This summer, professional development focused on TEAL writing workshops, BEST Plus re-calibrations, and BEST Plus new administrator trainings.

I attended the TEAL workshop at Mahoney State Park on August 10th. What a great workshop – there were several activities for teachers to use to involve and create an interest in writing across the curriculum. I thought, “Why didn’t someone develop these activities when I was teaching ABE/GED many years ago?”

My favorite is Quick Writes. Sue Pohlman from Northeast Community College-Norfolk and Shannon Schaben from McCook Community College were the TEAL presenters that day. The other two TEAL team members are Janet Kletke from Metropolitan Community College in Fremont and Maggie McLean from Southeast Community College in Lincoln.

These four AE staff members are finishing up a two-year project sponsored by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education at the US Department of Education; they have a wealth of knowledge and classroom activities to share with their fellow AE staff members. If you missed one of the workshops this summer, contact Jim Lukesh and let him know of your interest in attending a TEAL training. We will offer another 4-hour training if there are enough people requesting it.

And while our adult students may have other issues/commitments in life (e.g. job or no job, bills, family, child care, transportation, illness) that interfere or interrupt their learning, Adult Education is there to assist them when they are ready.

Isn’t it wonderful that we have a program for adults who need a second opportunity? Don’t we all need a second chance at some point in our lives? Our programs assist in fulfilling educational needs to continue with life goals. Yes, it is indeed wonderful that Adult Education is there for those who need it. Have a great year!
How important are volunteers?

Ask any Adult Education program and they will tell you that paid staff is wonderful, but volunteers keep everybody happy. Central Community College has had 5444 different volunteers since July 1, 1988.

Prior to that date, volunteer information was recorded by hand in notebooks; so no headcount is available. Some of these compassionate people have been volunteering for 15-20 years.

What do volunteers do in Adult Education programs? You name it and they’ve done it. At Central Community College, our volunteers teach classes, tutor small groups of students, teach one-on-one in any subject necessary, mentor students, help with paperwork, serve on advisory committees, assist with fundraisers, babysit and on and on.

We recently honored a volunteer in the Columbus area who has been with us since 1986 — spending over 1900 hours helping Adult Education students and staff. Volunteers are dedicated and talented friends.

Thank you to the Nebraska Department of Education and the State of Nebraska for giving us the opportunity to recruit, train and place volunteers!

Spotlight on...

Central Community College

By: Ann Chambers, AE Director—Central Community College—achambers@cccneb.edu

Ruby Beckman

By: Maryjan Fiala, Coordinator—Central Community College—mfiala@cccneb.edu

Oliver Musungay was recognized at Platte Valley Literacy Association’s Volunteer Appreciation celebration on Tuesday, April 24th, 2012. Olivier has spent more than 35 hours tutoring English as a Second Language students at Cargill Community Learning Center in Schuyler in the last year.

Olivier, a Cargill Meat Solutions employee, was born in Europe and moved to Congo when he was a child. Olivier speaks French, Swahili, English and some Spanish.

He graduated from university in 1996 and taught French, geography, history, and zoology for more than ten years before coming to the United States as a refugee.

Olivier spends his time at Cargill Community Learning Center working with beginning level English students, assisting native Somali speakers in mastering English language skills (pictured here with ESL student, Nimo Mahamud at Cargill Community Learning Center).

He is a tremendous asset to the learning center and his hard work is much appreciated!

Thank You!

Adult Education Volunteer Tutor, Olivier Musungay, pictured with ESL student, Nimo Mahamud

AE Volunteer Appreciation
Compulsory Attendance Law

Nebraska Revised Statute 79-202 Effective July 19, 2012

Excerpted From: http://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=s7902002000

A person who has legal or actual charge or control of a child who is at least sixteen years of age but less than eighteen years of age may withdraw such child from school before graduation and be exempt from the mandatory attendance requirements of section 79-201 if an exit interview is conducted and the withdrawal form is signed as required.

