



TEXAS Adult & Family Literacy QUARTERLY

Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy & Learning

Financial Literacy Instructor Preparation: Key to Equipping Adults for Managing Personal Finances

by Arlene F. Serrano

Financial literacy is an important issue for the world economical and financial development efforts...Well prepared financial literacy educators are essential for the improvement of individuals' financial literacy in the United States...There is a need for more professional development opportunities and efficient coordination among financial supervisors, regulators, private sector and other institutions. (Yilmaz, 2011, p. 65)

Financial literacy is essential for the economic self-sufficiency of individuals in our society. Being financially literate involves the effective handling of money and having the capacity to adapt and respond competently to life events that affect everyday financial decisions (e.g., buying a house, investing, saving money). In this case, financial literacy educators serve as catalysts providing adult learners with instruction and the tools to become better at managing their personal and family finances. Therefore, it is really important for financial literacy instructors to possess adequate preparation to do their work.

In spring 2011, I started volunteering as a financial literacy instructor in a community-based program in central Texas. The instructors in the program are mainly volunteers and part-time instructors from different educational and professional backgrounds. The curriculum used in the financial literacy classes consists of a combination of commercially available curriculum and adaptations of diverse curricula made by each instructor. Budgeting, banking, savings and borrowing are some of the topics covered in this program. The purpose of the classes that we offer is to provide adult learners with practical information about personal finances, and to help them make informed financial decisions with an awareness of the possible consequences. Ultimately, we strive to guide them to recognize financial inequities in their lives and community, to motivate them to make changes and become better at using financial resources.

One of the major challenges I have encountered when teaching financial literacy in this community-based program is the lack of professional development (PD) and training opportunities for instructors. We are committed to educating our students and we are in constant search for strategies and activities to improve our teaching but these are isolated efforts. A study made by Way and Holden (2009) supports the feelings that some of my colleagues have expressed in informal conversations and that as a financial literacy instructor I have also experienced. These researchers found that instructors feel underprepared in both subject matter and pedagogy



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when charged with the task of teaching financial literacy; particularly they report a lack of knowledge and training in the more technical topic areas such as risk management, insurance, saving, and investing. We all know that well-trained teachers can effect positive change in the financial knowledge and attitude of individuals and can help them achieve or adopt appropriate spending and saving habits. More than acquiring knowledge on the subject matter, I believe PD for these practitioners can be helpful in identifying relevant teaching topics for adult learners. These instructors also need to know how students should be assessed, and what teaching practices are more effective. From my point of view as a practitioner and as a dedicated instructor who is always looking for better ways to serve my students, I think PD initiatives for financial literacy instructors should:

- Improve and increase instructor's content knowledge.
- Guide instructors' understanding of how adults learn and include effective teaching methods for different age groups, cultural backgrounds, and diverse populations.
- Provide ideas and strategies for activities that fit the diverse needs of the adult learners.
- Include tools for assessing and evaluating teacher practice and student performance;
- Lead to the development of authentic and critically reflective practitioners by incorporating discussion and reflection activities.
- Engage instructors in professional dialogue about relevant issues in the field through gatherings and other networking opportunities, collaboration between instructors, and conferences.

In summary, PD opportunities for financial literacy instructors can help increase adult learners' achievement and ensure more effective instruction and higher quality programs. Training and PD initiatives provide an opportunity to stress the importance of financial education to those individuals who are directly responsible for conveying such information to adult learners (Yilmaz, 2011).

Establishing community partnerships with universities and adult education settings, local organizations and other institutions could help in the implementation of professional development opportunities for instructors of financial literacy. In addition, taking online classes, creating or reading financial literacy newsletters, attending financial literacy conferences, establishing collaboration with other financial literacy instructors, and inviting guest speakers to talk to instructors are just a few examples of how to increase opportunities for professional development. Since community-based programs often have a limited budget that is rarely allocated for PD opportunities, I want to emphasize the importance of using low-cost avenues for obtaining training and acquiring knowledge about financial literacy and teaching ideas through the use of online resources. The following are a few online sites and resources that I have identified, but there are many others.

<http://www.practicalmoneyskills.com/summit2012/index.php>
<http://www.talkingfinlit.org/>
<http://www.greatwest.com/greatwestgreateachers/html/educators.html>
<http://www.councilforeconed.org/resources/>
<http://www.mcgraw-hill.com/site/cr/community/financial-literacy>
http://financeintheclassroom.org/teacher/prof_dev.shtml

<http://www.financiallit.org/programs/flite.aspx>
<http://www.vcee.org/programs-awards/view/5>
<http://www.nefe.org>

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About the Author

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Texas C-BAR Assists Nonprofits With Legal Resources and Expertise

WHAT IS TEXAS C-BAR?

Texas C-BAR provides free legal assistance to nonprofit organizations in three ways: training programs, on-line legal resource library and direct referrals to volunteer attorneys. Texas C-BAR presents workshops for nonprofits on important legal issues, including employment law, joint ventures with for-profit organizations, and post-incorporation legal maintenance.

Nonprofits can also access a broad range of legal information, forms, and website links through the Texas C-BAR online resource library, at www.texasbar.org. In the library, which contains over 400 links and documents, a nonprofit can find information on raffles, bake sales, and sample bylaws.

Through Texas C-BAR's attorney referral program, volunteer attorneys with experience in real estate, corporate, employment, and business law are placed with nonprofit organizations to help them with their various legal needs.

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Simply submit an application. An application can be obtained in three ways:

- Visit our web site, at www.texasbar.org;
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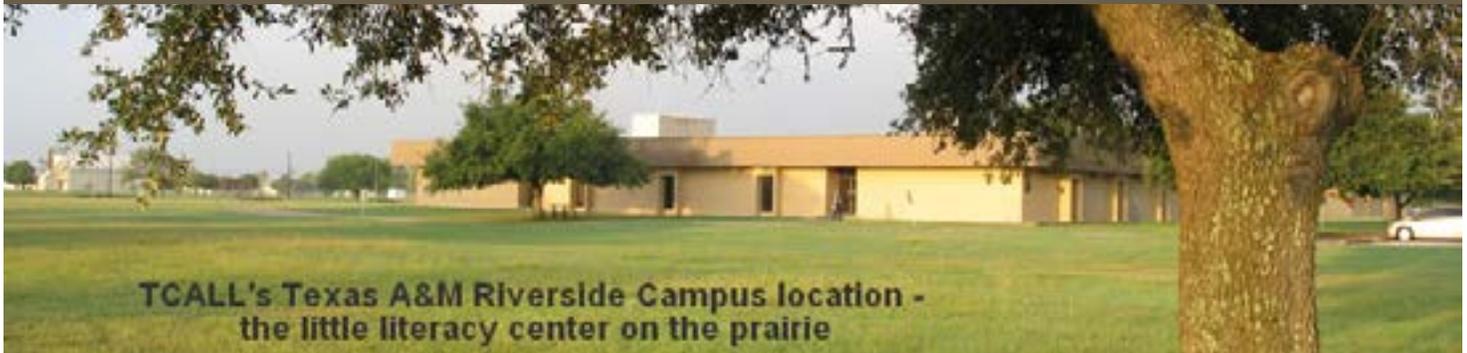
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TCALL

Texas Center for the Advancement of
Literacy and Learning



What is TCALL?

TCALL, the state's literacy resource center, is a center of Texas A&M University funded by the Texas Education Agency to serve literacy educators and programs throughout Texas.

*Through its **Adult Literacy Clearinghouse Project**, TCALL provides services and resources that are available to Texas literacy educators who are associated with any nonprofit entity offering free or minimal-cost adult basic literacy, English language instruction, or GED preparation for adults, or family literacy services for adults and their young children.*

Helping adult learners make successful transitions to postsecondary education, workforce training, and jobs with family sustaining wages is also a major focus of TCALL's resources, services, and partnerships.

You will find links to all these services on TCALL's home page. <http://tcall.tamu.edu>

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TCALL's services include:

- A statewide [Directory of Adult Literacy & Family Literacy Providers](#)
- A statewide [Literacy Hotline](#) for referring adult learners to literacy providers – also for referring potential volunteers and partners to the literacy programs. We refer hundreds of adults to Texas literacy providers each month.
- [Texas Adult & Family Literacy Quarterly](#) – TCALL's free quarterly electronic publication
- [Clearinghouse Library](#) of free and loan resources for literacy educators. Thousands of titles are available by mail or online for use in instruction of adults and families and for development and improvement of literacy programs. You can search and order titles from our Library on TCALL's website. You can also contact our Library staff for help identifying the resources you need (email tcall@tamu.edu or call 800-441-READ).
- [Email Discussion Lists](#) provide information and networking for literacy practitioners and their partners statewide. Several different "Listservs" are targeted to Teachers of Adults, Adult Education Administrators, Family Literacy educators, Volunteer/Community-based Literacy, Workforce Literacy, and more.
- [Calendars](#) of conferences, trainings, and important events for literacy educators in Texas
- [Literacy Volunteer Training Initiative](#) – provides Professional Development support for instructors and instructional leaders in community-based and volunteer adult and family literacy programs (those without access to federal/state adult education training funds)
- [Research](#) activities in support of quality instruction for adult and family literacy learners
- Central Dissemination Point for Information and Networking, including websites for [Texas LEARNS](#) (the state adult education office), the eight regional [GREAT Centers](#) (which provide professional development to adult educators), and [TALAE](#) (the state professional association of adult literacy educators).
- Other Support to Adult Education State Leadership Activities – TCALL manages statewide meeting logistics for Texas LEARNS, and administers other special activities in support of state leadership initiatives including the GREAT Centers.
- Technical support to family literacy, funded by Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy.

Professional Development

The Texas Adult Education Teacher Credential: Does it Lead to Measurable Program Impact?

by Elizabeth Thompson, Texas LEARNS & Ken Appelt, TCALL

In January of 2013, Texas LEARNS presented a report to a national audience comparing the effectiveness of Texas teachers who have completed the Texas Adult Education Teacher Credential with teachers who have not participated in the Teacher Credential process by examining student outcome data from TEAMS. The study was part of a federal Evaluation Learning Community (ELC) project and Texas was one of only six states participating. There were two research questions:

Do students in classes taught by teachers who have a Texas Teacher Credential have greater persistence than students taught by teachers without the Texas Teacher Credential?
and

Do students in classes taught by teachers who have a Texas Teacher Credential have more level completions across all domains than students taught by teachers without the Texas Teacher Credential?

The Teacher Credential is available to those teachers of record who teach adult students in AEFLA-funded Texas adult education programs and uses a model of participation in professional development, classroom implementation, and critical self-reflection. This process values the experiences of the individual and encourages teachers to make connections between current adult educational research and professional practice. Teachers are required to earn 150 points across six content areas and create an individual professional development plan which meets his or her personal needs while exploring content across the six areas.

Using the Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS), Texas LEARNS identified 44 credentialed teachers who had completed their credential by June 30, 2011 and 124 non-credentialed teachers. All participants in both groups were teaching an assigned class during the 2011-2012 academic year. Using TEAMS, the two teacher groups were matched on three variables: 1) years of experience, 2) employment status, 3) level of education. Both groups averaged 8.5 years of teaching experience in adult education; 70% of credentialed teachers were part time and 30% were full-time while among the non-credentialed teachers there were 33% full-time and 65% part-time

with 2% working as volunteers.

The Texas ELC Team looked to TEAMS for student contact hours and any completions for students in the teacher's classroom. All data used was from the 2011-2012 year:

The data showed that teachers who had earned their credential participated in an average of 57 hours of professional development (after receiving credential) during the year as compared to 24.5 hours average for non-credentialed teachers.

Credentialed teachers had an average of 91 students and the non-credentialed teachers had 69 students per teacher. Further examination of the data revealed that Non-Credentialed teachers taught 3.1 classes/teacher while the credentialed teachers taught 5.1 classes/teacher. This means the credentialed teachers had a slightly smaller individual class size, yet they taught more students during the course of the year.

