

Brad Deeds becomes State Director of Adult Education

Brad Deeds is on the job as Nevada's new Occupational and Continuing Education Coordinator in the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education. For the past six years, he served at Truckee Meadows Community College as Manager of Adult Basic Education and in 2010 was an Administrator-of-the-Year candidate. Throughout his stint, he was responsible for launching innovative transitions to postsecondary programs and advocated for adult education at the local, state, and national levels.

The Midwest native earned his Bachelor's degree in Print Journalism and English from the University of Southern California, then his Master's in Teaching English as a Second Language (M.A.-TESOL) from the University of Nevada, Reno. Brad recently served on the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education Immigration Workgroup and is Nevada's Single Point of Contact for national adult education legislative alerts. He is a founding member and current recording secretary of Nevada Adult Educators (NAE). He is also president-elect of the Mountain Plains Adult Education Association (MPAEA).



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Colleagues know Brad as an energetic team player with a constant focus on students. "The reason I love working in adult education is our ability to change lives, while simultaneously lifting the economy of Nevada," he said. "Working for our wonderful students and helping them set and achieve their goals — be it getting a job promotion, obtaining their GEDs and making the transition to college, helping their children do their homework and graduate from high school, or raising the socioeconomic level of an entire community — is the most satisfying and humbling work I've ever done. During my time at TMCC, Mr. Marsala and the dedicated staff and terrific instructors at TMCC set and met high standards for our work, always keeping the students at the forefront of any decision to better the program.

"I am excited to now have the opportunity to work closely with like-minded and talented colleagues throughout the state, engaging our students and staff in advocating for adult education locally, across Nevada, and in our nation's Capitol. I am confident that Nevada can become a national leader in adult education through quality and innovative programming and continuous improvement in our outcomes and accountability, while always remaining student-centered. In difficult economic times, the best strategy to revive the fortunes of the state is to fund adult education. Every dollar you invest in adult education will be multiplied in return through increased tax revenues, decreased health care costs, more people lifting themselves out of the social service system, decreased incarceration rates, and increased civic participation and upward economic mobility for our state's workers. Adult education is truly the solution!"



OVAE launches new Web site

The Office of Vocational and Adult Education recently launched <http://lincs.ed.gov/>. The site carries a LINC (Literacy Information and Communication System) banner and incorporates the content and functions of the old NIFL (National Institute for Literacy) site. The site holds a wealth of resources for adult educators, including professional development opportunities, research reports, subject-oriented Resource Collections, and links to LINC's popular discussion lists. The goal of the LINC project continues to be to improve communication and information exchange in the field of adult education and literacy nationwide.

Is multitasking good for you?



More than four in five people multitask, and 67 percent think they are good at it, according to a 2007 nationwide telephone survey by Apex Performance, a Charlotte-based

leader development and peak performance training firm. “But such a skill is a fallacy,” said founder Dr. Louis Csoka, “because you cannot simultaneously attend to one thing and do another.”

A recent article by Sam Anderson on multitasking⁽¹⁾ cited David Meyer, director of the Brain, Cognition, and Action Laboratory at the University of Michigan and a recognized expert on multitasking: “When you think you’re doing two things at once, you’re almost always just switching rapidly between them, leaking a little mental efficiency with every switch.” Meyer says this is because the brain processes different kinds of information on a variety of separate “channels” — a language channel, a visual channel, an auditory channel, etc. — each of which

can process only one stream of information at a time. If you overburden a channel, the brain becomes inefficient and mistake-prone. The classic example is driving while talking on a cell phone, two tasks that conflict across a range of obvious channels: Steering and dialing are both manual tasks, looking out the windshield and reading a phone screen are both visual. “Even talking on a hands-free phone can be dangerous. If the person on the other end of the phone is describing a visual scene — say, the layout of a room full of furniture — that conversation can actually occupy your visual channel enough to impair your ability to see what’s around you on the road.”

The only time multitasking does work efficiently, Meyer says, is when multiple simple tasks operate on entirely separate channels — for example, folding laundry (a visual-manual task) while listening to a stock report (a verbal task). But real-world scenarios rarely fit those specifications.

Brain imaging and other studies⁽²⁾ have shown the impact of multitasking on mental clarity, efficiency, and physical health — and it’s not good. Using brain scans, Professor Russell Poldrack, a psychologist at the University of California, found that trying to learn while doing something else — such as doing homework while watching TV — sends information to an inappropriate part of the brain: If we multi-task while studying, the information goes into the striatum, a region of the brain involved in learning new skills, from

where it is difficult to retrieve facts and ideas. If we are not distracted, it heads to the hippocampus, a region involved in storing and recalling information.

Studies by Gloria Mark, an “interruption scientist” at the University of California, show that when people are frequently diverted from one task to another they work faster, but produce less. Glenn Wilson, a psychiatrist at the University of London, reported that just being in a situation where you are able to text and email can knock ten points from your IQ. This is similar to the head-fog caused by losing a night’s sleep. An American study reported in the *Journal Of Experimental Psychology* found that it took students far longer to solve complicated math problems when they had to switch to other tasks — in fact, they were up to 40 percent slower. The same study also found multitasking has a negative physical effect, as it prompts the release of stress hormones and adrenaline. What to do?

