



GED XL class meets the need for speed

By Dave Sultzbach, senior specialist, 702/651-4894, dave.sultzbach@csn.edu

Many times we've heard the question, "How soon can I get my GED®?" from CSN's prospective GED preparation students. When asked what prompted their question, students usually say, "I need the GED for a job interview next week" or "I need the GED to enter a training that begins in a few weeks."

Realistically, no one can provide students with complete GED preparation, let alone the GED itself, "by next week," but we wanted to minimize prep time, especially for students who had mastery of basic math and language skills. Our Adult Literacy and Language program implemented GED XL, an accelerated class for students whose assessments at registration placed them at NRS' Adult Secondary Education functioning level.

We piloted GED XL in the fall of 2011 with eight students, who attended seven Saturday class sessions held in a computer lab at our Sahara West Campus.

Each class lasted five and one-half hours. In addition to attending class, each student met with the GED XL instructor during the week for a one-on-one tutoring session in which the tutor provided coaching on any GED subject the student wished to address. The day or evening tutoring sessions were scheduled each week at the student's convenience. These

tutoring sessions were also held in a computer lab to provide access to internet resources.

The GED XL class provided the means to earn "stackable certificates" by inviting the GED XL class members to make use of [Keytrain®](#), an interactive training system for career readiness skills. KeyTrain is based on ACT's [WorkKeys® Assessment System](#) and the [National Career Readiness Certificate](#), the national standard for certifying workplace skills. KeyTrain lessons supported students' GED preparation studies and prepared them to qualify for the National Career Readiness Certificate.

Currently, several of the GED XL class members have taken and passed the GED. Several more are in the process of registering for a testing date. Martha Odele, who recently passed the GED Test, commended the GED XL program: "That class was really perfect for me. The teacher was amazing! He was always there for me. The one-on-one tutoring sessions were very helpful, also!"

CSN's GED program is looking forward to putting more students on the fast track to success by providing solid preparation for acquiring credentials that will qualify them for further education and a satisfying work experience.



Students coached into the workplace

By Melissa Schroeder, GED registration specialist, Melissa.Schroeder@csn.edu, 702/651-4031

Amidst focusing on preparing students to pass the GED® exam, we realized many of our students do not know the paths that will be open to them after obtaining the GED Credential. But we knew employment was key!

[Economic Modeling Specialists Inc.](#) (EMSI) built [Career Coach](#) as a web tool specifically to help colleges connect students and job seekers to local employment. Here at CSN, we use Career Coach both as a tool while students are in the classroom and after they have passed the GED exam.

Instructors create a lesson that centers on careers and job research, then they introduce the students to the Career Coach program, available on the [Workforce and Economic Division's Web site](#), as a research tool. The Web site is easy to navigate: search for a specific job title and Career Coach provides information on local wages, job growth, companies with job openings, and what type of certification or degree is needed and available at CSN for the specific job. When a student is ready to apply for a job, he can use the Résumé Builder feature on Career Coach to help formulate a professional résumé.

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More on paths to careers

The Adult Career Pathways Training and Support Center (www.acp-sc.org) is a free, comprehensive Web site that supports adult education providers in understanding, designing, implementing, and improving instruction for adult career pathways programs.

Part of the Designing Instruction for Career Pathways (DICP) project funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education, the site provides unlimited access to:

- current information and research about adult career pathways
- a resource collection of instructional materials
- eight online self-paced courses
- an online community of practice
- a series of policy briefs
- a calendar of project-supported trainings and events
- the quarterly E-newsletter, *Adult Career Pathways (ACP) News*

Studies, manuals, curricula, and instructional materials

The LINCS Workforce Competitiveness Collection (<http://nvae.us/5p>) contains several resources focused on career pathways. For example:

- [ABE Career Connections: A Manual for Integrating Adult Basic Education into Career Pathways](#)
- [GED Career Bridge to Hospitality Curriculum](#)
- [Thriving in Challenging Times: Connecting Education to Economic Development through Career Pathways](#)
- [A Cross-Case Analysis of Career Pathway Programs that Link Low-Skilled Adults to Family Sustaining Wage Careers](#)

The Career Pathways Instructional Material Library (<http://lincs.ed.gov/pd/careerpathways>) organizes resources by the U.S. Department of Education's [16 career clusters](#). It contains materials teachers from various states use in the classroom to build basic skills and prepare adults for success at work.



The [National Career Pathways Network](#) (NCPN) is a membership organization for educators and employers involved in the advancement of career pathways, tech prep, and related education reform initiatives. It provides support and assistance on career pathways, career clusters, and programs of study. Resources available to members include toolkits, newsletters, and discounted conference registration. This year's conference will be held October 17-19 in Richmond, VA. Proposals are due April 5.

The mission of the [National College Transition Network](#) is to strengthen policy and practice related to college and career readiness of adult learners. The NCTN works with adult education programs, professional development providers, and policymakers to enable adult learners to succeed in postsecondary education that leads to jobs with family sustaining wages. NCTN's annual Effective Transitions Conference will be held November 7-9 in Providence, RI.



