our orientation process. When students come through our doors, the first things they do are sign-in and have a folder created with their name on a label on the tab. Then they are given a screening tool. The screening tool asks for basic information (name, address, phone), asks for the student to write their ABC's, and then asks them to write a few sentences on a given topic (i.e. Tell about your family). If a student does not know their ABC's, cannot understand our question, or cannot respond in a sentence-like format, we know that they will not be a good candidate to experience success in our program at this time. We take the student and the prepared folder over to the four or five representatives from community programs and make an introduction. From there, the student is given choices for class days, times and locations for an ESL class in our community. The folder with the screening tool in it is given to the community program as well, to help them in as-

sessing the student's ability level.

This partnership has worked so well for us that we have had teachers from other programs attend our Best Plus training to better understand how to prepare their students for Region 16 ESL classes. While these outcomes of the partnerships are great, the best outcome is that we never turn a student away without hope of improving their English skills. We are proud that each and every student leaves our orientation with a teacher, a class, and hope.

About the Author

Ruth Larson is the ABE Specialist, Team Leader of Region 16 Education Service Center in Amarillo, Texas. She is also a state trainer for Texas Adult Education Content Standards, GED® 2014, and TEAMS (Texas Educating Adults Management System). Mrs. Larson has been a presenter at the last two TALAE (Texas Association for Literacy and Adult Education) conferences, and plans to present again this year.

Professional Development

New TCALL Webpage Offers “One-Stop Shopping” for Online Professional Development

by Ken Appelt, TCALL Program Manager

After many years of discussion and development at both national and state levels, online professional development for instructors of adult education is becoming a reality. Enough high quality online courses are now available that it makes sense to examine the resources and take advantage of the opportunities.

TCALL launched the new webpage -- *Sources of Online Professional Development for Adult Education and Family Literacy Educators* at the beginning of August 2013. This page features resources that are:

- o High Quality;
- o Evidence-based;
- o Not linked to sale or promotion of a curriculum or instructional product;
- o FREE to the user in most cases; and
- o Able to provide documentation of course completion.

This new webpage shows online professional development (PD) sites from Texas sources, national providers, and other states. Although most of these resources are free, some of the more intensive courses listed have a cost associated with participation, especially when those courses are actively facilitated by experts in the field. Descriptions under each professional development source note the courses that are not free and whether certificates of completion are available.

To find it from TCALL's home page, first click on the blue

menu button for **Professional Development** at the top of the page. Then, under the heading *Texas Resources*, click on *TCALL's Online Professional Development Resource Page* link. This resource page has basic information about these online PD sites and a set of four “scrollable” folders which list all of the resources. There are folders for *GREAT Center & State Leadership Projects*, *Other Texas Sources*, *National Sources*, and *Online PD resources from Other States*.

Many instructors have requested information about the new GED® 2014 test format and how to prepare students for testing. We have included links to the GED® 2014 professional development resources in the National Sources folder where you will find test Items Samplers, Webb's Depth of Knowledge, Self-guided courses, and many other professional development resources for teachers. The computer-based Mathematics test will use the on-screen TI30XS calculator; a video and other materials on the TI30XS are available.

These online resources are available for you anytime you can access them. You can visit the new page clicking the link below:

<http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/onlinePDSources.htm>

We hope you enjoy browsing the online PD sites to search for relevant professional learning opportunities. Then, take the plunge and improve your teaching skills *online*.

Success Stories

Can You Start a Career with Your GED®?

by Rigoberto Enriquez

Yes, you can start a career if you have your GED®. One of the things that I look forward to as soon as I get my GED® is to get started on my career. This will involve more school, but I am willing to continue to expand my education to be successful in my life. The main reasons for me going back to school and pursuing a better way of life are my children. I want to show them that it's never too late to reach your goal. As for me, my dream has always been to be a veterinarian. This career choice will allow me to do what I love without straining myself.

The reason I say my kids are my inspiration is for the fact that they look up to me. Not only as a father but as male role model and that to me is very important. I see how our youth often go in a different direction than planned. They don't take the opportunities that this wonderful country can offer. As a child, I had similar opportunities, but I chose to go a different path. Now, I want to show my children a better way. Believing that you still have a chance no matter how old you are and what you've been through is crucial.

