

PREPARE LEARNERS FOR HIGH-PRIORITY JOBS IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES

“ASK, ASK AGAIN, AND ask one more time.”

That’s how adult educators find answers that will help them prepare learners not just for the workplace, but for real jobs in their own communities, says Sue Conrady, director of adult, nonpublic, and ESL education service for Intermediate Unit 1 in southwest Pennsylvania.

The questions are straightforward:

1. Who would make good partners at the One-Stops in my community?
2. What are the high-priority occupations in my community?

Conrady is a big believer in partnerships, noting that a good partnership yields important dividends:

- innovative approaches
- sharing of competencies and capabilities
- more resources
- new networks
- greater understanding

To get those benefits, three important needs must be met by each partner.

The first is equity—not equality. “Equity is an equal right to be at the table,” Conrady says.

The second is transparency. “Partners must be open and honest with each other,” she says.

The third is mutual benefit; the partnership has to achieve specific benefits for each partner.

Even with all three in place, Conrady says there are still potential obstacles. The primary ones are skepticism, unrealistic expectations, inadequate skills, conflicting priorities, and turf/politics/competitiveness.

Manage to avoid or deal with the obstacles and you are ready for question one.

Who would make good partners at the One-Stops in my community?

“The key is that you really need to know the

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... maybe we can couch
those skills in the way
a **welder**
would encounter them.

Yes, it’s still the *KET Adult Learning* newsletter. But why the new look and why the play button? See page 7.

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Worthwhile websites

There are many, many websites that provide useful tools and information for adult educators. Here are some we encourage you to explore. If you have a favorite website you'd like for us to share, please send us an e-mail at adulthood@ket.org.

T <http://www.ted.com>

Described as "ideas worth spreading" and "riveting talks by remarkable people, free to the world." Your brain will thank you.

 <http://www.onguardonline.gov>

Maintained by the Federal Trade Commission, this site provides tips to help you avoid Internet fraud, secure your computer, and protect your personal information.

One way criminals get your personal information is by "phishing," which means they send e-mail, text, or pop-up messages that appear to come from your bank or another organization with which you do business. The message asks you to go to a website or call a phone number to update your account information or claim a prize. In reality, legitimate businesses should never use e-mail, pop-ups, or text messages to ask for your personal information.

To avoid phishing scams:

- Don't reply to a message that asks for personal or financial information, and don't click on links in the message. To go to a business's website, type the web address into your browser yourself.
- Don't respond to a message that asks you to call a phone number to update your account or give your personal information. If you need to reach an organization, call the number on your financial statement, or use a directory. The site includes information on how to protect yourself and how to file a complaint.

 <http://caalusa.org>

The Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy (CAAL) is a national public charity dedicated to developing adult education, ESL, and workforce skills in America. CAAL does research, policy and issue analysis, symposia, planning, and leadership development activities, all with the goal of bringing about change that will help move individual Americans and the nation toward a better future. Visit this site to sign up for the new CAAL e-newsletter.



NATIONAL FAMILY LITERACY MONTH

NCFL has lots of exciting announcements, including: 1.) release of the new star-studded movie "Precious," endorsed by Oprah Winfrey; 2.) partnership with the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History and lots of resources at www.familit.org/online-activities; and 3.) help from CBS News chief national correspondent Byron Pitts on their A Penny a Book® initiative. **Find out more at familit.org.**

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DIGITAL NATIVES TO THE RESCUE

DAVID COLLINGS, EMILY BOSLEY, Tracy Noles and Rod Hamby were preparing for a presentation on matching new technologies with adult learner needs. The teachers for Jefferson County (Ky) Public Schools Adult & Continuing Education had many points they wanted to make, but one of the most salient, they agreed, was that technology has changed the relationship between teachers and learners—for the better and forever.

Learners often know more about technology than the teacher now because the learners are digital natives (have grown up with technology) while teachers are more likely to be digital immigrants (adopted technology later in life). This opens the door for—sometimes even necessitates—more participation on everyone’s part, learners’ as much as teachers’.

It levels the playing field, so to speak.

On the day of the presentation, Collings was talking about this point. “If we as teachers go into a classroom with the idea that everyone is equal, teacher and learners, and that we all have to ante up and contribute the unique knowledge we have, then all kinds of magical things are possible. For this to happen, however, teachers have to let go of control.”