Students taught by Credential teachers were progress tested at higher rates. The difference was a minimally statistically significant $p=0.0883$. This could be a result of better knowledge of assessment policy, better classroom management or other factors not considered by this study.

Students taught by Credential teachers were progress tested at higher rates. The difference was a minimally statistically significant $p=0.0883$.

Students in Credentialed teacher classes persisted an average of 80 hours while students of Non-Credential teachers persisted an average of 85 hours. Completion rates, however, were virtually the same for both groups.

Implications for Further Inquiry

Additional study is needed in several areas. Teacher turnover represents a loss of investment to adult education programs, just as it does in business. A review of data over a two to three year period is needed to determine if there are differences in turnover rates for the two teacher groups.

Summary

The results can be summarized in five main points.

1. Credential teachers continue participating in professional development at more than double the rate of their non-credentialed peers
2. Students in classes taught by credentialed teachers are progress tested at a slightly higher rate than those taught by non-credentialed teachers
3. Credentialed teachers teach more students/teacher
4. Credentialed teachers taught more classes
5. Students of Credential teachers completed a level in fewer hours than students of non-Credential teachers. This finding relates directly to program costs.

To read the long version of this article, please visit the publication page on the TCALL website (<http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/newsletr/spring13/spring13b.htm>)

A Communicative Approach to Language Instruction

by David Heath

What is the understanding of language?

A communicative approach understands that language is a *means* for the expression of *meaning*, functional and imaginative, personal and social. Consequently, the *communicative* and *semantic* dimensions of language are more emphasized than the grammatical characteristics. Classroom activities that involve authentic communication and promote natural and often *unconscious learning* are emphasized. These activities are directed toward meaningful, purposeful tasks fitted to student need, interest, and ability. The essence of a communicative approach is the design of a teaching-learning environment where the following scenario is present: someone is discoursing with someone else in an authentic, purposeful, and meaningful way. The discourse elements include listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

What is the general nature of teaching/learning activities?

Any activity that establishes the *scenario* above is harmonious to a communicative approach. Discourse can be divided into three general types of exchange corresponding to subjective, inter-subjective, and objective dimensions. This could be understood as the “I”, “we”, and “it” of language discourse (Wilber, 1995).

- *I*: Introspective activities: activities that report on one’s sensations, feelings, and thoughts, i.e., any activity from sensory descriptions to expressions of feelings to analysis of ideas. The priority of exchange is *expressive*.
- *We*: Social interaction activities: activities that require a social exchange such as a conversation or discussion. These discourses could be anything from an improvisational dialog to a problem solving activity. The priority of exchange is *communal*.
- *It*: Social function activities: activities purposed for developing specific life skills or social functions, e.g., asking for directions, requesting permission. The priority of exchange is *instrumental*.

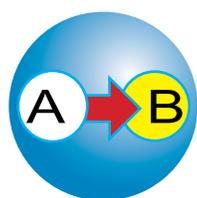
These classroom activities maximize opportunities for learners

to use the target language in a communicative way through meaningful, purposeful activities--activities grounded in the world of authentic discourse. Emphasis is consistently on *meaning* and *communication* rather than form or grammar.

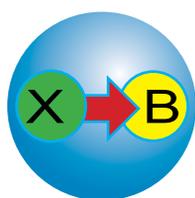
What is a “world of authentic discourse”? It is the *natural* language world *outside* the language classroom. Authentic instructional materials are instructional materials pulled from the *real* world. These authentic materials could be environmental print such as street signs, prescription labels, job applications, advertising brochures and information pamphlets. They could also be instructional materials taken from popular media such as the internet, music, movies, newspapers, and television. Authentic materials could be authentic literature and art, current events, your students’ experiences and your students’ stories brought to the language classroom.

This content and structure naturally place more emphasis on *active* modes of learning as opposed to passive modes of learning. There is an emphasis on both receptive skills and productive skills in the communicative classroom. However, it is understood in language acquisition theory that receptive skills (e.g., listening/reading skills) often precede and provide the foundation for productive skills (e.g., speaking/writing skills) even if all skill sets are taught somewhat concurrently or overlapping or in a dynamic, integrated fashion.

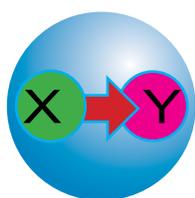
Consequently, discourse is not limited to conversational exchanges or oral work. Reading and writing skills are integrated into oral discourse strategies. This integration can take several forms: A = listening / B = speaking / X = reading / Y = writing (Heath, 2009). Language practice where learners act on authentic materials within the dynamic structure of integration of receptive and productive skills brings the world into the classroom and provides natural opportunities for students to use their acquired language in meaningful ways. Language competence takes place through listening as much as through speaking, through reading as through writing.



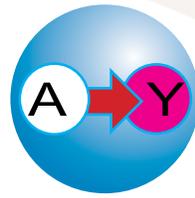
A prior to B



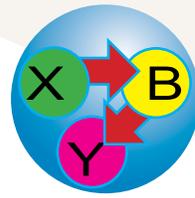
X prior to B



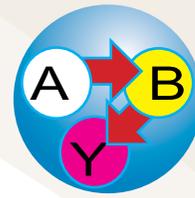
X prior to Y



A prior to Y



X prior to B
prior to Y



A prior to B
prior to Y

When discourse activities are directed toward improvisational production, language becomes more flexible and adaptive while learners gain confidence in coping with unforeseen and unanticipated situations. The natural and spontaneous use of the target language nourishes language creativity and personal skill in making language adjustments appropriate to the actual demands of the discourse situation. In addition, a communicative approach seeks to use authentic resources to incite learner interest and purposeful engagement. Authentic texts are products of culture and natural language use within that culture, providing the target language in contexts that are relevant and grounded in the world of the learner.

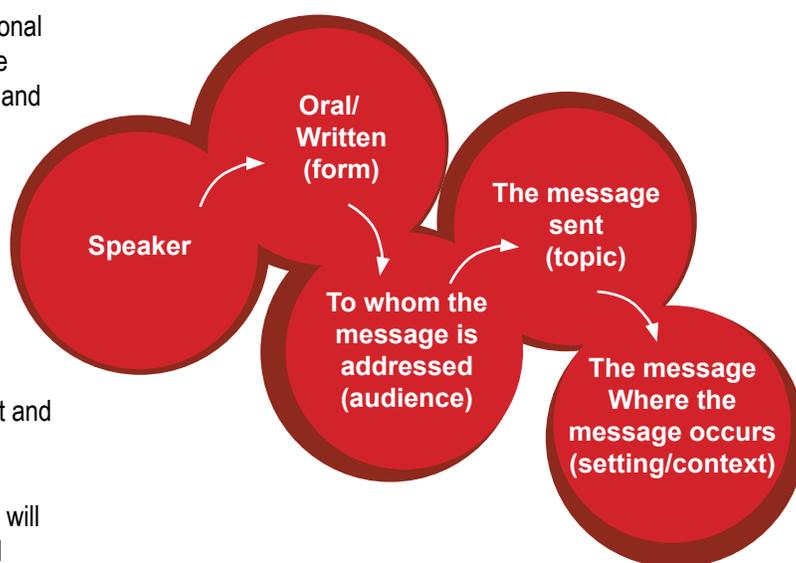
Engaged in natural language activities as these, students will naturally make errors. Learners discoursing within natural contexts using authentic materials, speaking with others in purposeful situations while trying their best to use the language creatively and spontaneously are bound to make errors. Continual correction is unnecessary and even counterproductive. Any correction by the teacher should be through modeling and restatement.

Grammar and other forms of conscious learning can be addressed, but as supplemental or supportive exercises, contextualized whenever possible. It has been my experience that complex language analysis via grammatical exercises, inductive or deductive, helps some learners develop meta-language cognition, useful *when the student knows the rule, is focused on form, and has the time to apply the rule* (Krashen, 1982). As Krashen suggests, what is more important than form is continuous and ample comprehensible input.

What is the teaching/learning or classroom environment?

A teaching/learning environment where: *Somebody is talking to someone about something...in context*. It is an environment where there are continuous, diverse, and abundant opportunities for discourse. This will always imply this structure:

In this active, dynamic, participatory approach to language acquisition, it is the role of the instructor, certainly, to provide the learner with an authoritative knowledge and skill base; but



even more importantly, it is the role of the instructor to create and design instruction and to organize the interactive learning environment where language acquisition can happen. This dynamic structure, in each instance, will include a speaker, a form, an audience, a message, and a setting or context.

It is an environment where the learner is an active participant in *constructing* knowledge within an interactive and transactional group of peers. It is an environment where the learner has opportunities to “work out her understanding,” to act and react, to question, to clarify, to respond, to reason, to check hypothesis and negotiate meaning, to rethink, to elaborate and extend, to invent and design, to judge and assess.

This action on language and through language takes place in authentic environments where the learner has copious opportunities to act upon an artifact of language culture (text, video, audio) and share his understanding with other learners. The learner is given opportunities to externalize and demonstrate internal processes and understandings, to create and produce original work and make commentary on an extended range of topics and sources, utilizing ideas, skills, and processes unavailable in a more traditional or teacher-directed and grammatical approach to language acquisition.

What is the content?

Content in a communicative approach is extremely diverse. ESOL texts are not eliminated, but neither are they considered the sole or even principal source of instruction. The ESOL text is one of many resources to be used and when used should be adapted to the degree possible to the principles of active instruction mentioned above.

Authentic materials are rich sources for developing a communicative practice. They are often more interesting, engaging, adaptive, and linguistically rich than a standard ESOL text. Authentic materials are created to entertain, inform, explain, describe, tell stories, give instruction, make an argument, express emotion, help us dream, escape, imagine, act, think. That is authentic materials give meaning through language, meaning that helps us understand ourselves, others, and the world we live in. They are created for the culture at large, not for a particular population of learners studying English. This is their advantage, and at times their disadvantage.

Some authentic materials are useful for advanced levels but worthless for beginning levels. Some materials are simple enough to be used with beginning learners and could be adapted to challenge even advanced learners. Other materials are linguistically complex but could be adjusted to be used at lower levels. Authentic materials can often be adapted to the language competencies of your students.

Conclusion

In summary, a communicative approach understands that language is a *means* for the expression of *meaning*, an approach where *communicative* and *semantic* dimensions of language are more emphasized than the grammatical characteristics. It understands language as a *means* of *symbolic* exchange and that the dimensions of that exchange are expressive, communal, and instrumental. It understands that language is always, in its essence, active and relational, that the scenario when language is present is always someone talking to someone about something...somewhere. It understands that language in the world is the optimum language in the classroom and that when learners operate on language in the world they operate on the world itself.

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About the Author

D. Heath is ESOL Coordinator at Odessa College. He has worked as an ESOL instructor and manager since 1988.

2013 TALAE Adult Education Staff Awards

At the February 2013 annual conference of Texas Association for Literacy and Adult Education (TALAE), four outstanding adult educators were recognized by their peers with 2013 TALAE Staff Awards.

Administrator of the Year: Dr. David Joost, Houston Community College

Dr. Joost is the adult education administrator at Houston Community College, a program that serves over 9,500 adult learners and generates over 1.5 million contact hours per year. Dr. Joost represented Houston in a national competition to participate in the Adult Education Great Cities Summit. Houston was one of just four cities across the nation chosen for this initiative. Most recently, Dr. Joost led the initiative to reduce college credit tuition for adult education students co-enrolled in short-term, credit-bearing workforce programs. His nominator described Dr. Joost as one who is "able to collaborate in creative endeavors, be innovative and inspire others to follow his lead."

Teacher of the Year: Debbie Janysek, Victoria Community College

Debbie Janysek started in adult education as a volunteer tutor and has grown into the teacher who is a leader among her peers. She teaches days, nights, and even Saturdays, and has taught beginning English as a Second Language (ESL) to the highest levels of GED® test preparation. Janysek engages in collaborative projects with her local Workforce Board, served on the Texas Adult Education Content Standards writing team, and assists with the Texas Adult Education Credential Project. She also volunteers as a board member for her local Literacy Council. Ms. Janysek nurtures the development of students and fellow teachers by focusing on their goals and developing individualized strategies for growth and learning.