Becoming a veterinarian is a lengthy process that requires many steps and years to complete. I will need to go to 3-4 years of college plus an additional 3-5 years to specialize. Having any experience with animals is a plus when coming into this profession; therefore, I have already started my volunteer work at our local zoo. The veterinarian world is very demanding and I am willing to show that I am more than capable. Veterinarians are in high demand in our country and it is estimated that there will be a 36% raise by the year 2020. The average pay is \$82,040 per year and \$39.44 per hour, which

would be great for my family. There are many types of specific areas that you can go into by having a private office or farm. Since I am moving back to Houston, where there is great farm land, I will be able to travel from farm to farm providing service for the animals. This would be an amazing experience that I would not be able to accomplish here in El Paso.

The work that I would be doing is "simple." I would be diagnosing, vaccinating, and medicating animals. I will also be treating and dressing any wounds the animals may have and performing surgery if needed. But the downside of this job is that it takes an emotional toll on everyone in this practice. I will have to be euthanizing and seeing animals that are badly injured by either humans or nature. Having to go through with the whole experience good and bad but still loving what you do is hard. I will be working in an office or clinic, which is not hard labor. This type of profession allows people to work but not do strenuous work.

In all honesty, getting my GED® would be life changing, not just for me, but for my family as well. Having this under my belt would mean not only will I be a role model to my children, but to other people who are in similar situations. You can be successful if you really want it!

About the Author

My name is Rigoberto Enriquez I am a student at Ysleta Learning Center I am a proud parent of 3 wonderful children and am seeking my dream of being a Veterinarian.

Determination and Perseverance

by Roxanne Burnett

My name is Francesca Ramirez, and I am a career counselor for Community Action, Inc. (CAI) of Central Texas. I first met Roxanne Burnett when she was referred by the San Marcos Housing Authority to CAI's 12-week College Prep Academy in January 2013. Though Roxanne hadn't been in school in over six years, lacked transportation, and was a single mother, she didn't let any of these common denominators of a nontraditional student stop her from excelling in the program. Roxanne was a student that rarely missed class, always did her homework, and would prepare ahead by working math questions from chapters that would later be assigned. Her hard work and dedication paid off when she took the COMPASS test for Austin Community College (ACC) and placed into College Algebra and English 1301, placing out of all developmental courses.

Unable to start ACC in the summer because of childcare and not being able to register for the beginning of the fall semester due to not having the necessary funds to get the Meningitis vaccination, hope was not lost in helping Roxanne enroll in the second half of the semester. Her daughter is now enrolled with CAI's Head Start program and Roxanne was able to obtain Medicaid, which made getting the Meningitis vaccination at one of the local clinics free. A few weeks ago after going to ACC and turning in her transcript and vaccination requirements, meeting with an advisor and the financial aid department, Roxanne declared her major as environmental engineering. She enrolled in two 8-week online courses and is now on her way to fulfilling her childhood dream of attending college.

The following is Roxanne's story told in her own words. It is a story of determination and perseverance. It is a story that shows us that whatever happened to us in our past shouldn't stop us from where we are going.

My journey thus far can best be described as serendipitous. I am a nontraditional student by every stretch of the imagination. I have learned that every step we take, even if it seems like a step in the "wrong" direction can lead us to the fulfillment of our wildest dreams.

As a child, I lived in a single parent home and my mother, although holding down a full time job, always held my school success in high regard. She graduated with her bachelor's from Texas Lutheran University, traveled the world, and then when she was ready, made the decision to start a family. Growing up not going to college was never an option. I was always encouraged to have my nose in a book or make time for studying. My mother delighted in her child, "The Book Worm". She fostered and nurtured a deep love of learning.

School was a delight for me. I always tried to make the honor roll and reach above and beyond expectation. As I got older, my mother began to take less interest in my school work. Our home life deteriorated. My grandmother, who unbeknownst to us was suffering from colon cancer, started a swift decline at the beginning of my junior year and soon was gone. This marked the descent into my personal educational mediocrity. I skipped school, and barely passed my junior year of high school. I give credit to Sunshine Morgan, my theatre teacher, for helping my head stay above water. She tried to prepare me for life choices, but I took her very much for granted.