Upon the written request of any person who has legal or actual charge or control of a child who is at least sixteen years of age but less than eighteen years of age, the superintendent of a school district or the superintendent’s designee shall conduct an exit interview if the child is enrolled in a school operated by the school district or resides in the school district and is enrolled in a private, denominational, or parochial school.

At the exit interview, the person making the written request shall present evidence that (a) the person has legal or actual charge or control of the child and (b) the child would be withdrawing due to either:

- Financial hardships requiring the child to be employed to support the child’s family or one or more dependents of the child or
- An illness of the child making attendance impossible or impracticable.

The superintendent or superintendent’s designee shall identify all known alternative educational opportunities, including vocational courses of study, that are available to the child in the school district and how withdrawing from school is likely to reduce potential future earnings for the child and increase the likelihood of the child being unemployed in the future.

Any other relevant information may be presented and discussed by any of the parties in attendance. At the conclusion of the exit interview, the person making the written request may sign the withdrawal form provided by the school district agreeing to the withdrawal of the child or may rescind the written request for the withdrawal.
Priyanka Sharma, from the National College Transition Network, presented the following questions and other information at the COABE conference in April about adult students transitioning into college. Can you accurately answer these questions?

1. __True  __ False   A GED® credential will have economic benefits for most students.

2. __10% __ 25% __50%   The percentage of undergraduates who were eligible for some financial aid who failed to complete a FAFSA. (Free application for Federal Student Aid)?

3. __1/4   __1/2    __ 2/3   The portion of our 2020 workforce which is beyond the reach of K-12 educational reform?

4. __23%   __35%  __  62%  Percentage of GED® credential-holders who go on to enroll in college?

5. __23%  __47%  __62%  Percentage of GED® credential holders who obtain at least a year of postsecondary education?

More than ever before, adults need to have information and access to college services, and adult educators are often the impetus to make that happen. Not surprising to many in adult education, research also shows that the advising component is vital to success with many adult learners.

How did you answer the above questions? Sharma presented this research-based information:

1. False—Although a GED® credential was an increased economic benefit ten and even five years ago, today more education is needed to bridge the gap between college and high school graduates.

2. Fifty percent—of undergraduates who were eligible for financial aid did not complete a FAFSA. Many students simply do not take the time nor believe financial help is available to them. Also, many are unaware of this important facet of college attendance. By directing students to agencies who help with financial aid forms (such as EducationQuest.org in Nebraska), this number could certainly be decreased. In fact, it is necessary to make college more attainable for those who may think college is not an option in their life goals.

3. Two thirds—Yes, the job market has changed and will continue to change. The present education system cannot fulfill the needs and demands of the 2020 workforce! Therefore, it is more necessary than ever before that postsecondary education become a reality for students — where in the past, a high school diploma was enough to attain economic gain.

4. Thirty-five percent—Though this is a somewhat hopeful number, Sharma reported it is not enough, and these numbers reflect the students attending college immediately after achieving their GED® credential. The numbers are markedly lower for those who wait to enroll in college.

5. Twenty-three percent—Again, this number may seem a bit optimistic, but not when it is reported that only 6% of these students actually attain an Associate’s degree.

Sharma pointed out that the tools to ‘transition’ into college from high school are not just a good thing today but a necessary component to ensure America’s future.

Adult educators must provide more postsecondary information—and more access to that information—with collaboration with agencies such as EducationQuest, community colleges, and other community organizations. It is a vital step for our students—and for the American economy. Check out these websites for more information: collegetransition.org and collegeforadults.com.

**Teacher Stories: Making Connections and Sharing Successes**

**Equipped for the Future: Teachers’ Instructional Practices and Strategies**

http://efftips.wordpress.com/

As adult education practitioners, we all want to see the adults and older youth we work with succeed. Hosted by the Equipped for the Future (EFF) Project, this site provides short, readily applicable teaching and learning strategies instructors can both try out immediately and further explore. Posts are designed to facilitate an exchange of ideas among adult education teachers implementing standards-based instruction and/or quality instructional principles.

