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Articles examine methods and technologies; explore locations and applications; and feature leaders who find successful, innovative ways to reach adult learners using KET materials. Unless otherwise noted, the material in this publication is not copyrighted. Please feel free to use it in the cause of adult education.

If you have comments, questions, or story ideas, please send them to Margaret Norman, editor, or Phyllis Youngerman, writer, by mail: KET Enterprise, 560 Cooper Drive, Lexington, KY 40502-2200; by phone: (800) 354-9067; by fax (859) 258-7396; or by e-mail: adulted@ket.org

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winter 2004

KET adult learning quarterly

Pre-GED Connection workbooks, videos, and Web links now available!

RESPONDING TO PLEAS from teachers in multi-level GED classrooms, KET called on the *GED Connection* content designers and writers to create workbooks for learners at the 6 to 8th-grade reading level, a teacher's guide supplement with lesson plans adapted to the lower reading level, and a locator test to help place learners at the appropriate level. And since *GED Connection* and *Workplace Essential Skills* both have Internet components, a special pre-GED section has been added to the PBS LiteracyLink® Web site.

"We're hearing 'thank you' a lot when we talk to teachers at conferences," says Ron Griffin, KET's director of sales and marketing. "Video will always reach a much broader range of learners than any other medium, so the teachers are glad to have these lower-level workbooks to get learners started earlier on GED preparation."

Pre-GED Connection covers the five GED Test content areas, with one book each for reading, writing, science, social studies, and math. *Pre-GED Connection* workbook chapters correspond to 26 of the original *GED Connection* videos.

For pre-GED learners, KET took out the orientation, each of the test-overview videos (e.g., "Passing the GED Writing Test"), and seven of the higher-level writing and math programs. Since the program numbers changed, the videos have been repackaged to match the *Pre-GED Connection* workbooks. This should make life easier for the pre-GED teacher.

The teacher's guide supplement includes a GED locator test teachers can administer to help guide learners to the most productive level of study. Learners come into adult education centers with varied skill levels across the five content areas. With this seamless curriculum, teachers can now place learners at the GED level in some subjects and the pre-GED level in others.

Teachers in multi-level classrooms who already have *GED Connection* can use the *GED/Pre-GED Connection Crosswalk* in the teacher's guide listing all 39 programs and showing which are also *Pre-GED Connection* programs and their new program number. The crosswalk is also available free on the LiteracyLink Web site, at www.pbs.org/literacy. Log in as a teacher and click on "Teaching Tips" from your home space.

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Canton Program Customizes Services to Help Learners Succeed



AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS

and the creative use of resources are creating success for adult education services of the Canton (Ohio) City Schools.

Ohio's eighth largest school district, Canton offers varied adult services: basic, technical, and an alternative high school. With the district's own TV station, collaboration with the Stark County District Library to lend GED tapes and workbooks, online services, and a walk-in GED lab, "we're proud that we can serve students in a multitude of ways, which opens more ways for the student to be successful," says Jane Meyer, coordinator of Adult Basic & Literacy Education for Canton City Schools.

"A teacher might work with one group on reading while others watch a tape with headphones, go online for a lesson, or do a workbook exercise. Then the teacher comes back to review while the first group does something else."

Getting started

It begins with an orientation, scheduled at the student's convenience.

The student identifies personal goals, and a counselor describes available services and evaluates skill levels. Pictures of learners meeting with a counselor, in class, and at graduation assure that the process and ultimate goal are clear even for adults who can't read well. Taking the adult's skills, goals, and schedule into account, the counselor assigns online, traditional classroom, or other programs suiting the learner's needs.

For some, online studies with *GED Connection* is the way to go. Funded through an Ohio Adult Basic & Literacy Education (ABLE) Project IDEAL grant, this program links students and online teachers. After a face-to-face orientation, the learner completes workbook, video, and online lessons assigned at his/her own pace and interacts with the teacher via voice- and e-mail. The teacher reviews and comments on completed assignments in the LiteracyLink online portfolio.

As a student begins a new subject area, there is another meeting with the teacher to receive the next tape and workbook. Students also can borrow *GED Connection* videos through the district library, a service rural residents appreciate because they don't have to come to the program to get and return tapes.

A GED lab provides needed support

Crucial support comes through the GED lab, open 8 am to 8 pm Monday-Thursday and staffed by a certified teacher and volunteers. Registered students (traditional or online) can call or visit any time, talk to a teacher, access supplemental resources and stay as long as they wish. Some traditional students go to the lab after class to study using the online facet of that day's lesson.

Meyer says the lab also helps learners interact. "If three people watch a writing

tape, for example, they may discuss what they've seen, write something, and then look at each other's work," she says. "The lab is a really nice support system."

Programs such as *GED Connection* are so important, Meyer adds.

"It is useful not only to online learners, but to other divisions in the District," she says. "The adult high school or the alternative high school, for example, can use individual tapes to help students review for exams or proficiency tests."