Support Person of the Year: Linda Gibson, Education Service Center, Region 9

Honoring Linda Gibson's 24 years in Adult Education, her nominator described Gibson as a "Superwoman" for her program, staff and students, and as one who lives her life in service of others. Gibson is a mentor in Wichita Falls ISD in her spare time, and builds relationships with all students, whether through the mentor program or adult education classes, demonstrating that someone cares about them and their success. Linda always goes above and beyond her regular duties and has helped set up ESL classes and conduct student interviews. This year she also earned her Texas Adult Education Teacher Credential.

Volunteer of the Year: Terry Rodriguez, Fort Worth ISD

During many years as a military spouse, Ms. Rodriguez attended college as an adult while still raising her children. She began volunteering in adult education four years ago, teaching beginning level ESL. Her classes have been so successful that they expanded from one night a week to three mornings and three nights each week. Rodriguez also tutors students and assists students who may need groceries or holiday meals. Terry says, "Never in my dreams did I imagine a life as I have lived and the best opportunities that opened doors to my education. I am humbled by the wealth and generosity of those who saw the potential in me to strive for a better tomorrow."

Nominating Adult Educators for TALAE Staff Awards

It's easy to nominate one of your colleagues, staff, or volunteers for a TALAE Staff Award. Nomination forms, instructions and timeline are announced each year in the fall through TCALL's email discussion lists and on the TALAE Website. <http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/TALAE>

Professional Development

iPads® - Offering a New Realm of Learning

by Dean Ransdell

Bowie Cass Adult Education Cooperative of Texarkana, TX has incorporated iPads® into the curriculum for project-based learning. This has been very exciting for our staff, teachers, and students. According to Apple®, the iPad® inspires creativity and hands-on learning with features you won't find in any other educational tool on a device that students really want to use. Powerful built-in apps and apps from the App Store like iTunesU let students engage with content in interactive ways, find information in an instant, and access an entire library wherever they go. iPads® take learning to a whole new level. Technology is ever increasing in our society today, and it is imperative that we stay up-to-date with the new technology in order to function in today's world.

Seeking to make a big impact on our community guests at our National Literacy Day celebration, we introduced iPads® to the students several weeks prior to the event. Counselor, Whitney Jackson, worked with the instructors and students. Students wrote personal poems and presented them with a musical background using the Splice app. One class wanted to make a video of their class-collaborated poem. They worked hard making the video and editing it with music to the words of the poem. As one teacher, Felita Gilmore, stated, *"The Literacy Day celebration presentations were entertaining, inspiring, and provoked thoughts of hope. Students showed pride in their writing, and their iPad® presentations. It was indeed a day of celebration."*

This project really created a community of learners. They were excited about coming to class to work on their projects; in return this increased the students' education and technology skills. Counselor, Whitney Jackson, also stated, *"I saw the moment when one student took ownership of her project. You could see the joy on her face when she presented what she had created, and in that moment she bought into her education."* You could see the

proud look of accomplishment on their faces when the audience appreciated their hard work. One student, Latrosha Maxwell, said, *"Oh! I just loved Literacy Day. I really never participated when I had the chance to go to high school, but I see now I missed out on a lot of fun things throughout my school day. It was truly wonderful to participate in Literacy Day."* Another student, Matthew Dawson, said, *"I enjoyed it! It was fun because I usually don't get to display my ideas like that."*

The iPads® have been a great contribution to the class. They offer contextualized learning to all students. The teachers have enjoyed using them in class as well. One small scale study conducted at Riverside Unified School District indicated that Algebra students using iPads® tested at 90% proficiency, compared to 60% among their traditional textbook counterparts (www.ReadWriteWeb.com). The coined phrase, "There's an app for everything," rings true to



Mildred Graves, Gerriecia Asberry, Matthew Dawson, Taylor Crane, Debra Buckley-Instructor, Frances Shepherd, Kacie Crawford, and Berta Washington

the classroom as well because there are more than 20,000 education apps. iPad® apps are expanding the learning experience both inside and outside the classroom. From interactive lessons to study aids to productivity tools, there's an app for every learner (Apple.com). One instructor, Debra Buckley, stated, *"The best part about using iPads® in class is that they keep students focused and engaged. It enhances skills they already have as they help each other use the iPad®. Then they are able to teach new skills to others."*

Bowie Cass Adult Education Cooperative has no regrets implementing this wonderful technological tool in the classroom. The best part about it is the students WANT to use iPads® to learn. They have taken ownership of their education while exploring new and exciting things. We have seen increased success in the classroom because of the iPads® and hope to continue to learn new ways of incorporating them into our adult education program.

ESL Portfolios as Alternative Assessment

by Dr. Clarena Larrotta

We have to build portfolios with our ESL students, but we didn't receive training on how to do it. I have built a professional portfolio in the past, when I was looking for a job, but that's the only experience I have with portfolios. How different are ESL portfolios?

The comment above was made by a graduate student during class in the *ESL Methods and Materials Design* course that I teach. I was lecturing on alternative assessment and the need to implement this type of assessment in the adult ESL (English as a second language) classroom. As we know, examples of alternative assessment include portfolios, journals, student-teacher conference sessions, interviewing students, and systematic observation of student work.

Specifically, Brown (2000) identifies the following characteristics of alternative assessment: a) is nonintrusive and extends classroom activities, b) requires students to perform, create, produce, c) uses real-world contexts, d) is meaningful to students, e) focuses on process as well as product, f) taps into higher level thinking and problem-solving skills, g) provides information about student strengths and weaknesses, h) uses human judgment and a person provides the grade, i) supports open disclosure of standards and rating criteria, and j) engages teachers and learners.

Through years of experience teaching ESL students and interacting with ESL instructors through delivering workshops and classes, I have learned that some instructors lack experience or hold misconceptions about the use, implementation, and purpose of alternative assessment and portfolios. Therefore, it is important to clarify that portfolios in Art are used to display the best work of an artist; however, the role of portfolios in Education is as a showcase for process and progress in learning (Brown, 2000; Padilla, Aninao, & Sung, 1996). I envision portfolios in the adult ESL classroom as a selection of items that can serve as evidence to illustrate language development as related to listening, speaking, reading, writing, and culture. Portfolios should reflect the student newly acquired knowledge and their work and effort to improve language skills. Portfolios should be directly connected to curricular goals and help prepare students for evaluation; they should illustrate the learning process, student progress, and literacy growth. Also, portfolios should require reflection from the part of the student and include student-teacher conference sessions to make decisions, assess learning, identify areas for improvement, and clarify student questions and doubts.

Building an ESL Portfolio

Plan to include non-negotiable and negotiable items as illustrated below.

Non-negotiable items

1. Table of contents
2. Cover letter
3. Course related item #1
4. Course related item #2
5. Course related item #3
6. Reflection
7. Student-teacher conference

Negotiable items

- Student selected item #1
Student selected item #2
Student selected item #3
Student selected item #4

The non-negotiable items are established by the instructor and are directly connected to the course goals or desired learning outcomes (e.g., literacy autobiography, audio recording of a short story, transcript of an interview to a native English speaker, summary of news on a specific topic). The negotiable items provide a list of options and the learner can make suggestions for other items to include in the portfolio (e.g., report in writing about your favorite TV show, build a timeline about "important events in my life," make a list of readings done outside of class). Providing options/choice is helpful for those students who require constant guidance and support from the instructor.

Assigning a Grade

The implementation of portfolios should provide room for self-assessment and peer assessment to take place. Brown (2000) asserts that practicing self-assessment fosters autonomy, creates independent learners, and fosters intrinsic motivation. Brown also explains that peer-assessment promotes cooperative learning, allows students to teach each other, and helps the teacher to implement learner-centered instruction and build community. Accordingly, I recommend that students self-assign the grade for the portfolio not the instructor. The following is the grading rubric that I have used in the past:

Portfolio Grading Rubric

Please answer the following questions to evaluate your work.

1. Did you turn in the reflection(s) for this activity? Yes ____ No ____
2. How many times did you see your instructor this semester/term?
Less than 3 times ____ 3 times ____ More than 3 times ____
3. How much of the required work did you do?
Less than 50% ____ 50% or more ____ 80% ____ 100% ____
4. What did you do for "negotiated items"? Please make a list.

5. As a whole, the quality of your work is:
Fair ____ Good ____ Very Good ____ Excellent ____

Recommendations for Practice

These are ideas to keep in mind if you are interested in implementing ESL portfolios.

- Adopt a definition of portfolios that fits your ESL teaching setting
- Identify curricular goals that fit with portfolios as alternative assessment
- Create guidelines and establish requirements for implementation
- Provide a list of *negotiable items* to help students make appropriate choices
- Establish appropriate assessment procedures (survey, rubric, evaluation tool)
- Guide students to write a reflection on the activity that you can use for improvement

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About the Author

Clarena Larrotta is associate professor of adult education at Texas State University-San Marcos.

Techie Tools for Teachers

by Tiffany Lee

As the GED® 2014 test is on the horizon, technology needs to be present in our GED® and ESL (English as a Second Language) classrooms. However, before we use it in the classroom, we need to learn what types of technology resources are out there and how to use them. By collaborating, socializing, and informing each other, teachers can become equipped with technology tools for their classrooms.

The first way to use technology in the classroom is to collaborate. Collaborate means to join forces or to work with one another (www.dictionary.com). For example, in our line of work, we want educators collaborating with each other. One type of collaboration techie tool is Google Docs® (www.google.com). For instance, I am a part of a project for I-BEST through the North GREAT Center. Our team project will focus on computer literacy skills and making a career portfolio. Our team is starting to make the lesson plans for our two projects. At this stage, it is hard to have teacher workday meetings when one of our team members lives in a city called Henrietta which is about 25 minutes away. So, to save gas, both of us thought it would be a great idea to use Google Docs® to work on creating the lesson plans. We would be in two different cities, but working on the project together. I started a folder called I-BEST in my Google Docs®. I then shared the folder with the team members. By using Google Docs®, we joined forces to complete a common goal of creating lesson plans that will be used in future courses in our adult education program.

Another way to use technology in the classroom is to socialize with the students, therefore, getting the students to build teacher-to-student and student-to-student relationships. For example, Facebook® works well for socializing. My Facebook® page is called "The GED® & ESL Lady" (www.facebook.com/gedesl9). I

use Facebook® for contacting students, keeping students updated with current events, and providing other adult education teachers and programs with classroom resources and teaching techniques. For example, I post pictures of a teaching technique called a Foldable®. A Foldable® is a 3D interactive graphic organizer (www.dinah.com). I teach an ESL Citizenship class twice a year. When we complete a Foldable®, I make sure it makes the GED® & ESL Lady's Facebook® page. It's like news for the week. Other teachers would post a comment, like the post, or just simply smile to say thanks for the idea. Another example is posting a "note" on the page. Each week during our citizenship class, I would post the week's citizenship questions in note format. The students would go to the Facebook® page, find the note, and reply to the citizenship questions. Then, I can go through the students' answers to see who was correct, give them hints, or congratulate them on getting all ten questions for the week correct. This is social media and active learning at work in my classroom.

The last way to use technology in the classroom is to inform. Adult education teachers need a place where we can inform other teachers about classroom management or share teaching strategies. One techie tool is to write a blog. For example, a blog website that I use is called Blogger (www.blogger.com). Blogger is connected with your Google® account. My blog site is <http://leeged.blogspot.com>. I use this site for my GED® and ESL classes; however, it is another way which teachers can learn and gather ideas for their classrooms by following new teaching strategies that I use in the classroom. By posting each day, my blog stays current and is a great way to inform teachers and share with others.