The summer before senior year, my family battled job loss, foreclosure of my childhood home, a move, and repossession of the family car. We moved to Seguin, Texas which was not easy to get around without a car. Senior year is when most kids are taking their SATs, writing scholarship essays, and turning in admission paperwork, all in hopes of getting the acceptance letter to the college of their choice. I barely gave thought to where I wanted to go to college. I made a plan to get out and find work to help support my mom. I had gone from college bound as a young child to not even considering a secondary education.

As with most nontraditional students, work was at the forefront of life. I moved back to Round Rock and found work I could get to on foot. I worked with at-risk children and then moved into a supervisory position at a local child care facility. I enjoyed all five years I spent there (I lost contact with my mother during this time), but college always loomed in the background, if not for more than a few extra dollars on my paycheck.

Life threw quite a few punches. I started a family and planned on marriage. The agreement was I would stay home with the baby and take a few classes on-line. But the prospect of finally having familial support quickly disintegrated, as my partner began spending more time outside the home and fighting became physical. I became an isolated single mother without the knowledge of where to begin. Here is where serendipity really takes hold. With my ten month old child in tow, I moved to San Marcos and stayed at the Hays-Caldwell Women's Center. The staff and women I met during this time were inspiring and loving, and in being so, taught me to love myself and to realize that no chance is too outlandish to take. Having this support rekindled my desire for pursuing a college education.

I was accepted into Chapultepec's Family Self-Sufficiency Program. This was a blessing, indeed. Now, Corrie and I wouldn't have to bounce around or live with roommates. We were given the opportunity

to rebuild. Through Chapultepec I found Community Action's College Prep Academy. While transportation was a definite factor, I found I was in luck as I found a fellow college bound individual who had enrolled in the EXACT same class!

I was nervous and excited to begin the process. I had been out of school for what seemed like ages. I was never very fond of mathematics and my test taking and homework skills were deplorable. College Prep was quite enlightening. We were encouraged to treat it as seriously as we would treat real college classes. We were given homework and assigned a large research project. I found myself thriving in the college environment. I was also given that which I had been lacking for so long, support. Not only support for my own educational success, but my daughter's as well. The program helped me pass the COMPASS, apply for financial aid, and apply to Austin Community College. A year ago, the idea of attending college was only a dream, but now it has become a reality!

I'm Hitting a Homerun!

by Maria Rodriguez

I have always loved going to school and learning new things but while growing up, I just had a hard time waking up in the morning. Also, I didn't have much support from my family because my mom was working strange hours. I never knew my father and my step-dad...well, let's just say we weren't that close. So I dropped out of school.

When I married my current husband, we promised each other that we wouldn't let our kids go through what we experienced. I'm 32 years old and have been married for 12 years. I have two children from a previous marriage and four from my current one. It seemed that being a stay-at-home mom was the only way to go. Now that I'm older and our children are all going to school, I need to prepare for our future; therefore, . I started looking into continuing my education. I started pursuing my GED® and in doing so, I applied for and received an Elissa Rivas Scholarship through the Adult Reading Center.

In today's world, getting an education seems like a luxury instead of a necessity. Many times, for an adult trying to get back on track, it appears to be an unreachable goal. A dream! A fantasy even! When we are young, we take many things for granted, edu-

cation being one of them. We don't understand how big an impact not having an education can have on our lives until we see ourselves going through that frustrating circle of saying, "I CAN'T!" I can't afford to pay my bills because I can't get a job! I can't get a job because I didn't get an education!

With six children, it's even harder reaching this goal because I worry about their needs first. But I have realized that I can still choose to influence my children's lives. I can still make an impact on their future. I will be an example for my children and anyone else who says, "Once you get married and have children, that's it! You're stuck!" That's not true if you have the right people and support system behind you. You can achieve many things! Remember, the better educated you are, the better your life will be...and that of your children, too!

I want to be an example for all those who look up to me and for those who look to me for help. There are many things I can say to them, but I know that actions speak louder than words. I don't want to achieve on a "fly-by." I want to accomplish my goal with flying colors. Like I told my GED® instructor, "I don't want to slide into home plate. I want to hit a

home run and leave no players on the field.” That is how receiving the Elissa Rivas Scholarship impacted my life. I will be able to look them in the eye and say, “It can be done; don’t give up.”