GED & Even Start

"Some teachers use *GED Connection* materials in the regular classroom," Meyer says. "For example, Even Start serves parents who present varied skill levels in the same classroom. A teacher might work with one group on reading while others watch a tape with headphones, go online for a lesson, or do a workbook exercise. Then the teacher comes back to review while the first group does something else."

A new Even Start online pilot serves parents who have no transportation or can't afford preschool services. Blending adult education, parenting education, child education, and parent and child together (PACT) time, Even Start brings teachers to the home once a week for two hours. Traditional students get supplemental one-on-one help at home in addition to honing parenting skills.

Sessions begin with parents and children reading a story and doing an activity. Then, one teacher works with the children while the other tutors the adult. Parents are introduced to online activities they can do with their children and receive books and learning games as well. During the week, the parent may go online for family activities, as well as GED lessons. The online connection also helps students who leave traditional classes because of job demands, a pregnancy, or other issues.

"We hope this can be a solution to short term problems—help keep those learners connected," Meyer says.

Fast Track

Assessments show that some adults are ready to go straight to the GED practice test.

"We may want to familiarize them with the answer grids on the math section, or provide some tips on writing an essay," Meyer says, "so we started a one-time practice test preparation class on Saturday mornings." Focusing primarily on math and writing, the class uses KET's *Fast Track* test preview packet—seven *GED Connection* videos containing a general orientation, five programs on test preparation, and one on the GED 2002 essay. The companion workbook contains all the pre-tests, practice tests, instruction, and reference materials from the three original *GED Connection* workbooks.

"The preparation class is a quick review before the practice test," Meyer says. "Then, if we find some areas that are marginal, the student might review those at the lab while waiting to take the actual test."

Meyer says the tapes and other materials are so flexible that Canton can customize services. That means more support for the student.

"We may want to familiarize them with the answer grids on the math section, or provide some tips on writing an essay, so we started a one-time practice test preparation class on Saturday mornings."

"This way, you have the services you need to succeed," she says. "All learners can work at their own pace. We're proud that we have different ways for students to study for the GED."

More Options

Offering similar assessment, orientation, and lab services is an English as a Second Language (ESL) program using *Crossroads Café*.

"Students really like it," Meyer says. "We never know how many people will drop in or what range of skill levels will be represented, so it's nice to have a tape they can watch while the teacher is working with someone else."

Canton's system is a collaboration that works. The state renders tapes affordable through Project IDEAL; District TV broadcasts educational programming, as well as "commercials" encouraging viewers to sign up and receive free materials and a calculator; the library system offers tapes and workbooks and a dedicated assessment room; and the YMCA provides free space for the GED lab.

And that collaboration brings added benefits.

The YMCA has homeless clients who might become joint clients—going to the lab or classes, and they offer support services such as a clothing bank that could help some of our students." Meyer says. "It's putting everything together that elicits success. When you have good partners, services prosper.

"The key is always to keep our ears open, to identify what the needs are, and to figure out ways to meet those needs. As issues such as welfare reform come up, we need to assess the impact on our students and how we can respond. Counselors and teachers look at trends—why some students leave a class, what's keeping them from being a success, what we can do for them. Some learners want to finish as quickly as possible, but others have a job and four kids; they won't be going as fast.

"There are different learning modalities, too. Online services are not for everyone. We need something else to offer them. That's why I like the flexibility to help meet needs. The needs of those we serve are always changing. We must keep listening to them."

To learn more about *GED Connection* or *Fast Track*, visit KET online at www.ket.org/ged.

ESL/CivicsLink: Learning on Your Own Terms



FORGET RACING TO GET TO CLASS

on time or finding a parking space in foul weather. You can get top quality, carefully reviewed, new professional development training from the comfort of your home or office, or from a nearby library or learning center with Internet access.

KET and PBS LiteracyLink® invite you to explore the new self-paced online professional development service for adult education ESL teachers—ESL/CivicsLink.

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CivicsLink can be used independently or with a facilitator—another aspect of its flexibility.

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- integrating civics and English literacy

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Individual teachers can register for six-month access to the site for \$89.95. Organizations can purchase a site license for 10 teachers to use the site for one year for \$800, or they can get discounts for purchasing multiple site licenses. KET also offers statewide pricing. Please call KET at (800) 354-9067 for more information.

Development of ESL/CivicsLink was funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education and was jointly developed by PBS LiteracyLink, The National Center for Adult Literacy (NCAL) at the University of Pennsylvania, Jefferson County (Kentucky) Public Schools Adult and Continuing Education, and KLRN-TV, San Antonio.

For a closer look, visit ESL/CivicsLink online at www.pbs.org/civicslink, where you can take a tour, try a sample activity, and apply for registration.