Adult/older youth populations addressed by the posts include those seeking basic literacy skills, GED test preparation, skills for success in first or new careers, English Language improvement, support for post-secondary transition, and more. Participants and practitioners are encouraged to submit ideas, questions and anecdotes for possible posting. Simply e-mail: eff@utk.edu. This Site is YOUR community! Your experiences and thoughts will help to support and enrich other teachers and learners in the field of adult education!
Sixteen New BEST Plus Trainers Approved

By: Jim Lukesh, State AE Consultant — jim.lukesh@nebraska.gov

Sixteen new educators completed the BEST Plus training program to become eligible to administer BEST Plus Training Assessments in Nebraska. Trainers Sharon McClaren and Carol Leonhardt conducted the training at Mid Plains Community College in North Platte and Southeast Community College.

For those unfamiliar with the BEST Plus training, here is a summary: The BEST Plus, developed by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), is an individually administered; scripted oral interview designed to assess English language learners’ interpersonal communication using everyday language.

BEST Plus is a performance-based test that measures an ESOL learner’s oral skills in three areas: Listening Comprehension, Language Complexity, and Communication.

In the computer-adaptive version of the BEST Plus, test items are delivered via a computer with a BEST Plus CD. The test administrator asks the examinee a question that is presented to the administrator on the computer screen, listens to the examinee’s response, uses a rubric to determine the score for the item, and then enters the score into the computer. (The examinee does not operate the computer).

Based on that score, the computer determines the difficulty level of the next question. As a result, the questions are appropriate for the learner’s ability and give the fewest number of test questions needed to accurately determine the student’s overall test score and proficiency level. Test time averages 10-15 minutes, depending on the examinee’s proficiency level.

If you are interested in becoming a BEST Plus tester, please contact your program administrator or Jim Lukesh at jim.lukesh@nebraska.gov.

Save the Dates for the 2012 Fall AE Conference—October 11-12

The Adult Education Fall Conference will take place at the Holiday Inn in Kearney on October 11th and 12th (the 10th is a travel day). Motivational and thought-provoking keynotes, intriguing focus sessions and over 20 concurrent sessions highlight the agenda that will include strategizing, networking and pleasant conversation. Application materials will be available from local program directors after August 24. Be sure to save the dates on your calendar and join your colleagues for an uplifting and educational meeting as Nebraska Adult Education “Charts a New Course!”

Rules and Regulations for the High School Equivalency Program

Title 92, Chapter 81 Nebraska Department of Education

Rule 81
http://www.education.ne.gov/LEGAL/webrulespdf/RULE81.clean.pdf

The Commissioner of Education has the authority to issue a High School Equivalency Diploma conveying all the significance and privilege of a regular high school diploma to any person who is not a high school graduate and who meets the following requirements:

- The applicant must have been a resident of Nebraska for at least thirty (30) days immediately preceding the date of application, or the final period of high school attendance during which credit was earned toward graduation was in a Nebraska high school.
- On the basis of achievement in approved tests and other criteria deemed pertinent by the Commissioner of Education, there is reasonable certainty that the applicant has attained the educational development and abilities of the typical high school graduate.
- The applicant must be at least eighteen years of age and is unable to secure a diploma from the last attended high school; or the class in which the applicant was enrolled at the time of withdrawal from school has been graduated for at least one (1) year.
Every carpenter has a tool belt and every journalist has an AP style guide—but what are the resources that a teacher in the 21st century should have?

We recently turned to our readers for help with this question: “If you could recommend just one teaching resource to your colleagues, what would it be and why?”