I don’t remember when I started thinking this way, but I know I owe it all to God first, my wonderful, loving, supportive husband, and my amazing, understanding, strong children for standing by my side. Also, I would not be able to get through these rough waters if it weren’t for my friends at the Adult Reading Center, Mr. Alvin Le Blanc, my GED® instructor and Mrs. Dale Pillow, the center director, who keeps cheering me on and holding my hand when I feel like quitting. With all

of them by my side, I am who I am today, and I aim to achieve!

About the Author

After a year of intensive study, Maria received her GED® certificate in June 2013 and immediately met with a counselor at Alvin Community College where she was encouraged to apply for a Pell Grant. With the help of the Pell Grant and the scholarship from the Adult Reading Center, she enrolled in a Child Development degree plan. Upon recommendation of her instructor, she was also hired by the Adult Reading Center to fill a part-time position as a receptionist.

Student Overcomes Language Barrier to Job Advancement

by Stacia R. Roberts and Juan Carlos Murillo

How can one overcome a barrier and create an opportunity for advancement? Juan Carlos Murillo explains in his story how he created an opportunity for advancement in his job by studying English.

Juan Carlos Murillo attends Houston Community College (HCC) taking ESL (English as a Second Language) classes at night. In this story he tells how he overcame a barrier.

When I started taking ESL classes at HCC I knew little to no English. This was a barrier that I had to overcome. I knew in order to advance in my job I had to learn to speak, read, and write in English.

Learning English helped to enhance my communication skills at work and has had a great impact in my work environment because I now understand my boss, co-workers, and customers clearly. My job performance has really improved. My boss noticed my improvements and has now promoted me to Construction Foreman and increased my salary. I’m so proud of myself for overcoming a difficult barrier that I could not

have overcome before I enrolled in the ESL program. This is the start of a better future for me and has allowed me to advance in my employment.

Though barriers can seem insurmountable, it’s important to remember that they are created internally, and they can be knocked down intentionally. Juan’s life has improved now through studying English. Juan made a decision to take the necessary steps to achieve success. Congratulations to Juan Carlos Murillo!

About the Lead Author

Stacia R. Roberts, M.Ed., is an Adult Education ESL Instructor with Houston Community College and has Teacher Credential through Texas State University.

About the Author

Juan Carlos Murillo is an ESL student with Houston Community College and a Construction Foreman who oversees 10 workers and reads blueprints for Karsten Interior Service.

Yes! I'm a Cook

by Stacia R. Roberts and Julio Garcia

Employment advancement is a great challenge for people that come to the United States for better jobs, yet they cannot speak, read, or write in English. To get past this they must make a courageous decision to learn the English language. This process takes strong commitment, requires participation, and causes short-term pain, but in time becomes a genuine triumph.

Julio Garcia is an ESL (English as a Second Language) student who shares his story of how he went from a kitchen helper to a cook in the principal line at a Greek restaurant.

My decision to attend ESL class at Houston Community College (HCC) was an important step in advancing my career. A step that initiated major change in my life and had a significant impact on my educational growth. Learning English was something that I had to do if I was ever going to advance in my job. I experienced the difference it made not knowing English and seeing how it was for others that did. That's when I said: "Success depends upon me." I signed up for an ESL class with HCC and I'm now making

progress, so much so that I went from Kitchen Helper to working the Principal Line, reading from the computer, getting customer orders so I can prepare them, and I can even do inventory. My commitment is to stay focused on my education, my job, and my family.

Julio's story shows that learning English can help you advance on the job but you must learn the English language by staying focused and committed. Success comes through hard work! Choosing the right path leads to success and potential advancement.

About the Lead Author

Stacia R. Roberts, M.Ed., is an Adult Education ESL Instructor with Houston Community College and has Teacher Credential through Texas State University.

About the Author

Julio Garcia is an ESL student with Houston Community College and a Principal Line Cook with Pecan Greek Grill Restaurant in Houston.