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Distance Learning is at the Heart of this Pennsylvania Project



THE 21ST CENTURY economy demands an educated workforce. Yet, many adults read at low levels or not at all; others do not have a high school diploma. These adults cannot function effectively in the workforce or as citizens of a democracy. In Pennsylvania, distance learning is

seen as one answer to the problem, and a promising project called ABLE-TIU Distance Learning Project is expanding to meet learner needs.

The project uses a statewide network of walk-in CareerLink centers to make education available to learners who could not (because of barriers such as child care, work schedules, or transportation) or would not (owing to embarrassment or other factors) participate in traditional classroom programs.

“Adults who need basic skills have had a lot of failure,” says Dehra Shafer, former distance learning project manager for the project. “Sometimes, it’s hard for them to just come through a door of agencies. Distance learning helps provide a way around that, providing anonymity and the opportunity to learn independently.”

Now in its fourth year, the project has truly been a cooperative effort. It was launched by the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education and Department of Labor/Industry, Team Pennsylvania CareerLink. Tuscarora IU’s Adult Education Department has managed the project, and Project IDEAL at the University of Michigan researched it. Collectively, these educators knew that traditional approaches were reaching only two percent of those who needed services, and they believed they could make more inroads by pooling their resources and working together.

Beginning with Workplace Essential Skills

The pilot began with PBS LiteracyLink® *Workplace Essential Skills*, a multimedia curriculum that includes videos, workbooks, and Internet lessons. Pennsylvania holds a statewide license, which means that the series may be broadcast by the Pennsylvania public television network and cable stations, used as a core for classroom-based instruction or online virtual classrooms, or distributed—in tape and workbook form—through adult education providers and local libraries, which could also offer computer access. The flexible package could stand alone or be blended into existing programs, allowing individual centers to customize for local needs.

After 18 months, 10 of the 12 original pilot sites estimated that at least 60 percent of their students reached with the new approach would not have enrolled in traditional programs. Encouraged, in the fall of 2002, they added LiteracyLink’s *GED Connection*, the Adult Literacy Media Alliance’s *TV411*, and IntelCom’s *Madison Heights/Lifelines* (MH/LL) to their offerings.

“*Workplace Essential Skills* is for the pre-GED learner—the one who has workplace goals or maybe wants his GED but is not ready for *GED Connection*,” Shafer notes. “*Workplace* is very application oriented, focusing on how you apply what you’re learning. *GED Connection* is for people who are ready to study for the GED: *GED Connection*, *Workplace Essential Skills*, and *TV411* all combine video, print, and online activities—taking a participatory approach to learning. Research shows that it boosts learners’ confidence and motivation, so pilot sites use it to prepare students for distance learning. *Madison Heights/Lifelines* is used in a facilitated distance-learning model.

“With low-level learners, pure distance learning does not seem to be a viable option, so we use it in home-based programs for people who can’t get to classes,” says Shafer. “A home visitor goes to the home and works on all the components of family literacy—adult basic education, parenting skills, child development, and parent and child together (PACT) times. The teacher goes through the MH/LL material, shows the appropriate video, and leaves some homework. It’s a kind of a beginning independent study curriculum that involves setting goals and establishing a specific time each day for study. The outreach sets people up to learn by themselves.”

Learner-centered approach

This year, Shafer says Pennsylvania is funding 21 providers to serve 1,200 distance learners, and agencies are systematically adding distance learning to their continuum of standard services. Competency tests help assess learners’ readiness for a particular program. If a client’s stated goal is a job, he/she might use *Workplace Essential Skills*. If he/she is seeking a diploma, *GED Connection* could be recommended. The overall program is “really learner-centered—a learner approach instead of a curriculum approach,” Shafer says.

“Sometimes students would ‘disappear’ from December through March because the weather would prevent travel to a classroom. In the last two years rural learners have been able to stay connected because of distance learning.”

Some adults discover the programs by contacting an adult education program or CareerLink; others may respond to a radio promotion, news story, brochure, diner place mat, grocery bag flyer, or bus placard. The common focus: “Do you want to learn at home?”

Educators are also learning. For instance, she says they have learned that not every adult who doesn’t come to class is a successful distance learner. Educators also have found that an on-site orientation session with the teacher heightens chances for success. Successful learners share some or all of these seven traits:

- are employed or actively seeking employment
- have a clear goal for participating
- read at 7th grade level or higher
- can organize their time and work independently
- have a computer at home or easy access to one
- have basic computer skills; can navigate the Internet if using an online component
- have a convenient place to pick up/drop off videos and workbooks if needed

For learners with these traits, distance learning can work. Shafer says that distance learning can really meet a need in rural areas.

“There was a bad, long winter in Pennsylvania this year,” she recalls. “Sometimes, students would ‘disappear’ from December through March in such a year because the weather would prevent travel to a classroom. In the last two years rural learners have been able to stay connected because of distance learning. But again, they have to have access to a computer; or to videos and workbooks via mail.

