NEVADA Connections

Bringing Resources to Nevada's Adult Education Community

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Assess yourself on technology

How much do you know about integrating technology into your adult education program? The Office of Vocational and Adult Education has funded a self-assessment tool for teachers and administrators who want to find out!

The online *Technology Integration Self-Assessment* at www.adultedonline.org not only identifies classroom technology integration skills in 12 areas, but addresses importance to teaching as well. The tool identifies needs, allows the user to prioritize them, then creates a customized Professional Development Plan to address them — all within about 20 minutes. The program provides strategies and resources available now, and allows the user to modify and update the Plan. Administrators may invite staff to take the assessment and share results, or individuals may do it on their own. The *Self-Assessment* is getting rave reviews from users throughout the country.

Also available at the same site to teachers and administrators is a *Distance Teaching Self Assessment* that explores requirements and provides suggestions for ways to learn more about distance teaching for adults.

The project is a joint effort of the Project IDEAL Support Center at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research and the Sacramento County Office of Education.

Transition tips

The Fall 2007 issue of Virginia's *Progress* newsletter contains several pertinent articles about transition. Of note:

- ✓ The piece on incentives (page 3) shows how using incentives for low-level ESL students helped create a 137% increase in perfect attendance.
- ✓ The "surveys" piece beginning on page 6 looks at postsecondary outcomes and discusses why GED holders consistently fall midway between high school graduates and program drop-outs. One finding: Socio-economic diversity, such as differences in income, class and other indicators of family socio-economic status, is not as significant a factor as are other risk factors. The piece includes recommendations for change.

To access the publication, go to www.valrc.org/, click on "publications," then on "progress" under "our newsletters" on the right. Navigate to the Fall 2007 issue.

Online math resources

Math is an increasingly critical skill required for college entry and employment, but evidence suggests that many adult education teachers may not have a strong background in teaching it.

Teachers may find help in creating more engaging math classes from the lesson plans in the "instructors" section of the Science and Numeracy Special Collection at www.literacynet.org/sciencelincs/.

A "learners" section provides online resources for direct and independent use by students.

The listed websites are arranged by the topics suggested in "A Framework for Adult Numeracy Standards," from a study by the Adult Numeracy Network (www.literacynet.org/ann/).

"In a completely rational society, the best of us would be teachers and the rest of us would have to settle for something else." — Lee Iacocca

It's intense — and it works!

The recently released report "Findings in ESL: A Quick Reference to Findings of CAAL Research on ESL Programs at Community Colleges" noted that high-intensity instruction appears to be an effective strategy for increasing learning gains and transition to credit studies for noncredit ESL students. The following is taken from the CAAL report.

The available evidence indicates that one major factor affecting how much ESL students improve their English is the total number of instructional hours they take. Most noncredit ESL programs meet for three to six hours per week over the course of a semester. ESL professionals believe that it takes between 500 to 1000 hours for students beginning at the lowest levels of proficiency (the vast majority of ESL students) to attain the higher levels of noncredit ESL and/or to be prepared for transitions to credit studies. At the rate of three to six hours per week, it would take students many years to attain a high level of proficiency— especially considering that most colleges offer courses only during two 12 to 18 week semesters.

This problem is compounded by the fact that most noncredit programs have "open entry/open exit" policies. Students can enroll in a class at any time during the semester and are not required to attend all the hours offered by that class after they have enrolled. As a result, many students do not attend all of the available hours of instruction even during the semesters in which they are enrolled, and it takes them more semesters to achieve significant learning gains than if they attended all of the available hours.

Research on high-intensity, managed enrollment classes indicates that most students improve their English far more in a shorter period than do students in other ESL classes.

Many ESL professionals believe that students become discouraged by the slow rate of progress that results from attending only a few hours of instruction per week and that they set their goals at levels they can attain in a year or two. A substantial number of students drop out and subsequently re-enroll in noncredit ESL classes. CAAL research conducted at the City College of San Francisco indicates that these "stop out" students attend class for about the same number of hours and achieve the same learning gains as students who are continuously enrolled.

To increase learning gains, a number of colleges have introduced "high-intensity" classes — classes that meet between 12 and 20 hours per week or more. Most high-intensity classes also have "managed enrollment" policies. This means that students can usually only enroll at the beginning of the semester and they are dropped from the class if they have a very large number of absences. Research on high-intensity, managed enrollment classes indicates that most students improve their English far more in a shorter period than do students in other ESL classes. Moreover, they are more likely to advance through more levels of English proficiency during the time in which they are enrolled in noncredit ESL, and they are also more likely to make transitions to credit studies.

It appears that far more ESL students than would be expected are willing to attend for large numbers of hours per week if they can improve their English more quickly.

Although students in high-intensity programs learn English at a faster rate, they will not progress through levels of ESL more quickly if classes teach only one level per semester. As a result, many high-intensity courses teach two or more levels each semester, and some promote students to higher-level classes at mid-semester. At least one well-regarded program (at Mira Costa Community College near San Diego) is structured around single-level, high-intensity classes that are half a semester in length.