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Assessment Guide for Educators: A Guide to the 2014 Assessment Content from GED® Testing Service, Revised Edition. GED® Testing Service (November 2012). Washington, DC: GED® Testing Service. This is a resource for adult educators and administrators to better understand the new GED® assessment. The guide dissects the new assessment and explains the decisions behind new item types, assessment targets, and other issues. The new assessment—being launched in 2014—will continue to measure high school equivalency, but GED® Testing Service also measures skills associated with success in a variety of pathways, including college coursework and job training programs. This book will guide you through the new assessment and highlight item types, assessment targets, and guidelines for how items will be scored, and more.

Breakthrough to Math, Second Edition. Tussing, Ann K. U. (2012). Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press. Reading Levels: 3-5. This series breaks skills down into basic steps and focuses on one skill at a time to make math easier to understand. It uses clear, simple instructions to help learners see how math is used in whole number computation, fractions, decimals, per cents, algebra, and geometry. There are four levels in the series with evenly paced instruction, covering a single skill or group of related skills per book.

Compelling Conversations: Questions & Quotations on Timeless Topics. Aberson, Toni and Roth, Eric H. (2012). Lexington, KY: Chimayo Press. This ESL/EFL textbook helps advanced English language learners develop conversation skills and improve fluency by sharing experiences, reflecting on their lives, and discussing proverbs and quotations. The oral skills English textbook includes 45 thematic chapters, over 1,350 questions, 500 vocabulary words, 250 proverbs

and American idioms, and 500 quotations to create and sustain conversations and class discussions. Designed for both adult education and intensive English language students, the conversations and activities deepen critical thinking skills and develop speaking skills essential to success in community college and university programs.

I Speak English: A Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages - Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Fifth Edition. Colvin, Ruth Johnson (2012).

Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press. This guide to teaching ESOL students listening, speaking, reading, and writing covers such topics as contexts of language learning, culture, learning styles, characteristics of adult tutors and learners, and integrating reading and writing into lessons. It guides instructors in helping non-English speaking students move quickly from controlled language to spontaneous language, thus providing opportunities for real-life expression.

More Powerful Literacies. Tett, Lyn and Hamilton, Mary and Crowther, Jim, Editors (2012). Leicester LE1 7GE, UK: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education. Building on the original Powerful Literacies (first published in 2001), this new volume considers the new developments in theory, technology, and policy that are having an impact on learning and teaching literacies of adults. The book links to the current policy context of lifelong learning, active citizenship, and social inclusion by showing how adult learners can be positioned in ways that seek to enhance their control and autonomy.

Perfecting Your English Pronunciation. Cameron, Susan (2012). United States of America:

HOW DOES THIS MAIL ORDER LENDING LIBRARY WORK?

Books and other resources described in the Library section may be requested for a 30-day loan. We will mail each borrower up to five loan items at a time (just two for first-time borrowers), and even include a postage-paid return address sticker for mailing them back to us! Borrowers must be affiliated with a non-profit program providing adult or family literacy services. Annotated bibliographies of our entire library of resources are available in hard copy by request, and the library can also be searched in 'real time' on our website (<http://tcall.tamu.edu>). Call 800-441-7323 or email tcall@tamu.edu to check out materials described here or to request hard copy listings of even more resources.

McGraw-Hill. This book focuses on the anatomical placement of sound and on the musculature used in articulation. This work focuses visually, audibly, and narratively on the physical ability to speak English, noting that many sounds of English may be difficult because some tongue positions used in English may not be used in another native language. The 45-minute DVD introduces mouth and jaw exercises to prepare the speaker for English, and then demonstrates mouth formations and tongue placement using other nonnative speakers.

Scoreboost for the 2014 GED® Test: Mathematics, Writing, and Thinking Skills. Lipke, Terrie, Editor (2013). Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press. Written at reading grade level 8 - 10, these workbooks cover three critical areas for success on the 2014 Series Tests. Two mathematics workbooks are included: Fractions, Decimals, Percents, and Proportions; and Algebra Reasoning. Two writing workbooks include analyzing arguments, developing a thesis statement, and deriving evidence to support a conclusion. Thinking Skills workbook includes making generalizations, determining purpose, and calculating probability. Each unit review includes additional online practice questions for the new item types.

