

NEVADA

Connections

Produced by Community College Southern Nevada to connect resources for Nevada's adult workforce

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This story is no tall tale

A study of results from the Toyota for Families Learning Program for 500 families in 32 sites in 10 cities shows why family literacy programs work:

- Adults participating in family literacy programs showed greater gains in literacy than adults in adult-focused programs.
- Participants in family literacy programs were less likely to drop out of the program than were participants in adult focused programs.
- Children participating in family literacy programs demonstrated greater gains than children in child-focused programs.

—“*The Power of Family Literacy*,” National Center for Family Literacy, 1994.

Family Storyteller improves the literacy skills of children and parents by getting books into children's hands and helping parents (or other caregivers) learn to use the books effectively with their kids. According to co-developer Sally Martin, Ph.D., CFLE, “The program is designed mainly for parents with limited language skills and their preschoolers and beginning readers. It has been successful with both English-speaking and ESL families.”

During each session of the six-session series, families learn basic parent/child reading techniques via video, discussion, and practice. Each family receives a free book and materials to use at home with extender activities.

UNR Cooperative

A study of results from 525 families in 38 sites in 14 Nevada cities shows why Nevada's innovative Family Storyteller program works:

- Pre- and post-interviews and assessments with families have revealed statistically significant increases in the amount of time parents read with their children, their enjoyment of reading with children, and their use of 14 different parent reading techniques.
- Children have made significant gains in their enjoyment of reading with parents and their understanding of print concepts.

—“*The Family Storyteller: A Collaborative Literacy Program*,” *Journal of Extension*, Dan Weigel, Patricia Behal, and Sally Martin, August 2001.

Extension, KNPB-Channel 5 Public Television, the Washoe County School District, and the Washoe County Library System collaborated to develop Family Storyteller. They have trained nearly 70 people to lead the family workshops. Nearly 500 families from across the state have participated in more than 40 six-session workshops over the past four years. A training team comprised of Pat Miller from KNPB and Sally Martin, Dan Weigel, and Pat Behal from Cooperative Extension will be conducting trainings in Elko, Eureka, Caliente, Yerington, and Pahrump or Beatty beginning in January 2002. Susan Graf (Nevada Literacy Coalition, 800.445.9673, sfgraf@clan.lib.nv.us) is coordinating these trainings.

The Northern Nevada Literacy Council is piloting a new, expanded version of Family Storyteller for ESL parents, and the Cooperative Extension will be conducting a rigorous evaluation of this version over the next three years. For additional information on the Family Storyteller program, contact Sally Martin (775.784.6490, smartin@unr.nevada.edu).



New online family literacy projects provide information and training

The Family Literacy Policy Project (FLPP) is a new online resource produced by the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL). The Web site (www.familit.org/flpp) functions as an online database of policies and funding for family literacy. You can view federal information or look at an individual state. The content is written in layman's terms, provides concise descriptions of legislation, and includes complete contact information for each entity.

Awareness Training is another new online project that could be helpful for those interested in learning the basics of family literacy. A collaboration between NCFL and the Head Start Bureau, the Web site provides access to a multi-media presentation that includes history, video testimonials from families and practitioners, parent education, and the four components of family literacy — adult education, early childhood education, parent education, and interactive parent and child activities (PACT time). Go to www.familit.org, click on "Head Start Family Literacy Project, then click on "Awareness Training."

More family literacy training — "local" and live

Nevada's Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiative has contracted with the National Center for Family Literacy to prepare 65 Nevada trainers to help others implement family literacy programs. The training takes place February 25-March 1 at the Nevada State Library and Archives in Carson City. Participants are expected to provide family literacy implementation workshops to their groups and others throughout Nevada during the next five years. The workshop and materials are free; travel and per diem reimbursements are available to participants who work at least 15 miles away from Carson City. Contact Project Director Emmy Bell, 775. 688.2284, ext. 228, exbell@dcfs.state.nv.us.

Advice to leaders — and teachers

Editor's note: For the June 2001 issue, Technology & Learning Magazine asked Jason Ohler, a former teacher and director of Alaska's Educational Technology Program, this question: What are the most important qualities education leaders need in today's technology-driven world? His response is applicable to leaders of any group:

1. Plan for change rather than change your plan. The planning equation has far fewer constants and many more variables than in the past.
2. The attitude is the aptitude. "What's important these days is not so much what you know," said Jason, "because information has such a short half-life.

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Perk up your projects with PERT

PERT (project evaluation review technique) is a good way to determine how long a project will take. Ask three questions of each major task:

1. What is the most optimistic estimate of the time to complete under best conditions?
2. What's the most pessimistic estimate under the worst conditions?
3. What's the most likely estimate under normal conditions?

Weight the most likely time by 4, add the others, and divide the total by 6. Increase that value by the percentage of unproductive time.

Source: *Tools and Tips for Today's Project Managers*, Ralph Kliem and Irwin Ludin, Project Management Institute, www.pmi.org.