“Distance learning doesn’t equate with the Internet, however. Technology is wonderful for people who have access, but we can’t throw out the old just because we have the new. Mailing workbooks and videos to people in rural areas still works. Some learners drop off materials and pick them up—it saves mailing costs. Access is the key. Once they have access, learners can move forward, whether it’s by correspondence courses or the Internet.”



Dehra Shafer

Challenges ahead

The teacher’s role changes as well.

“Teachers are used to a classroom, where they’re more in control of content,” Shafer notes. “With distance learning, the student is more in the driver’s seat—and needs to be.” Now, the teacher is a facilitator, helping students become better at setting goals and motivating them to keep learning. When the student identifies an area of study such as math, the teacher can direct him/her to an appropriate *GED Connection* module, Internet resource, or other materials. Professional development can help teachers make full use of these new opportunities for teaching as well as learning.

Teaching strategies can be enhanced in the new environment as well. *Workplace Essential Skills* and *GED Connection* feature teacher-student interaction, but not student-student interaction. Interested learners can be taught to use chat rooms or instant messaging. It’s not a built-in part of *Workplace Essential Skills* and *GED Connection*, but Shafer says the elements are there on the Internet and can be used.

A big challenge for distance learning is accountability and demonstrating education gains.

“We need to help teachers understand competencies and how the curriculum can help people overcome deficiencies in competencies,” Shafer says. “We want to tie student goals to the competencies in CASAS and TABE. KET and IntelCom are helping by showing that the curriculums improve competencies.”

Champions

Pennsylvania faces the future with confidence.

“The recipe for success lies in ‘top down’ support from the PDE Bureau of ABLE and ‘bottom up’ creativity from the teachers and administrators,” Shafer says. “The teachers and administrators are the ones who think out of the box, who have the courage to try something new, the ability to figure things out, and the stick-to-it-iveness to provide lots of data for research. They’re just phenomenal. Pennsylvania wouldn’t be doing what it’s doing if it weren’t for the level of commitment of the teachers, and their sense of purpose. They’re contributing to a body of knowledge that didn’t exist before. They’re champions—so great to work with.”

For more information, visit the [ABLE-TIU Distance Learning Project link at www.padistancelearning.org](http://www.padistancelearning.org).

Latté while you learn?

Access to technology is an issue for many adult learners. For those who don’t have a computer at home, the current answer may be the local library or an adult education center’s computer lab. In the future, cyber cafés may hold the key.

Cyber cafés abound in major European cities and are beginning to appear in America. In London, such cafés are open 24 hours and people get an hour on a computer for a pound (about \$1.75). Many learners would be able to complete a study module in that time. That’s economical.

“The real danger in distance learning would be increasing the gap between the haves and the have-nots,” Shafer says. “Libraries are great, but they have limited budgets (and can’t meet the needs of every learner). The cyber café development is business. They’re making money but also providing a service by providing access. Access is the key.”



Major Black Writers in GED Connection

LiteracyLink students don't just learn to read better; they learn to read better materials!

In anticipation of Black History Month in February, we've compiled a list of major African-American authors whose lives or work are mentioned in *GED*- and *Pre-GED Connection* videos, workbooks, and online activities. *GED Connection* is broadcast on many public television stations nationwide, workbooks and videos are available from KET, and the online lessons and activities are free for learners and teachers who register and log in at www.pbs.org/literacy. Follow the matrix to see where you can find works by or information about the authors listed.

Author or Topic	GED Connection Video (time code)	GED Connection Workbook	Pre-GED Connection Workbook	LiteracyLink® Online www.pbs.org/literacy
African American Literature-Overview				GED Connection, Reading, Units 3 and 4, <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God, Parts I and II</i>
Maya Angelou		Reading-14: Poetry, p. 307 [Context: Understanding speaker & tone] "Harlem Hopscotch" from <i>Just Give Me A Cool Drink of Water 'Fore I Die</i>		GED Connection, Reading, Units 3 & 4, <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God, Parts I & II</i> , Subjects: African American Literature
James Baldwin	Reading-13: Fiction (8:03) [Context: Understanding conflict] Passage from <i>Sonny's Blues</i>			
Toni Cade Bambara			Reading, Posttest, p. 98, Passage from "Blues Ain't No Mockin' Bird"	
Edwidge Danticat	Reading-13: Fiction (3:28) [Context: Understanding character, plot and setting] Passage from <i>Breath, Eyes, Memory</i>			
Frederick Douglass	Social Studies-17: Themes in US History (15:00). Excerpt "Why Am I a Slave?" from <i>My Bondage and My Freedom</i> , read by Prof. Charles Pace.	Social Studies-17: Themes in US History, p. 39, "The Right to Be Free." 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments		
Rita Dove		Reading-11: Passing the Reading Test, p. 239 [Context: Applying information to a different situation] Passage from <i>Through the Ivory Gate</i> , a novel		
W. E. B. DuBois				GED Connection, Reading, Units 3 & 4, <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God, Parts I & II</i> , Subjects: African American Literature
Lorraine Hansberry		Reading-15: Drama, p. 335 [Context: Understanding conflict] Passage from <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>	Reading-10: Drama, p. 89 [Context: Applying to a new situation] Passage from <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>	
Harlem Renaissance				GED Connection, Reading, Units 3 and 4, <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God, Parts I & II</i>
Robert Hayden	Reading-14: Poetry, (1:20) [Context: Understanding figurative language] "Those Winter Sundays" read by Sonya Sanchez			Pre-GED Connection, Reading, Poetry– Favorite Poem Project. Click "The Poems" and scroll to find Robert Hayden