STEM Project-Based Learning: An Integrated Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Approach, Second Edition Capraro, Robert M. and Capraro, Mary Margaret and Morgan, James R. (2013). Boston, MA: Sense Publishers. This second edition presents an original approach to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) centric PBL. This book was designed for middle and secondary teachers who want to improve engagement and provide contextualized learning for their students. However, the nature and scope of the content covered in the 14 chapters are appropriate for preservice teachers as well as for advanced

graduate method courses. New to this edition is revised and expanded coverage of STEM PBL, including implementing STEM PBL with English Language Learners and the use of technology in PBL.

Welcome to Computers for ESL Students + Workbook, Third Edition. Wooden, Lois (2012). United States of America: Labyrinth. Using a visual approach, this book takes students with intermediate reading skills (Intermediate CASAS reading level) through the basics of using a computer effectively to perform elementary tasks. Text features large print and illustrations and straightforward design so students absorb concepts and develop skills rapidly. Topics include: basic computer tasks, including Windows, word processing and the Web; picture dictionaries and verb definitions; guided hands-on practice and interactive conversations. Student workbook reinforces learning with vocabulary and verb practice, paired conversations, and fun exercises such as scrambled words, missing vowels and consonants, scrambled words, word search and crossword puzzles.

What's Next? A Multilevel Phonics Approach for ESL Students: Introductory Level Conklin, Lia (2012). Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press. What's Next? is a two-level reading series (Introductory Level and Low-Beginning Level) designed for multilevel English classes. Easy-to-read stories follow Samsam, a Somali immigrant, through her daily life in the U.S. where she is faced with learning English, finding a job, visiting a doctor, and more. Every lesson in What's Next? takes learners through listening, speaking, writing, vocabulary, prediction, and reading comprehension exercises. Audio files for each story are recorded at two speeds for learners in a multilevel classroom. The Teacher's Guide includes lesson plans and reproducible masters for each lesson.



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Beginning Sub-baccalaureate Students' Labor Market Experiences: Six Years Later in 2009. Ifill, Nicole and Radford, Alexandria Walton (January 2012). Washington, DC: Nation Center for Education Statistics. These Web Tables use data from the 2004/09 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study to identify and present the demographic and employment characteristics of certificate and associate's degree completers and non-completers. Labor market experiences presented include employment status as of spring 2009, unemployment spells since last enrolled, median salary earned as of spring 2009, employer-offered benefits, and job satisfaction.

The Cornerstones of Economic Security for Resilient Workers: A Policy Framework for Shared Action. Henton, Doug (April 2013). Washington, DC: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices. This report sets forth a new framework for economic security with the goal of strengthening the link between workers' economic security and productivity. The framework places worker resilience at the core of creating their economic security. It identifies four cornerstones of economic resilience—skills and adaptability, income and savings, health and wellness, and mutual support and social networks—as the key assets individuals must have to navigate today's economy. And it asserts that government at all levels, the private sector, communities, and individuals have shared responsibility in insuring economic security going forward and will share in the benefits of such a “worker resilience system.” Finally, the report posits that states are the critical link between all the stakeholders that can help ensure economic security.

Courses to Employment: Partnering to Create Paths to Education and Careers. Con-

way, Maureen and Blair, Amy and Helmer, Matt (2012). Washington, DC: Workforce Strategies Initiative. This publication summarizes research from Aspen WSI's Courses to Employment project, which studied how six community college-nonprofit partnerships work together to help low-income adults succeed in the classroom and the labor market. The report provides an overview of the approach and strategies these partnerships used, how these partnerships are structured in terms of institutional roles and responsibilities, what factors influence how these partnerships are structured, and describes the education and employment outcomes participating students achieved during the Courses to Employment project.

GED® Test Prep Handbook: Lesson Plans for use with Pass the GED® Workbooks. New Readers Press, Editor (2012). Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press. This Handbook has been developed as a curriculum to target critical test preparation skills needed to pass the GED® tests. Students who take other major high-stakes tests often supplement their content instruction with test prep courses and materials. GED® learners have access to a wide range of instructional materials but the “missing piece of the puzzle” is direct test preparation. These five instructional workbooks target critical GED® test-taking skills and provide full-length practice tests to simulate the actual test. This set provides GED® instructors with lesson plans to help implement the Pass the GED® curricula in the classroom. The handbook consists of modules containing lesson plans for each of the five GED® tests; in addition, three appendices present teaching and test-preparation strategies.