Although we assumed many of the suggestions would focus on technology tools and mobile devices of some kind, we received a wide range of ideas. While our readers are certainly tech-savvy, their responses seem to suggest they believe good teaching is about much more than gadgets or websites; it’s about using your own experiences, resources from other peers—and even the great outdoors.

Do you agree with these suggestions? Or, do you have ideas of your own you’d like to share?

1. A tablet

“I would recommend an iPad. I purchased one earlier this spring and am amazed at how much I use it. I can use Dropbox to check files, keep track of student meetings, quickly look up pictures and information when my GED® students need more information, keep in touch with students by e-mail, look up lesson plans and strategies for teaching concepts to my math students, demonstrate something I looked up on my iPad using the camera … I could go on. I initially purchased it because I wanted one. I never dreamed how very useful it is in a learning environment!” — Rina Hallock

2. Tools for student understanding

“The single resource that I would recommend is some form of Understanding by Design. Although somewhat daunting to tackle on your own, the level of competence in teaching gained when you truly know how to teach for ‘understanding’ is well worth the climb. If you are able to quickly grasp the ‘Why’ of the learning, the What, When, Who, Where, and even the How are infinitely easier to teach.

Now that’s only half of the story. Children taught with ‘understanding’ as their goal, come to master far more than the lesson at hand. They learn patterns of thinking, they connect things learned much more readily, they ‘know’ rather than just to recall or remember. Yes, they will test better as well, but that is just a collateral benefit! They learn, truly learn!” — Dr. W. Tom Pearce, Ky. District ISS, Ft. Campbell, Kentucky

“Think of your job as helping kids to learn rather than as ‘how to teach’ them.” — M.B. (Barry) Wansbrough, Bracebridge, Ontario

3. Publications from the field

“If I could recommend one teacher resource, it would be the American Educator—A Quarterly Journal of Educational Research and Ideas, published by the American Federation of Teachers. It offers very timely, thought-provoking, research-based articles in each issue, and it costs only $10/year for non-members.

If I could choose one more to recommend, especially for Language Arts teachers, it would be the National Writing Project (NWP), since it offers so much in the way of reasonably priced/free professional development opportunities in many cities/towns, nationwide.” — Carol Martyniuk, middle school Language Arts teacher, Sussex-Wantage Regional School District, New Jersey

4. A daily communication system for connecting schools and parents

“Every school, every classroom in America must have a comprehensive daily communication system made available to parents. In that electronic system, both academic and social skills are evaluated and reported into the home. Schools can no longer … be the primary change-agent of students.

Poor student academic performances and disruptive social behaviors are rapidly undermining the educational process. School and home must be united as never before understood. The entire concept can be achieved for pennies per day per student.” — Dave Dickerson

5. The natural world

“The outdoors would be the resource I would choose if I were limited to one great resource.” — Bev DeVore-Wedding, Meeker High School, Meeker, Colorado

6. Inner resources

“Yourself: Your attitude, your instinct, your creativity, your dedication, and your common sense. All this other stuff flying around is just marketing and has a short lifespan. Why? It is not your mission to prepare your students for the life you are leading as an adult. It is your mission to prepare your students for the lives they will be leading as adults. No easy task. And no educational theory, gizmo, or site is going to help you.” — Tom Layton
Recalibration meetings are taking place at five different sites throughout Nebraska. Seventy-two BEST Plus trainers are being “recalibrated” which is another way of saying they are reviewing, reinforcing and sharpening their skills at BEST Plus Trainers.

The reason for the recalibration is that reliable and accurate scores are essential to the usefulness of a standardized test such as BEST Plus. Accurate scores provide a means of correct placement in adult ESL classes, effective selection of materials and curricula to be used with adult ESL students, proper diagnosis of learning needs, and valid reporting of student performance and progress.

Because of the length of time between test administrations, lack of confidence in scoring accuracy, or other personal and program-related factors, BEST Plus test administrators must periodically recalibrate, or realign, their scoring to the original scoring rubrics.