Collings hit the button for a video segment to play during the PowerPoint presentation. The video segment was to illustrate that change was here and that teachers must understand the change or be lost if not trampled.

No sound. Four technologically savvy teachers sat on the stage. Each took a turn trying to solve the problem. Nothing worked.

As Noles explained what the video would be saying, someone from the audience passed a note to Collings. It read, “Reboot the browser.”

It worked perfectly, quickly. And the technical difficulty proved Collings’ point.

“It’s like the idea put forth in the movie *Matrix*,” Collings says. “If you can let go, get rid of the idea that you have to have control, you can do incredible things you never thought possible. You may not be able to jump off buildings or be shot without being harmed like the character in the movie, but you can create amazing experiences and learning that is a fun adventure.”

Collings says he doesn’t try to control much in the computer labs he runs. Instead, he checks the TABE scores for each of his students and puts the student in an online experi-

ence at the appropriate level. When the students arrive, he shakes their hands, lets them know they are partners in this learning adventure, and works on-on-one with each student.

The veteran teacher acknowledges that this approach may be easier in a lab than a traditional classroom, but he says there is a common theme that runs through each situation: Everyone succeeds together. Everyone learns something every day. That’s what keeps everyone coming back.

“Even when something flops when you are using technology, you are learning to evaluate situations and technologies,” he says. “We’re all learning, and that is good. Instead of looking for punishments or judgments (‘Do it this way or you


...learners get to be the experts at times.

will be in trouble’), it is much more fun to explore and learn together. Teachers are more like shepherds. And learners get to be the experts at times.

“If you can put your ego away and not worry about being upstaged, all kinds of learning can occur,” he says.

Collings defines four steps to this transition:

1. Understand and accept that it is OK that you don’t know everything, especially that you don’t know everything about new technologies.
2. Open the floor up to all participants. Tell your class that for this to work, everyone must contribute. Everyone has ideas and knowledge. Everyone is equal here.
3. Prepare an icebreaker so that everyone gets to know each other and feel safe.
4. Keep going. When you hit the inevitable awkward silence or embarrassing moment, don’t let it stop you. Try a different technology or different subject matter.

“The way teachers are trained changes slowly,” notes Collings. “As teachers, we have to make the decision to be more innovative and explorational ourselves.” 

For ideas about technology to use with your learners, Collings recommends larryferlazzo.edublogs.org. Click “My Best of Series,” then scroll down to Technology.

CELL PHONES FOR CLASS PARTICIPATION

Since so many of us have them, cell phones just might be the perfect technology to use as an icebreaker in a collaborative exercise. David Collings suggests creating an exercise using cell phones that would be relevant to your subject matter. Then dive in and solve the problem together. This is technology that most people will feel comfortable with and that will help them see how much fun learning together can be.



THE PERSONALITY OF A GENERATION

Generation theory ascribes general characteristics to groups of individuals born in roughly 20-year spans, in cycles that repeat approximately every 80 years, suggesting that we can, to some degree, predict the personality of a coming generation.

The theory is widely attributed to William Strauss and Neil Howe who described the generations in their 1991 demographic history of America, *Generations*. While some details are under debate (e.g., whether Baby Boomers' birth years run from 1943-1960, as Strauss and Howe maintain, or from 1946-1964 as others say) the basic concepts of Baby Boomers, Generation Xers and Millennials have taken hold.

Many educators, employers and marketers are taking the theory seriously and adjusting their teaching/hiring/training/marketing strategies accordingly.

MEET THE MIL



YOUR YOUNGEST STUDENTS MAY CAUSE YOU TO RETHINK HOW YOU TEACH.

They represent 36 percent of the U.S. population. They will increasingly be filling jobs now held by Baby Boomers. And they like to take an “if it’s not working, I’m outta’ here approach.”

Meet the Millennials.

They were born between 1980 and 2002, which makes them six to 27 years old today. They also go by the names Generation Y, Generation Next, Net Generation, Web 2.0 Generation, and Neo-Millennials. They are racially more diverse than any other generation. They are also large—two to three times Generation X and equal to or larger than the Boomers.

