

## PinPoint pins down best sites for adult programs

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When Nevada's federally funded Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language (ABE/ESL) programs plan for capacity and service, two issues drive the process:

- We need to justify that there is an increasing need for ABE/ESL programs in Nevada due to population growth and demographics.
- We need to use relevant, reliable, current data to determine where ABE/ESL program sites should be located in our communities.

The first component is easily demonstrated by tracking growth and the changing nature of our population over the last 20 years. PinPoint addresses the second of these two components.

PinPoint is a collaborative project between the Nevada Department of Education and individual school districts. Its purpose is to use student demographics to identify areas of need related to ABE/ESL.

The process is based on two major assumptions:

1. Where there are children who are limited in their English proficiency (LEP), their parents are most likely similarly limited; and
2. Children with a demonstrated need for free and reduced school lunch (FRL) tend to come from families whose basic education skills might be limited, contributing to their earning relatively lower incomes.

PinPoint takes advantage of data generated by all of Nevada's public K-12 schools. It is comprehensive, detailed, accurate, and updated annually in the fall. In these reports, each school can show the locations of its students who are LEP or FRL

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## How does Nevada Adult Ed compare to the nation?

Nevada's AEFLA-funded programs stack up very well! In *Thursday Notes* (2/22/07), the Office of Vocational and Adult Education provided national performance data for 2005-2006. Nevada's educational outcomes are ahead of the aggregate — in the top two quartiles — in all but the ESL low advanced level.

The data is reported through the National Reporting System (NRS) for each educational functioning level. (Each educational level is roughly equivalent to two "grade levels.") Each state reports on the percentage of students completing a level within the academic year.

Although each state is "evaluated" according to performance measures negotiated annually with the U.S. Department of Education, the comparison to nationwide figures provides insight into our part of the whole.

% of students completing an educational level in 2005-06		
	National	State of NV
ABE Beginning Literacy	38	47
ABE Beg. Basic Ed.	40	47
ABE Intermediate Low	40	50
ABE Intermediate High	36	39
ASE Low	42	55
ESL Beginning Literacy	37	57
ESL Beginning	37	47
ESL Intermediate Low	43	47
ESL Intermediate High	40	46
ESL Low Advanced	26	22
ESL High Advanced	24	45
Total	38	44

# Five things you can do right now to support college transition for your students

*From the National College Transition Network (NCTN)*

1. **Take your students on a tour of the college(s) near your program.** At Dorcas Place Family Literacy and Learning Center in Providence, RI, *everyone* at the center goes to visit the local community college once a year. Many students grumble that they shouldn't have to go because they are never going to college. Then, they get there and see other 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, financial aid, student support services, and the college culture.** Colleges benefit when students are well informed. Part of their job is outreach to potential students. It's all about relationships and it's a win-win situation.
3. **Speak the language of college with your students – semester, academic schedule, syllabus, text, etc.** Define and demystify college-ese. Send away for college catalogues and leave them around for students to look at. Use catalogues in lesson plans.
4. **Invite a former student who has gone on to college to come back and talk about their experience.** If a picture is worth a 1,000 words, a role model is worth a 1,000 pictures.



NCTN's goal is to increase the number of adult learners who access and succeed in postsecondary education. The Network supports adult educators and program directors in establishing and strengthening adult transition services through technical assistance, professional

collegial sharing, advocacy, and increased visibility. Additional partners include colleges, universities and workforce development professionals. There are currently more than 800 members.

Free individual membership includes:

- original, downloadable publications on promising practices and research
- tools for program development
- annotated links to research, funding, and policy on transition and related issues
- workshops at regional or national conferences
- updated lists of professional development opportunities
- bimonthly eNewsletter

To join, visit [www.collegetransition.org](http://www.collegetransition.org) and follow the links or email Cynthia Zafft ([czafft@worlded.org](mailto:czafft@worlded.org)). The new student website is at <http://www.collegeforadults.org>.

**More on transitions**, from the Center for Adult English Language Acquisition: [Supporting Adult English Language Learners' Transitions to Postsecondary Education](#), a Brief for all practitioners and administrators who work with adult English language learners. Go to [www.cal.org/caela/](http://www.cal.org/caela/), click on "ESL Resources," then on "Briefs."



## PinPoint *(continued from page 1)*

In our two major urban areas, Reno and Las Vegas, Geographical Information System (GIS) maps will be developed to identify individual LEP and FRL students and show the pattern of their locations. The maps clearly and graphically identify their neighborhoods. (In the rural areas, an Excel spreadsheet showing school-by-school information is sufficient to derive locations, since the number of schools is limited.) Confidentiality is maintained in all cases.