Using spiders to assess job market needs

A few colleges and states are testing a new, sophisticated technology which aggregates online job postings and provides real-time labor market intelligence. If proven reliable, "spidering" can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the workforce needs of local employers, thus enabling community colleges to better determine labor market demand for program and course offerings. The possibilities and pitfalls of this technology, as experienced by these early adopters, are documented in the report [Aligning Community Colleges to Their Local Labor Markets](#) (<http://nvae.us/5o>).



Group work really works!

By Glenn Mungcal, GED instructor, CSN, glenn.mungcal@csn.edu, 757/619-0442

There are many advantages to using cooperative learning, otherwise known as group work, with adult students. There has been an abundance of evidence since the late 1970s proving that having students teach other students is effective in teaching a multilevel group of students with a variety of different personalities.

Cooperative learning allows students to feel more at ease with the class because it reflects the methods used in most workplaces. I have noticed in my teaching that it reduces the anxiety of introverted students because it allows the more dominant personalities to be outgoing. Furthermore, a variety of students working on a project will bring a variety of prior knowledge that can fill in missing content, reducing the need to remediate.

Students are more comfortable asking other students questions about their difficulties or their failure to understand the content. Students who do understand the material will be able to reinforce their own learning because mastery can be proven if a student can teach the material.

Contemporary accelerated graduate and doctorate programs, which tailor to non-traditional students, have students take tests cooperatively as well as individually, allowing the students who fail to average their individual and group scores. Although the content of GED programs may differ from that of a doctoral program, the rationale is the same.

Cooperative learning also improves retention. In students' minds, if they want to drop out, they may feel that they will only let the teacher down. With cooperative learning, students may feel apprehensive about dropping out when their colleagues are depending on them.

Lastly, as a teacher, it is also important to be cognizant of one's own level of comfort when it comes to facilitating what may be a "noisy" class. Letting go of control may be difficult for some teachers, but it works wonders with retention and academic outcomes of our adult students!



Student successes

Marty Finsterbusch, the Executive Director of VALUEUSA is the first adult learner to become president of the National Coalition for Literacy. He entered a local literacy program as an adult learner in 1984 and then earned a degree in Hotel-Restaurant Management. He has been instrumental in the growth and success of VALUEUSA, a charitable organization working to improve our nation's education system and empower adults with low literacy skills to realize their human potential.

VALUEUSA is the only national organization governed and operated by current and former adult learners — an alumni association for adult education and English literacy in the U.S. Membership is open to everyone who supports its mission. More information at <http://valueusa.org/>

**For successes
closer to home,
see stories of
Nevada's adult
education students
at [http://nvedu.org/
studentsuccess](http://nvedu.org/studentsuccess).**

Career Coach *(Continued from page 1)*

After students pass the GED Test, they have access to our Career Coaching sessions — a series of one-on-one meetings where the student discusses career interests, options, goals, and résumé building with a CSN staff member.

Career Coach is the primary tool used to plot a career pathway for each student. It has made it easy to provide our students with quick and accurate job search information. We now can help our students feel more secure and confident as they go into the workplace. Now we not only provide instruction, but also help our students navigate into the workforce.

For more information on Career Coach, visit www.economicmodeling.com/career-coach/.

A campaign you can believe in

The Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy recently joined 35 organizations to form the [Campaign to Invest in America's Workforce](http://www.americasworkforce.org) (www.americasworkforce.org). The consortium calls for greater and more effective federal investments in our nation's skills — so more U.S. businesses can find the skilled workers they need to compete globally and so all U.S. workers can share in and contribute to our country's economic prosperity. The group will advocate for investment, share information, and collaborate on reform.

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.

When kids read, adults succeed

By Lyn Pizor, executive director, [Community Multicultural Center](http://CommunityMulticulturalCenter.com), esl1947@yahoo.com, 702/434-6858

Once each month on a Saturday afternoon, the Community Multicultural Center is filled with the sound of children's voices. Their parents are students at CMC and want to share with their kids what they are learning in their own literacy, GED, and ESL classes.

Thanks to [Spread the Word Nevada](http://SpreadtheWordNevada.com), CMC can offer this opportunity for children and parents to come together for story time, free books, and a snack.

Spread the Word Nevada typically works only with elementary schools, sending their employees out to read to kids. Alison Johnsen, a volunteer in CMC's ACE program and an employee of Spread the Word Nevada, thought it would be a good idea to bring books and stories to CMC's adult students and their children. Her supervisor, Lisa Habighorst, agreed and a plan for a new delivery method was formulated.

Seventeen kids and eight adults participated in the February session. It was Alexa Lopez's (shown above) first. "It was cool, Mommy!" proclaimed the two-year-old to Brenda. Then a bit sadly, "Story, over?"

The program is open to children from age 2 through early elementary school. Parents and children can each pick out a free book to take home with them, have a snack together, listen to a story and then participate in a raffle for more "cool" books to take home.

CMC has been hosting these get-togethers since September, and the interest has continued to grow among our students, who are thrilled to share an activity with their children and have the opportunity to take home books and activities to continue to enjoy.

