

Nevada Adult Education

Vision

Adult Basic Education is an integral component in Nevada's human service system, effectively responding to the needs of adult learners.

Mission

Our mission is to provide responsive, quality educational opportunities that will enable our students to achieve their work, civic, family, and personal goals.

Guiding Principles

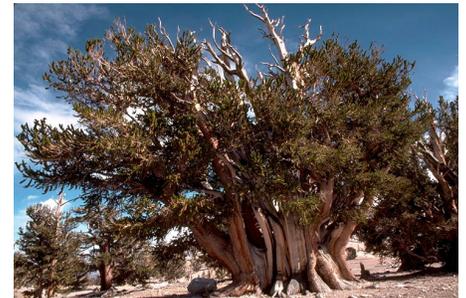
Excellence – We are committed to a quality adult education system that promotes continuous improvement and is held accountable for performance results.

Service – We value the dignity of each individual and the inherent ability to succeed. We respect the cultural diversity of our students. We encourage feedback from students and stakeholders in our customer-focused delivery system.

Innovation – We encourage creative ideas and support the integration of research and best practices.

Synergy – We believe that by working together, both internally and externally as part of an integrated system, we can achieve more than as separate entities.

Professionalism – We support knowledgeable and dedicated educators by encouraging integrity, professional growth, and self-improvement.



The State Tree of Nevada is the Bristlecone Pine, one of the oldest living things on earth. It is hardy, drought-resistant, and determined to grow where other things cannot. It is used as a symbol for Adult Education in Nevada because it reflects tenacity, durability, and dedication to purpose.



Perfect storm brewing?

A new report, "America's Perfect Storm: Three Forces Changing Our Nation's Future," uses data from a variety of national educational surveys and studies to answer the question: What educational and economic forces are affecting our country? Authors Irwin Kirsch, Henry Braun, Kentaro Yamamoto, and Andrew Sum conclude that we are in the midst of a "perfect storm" influenced by three factors:

1. **Disparity in literacy and numeracy skills** — a wide racial and ethnic gap in education means that large numbers of adults do not have the ability to "fully participate in an increasingly competitive work environment."
2. **Changes in the economy** — fewer manufacturing jobs and more jobs requiring a college-level education mean that those with both more education and higher skills can expect consistently higher incomes over their lifetimes.
3. **Demographic changes** — our population is becoming more diverse and older. This means that most job growth will come from immigrants rather than nonimmigrant workers. Also, most new Hispanic immigrants — one of the largest growing immigrant groups — lack a high school diploma and report not speaking English well.

The report warns that over the next 25 years millions of students and adults will be unable to qualify for higher-paying jobs. The authors advocate for new policies supporting education and training, so that key segments of our population will not be competing for fewer jobs with newer immigrants as well as workers in other economies around the world.

The report was funded by the Educational Testing Service. The executive summary and full report are available at www.ets.org. Search for "perfect storm" (upper right search box).



Assess yourself!

The AdultEd Online project recently posted two assessment tools at www.adultedonline.org:

⇒ The *Technology Integration Self*

Assessment measures skills

for using technology in the classroom. The tool assesses 12 competency areas, produces a customized professional development plan, and provides strategies and resources for improving your skills.

⇒ The *Distance Teaching Self Assessment* explores what is required to use distance education with adult learners. The program provides a personal profile summarizing those areas where you feel prepared and those where you may want to get some training to help you become a successful distance teacher. Various resources will also be suggested.

Study calls for expansion, restructuring of adult education system

Stephen Reder's report "Adult Education and Postsecondary Success" compares GED holders, High School Diploma holders, and those without a high school credential.

Focusing on long-term postsecondary education outcomes, Reder used the Adult Education Component of the National Household Education Survey (NHES 2005) and the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL 2003) to produce a comprehensive picture we haven't seen before.

The report identifies important barriers (to postsecondary success) besides academic skills. The findings indicate a need for expanding and restructuring our adult education system and for raising skill levels of students well above the passing level of the GED if they wish to succeed in postsecondary education. The 33-page report is at <http://www.caalusa.org/rederpolicybrief.pdf>.

Education pays — in many ways

"What difference does college make to individuals and to society?" is answered in an update to the 2004 report "Education Pays."

Using census, earnings, and longitudinal study data from the U.S. and nine other countries, this report finds the gap in median earnings between U.S. high school and college graduates has increased significantly in the past 30 years. For example, 46% of those aged 35-44 with a bachelor's degree earned \$60,000 or more, while only 12% of high school graduates earned that much.

According to a summary of the report in the summer 2007 issue of the *Adult Basic Education and Literacy Journal*:

- The college degree itself matters, and not just financially. Those with a four-year degree now earn much more (37% for men, 41% for women) than do adults with only some college education. College graduates have lower unemployment rates, vote and volunteer more, have improved health outcomes, and a higher percentage save for their children's college education.
- In comparing higher education in different countries, the report also shows the U.S. spends more (as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product) on higher education than any of the other OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries, but that (including two-year vocational training programs) the U.S. has fewer adults who have completed a postsecondary education program than do Korea, Canada, Sweden, and Japan. Gender and racial gaps continue in college enrollment, which are "significantly lower for men than for women and lower for blacks and Hispanics than for whites and Asian Americans."

The report concludes that investments in higher education pay off in both dollars and in improvements to quality of life for individuals and for society, making it imperative that we renew efforts to narrow the educational opportunity gaps in American society.

For a link to the full 48-page report, visit www.collegeboard.com.