Most importantly for adult educators, they could very well have you re-thinking how you teach.

“A lot of folks have heard about the generational research now being done but haven’t taken the leap to what that means to them as an educator, why it makes a difference,” says Duren Thompson, program coordinator at the Center for Literacy Studies at the University of Tennessee (UT). “Many have heard that

are multiple learning modality people.

“This generation is also known for being multi-taskers, texting while simultaneously doing something else. Psychologists call it micro tasking—doing a little of each and going back and forth between the activities.”

Also, unlike Generation Xers who preceded them and prefer to be given the information and learn on their own, Millennials prefer to learn by working together. They also prefer to learn by doing.

“Team activities were just what they *did* in school.” Thompson says. “Millennials use MySpace and wikis and podcasting to collaboratively create knowledge. You can almost see the difference. Other generations study alone at their desk. Millennials believe you are supposed to work together with a group to learn.

“In addition, Millennials are digital natives, meaning that technology has always been a part of their lives. They are totally at ease with it. Most adult education teachers are Boomers. Many of them didn’t deal with computers until their 30s. While some are willing digital immigrants, others are technologically resistant. Gen Xers came to computers in grade

LENNIALS

this generation likes technology but not why or how they use it.”

Thompson, a Generation Xer (born 1965-1979) and Beth Ponder, assistant director at the UT Center for Literacy Studies and a Baby Boomer, discussed teaching techniques for young adults and the implications from Millennials research at the recent COABE conference.

WARNING: THERE IS NO ONE-SIZE FITS ALL

Thompson cautions that generational research is inherently general. We are, after all, talking about millions of people born in a given timeframe.

“Every person is an individual,” says Thompson, “and has individual characteristics that may or may not align with their ‘generation.’ Also, most of this research has been done on people who have money to spend and weighted toward the upper- and middle class. We are not sure if it applies to most adult learners.”

That said, the research does give adult educators a lot to consider. Take technology for instance. The general assumption is that these young people love technology and are fluent with it.

While that’s true as far as it goes, Thompson says we all tend to overemphasize technology when it comes to this generation and may not understand how Millennials approach it.

“Millennials see technology as a tool,” Thompson says. “When it doesn’t work, they use another tool. They know that non-tech tools work, too, and use them when they are right for the situation. Millennials

school. While they are, therefore, not digital natives, they typically think technology is good and are willing digital immigrants. This creates vast differences in the comfort levels with technology and the preferences on how the different generations prefer to learn.”

One more distinction.

As a group, Millennials work to expectations, according to Thompson.

“Colleges and universities are finding that Millennials want everything spelled out in the syllabus,” she says. “If it is not in the syllabus, they don’t think they have to do it. They are product or completion oriented and real-life focused. They want to know exactly what is required and are not likely to do a whole lot more.

“This means teachers need to provide explicit directions and follow through. They need to give their Millennial learners strong positive feedback when they meet expectations. And they need to set the expectation high because that’s all they are likely to get.”

A REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE

Consider one of the most important tasks every adult learner must complete—the GED essay.

“Boomers prefer instructor-led activities and tend to be auditory learners,” Thompson says. “They are used to being lined up and talked to. This is what school was and what they are most comfortable with. They like the traditional arrangement of a teacher in the front of the classroom, telling them step-by-

Characteristics of Millennials

Sheltered—more easily stressed, look to authority/parents for guidance, accustomed to highly scheduled/structured life where desires were easily and quickly met.

Digital natives—while fluent in technology, it is just another tool; 24/7 on-demand lifestyle; multiple media-based interaction with knowledge; adaptable.

Social and team oriented—collaborative creation of knowledge; live publicly online; staying networked is key: MySpace/Facebook/Twitter/Texting/Blogging.




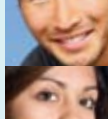
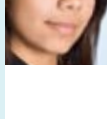
Ambitious but unrealistic—focused on fame, money, big ideas but have unrealistic expectations of workplaces and real-life opportunities; goal focused.

Globally, socially, environmentally conscious—embrace/accept diversity of all sorts; activists; more politically involved than Gen X.

Action-oriented—focused on new experiences, trying things out rather than thinking about or reflective activities; virtual world acceptable substitute for real-world activity; highly mobile; “TV is boring.”