Author or Topic	GED Connection Video (time code)	GED Connection Workbook	Pre-GED Connection Workbook	LiteracyLink® Online www.pbs.org/literacy
Langston Hughes		Reading-13: Fiction, p. 277 [Context: Understanding character] Passage from "Thank You, M'am" from <i>Something in Common</i> Reading-14: Poetry, p. 305 [Context: Understanding speaker & tone] "Mother to Son" from <i>Collected Poems by Langston Hughes</i>		Pre-GED Connection, Reading, Poetry–Favorite Poem Project. Click "The Poems" to read five poems by Langston Hughes or click "The Videos" to hear Hughes' poems read aloud. To learn more about the author's life and work, go to GED Connection, Reading, Units 3, 4 or 5 , Subjects: Zora Neale Hurston, Harlem Renaissance
Zora Neale Hurston		Reading-13: Fiction, p. 287 [Context: Understanding theme] Excerpts from <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i>	Reading-8: Fiction, p. 36 [Context: Setting] Excerpt from <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i>	To learn more about the author's life and work, go to GED Connection, Reading, Units 3, 4, or 5 , Subjects: African American Literature and Harlem Renaissance will give you an overview; Zora Neale Hurston will take you to a page with more links offering additional information on Hurston's life, times, and work. GED Connection, Reading, Unit 5, Activity 5 offers a wealth of resources related to Hurston, including the Harlem Renaissance, Red Hot Jazz, big bands, the Lindy Hop, Hurston's Folk Culture Collection at the Library of Congress, her work "Negroes Without Self-Pity," and excerpts from Alice Walker's "Looking for Zora." To further explore Hurston's writing, go to GED Connection, Reading, Units 3, Activities 2, 4, and 5; and Unit 4, Activities 1-5.
Jamaica Kincaid		Reading-13: Fiction, pp. 3-4 [Context: Identifying setting and mood] Excerpt from <i>Lucy</i>		
Cassandra Medley			Reading-10: Drama, p. 77 [Context: Picturing setting] Excerpts from <i>Dearborn Heights</i>	
Toni Morrison		Reading-13: Fiction, Identifying Narrative Point of View, p.279 Excerpts from <i>Song of Solomon</i>	Reading-8: Fiction, Conflict p. 46	
Motivational Speaker				Visit the LiteracyLink Forum to learn about Hasan Davis, youth and arts advocate, lawyer, performer, and GED graduate.
Sonia Sanchez	Reading-14: Poetry (17:15) Understanding rhythm and figurative language, "Last Recording Session/for papa joe"			
Alice Walker				Excerpts from Alice Walker's "Looking for Zora" Unit 5, Activity 5
August Wilson		Reading-11: Passing the Reading Test, p. 243 [Context: Analyzing tone] Excerpt from <i>The Piano Lesson</i>	Reading-10: Drama, p. 78 [Context: Picturing the scene] Excerpt from <i>Jitney</i>	
Richard Wright			Reading-10: Drama, p. 82 [Context: Picturing the action] Excerpt from <i>Native Son</i> by Paul Green and Richard Wright	GED Connection, Reading, Unit 3 , Subjects: African American Literature, talks about the author.

Connecticut Programs Offer Inmates a Second Chance at Life

CT A FAMILY feeling among teachers and support staff. Programs guided by what teachers say is needed. A “regular” school district in a prison system. All of these describe Unified School District #1 in Connecticut.

In 2001-2002, the district served 12,570 male and female students (averaging 3,749 per day) in 20 minimum-, medium- and maximum-security correctional institutions or jails. The Manson Youth Institute serves offenders ages 14-21.

“Our first and best tool to reach these students is the type of teacher we employ,” says Angela Jalbert, director of academic programs for the district.

“A prison environment frees quality teachers to do their job,” she says. “Inmates have a bed every night and food every day. They’re able to concentrate better on education; they’re not running around on the street. We have controls that a regular school does not have. Our teachers know the type of student they will be working with. Our teachers are so innovative in giving them what they need to succeed.”

Based on academic records and educational/vocational test results, education staff assign inmates to classes or programs as applicable, including adult basic, vocational education, special education, and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). There are many venues—classrooms with an average of 12 to 15 students, as well as services for those who can’t leave their cells or those who need special

education. ProLiteracy (formerly LVA and Laubach) members help, and Jalbert says they train some inmates to become literacy volunteers and work with other inmates under the supervision of teachers.