Can you imagine how your classroom environment could

change if we stepped out of our box? We need to use the free technology resources that are available to us. Imagine if Texas adult education instructors used Google Docs for homework or Facebook to start a conversation about the election? By using technology resources in our classrooms, we can prepare our students for transitions into higher education and improve educators' teaching strategies in the classroom.

About the Author

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Instructor for Region 9 Education Service Center (ESC) Adult Education Department. She has been teaching for Region 9 ESC since 2007. She has a Bachelor's in Business Administration with Computer Information Systems and a Master's in Education in Instructional Technology. She presented at 2013 TALAE Conference in Austin. She currently is a GED®, ESL, ESL Citizenship, and Distance Learning instructor. She is so proud to say that six of her students have received their U.S. Citizenship. If you have any questions, you are welcomed to contact her at tiffany.lee@esc9.net.

Empowering the Low Language and Literacy Adult Refugee Student

by Dr. Nancy Vincent Montgomery

The 2011 yearbook of Immigration statistics published by the Department of Homeland Security's Office for Immigration Statistics notes that nationals from Burma, Bhutan, and Iraq made up almost three-fourths of refugee arrivals with the Burmese being the largest group of the three. Texas and California received the largest number taking in more than one-fifth of the total. Having experienced perilous journeys and suffered great loss to finally arrive in the U.S. seeking a new life, many refugees possess low-level language and literacy skills, which add another layer to the resettlement process.

Many of these adult refugees will enter our ESL (English as a Second Language) classes wanting to learn to read and write in English for economic reasons, to understand the American school system, to gain control over their lives, to integrate into communities, and to gain emotional support from others, who had similar experiences, and from teachers, Roberts et al. (2004). To ensure their success we have to ask "How can their prior experiences and current context affect their learning in a positive way in our adult ESL classrooms?" and "What educational strategies must we employ for these new learners?"

Adkins, Sample, and Birman (1999) state that a teacher cannot ignore the three most significant types of stressors that refugees face. They include *migration stress* which for the refugee is loss of coping resources, loss of their families, and others they would rely on for help; *acculturation stress* where one feels their very identity is threatened since even a daily task such as shopping for food can be overwhelming; and, *traumatic stress* from extreme events such as injury or natural disasters which can change the person psychologically as well as socially.

Adkins, Sample, and Birman suggest three ways a teacher can counter the effects of stress on the learner. Teachers can create a positive learning environment in light of the student's prior experiences by implementing the following three strategies.

These are:

- a. Developing a discussion which can take place with the learner concerning health issues and cultural clashes as well as how those issues affect the learning process.
- b. Teachers can, and should, learn to recognize symptoms of depression, social maladjustment, and behaviors that will cause disruption of the class and thus the learning process.
- c. Networking between teachers and others who have experience with different refugee groups will help the ESL teacher ensure that the class is meeting the academic needs of the refugee student through the use of cultural context.

Burgoyne and Hull (2007) found that learning speaking, listening, reading, writing, and numeracy, skills simultaneously may be too great a learning burden for refugee learners. Therefore, their recommendation is to be flexible about time constraints in classes so learners can concentrate in the beginning on oral English language skills.

Florez and Terrill (2003) found a group of teaching strategies and skills that proved positive when working with refugees who have low language and literacy skills. These include:

- a. Praising achievement to help learners believe they can succeed.
- b. Showing respect to learners in terms of age, religion, and culture.
- c. Conducting field trips to significant parts of a new environment such as medical centers or schools.
- e. Grouping the students carefully to ensure that cultural values are respected and not threatened.
- f. Rote practice of oral skills to ensure a solid foundation of key skills.
- g. Teaching phonics regardless of age, especially with those who are exceptionally low-level learners.
- h. Teaching basic sight words with some being taught every day.

- i. Teaching all four literacy skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking.)
- j. Teaching everyday life tasks and issues. Use Realia! (real, authentic objects)
- k. Model/role play/reflection/practice in pairs.

It is difficult to determine to what extent these and other strategies are successful as all of the learning outcomes are a part of the difficult and sometimes long resettlement process experienced by the refugee. The value a refugee places on learning is theirs and theirs alone. Teaching a low-level language and literacy class is quite challenging, so it is important to build skills from the very beginning of any course or class so that all factors for all building blocks are addressed. Even modest results are helpful in assisting effective resettlement in a new country and culture.

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Dr. Montgomery serves as a lecturer, teaching ESL methods courses. Before coming to SMU, she served as program coordinator of ESL special projects at Region 10 ESC. Her career in education has included teaching in Illinois, Texas, and Jakarta, Indonesia, and serving as an administrator in the areas of reading and curriculum. Dr. Montgomery's research interests include assessment and the English language learner, literacy and the refugee child, Dyslexia and the English language learner, and Adult ESL Literacy.

Adult Learner Transitions to Work and Postsecondary Education

Adult Basic Education and Developmental Education: A Call to Action

by Anson Green

Developmental Education (DE) is undergoing tremendous changes in the few next years, and these changes will redefine how we have traditionally viewed the term Adult Basic Education (ABE). Many students who historically have been placed in college DE programs will soon be classified as ABE students. This realignment presents Texas both tremendous opportunities and potential challenges.

How We Got Here

Decades of research studies attest to the fact that transition and completion rates for DE students in colleges are dismal and there is limited evidence that current models are effective (Bailey, Wook Jeong, & Cho, 2012). In Texas, the three year graduation rate for DE students is just above 17% (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2012). For the lower-skilled DE students (students functioning under the 9th grade level) completion rates are almost negligible).

While DE has aspired to be bridge to college, the reality is it has acted more as a dead-end (Charles A Dana Center et al., 2012) or burial ground for student aspirations (American Association of Community Colleges, 2012). Students and the faculty who teach these classes cannot succeed in such a flawed system. This is especially true for lower-skilled students (American Association of Community Colleges, 2012).

In many ways DE is the core function in colleges. Up to 70 percent of community college students enroll in at least one developmental or remedial course (Scott Clayton & Rodriguez, 2012). It is not difficult to argue that what happens in DE impacts almost every other department of the college, and, in the age of performance based funding, the very financial footing of college systems.

Blurring the Lines

Often times, DE students are sharply contrasted with ABE students, yet it is not difficult to argue for similarities rather than differences. Apart from being high school or GED® program completers, DE students exhibit many of the same skill challenges and external pressures that ABE students face. Many have been out of school for years or received a GED® certificates. Consequently, these individuals may have missed years of high school instruction and not learned many basic skills. Among these groups are students with learning disabilities, other cognitive challenges or mental health issues that increase the likelihood that standardized placements tests will reveal a gap between test performance and actual knowledge, skills and abilities.

So What's Being Done?

Texas has taken great strides in the last few years to tackle these challenges and has done so under the revelation that DE and ABE should be viewed as complimentary and at times very integrated systems. Recent ABE and college work funded under various state funded initiatives have brought clarity to what needs to be done¹. Acceleration models, supplemental instruction, contextualization, integration, new advising models are just some of the innovations.

A Revolution in Testing

Opportunities, and perhaps some challenges for ABE programs are on the near horizon. Many students entering Texas community colleges after fall 2012, will be required to take a new placement test called the TSI Assessment. The new test will be aligned not only to the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards but also the TEKS (STARR) and ABE educational functioning levels. Statewide cut scores for the test, to be set in August 2012, will strategically segment students across three levels: college ready, within two years of college ready and ABE (College Board, 2012).

The test holds great promise in that it should help colleges more strategically address the remediation needs of students.

Yet, urgent questions exist:

- How many new students will be deemed by new cut scores as ABE level?
- Will these students, who have high school diplomas or GED® certificates, be referred to federally-funded ABE programs? What impact will that have?
- Will colleges need to develop new “ABE-level” options because federally-funded program are at capacity?
- What will colleges without federally-funded ABE programs (like Alamo Colleges) do?
- Will students who were previously eligible for financial aid, still be eligible?

While we have questions, we must recognize that a tremendous opportunity is upon us. The historically siloed systems of ABE and

DE have an opportunity, and the tools and models, to restructure and truly deliver the seamless transition lower-skilled students have desired for many years. Let's take the opportunity.

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Footnote

¹See work funded under the THECB DE Demonstration Projects, Adult Basic Education Innovation Grants and Intensive Projects for Adult Education Students. More at: <http://www.theccb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=2338F572-0D1C-A1A0-AE8D9C53E39B1617>

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Anson Green directs strategic workforce partnerships at Alamo Colleges. As a manager in the Economic and Workforce Development leadership team, Anson directs the I-BEST Initiative, Alamo Colleges' developmental education workforce reform strategy, green job training initiatives, employer-customized training, and workforce English as a Second Language initiatives. Anson is Chair of the advisory board for the Mission Verde Center, San Antonio's emerging sustainability center of excellence and a member of the Alamo Workforce Development Board.

Join the WorkforceLitTex Network

The **WorkforceLitTex** email discussion list has had two purposes since it was developed in 2005: to facilitate local collaborative planning between adult education directors and the workforce development community; and to exchange best practices and encourage collaborative efforts within the Tri-Agency Collaboration (Texas Education Agency, Texas Workforce Commission, and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board). For more information or to subscribe, look for **WorkforceLitTex** on the Email Discussion Lists page on TCALL's home page (<http://tcall.tamu.edu>).

Building Employability Skills

by Domer Fletcher

The ideas presented below are tried and true activities that work well in ESL (English as a Second Language) classrooms focusing on employability skills where even the students at the lower levels can feel successful in applying and seeking a job. If you work with the TISESL Curriculum Employability stand-alone component, you will find these activities very helpful to build employability skills.

Lesson 1: The Bottom Line

- 1) Have students draw a web about themselves on a large flip-chart page. Let them explain it to the class as to what they are looking for in their working conditions. This helps them communicate to the class as they would have to talk at an interview. Tape them around the room on the walls.
- 2) Practice writing sentences in English about work conditions they would like to see in their future employment.
- 3) Understanding the grammar is a must! Focus on vocabulary words such as: want, need, will, won't, goals, first, second, next, and finally.
- 4) Write about it: make a goals chart:

My Goal

I want to _____.

I need to _____.

I will reach my goal in _____.

- 5) After filling out the goals chart, students write a paragraph about their goals and read them to the class. Tell them to use position words such as first, second, next, then, finally.
- 6) Associate pictures with certain jobs: example: adding machine = accountant

Lesson 2: Taking Inventory

- 1) Focus on vocabulary: can, can't, have, am.
- 2) On large flip-chart paper, have students list all skills they can think of that they can do. Read them to the group. Let the group suggest all the jobs they can think of that this person might apply for.
- 3) Role-playing: Have students write a job on a 3X5 card that they would like to have. Have them act out the roles of that job and see if the class can guess what it is.
- 4) Poster: In class or as homework on large sheet of Manila paper, have students make a poster that illustrates the job that interests them. They can use their own drawings and/

or magazine clippings to create their poster. It will be fun and engage the imagination.

Lesson 3: Word Power

Teamwork is a critical skill for employment.

- 1) Construct teamwork towers: Working together and using vocabulary that the group understands (in English), the group will build a tower out of recycled materials. Collect boxes (all sizes), plastic bottles, yogurt/margarine containers, and cardboard tubes. Also, have string, tape, pipe cleaners, rubber bands, and colored paper. Divide the class into small groups. Give them 30-45 minutes to work together to create a tower; try to make it the highest, most creative, or most artistic. Give a prize for the best tower and for the group which used the most effective teamwork to create their end product.
- 2) Follow-up with discussion on how this teamwork relates to being "work ready."
- 3) The balloon game: You need a bag of balloons, chalk or masking tape, and a large indoor space. Mark a large space on the floor with chalk or tape. Blow up one balloon for each person. Everyone gets inside the game area. The challenge is to keep all the balloons in the air at the same time in the game area for 3 minutes. (Note: they are to help their neighbors keep their balloons in the air and in the game area, too!) Gradually increase the number of balloons. Add challenges such as using only their feet or not touching the same balloon twice in a row.
- 4) To emphasize WORD POWER, give each student one square of origami paper (solid one side, printed on the other). Have the students follow your directions without telling them what the end will be. Give directions on how to make a whale, boat, etc. Voila! They can see the object at the end, if they have followed the directions. Emphasize that following directions in an interview and at work are most important.