Editor: Sharyn Yanoshak ■ Phone: 702/253-6280 ■ Fax: 702/651-4538 ■ E-mail: saylv@cox.net
College of Southern Nevada, 3200 E. Cheyenne Ave. – K1B, North Las Vegas, Nevada 89030

Back issues archived at: <http://www.literacynet.org/nvadulted/newsletters.html>

Direct address changes to: robert.dorleans@csn.edu Phone: 702/651-4974 Fax: 702/651-4538

Straight talk about health

Thanks to Beccah Rothschild, School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley for this book review, which appeared in *Adult Basic Education and Literacy Journal* (Summer 2007), pages 113-114



Health Literacy from A to Z: Practical Ways to Communicate Your Health Message, by Helen Osborne. Published by Jones and Bartlett, Sudbury, MA, 2005. 293 pages, \$27.95.

Health Literacy from A to Z: Practical Ways to Communicate Your Health Message is designed to demonstrate methods to improve health communication. As the cover states, it focuses on "practical, cost-effective, time-efficient ways to improve health communication and patient understanding." It is written with a broad audience in mind, including health providers, public health specialists, health educators, practice managers, literacy teachers, professors, students, scientists, librarians, patients, and family members.

The book offers 46 chapters on health literacy and health communication topics, arranged alphabetically (beginning with "About Health Literacy" and ending with "Zest and Pizzazz"). It is meant to be used as a resource, allowing readers to search the book by subject. Examples of other chapters that may interest adult educators include Assessing Readability; Choosing, Adapting, and Reviewing Teaching Materials; Consumer Health Libraries; Internet Information; and Literacy: Communicating with People Who Do Not Read or Read Well. Every chapter is broken down into three sections: Starting Points; Strategies, Ideas and Solutions; and, Sources to Learn More.

Beccah's take

While each chapter is meant to stand alone, I recommend that readers begin with the first chapter before skipping to others that are of particular interest. The first chapter does a very good job at presenting the basics. The issue of how to define health literacy is frequently debated within the field, and Osborne wisely avoids offering just one definition, but offers three widely accepted and used ones, plus a fourth of her own. For people new to the field of health literacy, this chapter provides a strong introduction.

I have worked in the fields of adult literacy and health literacy for more than 10 years. *Health Literacy from A to Z* addresses — and answers — many questions that I am frequently asked. Since the information in the book is provided in a straightforward, nontechnical manner, I am confident in recommending particular chapters as resources. For example, queries that I receive from professionals in the health care field would cause me to recommend chapters such as "Assessing Readability," "Internet Information," and "Older Adults," to learn the basics of these topics. Whereas each chapter is quite short and to the point, the additional resources appear to be quite useful.

The general scholarship level of the book is strong, and compares well with other well-known books and manuscripts on similar topics. Because *Health Literacy from A to Z* is intended for such a variety of audiences, none of the chapters go into an overwhelmingly great amount of detail. For readers looking for just the very basics, this is helpful. However, readers looking for more than just the basics will have to do additional reading and research.

Additionally, while it is not intended that the book be read cover-to-cover, the arrangement of the chapters in an alphabetical format does lessen the flow of the book and any possibility of natural segues. For example, it seems logical to me that the chapters on "Internet" and "Website Design" should have followed each other rather than be separated by 23 chapters.

The book is timely because the field of health literacy is growing, and the topic is becoming recognized nationally as a critical issue. One way in which this book differs from other books in the field is its ease of use and lack of formality; it is not intimidating. *Health Literacy from A to Z* is a valuable resource, and it contributes to the fields of both adult literacy and health literacy.

"One way in which this book differs from other books in the field is its ease of use and lack of formality; it is not intimidating."

Eighty percent of low literate patients and health care providers surveyed by California's Health Literacy Initiative (www.cahealthliteracy.org/) said patients with low literacy had trouble with medical paperwork.

Sixty-five percent of patients surveyed reported avoiding going to the doctor because of low skills. Three-fourths of the medical professionals surveyed said they knew of medical errors related to low literacy. Only 11 percent of physicians responding to the survey had any formal training in health literacy.

This professional development project is a leadership activity funded by a grant from the Nevada State Department of Education, Workforce Investment Act, Title II (Adult Education and Family Literacy). There is no discrimination or denial of participation on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion or religious creed, national origin, sexual orientation, ancestry, or disability.

Register now for November — December workshops

Reserve your spot for these free, six-hour trainings, which qualify for .5 credit toward renewal of Nevada's ABE Certificate of Performance and for .5 Inservice Renewal Credit for Nevada's Teaching License.

What IS "Good" Teaching?

Presenter: Claudia Bianca-DeBay

Objectives: Become aware of HOW you teach, explore other perspectives of teaching, and decide which perspectives work best for you and your students. Learn easy ways to improve your teaching practice using proven effective strategies such as content standards, student goal-setting and holistic alternative assessments. Make concrete plans that will incorporate your newly founded beliefs of what "good" teaching is.

11/17/07, Las Vegas. Nita Russell-Latham, Catholic Charities, 702/693-6761,
jlatham@catholiccharities.com

Strategies, Techniques, Applications, and Lessons for Writing in the ESL, ABS, and GED Classroom (Part 1: Introduction)

Presenter: Gail Hettich

Objectives: Practice active-learning strategies that involve all students. Create writing lessons that can be adapted to every student's level. Learn a variety of vocabulary development group activities that promote writing development.

11/17/07, Reno. Brad Deeds, Truckee Meadows Community College, 775/829-9052, bdeeds@tmcc.edu

12/1/07, Las Vegas. Fay Savedra-Gamboa, College of Southern NV, 702/651-4722, fay.savedra@csn.edu