In Nebraska, BEST Plus test administrators are recalibrated for each of the first three years after becoming test administrators.

You may not continue to administer the BEST Plus Training unless you are recalibrated and recommended by the trainer. Those who have completed three recalibrations are exempt from this training.

BEST Plus trainers Sharon McClaren and Kathy Croson are conducting recalibration programs at five sites throughout Nebraska: Mahoney State Park, Kearney Holiday Inn Express, Mid Plains Community College in Ogallala, Southeast Community College in Lincoln, and the Bellevue Public Schools Support Center in Bellevue.

For more information contact your program director or Jim Lukesh at 402/471-4806 or by email at: jim.lukesh@nebraska.gov.

**BEST Plus Recalibration in Process**

**English and Spanish Influenza Materials**

**By: Dr. Mary Gillispie, Director—Healthy Roads Media**

CDC released this year’s inactivated influenza vaccine information a few weeks ago. It is very similar to last year's information with only minor changes. Healthy Roads Media has updated the free English and Spanish web-video versions of this content. They are available at healthyroadsmedia.org/topics/immunization.htm. Similarly updated English and Spanish live influenza vaccine web-video materials will be available soon.

**NDE Library Materials Available for AE Staff to Check Out**

The State AE Office of NDE has a lending library of materials for both AE and ESL. Some are for instructors and others are resources containing practical ideas and exercises to be used with students. www.education.ne.gov/ADED/pdfs/Nebraska_Adult_Education_Lending_Resource_Library.pdf

Many of the resources contain EXCELLENT material for students struggling in specific areas. Other materials would make WONDERFUL additions to, or a basis for, staff development sessions. If you would like to preview or discuss any of the materials, just drop in or contact Jim. Materials can be checked out for 6 weeks (longer if not in demand). If you should decide you would like to peruse some, please call or e-mail Jim at: 402/471-4806 jim.lukesh@nebraska.gov

**GED® Application Form Completion Just Got Easier!**

Now it’s easier than ever to complete Nebraska’s Application for a High School Diploma. Examinee’s can now key the answers to the form’s questions right on their home computer rather than printing out the form and then completing it all by hand. Visit NDE’s Adult Education website for the updated Application form and more!

- Application Form
- Transcript Request
- Duplicate Diploma Request Form
- GED Application Testing Requirements
- GED Testing Service:
  - NDE Form’s Portal (click “forms” tab)
  - Nebraska GED Testing Centers
  - Rule 81
  - Success Testimonials
  - Testing Center Locator
If you are a Leftie, Then Left Handers Day is for you!

Did you know? ...........

- Sinistrophobia is the fear of left-handedness or things on the left side.
- Left Hander’s Day was first celebrated on August 13, 1976.
- While many people are left handed, very few are 100% left handed. For example, many left-handers golf and bat right handed. On the other hand, most righties are 100% right-handed.
- It is believed that all polar bears are left handed.
- Only about 10% of the population is left handed.
- Everyone is a left-hander in Left Hand, West Virginia.
- During the 1600’s, left handers were thought to be witches or warlocks.
- Lefties are also called "southpaws." The term was coined in baseball to describe a left handed pitcher.

How many left handed people do you know? Thousands have excelled throughout history; a few are listed below. Find and circle the names of some famous left-handers in the puzzle:

Just For Fun!

Neil Armstrong  Bob Dylan  Michelangelo
Fred Astaire  Albert Einstein  Marilyn Monroe
David Bowie  Gerald Ford  Demi Moore
Jim Carrey  Bill Gates  Mozart
Julius Caesar  Cary Grant  Barack Obama
Winston Churchill  Jimmi Hendrix  Ronald Reagan
Bill Clinton  Angelina Jolie  Julia Roberts
Phil Collins  JF Kennedy  Babe Ruth
Tom Cruise  Nicole Kidman  Mark Spitz
Celine Dion  Paul McCartney  Mark Twain