Source: Duren Thompson

Approximate birth years for 20th Century generations

	1900-1924	G.I. GENERATION [OR GREATEST GENERATION]
	1925-1945	<i>Silent Generation</i>
	1946-1964	Baby Boomers
	1965-1979	GENERATION X
	1980-2000	MILLENNIALS OR GENERATION Y

Source: Matt Rosenberg, About.com

continued on page 6

Meet the Millennials *continued from page 5*

step how to write an essay. They want the teacher to be there the whole time and to walk them through it.

“Gen Xers, on the other hand, tend to be independent visual text learners. They are fine with using technology and prefer a rubric or guide. They would like to see samples of completed essays and are comfortable using technology to look up these samples. They like for the teacher to give them the task, for them to do the task, and then for the teacher to come back and check it.

“Millennials find the GED essay goofy because nobody writes like that. It is an academic task only. They would prefer to do something that has a real-life purpose and they would like for it to involve a collaborative process. To help them, let them brainstorm together about topics or elements in an essay. Let them share papers and do peer editing. As the educator, provide structure and clear, finite expectations and clear examples of what they are to do. Millennials listen to authority; they just don’t believe information should come from one source. The sage on the stage won’t work for them.”

Most of all, Thompson says to challenge assumptions.

“Just because it involves technology doesn’t mean it is a good fit,” she says. “It is a common trap to believe that if you stick information on a computer, Millennials will be happy.”

All of this may sound overwhelming if you are an adult educator with learners of all ages in your classroom and too much to do already. It’s not. Thompson suggests taking a middle-of-the-road approach.

“We recommend contextualized, multi-modal, active learning,” she concludes. “We have been recommending these strategies for years. It is more of a tweaking of what most educators do than an overall change.”

For more information, contact Duren Thompson via e-mail at duren.thompson@utk.edu.

A GED Testing Service® study shows high pass rates among young test-takers

A study called “Young GED Examinees and their Performance on the GED Tests,” released by the GED Testing Service, investigated characteristics of young GED test takers and how state minimum age policies affect their performance on the GED exam.

The study looked at 196,912 candidates aged 16 to 19 who took the GED Tests in 2006. The researchers found that 90 percent of these test-takers completed the test battery in the same year, and approximately 80 percent passed the tests. These completion and pass rates are higher than those in the whole population of GED test candidates (86 and 69 percent respectively).

Median preparation time overall for those who reported preparing was 32 hours, ranging from one to 4,000 hours. ①

To read the full study, go to gedtest.org and click Publications & Research.

Individualized instruction and privacy are keys in corrections

WHEN METAL DOORS slammed shut behind them years ago, many inmates left a world in which few had access to computers, the Internet was new, and there was no e-mail, no Facebook, no Google.

They may have served their time, but before they can rejoin society as productive citizens, these individuals must learn to survive in a high-tech world, where employment applications are mostly online, where basic skills and computer skills are a necessity.

Dr. Constance Banks, academic and vocational school principal

always in a group and each must be supervised at all times.

“We have found software that allows our teachers to monitor the progress of each of her students and make individual recommendations about their work,” Banks says. “The teacher can gauge each student’s pace, see what each is working on and how far they have gotten.”

Built-in assessments tell the teacher if a learner does not grasp the concept and needs additional help. But the teacher can often discover this before a student even takes a test because the teacher can monitor how long it is taking for a student to complete a section.

This feature saves pride and prevents frustration—two keys to success for any student.

“This takes the embarrassment out of the learning process,” Banks says. “They don’t have to worry that they are not keeping up with others or that others will know they are having problems. Some are fast; others are slow. They would all say they are geniuses. This takes a lot of fear away and saves pride.”

Although Banks doesn’t have statistics, anecdotal evidence says it is working. Interest in the classes has grown to where there is now a waiting list.

“We could never serve all the men who want take the classes,” Banks notes.

For those fortunate enough to go through these classes, a job can be waiting on the other side, says Banks. Several inmates have completed the classes and then gotten computer jobs when they were released. ①

For more information, contact Dr. Banks by e-mail at Bankscc@michigan.gov.

A job can be waiting on the other side...

for Michigan’s Mound and Ryan Correctional Facilities and her staff of 14 teachers are charged with helping these men prepare to make it in a world that has been digitally transformed.