Lesson 4: Explore Your Options

On the computer in Microsoft Office Publisher, have students create their own "contact" cards (similar to business cards). Include their name, job they are seeking, phone number and/or e-mail address (see example on page 6 Lesson 4 of student employability text). Hand these out to friends and family members to call with information about possible job openings they could apply for.

Lesson 5: Dress Your Best

- 1) Make class collages on Good and Bad Ways to Dress by letting everyone bring pictures of a good way and a bad way to dress for an interview. Get these from magazines, catalogs, and internet at home.
- 2) Let students explain their pictures to the class as to why they go in which group.

Lesson 6: Apply Yourself

- 1) Have each person in class write their own resume.
- 2) Type the resume in Microsoft Publisher using the template provided.

This will allow them to always have a resume on hand and able

to present a formal account of themselves and their work history. Making employability accessible and realistic helps students prepare for the future. Activities such as goal setting, taking stock of skills, and developing team work skills give students an action plan to achieve the skills necessary in the workplace. Isn't that what employability is all about?

About the Author

Carolyn Domer Fletcher received her MEd. Degree from East Texas State University, and has taught in the public schools for 33 years. For the last 3 years, she has been teaching EL/Civics classes in the Adult Ed. Department at Paris Junior College, Paris, Texas.

Building Collaboration & Program Involvement

Professional Learning Communities in Adult Education Programs

by Debbie Alford

Ensuring student success is a high-stakes game. Programs face possible budget cuts and limited funding due to poor performance and low retention. What are directors and instructors to do? One avenue to explore may be Professional Learning Communities (PLC).

PLC are a fast-growing practice amongst many K-12 districts. Research, such as Leo and Cowan (2000), suggests that PLC are one way to help instructors become better prepared to assist their students. PLC allow for shared values and support amongst peers and colleagues. PLC encourage mutual leadership and provide opportunities for instructors to be better prepared to serve their students. Ruebel (2011) affirms PLC are organized and systematic meetings where groups of people congregate who have mutual interests, such as a specific grade level or content area. Often a lead teacher runs the group meeting where they focus on student data and research best teaching practices to ensure each student's needs are met.

PLC can be organized around a two-step analysis of student data. The first step is looking at student progress during the semester and the second step is making inferences as to best instructional approaches by comparing the performance of students in each class.

Of course, it takes organization and having a vision and a mission for your program. Administrators/directors should free themselves of the burden of trying to create every answer for obstacles they face in adult education. Find your leaders amongst your instructors. Utilize instructors in creating and maintaining the program's vision. Form groups, either by GED® instructors or ESL instructors or by levels, such as Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, etc. Set aside time during the week and let the instructors see the data, interpret the weaknesses, and work together to find solutions.

A recommendation would be that all instructional staff has time to meet at a specific location one day per week for at least one hour. Group discussion can be peer led, for instance, the GED® instructors' group and another instructor would lead the ESL group. They look at attendance, retention, targets, and portfolios. They analyze all of the data and determine what methods of instruction or what teaching materials best fit the students based on the current Content Standards for the state. They co-plan and co-teach and support each other throughout this process to ensure the success of each student. Instructors develop collaboration, unity, and trust from this group process.

Instructors do need support, however. It is up to the administrator/director to support the process through funding, procedures, staff development, or simply listening to what the PLC has to say. The support from the administrative leader will provide the PLC with confidence and empowerment to ensure the success of the program. Breaking barriers is also the administrative leadership role. The director must find a common ground with the PLC. Look at your master schedule and determine where you could fit in an extra hour or two per week for your staff. Do you already have a planning day for them? Is there planning time set aside on a daily basis for them? Are they spread out all over the community, and you just don't think you can make it happen? Yes, you can!

At Brownsville ISD ACE (Adult Continuing Education), instructors are both full-time and part-time. Daytime instructors are mainly housed in one building, but also serve ten different locations in the community. Friday is the day that these instructors have for planning and one to one tutorials for students. They are all together on Friday mornings at ACE. One ESL instructor is responsible for meeting with all other ESL instructors, and one GED® instructor is responsible for meeting with all other GED® instructors. Together, they form a vision for their particular ABE content area. They decide which students will be assigned to which instructor and what levels each instructor will serve each semester. They collaboratively decide on registration assignments for staff and survey each other on desired professional development. They attend trainings and conferences and conduct share fairs to train each other. The director and lead teacher monitors each PLC and meets with them frequently to discuss the ever changing needs of the program. The director provides the instructors with freedom to deliver the content in the way they see as most beneficial for their group. Each instructor is very different, yet successful.

The results are impressive. In two and a half years ACE has become a Platinum level program meeting all performance

indicators and the retention has gone from 52% to 78%. Instructors feel a sense of ownership and responsibility to ensure the success of their students. Do they disagree? Yes. Is it easy? No. Is there room for improvement? Always. Can you incorporate the Integrated Career Awareness curriculum and pilot a transitional program while all of this is going on? Absolutely. Use the PLC time for instructors to form the cohorts for the ICA classes by identifying each qualifying student. Have the team decide on the criteria for the program, who should teach it, and how to schedule the ICA program. As the instructional leader of our programs, it is the director's duty to provide support, guidance, vision, and motivation for staff. We also need to stop making excuses about why we are not successful and incorporate new ideas, such as Professional Learning Communities in our program to ensure we don't let our students down.

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About the Author

Debbie Alford is the Director of Brownsville ISD Adult Continuing Education program. She is certified in Secondary ELA, Counselor, Principal, and Superintendent. The program serves the lower Cameron County and is situated along the Mexican border. BISD ACE serves individuals for ABE/ASE, ESL and Civics. Students range from 16 years of age on up. The program averages around 1500 students per year. PLC meet every two weeks for at least one hour, and during program staff development days.

Alpine Public Library One of the Top Three Small Libraries in America for 2013

The Alpine (Texas) Public Library has been named one of the top three small libraries in America for 2013. Each year Library Journal and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation recognize three U.S. public libraries that provide extraordinary service to populations less than 25,000 through the Best Small Library in America Award. The Alpine Public Library was selected as one of two 2nd place finalists who will each receive \$10,000, travel funds to the 2014 Public Library Association conference, and a writeup in the February issue of the magazine.

Nominated libraries were judged on key factors including creative and replicable programs, outreach to special populations, innovation in public access to the internet, success in computer education, use of technology, demonstrated community support, sustained cooperation with other libraries, partnerships with agencies and business, increase in library use, and role as a community center.

Alpine Public Library's ESL for the Big Bend program offers tutoring in English as a Second Language and Workforce Preparation for adults.

Innovation

A New Way of Teaching: Flipping Your Classroom

by Jennifer J. Osborn and Kimberly Bredvad Vinton

The flipped classroom model, also known as backward teaching, is an innovative way of incorporating technology in the classroom. In addition to the technology component, benefits of this model include student accountability, attention to students' preferred learning style, and more effective classroom time. The flipped classroom "inverts traditional teaching methods, delivers instruction online outside of class, and moves 'homework' back into the classroom" (Schoolwires, 2012, n.p.). The theoretical framework for flipping your classroom consists of two key components: educational technology and active learning. The idea behind flipping your classroom is that students watch lectures at home at their own pace and communicate with peers and their teacher via online discussions and concept engagement takes place in the classroom with the instructor as the facilitator. Flipping the classroom uses educational technology and provides opportunities for learning and engagement through classroom activities. When I initially heard about flipping your classroom, I discovered that some of my teaching practices were already in the early stages of flipping the classroom.

My initial teaching practice was slightly different. It entailed a PowerPoint Presentation for all concepts I taught in preparation for GED® test taking. I would show my presentations with a projector and my lectures consisted of the slides and examples throughout my instruction. On our designated computer lab day, I would upload the slides on each student computer for students to view at their own pace.

After learning about flipping your classroom, I shifted my approach to closer match this new model. I created a course outline that lists every math, reading, and writing concept they will learn in my classroom. The syllabus breaks down week by week what students will be working on and learning in class, and initiates the college transition process with exposure to following a syllabus and becoming an independent learner. This model teaches students accountability for their learning and expands on the research experience. I also provide them with the textbook information, homework assignments, and the titles of the PowerPoint presentations being used for their reference. In the South Central Project GREAT workshop "Navigating the Technology Frontier," I learned how to upload my PowerPoint presentations to GoogleDocs® and incorporate voice media

recordings within each slide.

One thought I had to consider was how to get students to buy in to my flipped classroom which was indeed rather challenging. As adult educators, we know that our students don't have time to do homework, they may not have access to computers, or they are fearful of technology and computers. These are all challenges, but truth be known, it is all about presentation. Students pursuing their GED® credential have families that they care for, many have jobs and other barriers that limit their time and may hinder their learning. By acknowledging these real life factors and obstacles in their lives and expressing how this model provides a remarkable level of student engagement, independent and collaborative working, and it allows me to work with them individually, they realize my dedication to helping them reach their goal in the shortest amount of time possible. This simple technique allows my students to focus on what drew them to pursuing their education in the first place...enriched learning where they are making use of their time at home and in the classroom.

In four months of flipping the classroom, it has been a huge success. I have uploaded all my PowerPoint presentations in GoogleDocs® and created folders for my students with labels for each week of class. I chat with them online during my office hours using the free chat program on Gmail® and am available to them if they have any questions. Since class meets two nights a week for a total of four hours per week, this type of theoretical model has been beneficial in three major areas. First, flipping the classroom has increased student accountability. Students are responsible for coming to class prepared and know there is a plan in place. If students are unable to attend class, they know my instruction is readily available to them online.

Second, this approach engages students of all learning styles. My auditory learners' needs are being met with hearing my voice on each slide; visual learners' have the actual slides themselves. Tactile learners are getting the hands on experience in the classroom, so, it is a win-win situation for all.

Finally, our class time is being used more effectively, and students enjoy this college-like atmosphere. Class is used for interactive activities and allows me the time to help students and explain difficult concepts. Before, many of my students would

not complete their homework; now, this has minimized with us working on problems in class together. Flipping the classroom is all about changing your instructional model so your students can receive more instructional support in your classroom. The availability of online resources and student access to technology has paved the way for this model to be effective and enhance my students' learning and my teaching style.

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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 ESC, 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.

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.

Using Volunteers in a New Way - To Build Literacy Program Quality

by Beth Rolingson

Advocacy Outreach, a nonprofit one-stop center in Elgin, Texas, was recruited into the "education business" within a few months of its start-up, thanks to the Ten County Adult Education Co-op which was then looking for an agency to facilitate a Homeless Education grant. Everyone was a volunteer in that first year and teachers drove the back streets of Elgin twice a week looking for and transporting the dozen homeless women who were participating in the education/lifeskills class. The women students learned some basic math and literacy skills and some of them got "off the streets" as a result of the intervention.

Conventional wisdom on the use of volunteers in literacy programs has changed and evolved over the twenty years that Advocacy Outreach has been in the education business. In the early days the use of volunteers was expedient but had its drawbacks; volunteers were often good-hearted individuals who lacked intensive training in the theory and strategies of adult education; they were also sometimes inconsistent in their commitment which left students occasionally stranded without a teacher or tutor. As time went on, the trend in the field was to professionalize, to use paid instructors with degrees who maintained annual standards in professional development. In Bastrop and Elgin, volunteer literacy coalitions atrophied and dissolved. In 2001 the Literacy Coalition of Central Texas was formed to bring area literacy services providers together.