Colleges assume that high-intensity courses require a larger commitment of time each week than many adult students are willing to make. As a result, most colleges offer only a few courses of this kind— usually to students at the higher levels of ESL. However, at a few colleges, high-intensity instruction is offered to students at all levels, and, in some cases, a large percentage of students select this option. Moreover, some colleges that have offered a limited number of high-intensity courses are expanding their offerings in response to student demand. It appears that far more ESL students than would be expected are willing to attend for large numbers of hours per week if they can improve their English more quickly. The full potential of high-intensity, managed enrollment courses has yet to be determined. But from the evidence available, it appears that high-intensity tracks can make an important contribution to increasing learning gains and transitions in most ESL programs.

The entire summary document is available in PDF format from the CAAL website (http://www.caalusa.org/, publications page, item ESL6). It may be purchased as a bound document directly from CAAL ($10 prepaid plus postage, bheitner@caalusa.org for instructions).

Source: *Findings in ESL: A Quick Reference to Findings of CAAL Research on ESL Programs at Community Colleges*, Forrest P. Chisman, Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy, July 22, 2008.

NAE News — meet the Board!

NAE President lives lifelong learning

NAE President Bob Henry
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Bob Henry brings leadership, vision, and organizational expertise to his position as president of the NAE Board. His sense of humor takes the tedium out of the important task of working through the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws as the group lays the groundwork for the recently formed organization.

His facility with such "legalese" is perhaps a reflection of his extensive educational background. Bob studied mathematics education as an undergraduate, is degreed as an education specialist, and holds master's degrees in counseling and in secondary mathematics, as well as an educational administrator's certificate. And he is not done! He is currently writing his dissertation for his doctorate in Educational Leadership from UNLV.

Bob currently serves as a director in the Adult Education Department of the Education Services Division at the Clark County School District (CCSD), working with at-risk youth and adults. He previously supervised Juvenile Corrections programs and alternative high schools for CCSD, and oversaw several programs for gifted and talented students and for those with special needs.

Prior to his work with the at-risk population, he served as director of program development with the Special Education Division at CCSD. "I supervised administrative personnel providing support services to school programs as they provided special education services to comprehensive schools," he said. "Additionally I supervised the gifted and talented program and the district's special education schools."

In his "spare time" Bob teaches and heads the counseling program for the University of Phoenix, Las Vegas campus.

The Philadelphia native grew up in Schenectady, New York. He moved to Las Vegas nearly 15 years ago and loves the town! "We're coming into that time of the year when I enjoy telling my friends back east that I had to scrape the sunshine off the windshield of my car again this morning!"

World traveler passionate about helping Nevadans

NAE Treasurer Linda Bogle
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NAE Treasurer Linda Bogle grew up on Oahu, earned her master's degree in education in Miami, and raised her two children in Reno. She has worked for more than thirty years in the school districts of Hawaii and Reno and has been a counselor at Washoe Adult High School since 1982.

"I love my job," she said, "because I can help give students a second chance at life and see them succeed."

She is also passionate about her work on the NAE Board. "I believe this organization will unite Nevada's adult educators and improve their service to the community through the sharing of their combined knowledge, wisdom, and experience."

An avid reader, Linda also serves as librarian for her church. You might expect this grandmother of three to enjoy adventurous traveling to places such as Russia, Peru, and Israel, but you might be surprised to know she has also parasailed, skydived, and bungee-jumped! But not to worry — when it comes to NAE's money, Linda takes no

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Prepare for life's U-turns

Adapted from *First Monday Tip from Kit,* September 2008
Kit Prendergast, Career and Life Coach, www.careerconnectionssn.com/

We need to know that we will have unwanted U-turns in life — those events that have significant impacts on our daily lives. Our parents do grow older, our jobs can go away, and a slump in the economy can throw lives into a tailspin.

Though we cannot always control the U-turns, we can prepare ourselves for them. Here are some suggestions:

- ✓ **Keep life simple**. Make sure your days are manageable and you are not over-extended. Simplify as much as you can so that if you are pulled away, your home and family can keep going.
- ✓ **Stay organized**. This is a three-part step.
  1. **Know your support team**, the people who can step in and help with family and work if needed. Be ready to delegate if necessary.
  2. **Keep your finances organized.** At work and home, set up your bookkeeping so that you can leave for a couple of weeks without risking an all-out financial crisis.
  3. **Work ahead.** Avoid leaving all your tasks until the last minute. Cramming the night before an exam may have worked for you in college, but it will leave you with no contingency plan in real life.
- ✓ **Practice flexibility**. When it comes right down to it, our ability to be flexible is what determines our ability to cope with life's U-turns. Stretch those flexibility muscles on the small things in daily life.

U-turns come in many shapes and sizes. They can be that call in the middle of the night, or they may be gradual changes in your direction. Either way, a little preparation can go a long way toward releasing you to focus on the crisis, not on daily routines.