Computer-assisted programs also play a role.

“Our teachers create curricula under guidelines of state education standards with our students in mind—with what they need to make it in the community,” Jalbert says. “Software and video programs are additional teacher tools. We don’t push any particular one. Teachers let us know what they like to use.”

Celebrating success

Most facilities hold graduation ceremonies to recognize student achievements. “We try to make it special for very often this is the most significant accomplishment a student has made,” Jalbert says. Often, families are invited to share in this event. In 2001-2002, 629 learners received their GED certificate, two with honors.

In the vocational program—which features 25 different trades and prepares students for entry-level jobs—some graduates receive a Connecticut Career Certificate developed by the state Departments of Education and Labor, and area businesses. Sixty-two students have earned the certificate, which profiles individual accomplishments and can be presented to employers.

That same year, 120 students received certificates of completion in an apprenticeship program conducted in collaboration with the state Department of Labor. Learners also

receive a student portfolio, “a professional way to present education information,” Jalbert says. The portfolio includes a student profile that details the learner’s academic competencies, as well as daily life skills such as preparing taxes.

Real-world opportunities

“Our program also includes community outreach activities that provide real-work skill opportunities,” Jalbert adds. “We do these activities with our students in mind.”

Working with non-profit organizations, prisoners fix bicycles for needy children, create Braille books for the blind, refurbish wheelchairs for third-world countries, create pamphlets and brochures, and make U.S. maps for public schools. Some inmates talk to at-risk youth about the consequences of negative behavior. Jalbert’s office receives many letters from young people describing how these programs influenced them to curb negative behavior and make them think about their everyday decisions.

Many inmates also need guidance in communication, parenting, problem solving, etc.

School counselors and psychologists are there to assist with developing career paths and pre-employment skills, locating jobs, and transitioning to the community. In 2001-2002, more than 500 students were placed in community jobs or education programs, and only 75 of those returned to prison, according to Jalbert.

“We feel the younger the inmates are, the earlier we can instill positive thinking and

goal setting,” she says. “Transition programs do help, but so much depends on the environment into which they are returning, if any substance abuse is under control, and the level of emotional support they receive once they’re out. We hear so often: ‘If I hadn’t come to prison and had this program, I’d be dead now,’ or ‘It’s the first positive educational experience I’ve ever had.’ We hear from all ages, and we know that without these programs, there would be no hope. For so many, this is a second chance at life.”

Making a statewide program succeed means teamwork.

“Our support staff, teachers, and administrators make it all work in the field,” Jalbert says. “In addition, the school district directors move this program in wonderful ways, as well. She cites Special Education Director Christine Murphy; Director of Curriculum and Transition Services Diana Pacetta-Ullman, and Vocational Education Director David Gallicchio.

“And I can’t say enough about Superintendent of Schools Bill Barber,” she says. “He’s the wheel that drives this district. He is so supportive of programs and staff, and he gives this school district the family feeling. That’s how teachers feel—we are a unified school district.”

And of course everything happens in collaboration with custody administration and staff. “Success is built on what teachers think and what they say the students need,” she notes. “It’s very much grassroots.”

Los Angeles County Uses Education and Art to Change Inmates’ Lives



CRIME IS A public health issue. Jail can be punishment (often followed by recidivism) or treatment—rehabilitation and a second chance at life.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department opts for the latter, according to Karen Dalton, the Department’s director of bureau operations. Dalton, who holds a PhD in public health, says that incarceration provides the opportunity to “use education to help develop skills for jobs and...stop the family violence, drug abuse, or other factors fueling criminal activity.”

With a variety of educational and counseling services, including Teaching and Loving Kids or TALK, the department is working to make that kind of difference. Financed through a self-supporting inmate welfare fund not tax dollars, Los Angeles County services target those incarcerated from as little as 45 days to as long as a year.

“The perspective of county jail is very different from that of state prison (where sentences are longer),” Dalton explains. “We don’t have a lot of time to instill change in people. We have to work rapidly. Some think there is nothing you can do in so short a time, but I have seen changes.”

One constant across programs is a focus on recognizing achievement.

Every five to six weeks, graduation ceremonies are held for successful completion of domestic violence programs, earning a high school diploma or GED, and other milestones. For many, it’s the first time they have ever achieved anything, and Dalton says they try to do something special for them.

Inmate-veterans decorated the walls of their dorm with this patriotic mural.

A captain illustrated this focus when talking with a young inmate who had just earned his high school diploma. Learning that the boy’s mother was at work and couldn’t attend the ceremony, the captain called her on his cell phone so that the inmate could share the good news. Something special. Kudos to that captain.

