

Disability.gov Connecting us all

Disability.gov (www.disability.gov) is the federal government website for disability-related information on programs and services in communities nationwide. The site links to more than 14,000 resources from federal, state, and local government agencies; academic institutions; and nonprofit organizations.

New information is added daily across 10 main subject areas — [Benefits](#), [Civil Rights](#), [Community Life](#), [Education](#), [Emergency Preparedness](#), [Employment](#), [Health](#), [Housing](#), [Technology](#) and [Transportation](#).

The site is a web portal — every time you select a resource, you will be directed to another website. For example, a resource about Social Security benefits may direct you to the Social Security Administration's website, www.ssa.gov.

To celebrate its 10-year anniversary, Disability.gov has created the “What’s Your Connection?” initiative, a grassroots movement emphasizing the connections among all people. The program will run until July 31, using social media and grassroots tactics to spark conversations and build support for inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace and in their communities. See <http://nvae.us/7q> to participate.

New portal for teaching and learning

NTER National Training & Education Resource

The National Training and Education Resource (NTER, www.nterlearning.org), is a sub-Internet and search engine for education and training. The web-based learning platform offers opportunities to learn from, create, add, distribute, and manage educational content. It's an open source solution for students, professionals, schools, colleges and universities, and organizations. Much of the content is focused on specific career fields, e.g., weatherization, health, etc. All courses published on NTER can be accessed by anyone at no cost.

While this portal is not intended to replace the need for formal, hands-on training or instructor-led classes, it can enhance or augment training by providing authentic challenges in interactive 3D worlds. The NTER platform can be used to provide students and individuals with problem-centered learning, alternative approaches to learning, varied and contrasting examples, just-in-time learning, and opportunities for practice and skills refreshment.

Learner-centric eLearning design

Condensed from an article by eLearning designer/developer Judy Hext, from the [B Online Learning blog](#), November 20, 2012. The complete article may be found at <http://nvae.us/7l>.

With eLearning design, there is the risk of being so preoccupied with organizing content that we overlook the needs of the learners. The focus is on pushing out the content, rather than pulling in the learner. This approach often results in courses that look very similar to presentations [or teacher-centric formats].

Here is a useful definition of the learner-centric/student-centric approach: “In student-centered learning, students are active participants in their learning, they learn at their own pace and use their own strategies ... learning is more individualized than standardized. Student-centered learning develops learning-how-to-learn skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and reflective thinking. Student-centered learning accounts for and adapts to different learning styles of students.” (Source: <http://www.intime.uni.edu>)

(Continued on page 2)



Useful resources for career clusters and career pathways

Based on recent conference attendance and significant work with moving students onto paths to careers, Professional Development Coordinator and CASAS Manager Claudia Bianca (cbianca@tmcc.edu, 775/824-8604) suggested these resources.

1. <http://www.cteresource.org/verso/> — Virginia lesson plans for career pathways.
2. <http://khake.com/> — Offers students career options related to their technical training. Connects to websites with information about the skills employers really want, salaries, career paths, and qualifications for entry into the field.
3. <http://www.nextsteps.org/nextsteps> — Outstanding Canadian website written for younger adults entering the workplace. Advice is appropriate, applicable, easy to read, and attractive to high school students or young adults. Activities are interactive, fun, and educational.
4. <http://www.onetonline.org/> — A great U.S. Department of Labor website for comparing potential careers. Offers students detailed information about tasks, education, knowledge, abilities, and work activities related to each career.
5. <http://msn.careerbuilder.com> — Click the “advice” tab for a multitude of short articles about workplace tips and how to handle workplace situations. Great for students to read for discussion groups or warm-up activities.

Teachable moment

All federal benefits will be dispersed electronically through direct deposit or an online managed card starting March 1, 2013. What a great opportunity to talk about digital and financial literacy!

Check out <http://www.godirect.org/> for resources you can use to help students make this transition.



eLearning design *(Continued from page 1)*

Teachers and trainers who use a learner-centered approach are able to tune in to the individual needs of learners and do their best to meet those needs. A few suggestions for being more learner-centric in eLearning design:

- Think of the course as an experience for the learner. If you realize that your eLearning course is starting to look more like a presentation, then it is time to step back and imagine you are the person taking the course. Would you enjoy the learning experience or would your eyes soon glaze over?
- Use scenario-based learning. This involves presenting a realistic situation to the learners and then asking them to apply knowledge by making a choice. Each choice branches to a screen with different consequences. This is a great way to encourage learners to actively participate in the course. You are asking them to think for themselves and make their own decisions.
- Give learners choices where appropriate. For example, if you are including a research activity, give the learners a choice of three websites to go to or a choice of topics to research. This will make the learning experience more enjoyable.
- Provide a range of media for people to learn from — videos, podcasts, documents, graphs, charts, lists, quizzes, activities, etc. This will help you cater to visual learners, auditory learners, and so on.
- Give learners additional resources so they can branch off and explore a topic further if they need to. Remember that each learner brings her or his own pre-existing knowledge and skills to a course. Some learners will need more information than others. I like the idea of boxes throughout a course — entitled “Want to know more?” or “Need more information?” — that link to a document or website with more details. This is not for essential course information; instead it is for supplementary material. Some people may read the additional information out of interest, others out of necessity, and others may ignore it. The point is you are recognizing potential differences and catering to those differences in the course design.
- At the most basic level, a learner-centered approach means you must have a good understanding of who the learners are. Before starting the storyboard, research the ages, abilities, attitudes, and expectations of the learners. With a clear learner profile in mind, it is easier to design a course that meets their specific needs.

