



*Bringing Resources to Nevada's Adult Education Community*

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## **ABE programs develop, adopt ESL standards**

Nearly two years ago, the Office of Adult and Vocational Education, U.S. Department of Education, began strongly recommending that all states adopt content standards for adult basic education students. Although Nevada's federally funded ABE programs had been using a nationally accredited assessment instrument (CASAS) since the late 90s, there were no formalized content standards to ensure that adult learners would leave the programs with the tools necessary to carry out their roles and responsibilities as successful workers, parents, citizens, and community members.

Claudia Bianca-DeBay, Nevada's ABE CASAS Manager/Trainer & Resource Specialist, spearheaded the development of Nevada's ESL Content Standards. In March, 2004 she began working with the National CASAS Consortium Content Standards Technical Work Group (comprised of thirteen states). The standards developed by this group were augmented and customized for Nevada, and other states' standards were reviewed as well. Meachell LaSalle, head of Great Basin College's program, and teacher feedback from various AEFLA-funded programs throughout the state informed this stage of the project.

To ensure effective implementation of the standards, Claudia gathered a list of resources from each of the eight AEFLA-funded programs and began matching each program's materials to each standard. This phase took nine months of research (correlating the materials to the CASAS competencies) and writing. Diana Stater, ESL and adult education instructor for the Adult High School program in Carson City; Dawnne Ernette, ESL instructor at Truckee Meadows Community College; and Sheryl Tingle, ESL teacher at Western Nevada Community College were instrumental in completing this phase of the project.

The Standards were rolled out at each of the program sites this past summer. They may be accessed through Nevada's literacy website: [www.literacynet.org/nevada/](http://www.literacynet.org/nevada/), click on "teacher/tutor," then scroll to the ESL section.

The development of the ABE and ASE standards is underway and will be completed and available online by June 2006. For more information, contact Claudia at 775-824-8604, [cdebay@tmcc.edu](mailto:cdebay@tmcc.edu).

**Nevada's Content Standards for Adult ESL Programs are aligned to the National Reporting System levels, CASAS assessments, the 300+ CASAS competencies, and the EFF standards. They include reading, listening and speaking, writing, and grammar and address the beginning literacy, beginning, low intermediate, high intermediate, low advanced, and high advanced levels.**

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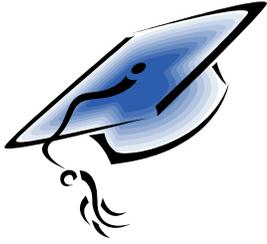
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**"Education and literacy are necessities in a world devoid of certainty but abundant with opportunity. Lives can be transformed — lifted over time from poverty and chaos to dignity and independence. Education offers a ladder on which to climb and a foundation upon which to stand. In this knowledge-based world, earning depends upon learning. Education helps both people and nations rise above their circumstances."**

**— U.S. Secretary of Education  
Margaret Spellings, 2004**



## Movin' on up

According to Brown University researcher John Tyler, economic benefits to the GED (without postsecondary education) accrue only to dropouts who leave school with very low levels of basic skills.

- ◆ Although the increased earnings may be as high as 15 percent, this is usually 15 percent of a low wage or salary, so the GED is far from a ticket out of poverty.
- ◆ There are no earnings differences between high-skilled dropouts with and without a GED unless they go on to postsecondary education.
- ◆ The biggest payoffs of a GED occur for those who use it to access postsecondary education. There is no earnings difference between holders of a GED and high school diploma who have completed a degree program.

With thanks to the unknown source of this list, here are five things you can do right now to support college transition for your students.

1. Take your students on a tour of the college(s) near your program. Some students may grumble that they shouldn't have to go because they are never going to college. Then, they get there and see students — just like themselves — and they begin to see the possibilities.
2. Invite an admissions counselor from the college to speak to your students to give them an overview of the college admission process, student support services, and the college culture.
3. Speak the language of college with your students — semester, academic, schedule, syllabus, text, etc. Define and demystify college-ese. Send away for college catalogs and leave them around for students to look at. Use catalogs in lesson plans.
4. Invite former students who have gone on to college to come and talk about their experiences. If a picture is worth a thousand words, a role model is worth a thousand pictures.
5. Join the National College Transition Network (NCTN, at [www.collegetransition.org](http://www.collegetransition.org)) and keep up with this developing field. Individual membership is free. The goal of the NCTN is to help more adults participate in postsecondary education by supporting adult secondary education programs in establishing and strengthening transition services for adult students with GEDs or other non-traditional diplomas, including ESL students.

### But wait ... there's more!

Here are five more tips, excerpted from “Five Things You Can Do to Help Students Get to College,” by Trish Schneider, *Change Agent*, March 2005, pp. 6-7, [www.nelrc.org/changeagent/](http://www.nelrc.org/changeagent/).

1. Change the culture. Create an atmosphere and incorporate strategies into your program that promote the GED as a stepping stone and not a final destination.
2. Teach critical thinking. By creating a community of learners who are presented with relevant material and who are encouraged to discuss, question, and think about what they are learning, students will be better prepared for the GED Test and for the learning they will have to do in college.
3. Make it seamless. Share your knowledge about the wide variety of post-GED opportunities and give the transitioning student a safe introduction to the structure of higher education.
4. Cross two hurdles with one leap. Make college readiness part of the preparation for the GED exam.
5. It's more than academics. If students are to transition successfully into postsecondary education from ABE, you must help them navigate the often overwhelming bureaucratic hurdles they will face.