A community transition unit indirectly led to another valuable service. Established to provide post-release support on a voluntary basis, the unit was continuing a long-standing relationship with the Veterans Administration, coordinating benefits and services inmate-veterans might need. Unit staff noticed that inmate-veterans usually held honorable, general, or medical discharges.

“We took one of our dorms (holding about 90) and made it a veterans’ unit,” Dalton says. “An artist, working for the cost of her materials, taught the men to paint murals. Today, the dorm is decorated with flags of every military service and with a mural depicting every U.S. conflict, ending with 9/11.

“We don’t have a lot of time to instill change in people. We have to work rapidly. Some think there is nothing you can do in so short a time, but I have seen changes.”

“These men are able to share experiences no one else could understand,” Dalton says. “They have a camaraderie. There is very little trouble among the inmates.”

In addition to the supportive environment, the men have access to educational and vocational programs, self-help for anger management, and other voluntary services.

The result? “People come up and say, ‘Thanks. Thanks for not being easy on me.’”

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continued from page 1

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Job Success Basics



Central New York Staff Development Consortium

The Central New York Staff Development Consortium (CNYSDC) is one of eight statewide consortia established by the New York State Education Department to provide ongoing professional growth opportunities to the greater adult, family, and alternative education community.

In its mission statement, CNYSDC pledges to “provide its adult learning community with imaginative ideas, current information, and functional strategies which will affect quality learning.”

To learn more, visit the CNYSDC web site at www.centralstaff.org.

TEACHING ADULTS often requires rethinking the learning environment.

To create a new environment, teachers can use tools such as KET’s “*Math Basics, Learn To Read, GED Connection, Workplace Essential Skills, and TV411*,” says Georges Marceau, executive director for the Central New York Staff Development Consortium (CNYSDC). “We use them all. *Workplace Essential Skills* is wonderful, and *TV411* is also very high quality for the pre-GED student.”

Covering a six-county region of New York State, Marceau works with both distance learning and traditional programs, demonstrating how to integrate videos into existing curricula and how to use online components.

“This is about nurturing, not demonstrating products,” cautions Marceau, who has researched and published on the nature of staff development. “Teachers go back to their sites and see how they can integrate what they’ve learned, get used to a program, find funding, adapt to their regional needs, and come back for more training. Systemic staff development is a big, long-term process, not a single event.”

To succeed, the process requires energetic, highly-interested educators.

“Equal sharing of the learning process is critical – not assuming the teacher as authority,” says Terri Bickford, family advocate and trainer with Literacy Volunteers (LVA) in Chenango County (NY) Opportunities for Chenango, Inc. “This needs to be one-on-one learning from each other, totally different from your traditional educational learning model.”

A good example is an exciting program devised by Bickford and Juliette Monet, director of Literacy Volunteers of Chenango County, Opportunities for Chenango, Inc. After seeing a *Workplace Essential Skills* overview, the two attended a more detailed implementation session. They asked Marceau for more information on improving skills of employed learners and soliciting employer support. With Family, Adult and Workplace Literacy (FAWL) funding from the New York State Departments of Labor and of Education, the two created Job Success Basics.

Reading and Earning

It isn’t that these workers can’t read at all; it’s a comprehension issue. Employers may assume that since workers have high school diplomas, they don’t have anyone who can’t read. Yet, in Chenango County, Bickford says 14 percent of workers read below the fourth grade level, and 42 percent have some difficulty with basic reading and other skills.

“When you’re trying to read and stopping at each big word and struggling to get an individual meaning, you will never get the point of the article or the chapter,” Bickford says. “These adults are trapped in a

world where they don’t speak the language. People talk to them and they pretend to understand, but they’re terrified they’ll be asked to do something in connection with what was said. They won’t read the paper. Church involves reading, so they won’t go. They won’t volunteer. They can complete a simple job application, but don’t understand one with longer words. Even on a benefits application, there are shaded boxes, long words. Adults will walk out rather than ask for benefits they need because they WILL NOT reveal that they can’t read. Our whole society is based on reading. They feel useless, worthless.”

Many LVA clients were struggling with literacy in the workplace, according to Monet. “Some had refused promotions because that would risk exposure. They would do anything to avoid co-workers or employers finding out: take projects home so the spouse could help or claim they forgot their glasses and let a co-worker read. We saw this and wanted to help.”

Monet and Bickford sought solutions from a business perspective for two reasons:

1. While there are a few large industries in Chenango County, most employers are small businesses that are really struggling with employees who lack the reading, math, or writing skills to do what needs to be done. Moreover, U.S. firms lose an estimated \$60 billion in productivity each year due to workers’ lack of basic skills.
2. Because transportation or other issues may prevent adults from attending programs on their own time, employer-endorsed assistance is more likely to be used.

Tailor-made solutions

“We wanted to develop a curriculum that could be offered to businesses and tailored to their situations,” Monet says, “and we wanted to focus on how to present the program so businesses would see the scope of the problem and the value of investment in worker skills.