A few years later, the GREAT Regional Centers of the professional development system were created. Volunteer literacy organizations in the Austin area and federal/state-funded programs met together and one of the outcomes was the

identification of a need for professional development for volunteer programs that did not have access to the TEA-funded GREAT Centers. An arrangement was made with the Central GREAT Center to collaborate on some training initiatives that could serve the whole literacy service community and the Literacy Coalition of Central Texas funded some excellent training opportunities, including a series of trainings by Heide Spruck Wrigley on ESL strategies. The Literacy Coalition, of which Advocacy Outreach was a founding member, also developed a volunteer recruitment website and a program for orienting and placing volunteers at literacy programs. An Americorps Literacy Volunteers grant was awarded to the Coalition which created a hybrid of sorts—"volunteers" who worked for a small stipend which was paid in part by the organization sponsoring the volunteer. Enhanced training opportunities, the development of a protocol for volunteers and organizations which provided more accountability from both, and the Americorps Literacy Volunteer program all contributed to an increased quality in the training and use of volunteers.

Advocacy Outreach has long utilized community volunteers to help maintain its homeless day shelter and resource center, but it is only within the past three years that we have begun to rely on literacy volunteers as integral components of our program. We have one full-time volunteer at this time. She came to us as a walk-in, curious about our services; someone told her we had a Free Thrift Store. An alert instructor, realizing her potential, interviewed her and discovered that she had a Master's Degree in psychology and a desire to teach or mentor. She was recruited to assist students in the GED® class; she attended the orientation

for new volunteers provided by the Literacy Coalition of Central Texas and 3 three-day sessions, one in teaching ABE and two in ESL, beginning and advanced. She also participated in training on one of the curricula used for Parent/PACT classes, the Nurturing Program, which was offered at the Advocacy Outreach site by the Nurturing Program's state designated trainer. Preparation, in terms of training and an orientation that outlines responsibilities, was helpful. Our volunteer worked an average of 12 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters and continued on a more limited basis during the summer session. She was available to substitute when the teacher was absent and when both

instructors were present, she provided one-on-one assistance to learners who need additional help.

Use of volunteers should never replace the provision of trained and paid staff, but as a supplement to instructional staff, volunteers are a real enhancement to program quality.

About the Author

Beth Rolingson is the Executive Director of Advocacy Outreach in Elgin, TX.

Success Stories

Reach Goals to Reach the Stars

by Rana McMiller

I have gained a lot of knowledge since I started attending Ysleta Community Learning Center. A lot of improvements been made in different subjects. Now I'm one step closer to my college level education, which is what I've been working towards the past few weeks. I have never been patient when it comes to learning. I always wanted to get my education phases done all at once, so that I can move on in life to do and learn more than what we study in school. Now I realized life is a big school and more difficult than any level education, I became more patient and I admit that education is a great thing to gain in life. And great things take time.

In high school I had a hard time studying math. Especially when I had to solve math problems the way my teacher asked, it was like Chinese to me, difficult to understand!! Therefore I always had my own way solving and studying math; just like everything else in life. After attending Miss Puga's class, I improved a lot and I am doing much better than before. In fact I became very addicted to math, and I love it, which makes me and my teacher happy! Besides math I am also studying science, social studies, and language arts. In science I learned about plant and animal cells, human body, the central nervous system, the brain and how all these work together. Science always been my favorite subject in school as well as history; I used to do well in both. Social Studies is another subject I enjoy studying. I had learned

about U.S. history, the Civil War and maps. I also learned about the globe, continents, oceans and other countries. Out all these interesting subjects, U.S. history caught my attention the most. I like to learn about the United States. It impresses me how U.S. history is full of interesting events, whether good or bad. They all were part of making the United States the way it is today, to make it the land of free, the place where people can have better life, the land I call my heaven. Always great, always blessed!

In the evening class I learn how to choose the occupation that might turn into life time career. It starts with learning how to prepare for college, how to choose the field I am interested in pursuing for the future and how to enroll in these colleges after I finish my general education. These classes are offered by El Paso Community College. My goal is to get my degree in Interior Design and Architecture. I am planning on studying business so that I can have my own business in Interior Design.

Art, crafting and designing always were my favorite hobbies. Started in early age, as eight years when I start learning crafting, knitting and crocheting. My teachers helped me to improve my skills. And now I am designing houses, buildings, furniture and fashion. Lately I worked on designing a house, using the computer and software that was made for this purpose. Also I designed a small fountain that can be installed indoors. They

are still drawings on papers. But in the future I will bring them to reality for sure; I just don't have the money to build them yet. It's always nice to see beautiful things done by you. I had designed some of my own outfits as well.

It was a fancy shirt that can be worn for formal events. It was shaped as flowers attached to each other with small tiny strings in rows. To cut and make the shirt as the pattern, I had to cut these flowers and reattach them according to the style I created. I had to cut the material very carefully, to not cut the flowers. Any mistake could damage the flowers and losing the material I needed to complete the shirt. People advised me to become a fashion designer, after they saw the shirt. I liked the idea; so I decided to improve my skills in designing. I also made a set of scarf and a hat. They were crocheted and designed as the United States flag. The hat was designed as Uncle Sam's hat, along with some accessories. These were interned for contest at the Mariposa County Fair in California last summer. I like to show my support to our Nation. It gave me the chance to share my interests with my family and friends.

If you have a goal in life, you can reach it as long as you stick to it and fallow through, making things happen is success itself. We all can do it. Reaching a goal is like reaching the stars, always good to experience. That's why I think people should go to school if they can. Education is the key to open all the doors in life. And that's why I am here now. Thanks to my family, teachers, and Ysleta Community Learning Center for helping and supporting me to reach my goals. I am blessed to be one of Miss Puga and Miss Hanson's students.

About the Author

Rana McMiller is a student of Ysleta Community Learning Center. She is married to a service member and speaks two languages, Arabic and English. She worked as interpreter with the United States Army in Iraq from 2004 until 2009. Her goal is to become an interior designer or architect. She has two loving dogs, that she calls her kids.

Work and Parenting Goals Inspire El Paso Father's Learning

by Nestor Rodriguez

I delayed my education for twenty-eight years, way too long. I thought as a teen that I did not need a high school diploma. I was very wrong! Now after all of these years I decided to return to school to earn my education.

The first reason I returned to earn my education is to better myself. I have found that I had much room to improve. For many years I have had an immense hunger to return to earn my education. I also realize that I need assistance from my instructor to prevail.

The second reason is so I can guide my eleven-year-old son when he needs assistance with his school work. A father should guide his children and have the tools at hand when they are needed. At this time I can only help him partially. When I don't know the material it does make me feel less as a guiding father.

The third reason is that I need to improve my employment status. I have been employed at the same company for nineteen years. I work the second shift. Working this shift leaves me no time to be a guiding father to my son. I

was not there to assist my eldest with his education. So I decided that I needed to earn my diploma to earn a chance at an improved employment status, with a chance to be at home on the evenings. My family is very important to me, at this time I don't see much of them. These three weeks I have been learning material that I have never done. I have demonstrated to myself that I can do it! By doing this material, I have truly demonstrated that I can achieve this. I want to convey to any person that wants to earn the education that they hunger for, they should not delay.

About the Author

Nestor Rodriguez is a student at Ysleta Community Learning Center, in El Paso. He started attending class on September 17. He has been a member of this community for 33 years. He attended Ysleta High School briefly as a teen, and was a student at the El Paso Job Corps Center where he earned his certification in welding. Nestor has been working for VF Jeanswear in the maintenance department now for 19 years and 6 months. He enjoys his Harley Davidson in his free time and his family is very important to him.

“Learning” My Wings

by Ricardo Retta

Learning English is like the life cycle of a butterfly. It is a lengthy and challenging process. As an adult learning a new language, it is by no means an easy task, but coming to America was one of the best decisions I ever made. However, after a few weeks in the good, old U.S.A., I began to have second thoughts about my ‘best decision.’ Looking back at those days, I remember how I felt. I was sad, alone, not included, and invisible. No one noticed me, and I was without anyone to share my thoughts. I felt like a caterpillar in its cocoon. Memories of my homeland danced in my head: Dreams of my family, my friends, and my language. ‘Oh, God, if I could only learn English, it would be so different and good,’ I thought. I could have friends, a high-paying job, drive a car, go places and even go back to school. It would be like getting out of the cocoon and having wings. Yes, I wanted to fly, be free and be noticed. So I decided to learn English by studying hard

and becoming bi-lingual. Well, my English is not perfect, but it has given me wings and a lot of freedom, and I have reached most of the goals I wanted to achieve. So, if anyone is having second thoughts about learning, please don’t quit. There is a pair of wings waiting for you.

About the Author

Ricardo Retta is 65 years old and originally from Monterey, Mexico. He enrolled in the Advanced ESL class in September, 2012, to improve his writing skills. Students from all countries gravitate to him for help and advice in many areas. He is a natural storyteller and a joy to have in class.

Journey to GED® Credential Leads on to Computer Certificate and Full-Time Job

by Nora Figueroa

One of my goals in life was to get my GED® credential. I never told my children that I didn’t graduate. I was too embarrassed. One thing I did do was encourage them to graduate and attend college.

The first time I took a GED® test, I passed everything except math. For over 10 years, in the back of my mind I knew I needed to get my GED® credential but I kept making excuses - I have no time; I’m working; I have children; I’ll do it when I get the time. We know the time never comes unless we make time. We have to make the difference in our life.

Years passed and one day I saw a sign that said – GED® classes to begin, sign up NOW! – at Alvin Community College. I paid my fee and started classes. I took my math test but the results were: FAILED. I went back, signed up again for classes and for the 3rd time, the result was: FAILED. By this time I was getting frustrated, doubting myself, disappointed, seeing myself as a failure, and asking why, why can’t I pass the math test? Still I knew that I couldn’t give up; I wouldn’t give up. I can do this! I refuse to give up!!

I didn’t want to pay for the classes again as it would put a strain on my budget. My teacher at Alvin Community College understood my situation and told me about classes at the Adult Reading Center where the classes are FREE!! I signed up and,

while taking the classes, I wondered if I could help out at the Center by volunteering. Another of my goals was to work in an office environment as a receptionist or as an administrative assistant. I was intimidated, fearful and embarrassed, but I asked anyway. I was greeted with open arms.

While volunteering at the Center, I learned many things. I finished my GED® classes and went back to Alvin Community College to test again. I’ll never forget reading the email from my teacher that said in BIG BOLD letters: CONGRATULATIONS, CONGRATULATIONS! As of Dec. 12th, you are a GED® graduate!!

The staff at the Adult Reading Center saw the potential in me because, after I got my GED® certificate, I was offered a job as a receptionist. Additionally, my GED® teacher nominated me for a scholarship from Alvin Community College through their Continuing Education program. I was awarded a \$500 scholarship! I took a computer class, received my Certificate, and, just recently, was promoted at the Adult Reading Center to a full time position.

Everything that has happened in 2012 has given me more confidence and is giving my family more financial stability. We are more secure with a second income.

I just want to say: never give up and make time for yourself. You are the only one that can accomplish all your dreams!

About the Author

Nora is a student at the Adult Reading Center in Pearland. Recently she was one of the speakers at the Red Hat Literacy Luncheon.

Every Day is a Challenge

by *Adriana Szvetcz*

I moved to the United States three years ago from Europe. This year I decided to go to school and get my GED® credential. After my evaluation test I saw how much information I'm still missing, and how much I need to learn to be able to get my GED® credential. Every day will be a challenge but with hard work and input I can do it.

The first class of social studies in September 26, 2012 our teacher was teaching us about the French and Indian War 1754-1763. It was like black magic for the first couple minutes. The fact I'm from overseas, and I never learned about U.S. History, didn't help. But Mrs. Puga is amazing, and a very patient teacher. The way she explains, and simplifies the information was very helpful. That day I learned about the 18th century and the reason why the U.S. is celebrating the 4th of July. For any other students this information may be just a refresher from high school but not for me, it was the first time I learned about that subject. After that class I walked to my teacher and asked about a good history book to read. She didn't have any special recommendations. I left school but on my way home I couldn't stop thinking about that class and how important is to know history, so I decided to go to Barnes and Noble and look for some books. I was in shock how much information was out there. So after an hour of search liked child in candy store I left with five books. Soon I got home I started reading and studying them.

