

## Does the Core make common sense for adult ed?

The April 2013 report [College and Career Readiness \(CCR\) Standards for Adult Education](#) is the result of a nine-month process that examined the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) from the perspective of adult education. It was funded to provide a set of manageable yet significant CCR standards that reflect broad agreement among subject matter experts in adult education about what is desirable for adult students to know so they are prepared for the rigors of postsecondary education and training.

Pages 5-6 discuss the applicability of the Common Core to adult education. Sections 4-5 answer the questions:

- √ What content in the area of mathematics and in English language arts and literacy (ELA/literacy) is most relevant to preparing adult students for success in higher education and training programs?
- √ Which standards in each content area are most important for adult students?

Identifying these standards can benefit states in a variety of ways, including the promotion of:

- Consistent expectations between K–12 and adult education systems so all students — whatever their pathways to graduation — will have access to the preparation they need to enter credit-bearing freshman courses without a need for remediation;
- Partnerships between and among states and programs to combine financial resources and human capital to create common tools and materials to support implementation; and
- Student preparation for new assessment models using knowledge and skills identified by the CCSS required for the attainment of a high school diploma or its equivalent (e.g., GED<sup>®</sup>, Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium).

The report was prepared by MPR Associates, Inc. for the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. Download the full report from <http://nvae.us/8s>.



## New online resource for career planning

The U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) has developed new resources to help students and job seekers chart their future career paths. The *What's My Next Move?* guide (<http://nvae.us/8v>) connects young people to career exploration resources available on the CareerOneStop (COS) ([www.careeronestop.org](http://www.careeronestop.org)) and the O\*NET My Next Move ([www.mynextmove.org](http://www.mynextmove.org)) websites. The guide encourages students to think and make decisions about their futures and to engage with career counselors, workforce professionals, teachers, and parents or guardians.

"Deciding on a career may be the single biggest decision young people face in the transition from school to the workforce," said Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, "and having a clear, step-by-step plan can help job seekers make more informed decisions about their role in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century economy."

*What's My Next Move?* leads students through a seven-step process that begins with a self-assessment of their career interests. It helps them identify the education and skills they will need to qualify for a job in specific occupations, and ends with a comprehensive career plan that can be shared with high school guidance counselors, parents, teachers, and workforce professionals in the American Job Center Network ([www.jobcenter.usa.gov](http://www.jobcenter.usa.gov)). Students who tested *What's My Next Move?* found it easy to use and the resources very valuable. While the intended audience is primarily high school students, the guide also can be useful to those seeking a new career direction and dislocated workers who are interested in developing new skill sets and making themselves more marketable.

## Tips for increasing online learner persistence

Excerpted from a January 2013 article for the World Education, Inc. newsletter by [Cynthia Zafft](#), curriculum director of the Health Care Learning Network at World Education. The full article can be found on the National College Transition Network website (<http://nvae.us/7s>); full newsletters are archived at <http://nvae.us/7t>.

Working with three local workforce investment boards, World Education created online courses for the Health Care Learning Network project. Here are some of the lessons learned about creating a learning environment that supports persistence.

**Consider an extended intake/orientation.** Many adults do not have a clear picture of the time commitment and self-discipline needed to make progress in online learning. Providing a two-part face-to-face orientation in a computer lab, with one or two weeks between sessions, gave learners an opportunity to make sure they had the computer/Internet access and technical skills needed to log-in and navigate the first course. We provided directions for all the basic activities in written and video formats so that students had multiple options for reviewing the skills taught during orientation.



*Instructor Lorraine Boyd works with students at the College of Southern Nevada.*

**Consider a hybrid format and adjust as needed.** Most students needed the external motivation of face-to-face gatherings in order to persist. We called these gatherings “Learning Labs”; typically they were three hours long and held every two weeks. Initially, the first hour gave students time to work on their current course with one-to-one tutoring from their instructor, if needed. The remaining two hours included activities to build motivation and college awareness. We flipped the time frame and focus when we found that making progress on coursework was the most motivating activity for students.

**Consider anytime/anywhere supports for online students.** To be successful online learners, students needed to be able to connect with their instructors by e-mail and telephone. Our courses are self-paced, but facilitated with an instructor following student progress, correcting exams and overseeing other assignments. Between orientation days

one and two, instructors set up a time to talk with new students by telephone and e-mail to cement those communication options. (Many students needed to be explicitly taught to return telephone calls and e-mails.) Connection to the student’s workplace via a career or educational coach was extremely helpful in identifying any communication problems.

**Consider a contextualized curriculum.** One of the biggest motivators, especially for English language learners, was the health contextualized curriculum. Our program offered four courses: Computers for College, Basic Math Review, Reading and Writing for Health Careers, and Health Science. Content and activities introduced vocabulary, key concepts, and study strategies so that students would have some familiarity with them before entering fast-paced college courses. Assignments and exams were designed to demonstrate mastery of both health concepts and study strategies before a student moved on to the next lesson or course. One of the most important areas of learning for students was the use of the computer and Internet for college.

**More persistence strategies are needed!** About 10 percent of our students find contextualized online learning is just what they need. For these students, courses serve as a brush-up and the experience gives them confidence to apply to and enter college, typically before finishing all four courses. Most workers are able to complete the Computers for College course, gaining useful skills with technology. For English language learners, these online courses provide a format for them to go at their own pace, retake lessons, and use audio resources as needed. Presently, a small number of adult education centers are piloting courses in conjunction with weekly face-to-face classes, and this emerging model is moving students along more quickly and with greater success.