- Instead, what's important is your attitude toward shedding old information unsentimentally and grasping and absorbing new information — and being able to apply it quickly to new situations."
3. Either/or becomes both/and. The flexible leader will not be able to abide by a single school of thought, but will need to know a number of strategies and be wise enough to know when to use which.
"Finally," adds Jason, "a true leader believes that everyone needs to take their next step — not their next twenty at once, as is so often expected — and helps those in their charge identify and take that step, whatever it might be."

High-tech help

The state of Nevada is developing a new Web site (www.literacynet.org/nevada), thanks to Paul Heavenridge and Cheshire Dave Beckerman. Paul is the Director of the Western/Pacific Literacy Network, which is part of the National Institute for Literacy's "Literacy Information and Communication System" (LINCS). Designer Cheshire, Art Director and Webmaster, maintains the site.



Nevada's site has the "look and feel" of the national LINCS site and that of many other states, with consistently placed buttons along the left for features (partners, what's new, calendar, etc.), literacy resources (for teacher/tutor, student/learner, manager/administrator), quick references (facts and statistics, policy and legislation), etc. A "collections" button at the top of the page leads you to eleven "special collections" — one-stop electronic gateways to specialized information on high-quality literacy practices and materials for use in adult education and literacy programs. Topics include assessment, correctional education, ESL, EFF (Equipped for the Future), family literacy, health and literacy, learning disabilities, policy and legislation, science and numeracy, technology training, and workforce education. The collections feature full-blown curricula and full-text materials. Paul is looking for additional quality curricula, and will help adult educators get it posted on the Web.

As an instructional designer, Paul is passionate about delivering Web-based literacy materials using hypermedia. One result of his work is a collaboration with CNN/San Francisco called "Learning Resources" at www.literacynet.org/cnnsf. Several times a month, Paul posts story modules that include the full text of each story and interactive activities to test comprehension. The learner can choose to read the text, listen to the text, and view a short video clip of the story. Each module is designed for ease of use so the learner can use it independently. The instructor can also incorporate any story into class activities and lesson plans.

Paul recently founded Literacyworks, a regional nonprofit organization that will serve the educational community, allowing small programs to collaborate and combine resources. He and Cheshire are also available to assist with distance learning, other technology projects, and with Web page design, maintenance and hosting.

New on Nevada's literacy Web site:

GED 2002 FAQs

Val Lyons-Brady and the four other members of the ABE GED 2002 Training Team (Jeanie Thibault, Wendy Raynor, Dimi Jefferis, and Robbyn Tolles) have posted frequently asked questions about the new GED exam on Nevada's Web site: www.literacynet.org/nevada.

Potential credentialing system for ABE teachers and tutors

ABE administrators and practitioners throughout the state have been working on a system to recognize and honor the competence and performance of Nevada's ABE teachers and tutors. Nevada's system would be voluntary, as are those in most other states. However, our system would be unique because, unlike that of any others in the nation, Nevada's system would be outcome-based: the main criteria for receiving a credential would be student outcomes. The system is very much in the draft stage and we welcome — indeed, need! — your input. Download a four-page summary from Nevada's Web site or contact Sharyn Yanoshak (702.253.6280, syank@ix.netcom.com).

- Percentage of U.S. teachers with Internet access in their classrooms: 80
 - Percentage who say that the Internet is NOT well integrated into their classrooms: 66
- Source: *blink*, (Earthlink's magazine), Fall 2001

Connecting resources for Nevada's adult workforce

Funds available for projects, professional development



Nevada's mini-grants — For teachers, tutors, and administrators who work in established Nevada programs serving adults who do not have a high school diploma.

Practitioners—for special projects

Mini-grants for up to \$1,000 must address one of the following: integrating technology into the classroom, family literacy, or a research project geared toward analyzing or improving student outcomes.

Administrators—for self-directed training in program management and administration

You may apply for up to \$500 to fund training materials, conferences, workshops, site visits, etc. that focus on administrative practices for ABE/ESL programs. Priority will be given to site visits by or to AEFLA-funded Adult Basic Education programs.

To request an application (specify practitioners or administrators application):

Leave a message at 702.651.4974 and an application will be mailed to you, or download an application from Nevada's literacy Web site (www.literacynet.org/nvadulted/minigrants), or e-mail a message to syank@ix.netcom.com and a WORD file will be e-mailed back to you.

Questions? Contact Sharyn Yanoshak, 702.253.6280.

Applications received by the last Friday of the month will be reviewed during the following month.



MPAEA (Mountain Plains Adult Education Association) Scholarships — For adult education practitioners.

Three scholarships are available: one to assist graduate students, another to develop and implement innovative ideas in adult education, and a third to provide funds for professional development.

Details are available at the MPAEA Web site (www.mpaea.org, follow the “information” link) or from Nevada's Board Members: Vicki Newell (775.356.1007) and Julee Henson (702.799.8655, ext. 341, jahenson@interact.ccsd.net).

Deadlines:
1/1/02 & 1/31/02