The most important part of me going to school is to learn how to write, read and speak correct English. Attending my class of reading and writing will help me to improve and get better every day. I remember the first time when I got to the United States I couldn't write and spell how I do it now. Every class I'm attending is helping me to learn new vocabulary, the right way to use it, and how to use it. With my teacher's help I learned how to write essays too. English can be very challenging but is, like with everything in life is, never easy. But with hard work I can be successful.

The class of science is the most challenging because not only I have to learn about that specific subject but the new terminology going with it. Like the first time when I attend my class Mrs. Puga was teaching about the respiratory system and digestive

system. That day not only I learned that the respiratory system brings oxygen into the body and releases carbon dioxide into the air, but also I learned the new vocabulary with this subject: trachea, bronchi, alveoli, capillaries, and many others terms. That's helped me not only with my science class but also with my writing and my reading class.

Education is very important in everyone's life. Without education it is hard to get a job, and be productive and successful. My mom was always telling me when I was young, "Education is one thing that no one can't take it from you." Today I know what she meant by that. Everything in life can go away but you and your education, working experiments will always be with you. A very important part of my learning experience is my teacher because without her help and strength I couldn't do it. It is important that you have the right person to guide you.

About the Author

Adriana was born on September 22, 1986 in Koszalin, a small city in the north part of Poland. After my 18th birthday I moved to Germany to stay with my aunt. That's how I met my loving husband Nicholas; he was Explosives Ordinance Disposal (EOD) teacher in the U.S Army. We got married on January 28 of 2010. Month after we moved to El Paso, TX. We have been here for three years. This year March 6 Nicholas was involved in motorcycle accident and he died. He was my inspiration and the reason why I decided to get my education and never give up in life.

EveryoneOn Campaign Aims to Eliminate Digital Divide

EveryoneOn is a new federal government, corporate, philanthropic and community collaboration to promote the importance of digital literacy skills and increase access to free computer and Internet classes nationwide. EveryoneOn is powered by Connect2Compete, a national nonprofit on a mission to eliminate the digital divide for all Americans. Learn more and access the EveryoneOn online tool kit here. www.EveryoneOn.org

Adult Education Transforms Job Loss Into College Success and Career Goals

by *Brittney Bryant*

Obtaining my GED® credential has been one of my biggest achievements and also the first step to my successful future. Before I decided to pursue my GED® credential I was working at an animal hospital in the Houston area. I didn't like the job or the pay and knew I needed to do better by pursuing my own dreams. In February 2012, after working at the hospital for a year, I was laid off.

Even though most would see this as a bad thing, for me it was a blessing because I then had the opportunity to further my education. In the next couple of months I enrolled in the GED® program at Houston Community College to help me prepare for the exam. My instructor, Mrs. Sharon Gaudin, gave me all the tools I needed to succeed and did a really good job at helping me understand the subjects I had trouble with. A couple of months later I was ready to take the test, and I successfully passed.

I immediately took the next steps to start my college education. I enrolled at Houston Community College in the fall of 2012 where I took my prerequisites for their Vocational Nursing Program. Currently, I am in the second month of the program and am doing very well. I would not be where I am today if I had not pursued my GED® credential. I would like to thank TALAE for this award because it will greatly assist me in reaching my educational goals.

About the Author

Brittney Bryant of Houston was among the adult learners recognized with Student Awards at the February 2013 annual conference of Texas Association for Literacy & Adult Education (TALAE). Ms. Bryant's acceptance speech included this account of her educational journey and successful transition to postsecondary education.

New Benefit for TALAE Members

Voting Members of Texas Association for Literacy and Adult Education (TALAE) now have a new membership benefit – automatic membership in COABE. The Commission on Adult Basic Education is a national organization that provides leadership, communication and professional development for adult education and literacy practitioners in order to advance quality services for all adult learners. Mark your calendars now for the COABE 2014 Annual Conference, to be held March 16-19, 2014 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. TALAE members will be able to register at the COABE member rate.

What is TALAE? Texas Association for Literacy and Adult Education is a voluntary professional association open to any person involved or interested in any facet of literacy and adult education. Since its inception in 1968, TALAE's purposes have included professional growth of educators, the exchange of ideas and cooperation among literacy educators, and creating linkages with local, state, regional, and national organizations interested in literacy and adult education. TALAE also supports adult learners directly with its GED® Student Award and its ESL Student Persistence Award.

The TALAE membership year runs from July 1 through June 30. To join, look for the Membership page of TALAE's website, which is hosted by TCALL and can be found on TCALL's home page (www-tcall.tamu.edu) under "Organizations."



It's a Good Step for Me

by Literacy Council of Tyler

"If it's important for my kids to get an education, it's a good step for me to get an education as well."

Shortly after Jason Rhodes dropped out of high school he came to Literacy Council of Tyler to obtain his GED® credential. But before long, Jason quit the program, saying he felt like it was more important to go out and work. The years passed and "life happened." Jason got married and had three children – now 12, 11 and 9. In the end it was his love for his children and desire for their success that made him reevaluate his own life's goals.

"One of my goals for my children is for them to get an education," said Jason. "It seems like if it's important for my kids to get an education, it's a good step for me to get an education as well." Jason firmly believes that you can't motivate someone else to do something that you don't do yourself. So, he headed back to LCOT with a new outlook and met a new group of people. For him, the timing was perfect. "I got into the hands of some really caring people and it seemed like the rest is history in the making."



Jason enrolled in the Innovative Grant program, where he received his GED® credential and Medical Administrative Assistant Certificate concurrently. Now, he's in the Bookkeeping and Business Management Program at TJC working on his

Associate's Degree. "Going back to school has given me a new lease on life," said Jason. "I had this grandioso idea when I was younger that I'd have my own business and that would be supporting me for the rest of my life. But I realized that an education was mandatory because the world never stays the same. It constantly evolves, and I felt like I needed to evolve with those times to be successful."

When asked if he's surprised about his new academic success, he said that he's not really surprised. "This success is going along with the picture in my mind. I believe when you set your mind to it, you can accomplish anything."

This article is reprinted with permission from Literacy Council of Tyler, Holiday 2012 newsletter, <http://lcotyler.org/tinybrowser/files/2012holidayforweb.pdf>



GED® Testing Service Offers Free "Second Shot" to Pass Current GED® Test On Computer

Attention GED® Test takers: Texas has officially launched the 2002 GED® test on computer at 32 PearsonVue testing centers. Adults who

take the GED® test on computer are scoring higher and finishing faster. In fact, 88% of people passed the GED® test on computer compared to 71% for those who tested on paper.

GED® Testing Service is so confident you'll do well that if you don't pass your first GED® test subject on computer, GED® Testing Service will pay for your second shot! It's that simple. You pass or they pay.

Visit GEDtestingservice.com/secondshot to learn more.

Texas Adult Education Programs Developing Local College & Career Readiness Plans

Under the guidance of Texas LEARNS and Sandy Goodman of the National College Transitions Network, adult education programs statewide are developing customized local plans to integrate career awareness throughout their programs. The plans will also help programs identify students who would qualify for and benefit from a Transition to Postsecondary Class. Stay tuned to future issues of The Quarterly for updates on this exciting innovation.

Welcome to Our Library. . .

Librarian Susan Morris and her staff of student library workers stand ready to assist you! Call them at 800-441-READ (7323) or email tcall@tamu.edu to request materials by mail or information on the Library's services.



In this issue, we are highlighting some of the Library's loan resources on Integrating Technology Into Instruction, one of the six Core Content Areas of the Texas Adult Education Teacher Credential.

"In addition to helping learners utilize technology in their learning and to prepare them for the workforce, adult educators must also be prepared to utilize technology themselves in their own professional development." (Retrieved from the Credential Project's website - <http://www.tei.education.txstate.edu/credential/>).

10 Best Teaching Practices: How Brain Research, Learning Styles, and Standards Define Teaching Competencies, Second Edition.

Tileston, Donna Walker (2005). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. In this book, the author offers a practical guide to inspiring, motivating, and therefore educating even the most unenthusiastic students. Tileston details the fundamentals of differentiated teaching strategies, teaching for long-term memory, collaborative learning, higher-order thinking skills, technology integration, evaluating learning through authentic assessments, and making the connection from prior learning and experiences to new learning. Examples illustrate how each teaching practice can be employed.

Creating a Sense of Presence in Online Teaching. Lehman, Rosemary M. and Conceicao, Simone C. O. (2010). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. How can faculty create a strong e presence for their online classes? This volume highlights the need for creating a presence in the online environment. The authors explore the emotional, psychological, and social aspects from both the instructor and student perspective. It provides an instructional design framework and shows how a strong presence contributes to effective teaching and learning. Filled with illustrative examples and based on research and experience, the book contains methods, case scenarios, and activities for creating, maintaining, and evaluating presence throughout the cycle of an online course.

Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education, 2010 Edition.

Kasworm, Carol E. and Rose, Amy D. and Ross-Gordon, Jovita M., Editors (2010). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. For nearly seventy years, the handbooks of adult and continuing education have been definitive references on the best practices, programs, and institutions in the field. In this new edition, over sixty leading authorities share their diverse perspectives in a single volume--exploring a wealth of topics, including: learning from experience, adult learning for self-development, race and culture in adult learning, technology and distance learning, learning in the workplace, adult education for community action and development, and much more. Much more than a catalogue of theory and historical facts, this handbook strongly reflects the values of adult educators and instructors who are dedicated to promoting social and educational opportunity for learners and to sustaining fair and ethical practices. This book is available for loan to Texas educators ONLY.

Instructional Technology and Media for Learning, Tenth Edition.

Smaldino, Sharon E. and Lowther, Deborah L. and Russell, James D. (2012). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

This book provides a framework that teaches you to apply what you learn about computers, multimedia, Internet, distance learning, and audio/visual technologies to the 21st Century classroom instruction. The text is filled with examples drawn from authentic elementary and secondary education situations to show technology and media enhancing and supporting teaching and learning. The ASSURE cases are supported by video, guided reflection prompts, and lesson plans that demonstrate strong technology integration and lesson planning. This book is available on loan to Preferred Borrowers ONLY due to its cost; ask our Library staff how you can become a Preferred Borrower.

Logged On and Tuned Out. Vicki Courtney (2007). Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing. Logged On and Tuned Out is a resource for parents whose high-tech kids use modern computer and cell phone technology like second nature. In simple language, moms and dads overwhelmed by today's digital world will learn the basics and checkpoints of Instant Messaging, text messaging, social networking Web sites (MySpace, Facebook), chat rooms, and photo and video uploading.

The New Teacher of Adults: A Handbook for Teachers of Adult Learners, Second Edition. Brady, Michael and Lampert, Allen (2007). Old Orchard Beach, ME: New Teacher Concepts. Handbook is designed to help new and inexperienced teachers with practical teaching methods and examples based in research and theory but using "non-threatening language." Short chapters put theory into the context of teaching practice, with classroom examples and sample teaching tools such as syllabi, advance-organizers, mind-maps, and more. Some chapter titles include: The Basic Characteristics of Adult Learners; Planning a New Class and Building a Syllabus; Choosing Books, Materials, and Assignments; Establishing a Safe Environment for Learning; The Art and Science of Lectures; Planning for and Facilitating Group Discussion; Teaching Through Writing; Peer Learning; Instructional Media and Technology; Teaching Online; Assessing Student Learning; and Co-Teaching.

New Technologies for Literacy and Adult Education: A Global Perspective. Wagner, Daniel A. and Kozma, Robert (2005). Paris: UNESCO Publishing. This short book explores ways in which technology can support adult literacy and adult education, with an emphasis on those living in poverty. The book takes two approaches to utilize Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in teaching literacy. One approach stresses teaching the traditionally conceived aspects of literacy (e.g., decoding text, text comprehension) using technology as a delivery and instructional tool; the other, builds on literacy as a skill base to incorporate comprehension and application of

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knowledge to problem solve and create new knowledge. In the latter, technology becomes not just a delivery method but a skill learned by the adult literacy learner, thereby linking technology and literacy. Wagner and Kozma outline new skills that should be incorporated into the definition of literacy and, therefore, literacy curricula.