Thinking beyond “increased participation”: integrating civics and adult ESOL

Condensed from an article by Andy Nash, director of the New England Literacy Resource Center (www.nelrc.org) at World Education, 2010.

The full article, with sample studies and activities, is posted at <http://nvae.us/7j>



The [New England Literacy Resource Center](http://www.nelrc.org) (NELRC) at World Education has attempted to develop a guiding process for civic participation projects that reflects the lessons learned from dozens of past projects. The model is informed by current discussions in civic education, developments in adult learning theory and research, and our own work with a diverse set of adult programs, including citizenship, ABE, ESOL, and bilingual ESOL classes.

While there has been general consistency in how ESOL programs have interpreted civics, there is an active dialogue about the aims of civic education and the best practices for achieving those aims. The debate rests largely on two underlying schools of thought about what constitutes “democracy.” The *procedural* view focuses on the form and process of government — the rules and procedures by which decisions are reached. The *substantive* view concentrates on the impact of government actions — that is, whether or not government policies fulfill the democratic ideals of fairness and justice. These competing views of democracy then impact how we define citizenship. (We use the term “citizen” to denote a resident of a community, regardless of legal citizenship status.)

Research distinguishes between a “personally responsible citizen,” a “participatory citizen,” and a “justice-oriented citizen.” The first “works and pays taxes, obeys laws, and helps those in need during crises such as snowstorms and floods.” The second “actively participates in the civic affairs and the social life of the community at local, state, and national levels.” The third “critically assesses social, political, and economic

structures and explores collective strategies for change that challenge injustice and, when possible, addresses root causes of problems.”

The majority of civics adult education materials reflect the first two notions of citizenship, both of which prepare people to participate in the system as it is, accepting it as an effective, functional process. The third notion does not make this assumption; it expects citizens to critically analyze and question the structures that are set up to make decisions about their lives.

Our experience indicates that it’s possible to address all three types of citizenship at all levels of the curriculum. The NELRC has documented a guiding process that aims to develop the qualities of all three types of citizens. We support a process that:

- orients newcomers to their communities,
- deepens understanding of issues,
- increases the ability to articulate ideas and opinions and to listen to others’,
- engages adults in weighing options and making informed choices,
- creates possibilities for community, inside and outside class, and
- develops skills and knowledge that can be transferred to new situations.

If we want to build the capacity for engaged and active citizenship, then EL/Civics classes need to provide a venue not just for comprehending, but also for critically examining the systems we have. We need to aim not only for an increased quantity of civic participation, but for high quality participation to claim this full, broad definition of citizenship.

Nevada Assemblywoman addresses CALL students



Front: Literacy Services Coordinator Tim McDonald, Assemblywoman Irene Bustamante Adams, Instructor Jonathan Tharp.

On January 18, Assemblywoman Irene Bustamante Adams addressed students on the first day of CALL’s citizenship class at the Spring Valley Library. She spoke about her role representing the Las Vegas community in the state Legislature and later reflected, “The visit was the highlight of my day. I was so inspired by the attendees!”

The citizenship classes provided by the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District’s Computer Assisted Literacy in Libraries Program are designed for non-native speakers of English who are interested in applying for naturalization and want to prepare for the civics and English test and interview required by the United States Citizenship

and Immigration Services (USCIS). These classes are suitable for English language learners at the high-beginning through high-intermediate level.

For more information, contact the CALL Program at the Clark County Library, 1401 E. Flamingo Road, Las Vegas, 702/507-3446.

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 conference April 9-12

Here is what to expect at MPAEA's April 9-12 conference in Cheyenne, WY:

- Early bird registration closes March 1: \$200 for members, \$250 for non-members. Includes breakfast and lunch Wednesday through Friday and a reception Wednesday evening.
- Confirmed pre-conference sessions (April 9) include Brain Basics 101 — What You Need to Know to Improve Student Persistence and Learning, Bridges Out of Poverty, Reading the Tells — Learning How to Read Body Language, The ABCs of Designing Instruction, and BEST Plus Test Administrators Training. Some pre-conference sessions will have additional fees (up to \$100) based on presenter costs.
- Conference tracks include Adult Education, Career Pathways, Community Education, Correctional Education, Distance Learning, ESL, Family Literacy, Special Needs, Technology, Testing, and Workforce Education.
- Presenters include Dr. Richard Cooper/NAASLN, Dr. Laura Weisel/The TRP Group, LINCIS, Pearson ELT, Kratos Learning, Dr. Christopher Coro/U.S. Dept of Education/OVAE, National Center for Family Literacy, National College Transitions Network, Wind River Indian Reservation, and many others!
- Special events: American Association of Women in Community Colleges Annual Leadership Dinner, with a panel discussion by Wyoming's first ladies. Several interesting tours of area attractions are also planned.

For more information: Conference Chair Kelly Willmarth (kwillmar@lccc.wy.edu), Nevada's MPAEA Board Members Kathleen Jameson (kjameson@lyon.k12.nv.us), and Olu Akinyele (OEA454@interact.ccsd.net).

NAE scholarships available

NAE is offering one-time scholarships to pay the early bird registration fee to the MPAEA Conference.

You must be a member of Nevada Adult Educators to apply. Visit <http://www.nvadulted.org/join-nae/> to join.

Not sure if you are a current member? Contact NAE at <http://www.nvadulted.org/contact-us/> to find out!

To apply for a scholarship, download the information and application package from www.nvadulted.org.

Complete and return to Scholarship Chair, [Kathleen Jameson](#) by February 25.