**Meachell LaSalle, ABE program director at Great Basin College (775/753-2109, [meachell@gbcnv.edu](mailto:meachell@gbcnv.edu)) and English Instructor Jan Kempster have gotten excellent results with the “Bridge to College English” course (English 080) they developed to prepare second language learners to enter college-level English courses.**

**Last spring, Truckee Meadows Community College piloted CPD 122, a one-credit college success skills class to help students transition from community education to for-credit college ESL classes. “We are delighted that 16 of the 18 students subsequently enrolled at the college,” said Paul Marsala, director of the ABE program. Contact Brad Deeds, project coordinator (775/829-9052, [bdeeds@tmcc.edu](mailto:bdeeds@tmcc.edu)) for more information.**

## Initiative markets, enrolls; students study and succeed

The 18-24 *and more* Initiative, aimed at increasing the GED and high school diploma completion rate for Nevadans between 18 and 64 years old, has distributed toolkits to the top 100 businesses in Las Vegas and Truckee Meadows and to the Adult High School programs and largest businesses in the rural counties. Staff members have also hand-delivered hundreds of brochures to Family Resource Centers and Cooperative Extension offices throughout the state.

Nearly two dozen buses in Las Vegas and Reno sport signs like the one at right, advertising the Initiative

### Enrollment Coordinators

- ★ **Sheila Fairbairn, Las Vegas**
- ★ **Terry Lewis, Sparks Job Connect and Washoe County Library**
- ★ **Vera Jordan, Henderson**

Sparks JobConnect. Students may also study at these enrollment centers.

Once enrolled, a student may also study at one of the many study access centers springing up across the state. Currently there are twelve centers available through Parks and Recreation in the city of Las Vegas and throughout Clark County. Henderson, northern, and rural locations are being firmed up. Or, students with Internet access may choose to study from their homes.

*GED Integrated Online Solution* is also accessible from seven federally funded adult education programs in Las Vegas, Reno, Carson City, and Elko/Winnemucca and from all Adult High School programs. It is typically used as a supplement to classroom-based instruction at these facilities.



### LINCS launches WebQuests for adult learners

The LINCS Technology Training Special Collection ([www.altn.org/techtraining/](http://www.altn.org/techtraining/)) is developing

a series of WebQuests for adult learners and recently launched the first three.

A WebQuest is an online activity that includes a set of tasks, step-by-step instructions, vocabulary activities, evaluation, and additional activities. Go to [www.altn.org/webquests/](http://www.altn.org/webquests/) to access *How to Find a Good Job*, *Eating right for a Healthier Life*, and *Managing Your Money*.



**This year, get your GED or adult high school diploma and increase your earning power.**

**It's FREE!**

**Call 1-866-444-1824**

**Do It For Your Future!**

## Give Yourself the Edge!

Sponsored by: Nevada's Statewide 18-24 and more Credential Initiative

All students must first visit an enrollment center so that knowledgeable coordinators can assess to ensure the student is ready to use *GED Integrated Online Solution* to study (otherwise, the student is referred to a more appropriate local program). The centers are staffed three hours/day, five days/week. Current locations are the Washoe County, Las Vegas, and North Las Vegas libraries; the Gibson branch of the Henderson library; and

Sparks JobConnect. Students may also study at these enrollment centers.

Once enrolled, a student may also study at one of the many study access centers springing up across the state. Currently there are twelve centers available through Parks and Recreation in the city of Las Vegas and throughout Clark County. Henderson, northern, and rural locations are being firmed up. Or, students with Internet access may choose to study from their homes.

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**The federal government authorizes appropriations for adult basic education and literacy programs under the Workforce Investment Act. Approximately three million adult students per year receive basic literacy instruction in federally funded adult literacy programs.**

- ◆ **Americans spent \$64.38 per taxpayer on video games in 2002. The federal government spent \$3.56 per taxpayer on adult basic education and literacy instruction in the same period.**
- ◆ **In 2003, Congress appropriated \$575 million for state grants for adult basic education and literacy programs. In the same period, Americans spent \$838 million on premium label ice cream.**

—ProLiteracy Worldwide Media Tool Kit 2005

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## Upcoming conferences—fall 2005

**PROLITERACY**  
Worldwide



**October 26-29 Tucson, AZ**

**315/422-9121, ext. 352; <http://www.proliteracy.org/conference/>**

ProLiteracy expects to attract as many as 1,000 adult literacy and basic education leaders and professionals to its annual conference at the Starr Pass Marriott Resort and Spa.

The event offers more than 80 professional development workshops for program managers, trainers, volunteers, and teachers working with adults who want to improve their literacy skills or for whom English is a second language. To better meet their individual professional development needs, attendees will be able to select workshops from one of six program strands; a seventh strand will offer topics specially selected to meet the needs of the adult students who also attend the conference.



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR ADULTS  
WITH SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS**

**November 12-15 Denver, CO**

**800/496-9222; [www.naasln.org/Conference-Main.html](http://www.naasln.org/Conference-Main.html)**

This international conference begins on November 12<sup>th</sup> at the Grand Hyatt with a special pre-conference session bringing NAASLN membership together with State Adult Education Directors and staff to discuss developing state and local policies, critical partnerships, professional development, and effective practices for serving persons with special learning needs.

Additional pre-conference sessions and the full NAASLN Conference agenda target education, employment, human service, rehabilitation, corrections administrators, and service providers working with adults with special learning needs.

More than 50 diverse sessions will target current evidence-based research, ESOL and special learning needs, exemplary partnership models, adaptive technology, successful programs that have forged consumers as partners, new funding opportunities, and testing accommodations.