- “You just can’t overcome the way the brain is wired,” said Dr. Csoka. “Habitual multitasking may even result in a situation where you can’t focus even if you wanted to. But you can learn to shift your focus and concentration in a way that improves your ability to attend to what matters most.”
- Meditate! Brain scans of non-religious Westerners who meditate show increased development in regions associated with memory and attention.
- Practice with simple tasks. Paul Dux, a neuroscientist at Australia’s Queensland University cited in the Nash article, trained people over two weeks to do two very simple tasks at the same time: pressing a button in response to a visual cue and saying a word in response to a verbal cue. He found the volunteers got significantly faster at the tasks and their brains processed information more quickly. But Dux admits it’s not true multitasking of the sort that could enable us to achieve several complex things quickly.
- Timing: If you absolutely must multi-task, don’t do it in the afternoon. The multi-tasking brain generally struggles hardest in the afternoon.

(1) Anderson, Sam, “In Defense of Distraction,” www.nymag.com, May 17, 2009.

(2) Nash, John, “Is Multi-Tasking Bad for Your Brain?” www.dailymail.co.uk, August 11, 2009.

Test yourself: Try the *New York Times*’ interactive feature ["Test Your Focus"](#) to see how you how well you focus and juggle tasks.

Crossing the bridge to postsecondary education

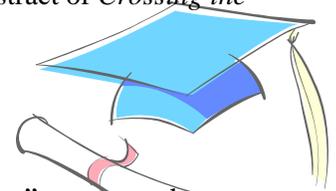
GED® Testing Service (GEDTS) recently released a groundbreaking research report showing that more than 17,000 GED graduates from 2003 have since earned a college credential. [*Crossing the Bridge: GED Credentials and Postsecondary Educational Outcomes*](#) addresses the issue of outcomes for GED graduates with greater certainty than any other research to date. GEDTS researchers completed the report by matching 2003 data from the GED Testing Service International Database (IDB) with postsecondary enrollment and completion records as of September 2009 from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). This type of population research has never been completed on a national level.

Data from the report show that when given enough time, 71.5 percent of 2003 GED Test passers with postsecondary education goals and aspirations followed up on those goals. Nearly 78 percent of postsecondary students who had passed the GED Tests enrolled in community colleges or similar types of institutions.

A [June 2010 report](#) from the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce projects that by 2018, 63 percent of new and replacement jobs will require workers with at least some college education. More than half of those jobs will require a Bachelor's degree or better.

Approximately half of GED Test passers who enrolled in a college education and training program returned for a consecutive second semester. The most popular majors for these students were nursing, nurse assistant/aide, criminal justice/law enforcement, emergency medical technician and business administration.

Crossing the Bridge is the first in a multi-year series of reports aimed at learning about the effect of the GED credential on postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and completion in the GED testing population. The full report and an abstract of *Crossing the Bridge* are available at www.GEDtest.org under Publications & Research.



College for a day

Community Colleges in Texas and Massachusetts have implemented “College for a Day” programs that expose adults to college through direct experience. The programs’ goals are to affirm students’ aspirations of pursuing postsecondary education and to prepare them to take that next step.

Common aspects of both programs include students’ participation in classes taught by college professors, lunch, guided tours, student panels, and information on admissions and financial aid. Before and after the one-day event, which lasts five-six hours, the participating programs extend their educational offerings to include more course work related to being a successful college student, such as career planning, time management, study skills, financial planning for college, and knowing how to take good notes.

Search for “Maine College Transitions” on YouTube for a [TV ad about transitions](#)

Details on this [promising practice](#) are available at www.collegetransition.org, where each state shares implementation tips, challenges and solutions, and information on costs and funding.

ACS to report population data for small communities

The American Community Survey (ACS) is an ongoing, nationwide survey that provides communities with demographic, economic, social, and housing data every year, giving providers current information for planning investments and services. The survey includes a sample of about three million addresses, including housing units and group quarters. Information from the survey generates data that help determine how more than \$400 billion in federal and state funds are distributed each year.

In the past, the *Survey* reported data on communities with populations exceeding 20,000. Now, the *Survey* is preparing to produce data products for smaller areas by reporting on Census tracts, which typically represent 2,500 - 8,000 people.

ACS Data Release Schedule

September 2010	2009 (1-year, geographies of 65,000+ population)
December 2010	2005-2009 (5-year, Census tracts)
January 2011	2007-2009 (3-year, geographies of 20,000+ population)

Visit www.census.gov/acs/www/ for a tutorial on how to access and effectively use these data products.

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.

MPAEA in the city by the bay



The Mountain Plains Adult Education Association is teaming up with COABE (Commission on Adult Basic Education) and CCAE (California Council for Adult Education) for what promises to be the biggest and best conference in the west! Preconference sessions begin April 17; main conference April 18-20; field trips to local exemplary programs April 21.

Visit www.ccaecoabe2011.com for information.

Membership in MPAEA (www.mpaea.org) provides opportunities for professional development, networking and scholarships. The organization publishes a quarterly newsletter and the *MPAEA Journal of Adult Education*.

COABE (www.coabe.org) membership typically provides a discount on conference registration and other benefits such as a quarterly newsletter, almost 50 percent off a subscription to the *Adult Basic Education and Literacy Journal*, advocacy updates via email, etc.

Dial 2-1-1

A call to 2-1-1 provides immediate access to a live person who can provide free information about critical health and human services available in your area:

- Basic human services
- Physical and mental health resources
- Prenatal health care information
- Financial stability and assistance
- Employment support services
- Programs for children, youth and families
- Support for seniors and persons with disabilities
- Support for community crisis or disaster recovery
- Volunteer opportunities and donations

You may also search for services at www.nevada211.org.

The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed. —Carl Jung, *Swiss psychologist (1875 - 1961)*