# From access to completion: a new focus for community colleges

Excerpted from [R&D Alert, Vol. 13, No. 3, Fall 2012, pp. 14-17](#), WestEd



CBD's [Design Pathway Principles](#) were developed by the Gates Foundation, WestEd, the Community College Research Center, and the Research & Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RP Group). They urge community colleges to:

- Accelerate students' entry into coherent, sequential programs of study by establishing clear program prerequisites, eliminating nonessential requirements, and ensuring that student progress is aligned with learning outcomes and field competencies.
- Minimize the time it takes to get students college-ready by helping them avoid developmental education or complete such requirements while they work simultaneously in college-level classes.
- Ensure that students understand exactly what they have to do to fulfill the requirements for a certificate or degree.
- Customize instruction, making it program-specific, relevant, experiential, and engaging.
- Integrate student support services, such as advising and study skills lessons, into the instructional program.
- Monitor student progress and provide feedback, using data to inform program planning and staff professional development.
- Create monetary and nonmonetary incentives to motivate students.
- Increase the use of technology to customize instruction, monitor student progress, improve student motivation, and reduce costs.

For the vast majority of the students enrolled in community colleges in the U.S., earning a certificate or associate degree after two or three years is little more than an elusive dream: Only 21 percent of students who enrolled in a community college in 2005 had earned such a credential three years later. Among black and Hispanic students, the figures were even more dismal: 12 and 16 percent, respectively.

Completion by Design (CBD), a five-year, \$35-million project funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, aims to increase the odds that community college students — who constitute nearly half of all U.S. undergraduates — complete a program of study. Andrea Venezia, a WestEd Project Director, describes CBD as engaging colleges in “systemic and structural change” on policies and practices on everything from developmental education and advising to program requirements and costs. “CBD colleges are redesigning the core of what students experience, including their programs of study and student supports,” she said.

One of CBD's early steps was to create an [online Knowledge Center](#) — a database of relevant research materials and tools. The Knowledge Center houses research-based materials and tools from across the field. [WestEd](#), an education research, development, and service agency, oversees the Knowledge Center and has contributed several publications to the database.

The planning guide, [Changing Course: A Guide to Increasing Student Completion in Community Colleges](#), notes that there are several points in students' college careers at which they are most likely to be “slowed-down or sidetracked.” The first is their initial semester on campus when, due to poor academic preparation, many students are placed in developmental or remedial education classes.

“They can get easily discouraged,” said Kathy Bracco, Senior Policy Analyst at WestEd, pointing out that according to the research, “having to take two or more courses in developmental education significantly reduces the likelihood that students will complete a course of study.” Even many students who don't require developmental education or who manage to successfully complete it sometimes get tripped up by the next hurdle: so-called “gatekeeper” courses such as entry-level English and math. The [Loss and Momentum Framework](#), developed by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, spells out these and other situations likely to derail community college students and offers ideas on how they can be counteracted.

Through a competitive grant process, the Completion by Design initiative has chosen teams of community colleges in Florida, North Carolina, and Ohio to receive technical assistance and funding to put the Design Pathway Principles in place. Although it is still early in the life of the project, Venezia urges others in the community college field to study the CBD Loss and Momentum Framework and Design Pathway Principles, which are discussed in great detail in the *Changing Course* guide and planning tool. These resources are available at <http://knowledgecenter.completionbydesign.org>.

For information about WestEd's role in the Completion by Design project, contact Andrea Venezia ([avenezi@WestEd.org](mailto:avenezi@WestEd.org), 415/615-3248) or Kathy Bracco ([kbracco@WestEd.org](mailto:kbracco@WestEd.org), 415/565-3012).

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.



Stay Connected  

search here

Search

Home

Educators ▾

Administrators ▾

Students & Supporters ▾

About Us

Contact Us

## By Nevadans, for Nevadans

During the past two years, instructors from the Community Multicultural Center, Truckee Meadows Community College, and Western Nevada College participated in the National Career Awareness Initiative. They studied the [Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE/ESOL Classroom \(ICA\) curriculum](#) produced by the National College Transition Network and Massachusetts' SABES (System for Adult Basic Education Support) with a goal of incorporating career awareness and planning into their instructional and counseling activities.

Lucy Castro, Diana McIntyre, Geraldine Thomson, and Joy Zimmerman have developed lesson plans for all levels of English Language and Adult Secondary Education students and made them available to all educators at <http://nvedu.org/ica>.

"These instructors did a fantastic job," said Project Coordinator Claudia Bianca. "I am confident their work will ultimately help Nevada's adult students increase their knowledge and skills as they prepare for careers with family-sustaining wages."

## Celebrate success!

Nevada Adult Education programs blanket the state, serving adults who want to improve their basic skills and obtain jobs that pay family-sustaining wages. They offer GED, Career Pathways, Literacy, ESL, Civics, Citizenship, & Transition to Postsecondary programs. Adults who have studied at the Clark County School District and at the eight [federally funded programs](#) tell their stories of struggle and success at <http://nvedu.org/studentsuccess>.

**The illiterate of the 21st century  
will not be those who cannot read  
and write, but those who cannot  
learn, unlearn, and relearn.**

**—Futurist Alvin Toffler**