“When we saw *Workplace Essential Skills*, we thought it would be wonderful for the project,” Bickford says, adding that its flexibility assures successful adaptation in a variety of settings. “We purchased videos and workbooks with the FAWL grant.”

Monet says they found the level was a little too high, so they scaled it down and simplified it a bit.

Job Success Basics features a series of three-hour workshops that can be adapted to any literacy level or content area, customized to meet employer/employee needs, delivered at the work site or in the community, and offered on a flexible schedule. Emphasized are learning how to learn; soft skills (workplace communication and behavior, teamwork, ethics and attitudes); literacy-related skills (reading, writing and math); and technology skills (computers). Sessions are free to the learners.

Since January of 2003, 50 to 70 adults have been served in three programs held at the Chenango One Stop. Sessions meet two mornings a week, with a day in between. This allows time to reflect, as well as time to go back to work and try things, then discuss in class what worked and what didn’t. Learners also practice at the One Stop computer lab.

Curriculum design is only part of the story.

“We have to get adults to be open to learning and to participate,” Monet explains. “The goal is a non-threatening environment. Class sizes range from six to 15 to build a feeling of safety, and no one is allowed to make fun of others. I make mistakes sometimes on purpose, so they know we’re all human.”

No one is asked to read aloud or do things they can’t. Instead, participants break into small groups and get to know each other. “We go around the class with a story, and each person has to continue it,” Bickford adds. “The rule is that we won’t be sarcastic about what the previous person said. Students get creative, build the stories, *laugh*. They open up a little and begin to trust.”

Learners view small video segments, then role play or discuss the topic, relating the material to experiences in their own lives.

Employers may assume that since workers have high school diplomas, they don’t have anyone who can’t read. Yet, in Chenango County, Bickford says 14 percent of workers read below the fourth grade level, and 42 percent have some difficulty with basic reading and other skills.

“As a team, they create a comic strip,” Bickford says. “It doesn’t have to be funny. We talk about their lives. Maybe they take a bus to work. What could happen? They have no clue how to do this, but when they learn to solve problems instead of waiting for someone else, or to look at options and make a decision (realizing they’re not limited to one choice), it amazes me the creativity that comes out of them.”

Different strokes for different folks

In addition, Bickford says that learners don’t understand decimals, fractions and percentages, so they spend time on that, using calculators. She then gives them the calculators.

“After using highlighters to dissect and de-mystify business forms, students keep the instruments,” Monet says. “The tools symbolize what they learned that day and help them remember it.”

Throughout, each point is reinforced in several different ways using a variety of teaching methods to meet different learning styles.

“We have flip charts in color, videos, activities so that the learners are up and moving,” says Bickford. “Our students learn differently. In school, they couldn’t learn by listening to lectures and taking notes. It didn’t work for them.”

In the proper environment, those who need movement, for example, learn just as well as those sitting and taking notes.

“Doing different styles takes longer,” Bickford says, “but you get people actually learning and walking away with something. While there isn’t a formal assessment for individual learning styles, if you have a plan for different styles, then everyone is covered.

“I teach the skills, but they have to use them. They have to learn to think outside the box of fear. That means developing self-esteem.

“The teacher has to build a relationship with the students. This bolsters a learner’s comfort level in class and helps in other ways. If a student has been evicted or has other problems that interfere with learning, the teacher can do case management.”

Bickford recalls a learner who confided that she was in an abusive situation, something she had not told her social worker. She felt that if she let her boyfriend abuse her, he wouldn’t hurt her children. Because she had “learned” that telling the truth caused problems, she had a history of telling conflicting stories that confused her counselors. With her teacher present, she was able to open up to a counselor. Over time, she began dressing better, looking people in the eye, and exhibiting new self-assurance.

Understanding a learner’s life is essential to helping him/her succeed, Bickford adds.

“If you have a house with no hot water, how can you keep yourself and your clothes clean? If you have no car and there’s no bus nearby, how can you get to work? How can you access resources? Part of our success is that people are not treated as second class. We treat them as adults, with respect.”

While the program is still new, “we feel very successful,” Monet says. “It’s a major feat to get people to come back to a classroom (a setting where they experienced failure), to enjoy it, to feel safe. In class, people are laughing, talking.” And they change. “Self-confidence increases. And if people feel better about themselves, they’ll do better.”

Job Success Basics is a collaboration, including the

- Afton Consortium, a GED provider
- State Office of Employment and Training
- Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES)
- Chenango/Delaware/Otsego Workforce Center
- County Department of Social Services

Guidance and feedback are provided by a workplace literacy advisory committee that includes LVA tutors, business people, and social services and community representatives.

For more information on Job Success Basics, contact Juliette Monet at Opportunities for Chenango, Inc., P.O. Box 470, Norwich, NY 13815, or e-mail at lva@ofcinc.org. Grants are available to help employers fund worker training. Businesses should contact their Workforce Investment Area office to learn more.



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Here are just *some* of the lessons covered:

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