Helping Adult Learners Navigate Community College and the Labor Market. Helmer, Matt

(March 2013). Washington, DC: The Aspen Institute. The project studied sectorial approaches in six non-profit community college partnerships that serve low-income communities and workers. Many adult learners, especially low-income, low-skilled adults, face obstacles or “traps” that if unaddressed will keep them from succeeding in college and in jobs. This report describes the obstacles identified in the partnerships studied and highlights issues and strategies to better support adult learners on college campuses. It also discusses some of the specific achievements possible when community colleges, nonprofit organizations, and others involved in workforce development collaborate to help adult learners overcome the challenges they face.

The Life Skills, College, and Career Readiness Guide for ESOL Learners. CAELA Project Team (October 2011). Boston, MA: SABES. The Guide provides teachers with sample activities to use in their classrooms to help ESOL students develop the skills and knowledge they need to achieve their next steps: employment, academic, or life skills goals. This resource is not a list of skills but a resource that translates those skills into interesting classroom activities. The Guide is actually three guides, one each for Basic (SPLs 0-3), Intermediate (SPLs 4-5), and Advanced (SPLs 6) ESOL learners. While this resource was especially designed for ESOL learners, the activities can be easily adapted for ABE and Transitions students as well.

More Than Reshuffling: Lessons from an Innovative Remedial Math Program at The City University of New York. Hinds, Steve (March 2011). New York, NY: The City University of New York. This article describes the math program for freshmen who failed multiple placement exams. It includes sections on program structure, how expansion of math curriculum was accomplished, enrollment and retention information, assessment of student learning, comparison of CTI math teaching and learning with standards and common remedial math reform efforts in community colleges, and institutional and other conditions that need to be in place to make this sort of pedagogical change. This paper provides important information for GED® and college tran-

sitions teachers and directors. This resource is a companion paper to *More Than Rules* (a separate TCALL title), and it is suggested that *More Than Rules* be read before this article.

The Return on Investment (ROI) From Adult Education and Training: Measuring the Economic Impact of a Better Educated and Trained U.S. Workforce. McLendon, Dr. Lennox and Jones, Debra and Rosin, Mitch (2011). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Research Foundation. This position paper asserts that billions of dollars could be earned, saved, and pumped back into the struggling economy as a result of investments in effective and efficient workforce development programs. The co-authors contend that adult education and career training is potentially one of the most cost-effective tools for economic recovery.

Summary of the Skills and Content Needed to Prepare for the 2014 GED® Test. Vickers, Amy (October 2012). Minneapolis, MN: Minneapolis Community Education. This 14-page resource succinctly documents the expectations and changes coming with the GED® 2014. This is a summary of the skills and content needed to prepare learners and teachers for the 2014 GED®.

Texas Interagency Literacy Council Report. Texas Workforce Commission (November 2012). Austin, TX: Texas Workforce Commission. The Interagency Literacy Council was created for the study, promotion, and enhancement of literacy in the state. This report includes the following: Description of the Council and its responsibilities and meetings; Assessment of adult literacy needs in Texas; Status of programs and services administered by each agency or entity on the Council; Description of efforts by these entities to coordinate efforts and align services, reduce redundancies, implement best practices, integrate services, and improve accountability; Identification of barriers in Texas to improving literacy and action items to address those barriers; A state plan for the next two years to implement action items; and Discussion of an approach to building existing funding streams and identifying additional state and federal funding sources available for promotion of literacy in Texas.

Texas Adult & Family Literacy Quarterly is a publication of the Adult and Family Literacy Clearinghouse, a project housed in the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy & Learning (TCALL) at Texas A&M University. **The Quarterly** is dedicated to advancing the knowledge in the field by addressing topics of concern to adult and family literacy practitioners, policymakers, and scholars. Topics include but are not limited to methods and innovations in teaching and learning reading, writing, and numeracy; second language learning; family literacy; workforce literacy; transitions to post-secondary education and job training; learning technologies; health, financial, and civic literacy; and the professional development of practitioners.

Email subscriptions are free to teachers, students, administrators, program coordinators, researchers, literacy volunteers, adult education's partners in the Workforce Development system, and others interested in the fields of adult and family literacy.

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