Additionally, planners will be able to overlay the location of all the current ABE/ESL sites operated by the programs in the area to determine which neighborhoods with high needs are being served and which ones are not.

Preliminary maps for planning the 2007–2008 school year have been generated by Vanessa Simpson, GIS analyst at the Washoe County School District. In Clark County, Mary Ramirez, director of adult education, is working to complete the process. Adult High School Diploma Programs operated by the two school districts will be overlaid on the maps.

All programs can then cooperatively plan to locate their sites based on the best available information and can update the information each year.

**Build it and they will come ... if you build it in the right spot!**

# Standards from a teacher's lens

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During the past few months, we've been discussing Nevada's Content Standards for the federally funded ESL and EL/Civics programs. These Standards are the broad, general statements that define what students should know and be able to do. We've also talked about objectives — specific, measurable statements attached to the Standards.

So what's the difference between ESL objectives and EL/Civics objectives? ESL objectives address a learners' personal life skill needs, whereas EL/Civics objectives expand a learner's horizon to include involvement in his/her community.

For example, an ESL objective could be to make an appointment with a doctor, whereas a civics objective might be to locate free or low-cost medical services in the community. An ESL objective might be to write a check accurately, while a civics objective would be to locate banks in the community and compare services. As one teacher remarked, "Oh! ESL objectives are personal and specific, and EL Civics objectives are community and more general. These are comfort words, words we can understand!"

Experience shows that teachers who successfully implement standards and objectives in the classroom identify what they do in their day-to-day activities, reflect on what they do in the classroom, and are clear about how the standards could be used outside the classroom and in the community. The terms "objectives", "competencies," "standards," etc. simply tag what has already been identified in the teacher's "world." Many teachers realize they have been teaching many of the standards all along. They are now able to affix the appropriate term to what it is that they have been doing.

As I work with teachers implementing the standards — with our thoughtful discussions, clear definitions of terms, and visual examples — I see they are excited about using standards to improve instruction and enhance student learning. Their lenses are clear and they wear them comfortably!

**Understanding the difference between ESL and EL/Civics objectives enables teachers to determine which objectives they want to focus on in their classrooms.**

**The standards implementation process enables teachers to better organize their lessons and clarify what they are teaching and what their students are learning.**

**More on Content Standards**, from the Center for Adult English Language Acquisition: *Understanding Adult ESL Content Standards*, a Brief that defines terminology, summarizes instructional benefits, describes characteristics of content standards in the adult ESL field, and discusses existing research about the implementation of content standards. Go to [www.cal.org/caela/](http://www.cal.org/caela/), click on "ESL Resources," then on "Briefs."



## Funding ends

The research dissemination efforts of the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) ended on March 31, 2007, with the termination of the federal funding. The existing research publications, all back issues of *Focus on Basics*, training and teaching resources, and other materials will continue to be available on the NCSALL Web site at [www.ncsall.net](http://www.ncsall.net). All funding for NCSALL will end on July 31, 2007.

## Education's payout

Estimated lifetime earnings, according to figures provided by the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas:

\$ 976,350:	Someone with less than a ninth-grade education
\$1,150,698:	High school dropout
\$1,455,253:	High school graduate
\$2,567,174:	Bachelor degree

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## Northwest Regional Institute May 10-11

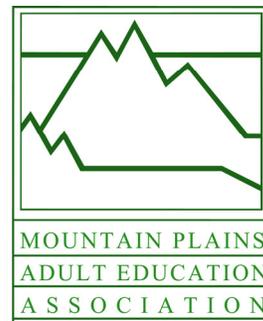
ProLiteracy America, in conjunction with the Anchorage Literacy Project and the Literacy Network of Washington, is sponsoring a two-day Institute in Portland, OR. There will be two tracks:

“The ABCs of Student Engagement: Active Learning, Building Community, and Contextualized Instruction” is geared toward instructors, teachers, trainers, and tutors. A one-hour preparatory online course is included in the registration fee.

“Performance Accountability Initiative: Data Collection and Management” is for program administrators, managers, and coordinators. This is the first of three modules, part of the Dollar General/ProLiteracy Performance Accountability Initiative. Participa-

tion in this session is limited and must be pre-approved. To apply, contact Melanie Daniels, project manager, at [mdaniels@proliteracy.org](mailto:mdaniels@proliteracy.org).

For more information on the Institute, call 315/422-9121, ext. 283 or e-mail [info@proliteracy.org](mailto:info@proliteracy.org).



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## Annual Conference: Navigating the Waters of Lifelong Learning April 25-28

For all lifelong learning educators, including those working with 21st Century programs, community education programs, continuing and higher education, correctional education, adult basic education (ABE) programs, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and GED programs.

[www.mpaea.org](http://www.mpaea.org)