Online and Social Networking Communities: A Best Practice Guide for Educators. Kear, Karen (2011). New York, NY: Routledge. The primary focus of the book is the practice of online learning and teaching, but this is grounded in a discussion of research in this area. The book includes coverage of: wikis, forums, blogging, instant messaging, Second Life, Twitter, desktop video conferencing, social networking sites such as Facebook. The aim is to enable readers to develop an informed and critical approach to online collaborative learning, and to the communication tools that can support this. A feature of the book is the use of case studies that are used to illustrate the ideas introduced in the main text and to demonstrate how the ideas apply in a practical context.

The Online Teaching Survival Guide: Simple and Practical Pedagogical Tips. Boettcher, Judith V. and Conrad, Rita-Marie (2010). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass. The Online Teaching Survival Guide offers faculty a wide array of theory-based techniques designed for online teaching and technology-enhanced courses. Written by two pioneers in distance education, this guidebook presents practical instructional strategies spread out over a four-phase timeline that covers the lifespan of a course. The book includes information on a range of topics such as course management, social presence, community building, and assessment. Based on traditional pedagogical theory, The Online Teaching Survival Guide integrates the latest research in cognitive processing and learning outcomes. This book is available for loan to Texas educators ONLY.

Out & About in the World of Computers: An Introductory Computer Course for Beginning English Learners. Hemmert, Amy and Sander, Tina (2008). Provo, UT: Alta Book Center Publishers. Designed as a student workbook, the Computer Book starts with the basics of computers and Microsoft Word and gradually progresses to cover the more advanced features of Microsoft Word, the Internet, and email. It consists of 13 units, each focusing on a specific theme or set of themes. The Teacher's Guide is available as a free, downloadable pdf file. The website prepares students to navigate the Web. It familiarizes them with the most common uses of the Internet through interactive activities involving job listings, housing ads, virtual bus schedules, movie guides, restaurant menus, and more.

Teaching Online: A Practical Guide, Third Edition. Ko, Susan and Rossen, Steve (2010). New York, NY: Routledge. Pocket-sized book is a portable guide for instructors teaching distance learning courses or

instructors supplementing a traditional classroom with online elements. This book can be used as either a course text or a professional resource. Written by authors who have both taught online courses and trained hundreds of faculty to teach online, the text serves as a pedagogical "how-to," addressing instructors' most commonly asked questions and concerns. Its informal style reassures readers that they do not have to be technology professionals to make the transition to the world of online teaching. This updated edition has been fully revamped and reflects important changes that have occurred since the second edition's publication.

Teaching Strategies in the Online Environment. Conceicao, Simone C. O., Editor (Spring 2007). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers. From the Editor: "One of the challenges for adult educators who teach online is identifying the teaching strategies that fit the needs of learners, content, and the environment. This volume describes a variety of teaching strategies research on their use in the online environment, examples of how they have been used in online courses, a consideration of their effectiveness and limitations, and implications for the practice of adult and continuing education." A chapter by Steve Rocco focuses on how instructors can assess individual learners in the online environment, including current research as well as types and methods of assessment available to online instructors. This title is Number 113 in the New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education series.

Welcome to Computers for ESL Students, 1st Edition. Wooden, Lois and Adendorff, Olivia (2006). Berkeley, CA: Labyrinth Learning. Using a highly 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.

Welcome to the World of Computers, 4th Edition. Stolins, Russel, et al (2013). Berkeley, CA: Labyrinth Learning. Designed for the beginner, this book is intended as an engaging introduction for computer novices in how to use computers, Windows 7, the Internet (IE9), email basics, and word processing using Microsoft Word 2010. Features for both instructor led and self-paced learning environments include hands-on projects and exercises, along with clear direction and visual cues for learners.



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In this issue, we are highlighting free online resources cataloged in TCALL's Library in the category of **Integrating Technology Into Instruction**, one of the six Core Content Areas of the Texas Adult Education Teacher Credential.

"In addition to helping learners utilize technology in their learning and to prepare them for the workforce, adult educators must also be prepared to utilize technology themselves in their own professional development." (Retrieved from the Credential Project's website - <http://www.tei.education.txstate.edu/credential/>).

Developing Discipline-Based Critical Thinking Skills via Use of Interactive Technologies. Kok, Ayse (November 2008). Thousand Oaks, CA: International Journal of Instructive Technology & Distance Learning. This article provides a rationale for incorporating the development of critical thinking skills into the online learning environment. The author also presents possibilities for building these cognitive skills into online classes. She maintains that incorporating critical thinking skills is a necessary component of learning; these skills assist learners to evaluate and link the abundance of information and ideas that is available via information communication technologies (ICTs). Kok starts by reviewing research on critical thinking and learning principles that apply to the teaching of these skills (accompanied by tables that delineate the information). She ends by offering activities that would be suitable to the online learning setting. It should be noted that this article is written for a college setting, however, the content and principles, with adaptations, can be applied to a variety of adult learning settings. The reader will need to adjust suggestions to fit the context of Adult Basic Education.

Distance Learning: The Challenge and Opportunity of Online Technology, Vol. 9 #3. Layne, Jacqueline M., Dr. (December 2008). Toledo, OH: University of Toledo. This literature review explores the abundance of technologies that have sprung up over the last two decades and how they are being used in the classroom. The author particularly examines how they are being applied to on-line learning. She also considers effectiveness, content, and relationships among students and teachers.

Emerging Technologies in Adult Literacy and Language Education. Warschauer, Mark and Liaw, Meei-Ling (June 2010). Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy. Although information and communication technologies have become an integral part of life in the United States, they have not yet been adequately integrated into adult language and literacy programs. This raises concerns because of the potential value of technology for enhancing learning and because of the vital role of technological proficiency as a gatekeeper for occupational success and full civic participation. Research findings on the impact of technology in education are mixed, but a few studies among adult learners suggest benefits worth exploring. This paper describes the potential contribution of emerging technologies to adult literacy and language education and the opportunities and challenges involved in incorporating these technologies into adult education programs. Various emerging technologies (those arising or undergoing fundamental transformation in the last decade) are described, ranging from audio and video production to games, wikis and blogs, to mobile devices, cell phones and open-source software. Relevant research is reviewed, and the costs, difficulties and advantages of deploying various technological approaches in adult education are discussed. Although current research is insufficient to urge wholesale adoption of the technologies described, many—especially low-cost mobile devices—warrant further investigation as potentially valuable tools for adult educators and learners.

Exploring Distance Education Curricula for Adult Learners: Working Paper #8. Young Shannon (September 2005). Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research. Project IDEAL is a consortium of states working together to develop effective distance education programs for adult learners. Determining which curriculum to use is one of the most challenging and important decisions states make in developing a distance education program. In this Working Paper, Project IDEAL provides guidance on Instructional Models and Delivery Systems; computer-assisted instruction; teacher-facilitated multimedia products; purchasing curricula; issues of media, licensing, training, and technical support; and product descriptions.

Focus on Basics, "Modes of Delivery" Issue. NCSALL/World Education (March 2005). Cambridge, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. Focus on Basics was a quarterly published by National Center for Study of Adult Learning and Literacy from 1997 to 2008. This issue's theme was

“Modes of Delivery”. Featured articles included “Studying ESOL Online” by Marisol Richmond, Marian Thacher, and Paul Porter.

Informal Adult Learning and the Internet. Imel, Susan (2003). Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. The Internet seems an ideal medium for fostering and supporting informal adult learning and “could possibly be classified as one of the most powerful and important self-directed learning tools in existence” (Gray 1999, p. 120). Several issues have been raised related to the Internet and its role in informal learning. Access remains a major hurdle, although some initiatives are providing public access. Lack of research about informal adult learning on the Internet is a barrier to fully understanding the extent and type of learning that is taking place. The resources described in this ERIC Trends & Issues Alert provide additional information about the Internet and informal adult learning.

Investigating the Language and Literacy Skills Required for Independent Online Learning. Silver-Pacuilla, Heidi (September 2008). Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy. Written by Heidi Silver-Pacuilla from Stephen Reder’s original analysis, this resource reports on a study undertaken to investigate the levels of literacy and language proficiency needed for adult learners to undertake independent online learning. Researchers identified that no concrete threshold exists; rather, the relationship among the learner’s skills, the opportunities afforded to the learner, and available supports determines what is needed for the learner to be successful. Learners at all levels of language and literacy proficiency were found to be both eager and able to successfully engage in online learning if the above three elements were present. Furthermore, adult learners are strongly motivated to gain these skills as they perceive them as being related to job improvement. This report offers information on how to balance the elements to optimize adult learning. The authors address creating opportunities for learning, instruction, program planning, and content development.

Learning to Write in the Laptop Classroom. Warschauer, Mark (2009). Irvine, CA: University of California. According to Learning to Write in the Laptop Classroom, using computers to draft and revise pieces of writing have a positive effect on the quality of that writing. Substantial positive changes were observed in each stage of the writing process, including better access to information sources for planning and pre-writing; easier drafting of papers; more access to feedback; more frequent and extensive revision; and greater opportunities to publish final papers or otherwise disseminate them to real audiences.

Measuring Contact Hours and Educational Progress in Distance Education Programs. Johnston, Jerome (September 2005). Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research. Project IDEAL is a consortium of states working together to develop

effective distance education programs for adult learners. In classroom programs, students are credited with seat time hours based solely on attendance. The amount of seat time earned is used to determine enrollment (usually associated with earning 12 hours). It is also used as an indicator of when to conduct follow-up testing (frequently set at 35 or more hours). This report identifies three methods for counting contact hours for distance students, providing outcome results for distance experiments conducted between 2003 and 2005.

Measuring the Motivation and Strategy Use of GED® Students in Distance Education Programs. Wolters, Christopher and Karabenick, Stuart and Johnston, Jerome and Young, Shannon (September 2005). Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research. Project IDEAL is a consortium of states working together to develop effective distance education programs for adult learners. This report summarizes a pilot study in which 94 adults working on their GED® credential in distance education programs completed a survey that measured their motivational beliefs, strategy use, and self-regulation with regard to the distance education course they were taking. Findings in this non-representative sample indicate that participants pursuing their GED® credential in these programs were highly motivated. They consider their GED® preparation program valuable in terms of its utility and importance to them as persons, and consider themselves efficacious, while indicating that being in the program required a moderate level of sacrifice. Quite important for program evaluation is the fact that virtually all the students reported being strongly supported by their instructors. They would recommend the program to others and have little regret about having chosen to work on obtaining their GED® credential.

Technology Competencies: Meeting the Challenge. Kansas Board of Regents Adult Education Division (2004). Topeka, KS: Kansas Board of Regents. As computers become more and more prevalent, technology competencies are becoming a standard in adult basic education. The Kansas Board of Regents – Adult Education Division has developed this resource to meet the challenge. The notebook includes technology competencies aligned with level descriptors from the National Reporting System (NRS), detailed lesson plans with worksheets for each competency, and a method for verifying competency mastery.

Uses of Technology in the Instruction of Adult English Language Learners. Moore, Sarah Catherine K. (February 2009). Washington, DC: Center for Adult English Language Acquisition. This brief discusses three ways of using technology with adults learning English—onsite, blended, and online—and briefly describes examples of specific technologies and programs for adults learning English. The brief concludes by identifying issues to consider when using technology and by offering suggestions for further research.

Texas Adult & Family Literacy Quarterly is the publication of the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy & Learning (TCALL), made available free to adult educators, literacy providers, and others interested in adult and family literacy. **The Quarterly** is dedicated to advancing knowledge in the field by addressing topics of concern to adult and family literacy practitioners, adult learners, and scholars. The audience includes teachers, students, administrators, program coordinators, researchers, literacy volunteers, and in general individuals interested in the fields of adult and family literacy.

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