Besides limited computer knowledge, most of their students also have academic deficits. And they live in an environment where information about their educational level is one of the few areas where they still have some privacy. Protecting that privacy is a big deal, indeed.

Despite all the obstacles, Banks and her teachers have learned how to protect privacy, and work individually with each learner although they are



KET Adult Learning had a makeover

Why the new look?

For a philosophical answer, we like this quote by Pauline R. Kezer: *Continuity gives us roots; change gives us branches, letting us stretch and grow and reach new heights.* Our primary focus remains best practices in adult education; incorporating new features like “Worthwhile websites” helps us grow.

And why the play button?

KET has been producing educational videos since 1968, including three nationally televised GED series (*GED on TV*, *The KET/GED Series* and *GED Connection*). Whether you watch the programs on television or DVD, streamed over the Internet, or through cable video-on-demand, hitting the Play button will bring experts into your home or learning center, demonstrating complex concepts as only video can, reaching learners across the broadest spectrum of learning styles.



NEW GED® TEST UPDATE

WHILE THEY WILL NOT BE RELEASING a new GED 5th Edition Test in 2012 as previously planned, GED Testing Service® will begin making changes to the current exam starting in 2010.

In a recent announcement, GEDTS deputy executive director Marty Kehe said, “Instead of introducing a new test series on January 1, 2012, based on the old model, we will...begin introducing new elements of a revamped GED program in 2010. These changes will introduce a new program that we are referring to as GED 20/20. This new model...will benefit current test-takers and the large numbers of people we still aren’t reaching—people who need the GED credential now more than ever.”

According to Kehe, the changes are

“in sync with the new national conversation on what it means to be a high school graduate, and what is needed for graduates to become college- and career-ready. This movement towards more rigorous national content standards will have direct and lasting impact on our tests, on the GED credential, and on the testing program as a whole. We have to introduce changes and improvements to the test and the testing program that are consistent with the new direction, quickened pace, and quite frankly, the new expectations placed on all of us in the field of education.” ①

For more information, visit the GED Testing Service website at gedtest.org. Look for “National Needs Alter Plans...”

Prepare learners for high-priority jobs *continued from page 1*

CAN YOU TALK THE TALK?

Here are some of the most important acronyms adult educators working with community partners should know:

AAA – Area Agency on Aging

BWDP – Bureau of Workforce Development Partnership

CBO – community based organization

ITA – Individual Training Account

LWIB – Local Workforce Investment Board

OVR – Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

PIC – Private Industry Council

TAA – Trade Adjustment Assistance

WIA – Workforce Investment Act

WIB – Workforce Investment Board

personnel in One-Stops,” Conrady says. “You need to know the people you can refer to and can refer back to you. You need to know who the governing agencies are for the One-Stops. You need to find out the names of the people who make the decisions and you need to get to know them.”

Educators also need to know their partners’ governing agencies and to understand the needs and goals of the One-Stops. You also need to know the agencies’ terminology. (See sidebar at left).

Once you know the people to work with, their goals and their lingo, you are ready for the second question.

What are the high-priority occupations in my community?

“What you learn about high-priority occupations is the basis for curriculum planning,” Conrady says. “If there is a need in your area for health care workers for example, that means there are jobs out there, and because they are high priority, applicants are in demand. We should at least be able to expose our students to the availability of jobs in these fields and help

support them if they want to pursue these jobs.

“Our help comes with curriculum planning, helping them develop the skills needed in those occupations. Say they want to be a truck driver. We are not going to help them learn to steer the truck, but they will need to be able to read manuals, fill out forms, keep logs, and read road signs. Those are occupational aspects we can help them with.

“Every high-priority occupation requires a certain level of reading, problem solving and thinking skills. If a student is looking to become a welder, maybe we can couch those skills in the way a welder would encounter them. We can also help them understand what various jobs entail.

“Think about what the aim of adult education is,” Conrady concludes. “We are helping our learners prepare to pass the GED, be able to go on to post-secondary education, and be able to get better employment. Through partnerships, our students can definitely improve their lives.” ①

To learn more about One-Stops or to locate a One-Stop in your community, go to careeronestop.org.

