

Nebraska Adult Education
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Requests for Reimbursement

By: Jan Drbal, Nebraska AE Professional Assistant—jan.drbal@nebraska.gov

If you have signed a letter contract and attended an event (workshop/training/conference/meeting), you will need to complete a **Request for Reimbursement** form in order to receive a stipend and/or reimbursed expenses. *Refer to the Letter Contract for details of what can and cannot be paid.* Below are some items that I would like to clarify.

Start and Stop Times: All requests for reimbursement must include the date and time you left home or work for the event and the date and time you returned home or work after the event.

Mileage: To receive mileage reimbursement, you must carpool when possible and have authorization from your Program Director.

• Include the Owner of the Vehicle and the License Plate Number on the form.

• If your request for mileage is more than 10 miles over what's shown in MapQuest, an explanation is needed.

Lodging: Unless otherwise stated in the letter contract, the Nebraska Department of Education reimburses ½ of a double room rate unless prior authorization from NDE AE has been obtained.

• If you opt for a single room, it is your responsibility to pay the other ½ of the room charge.

• The motel receipt must show a \$0 balance.

• The Request of Reimbursement form should show what you expect to be reimbursed.

Meals: Refer to the letter contract for details. **Note** the following:

• If traveling the day before the event, the start time of travel must be before 5:00 p.m. to be reimbursed for dinner.

• The Department will reimburse only up to the maximum amount stated in the letter contract (ex. \$18.00 for dinner). Itemized receipts must be included.

• Alcohol is not reimbursable (tax and tip for alcohol is also not reimbursable).

Tips and Taxes: The request for reimbursement for tips must be reasonable (15-18%). Write "tip" and the amount on the itemized meal receipt. The tax and tip reimbursement will be prorated and adjusted for the allowable reimbursement of the meal.

The **Request for Reimbursement form** needs to be completed and signed. The form should include the amounts to be reimbursed. The **receipts** should show actual costs.

Contact Jan Drbal with questions.

With the current version of the GED® test expiring in 2013, we need to notify adult learners about the change. When the 2002 Series GED® Test expires the end of December, any incomplete scores will expire too. Test-takers who pass some but not all of the 2002 Series GED® Test will have to start over.

Join the 2002 Series Closeout Campaign and tell adult learners to finish the GED® test. You have the power to inspire and encourage adult learners to finish the GED® test and open doors to college, better jobs, and the respect they deserve. Join the campaign, today! <http://www.gedtestingservice.com/educators/closeout>



VOLUNTEERS

Who Says Everything Has A Price Tag?

By: Maureen McNamara, AE Director—Bellevue Public Schools

“Everybody can be great because everyone can serve.”
—Martin Luther King, Jr.

One of the highlights of the Bellevue Public Schools Adult Education program is the staff, and the purpose of this article is to feature and recognize our ten volunteers. According to the Corporation for National and Community Service, when we share our time and talents, we solve problems, strengthen communities, improve lives, connect to others and transform our own lives.

Helping Out, 2007, indicates the top **five benefits** from volunteering as stated by volunteers are:

- A sense of satisfaction from seeing the results (97%)
- I really enjoy it. (96%)
- It gives me a sense of personal achievement. (88%)
- Meet people and make friends (86%)
- Gives me a chance to do the things I'm good at (83%)

Helping Out, 2007, indicates the top **five barriers to volunteering** are:

- Not enough spare time (82%)
- Put off by bureaucracy (49%)
- Worried about risk/liability (47%)
- Don't know how to find out about getting involved (39%)
- Don't have the right skills/experience (39%)

For those of us who have discussed the frustration from the lack of volunteers at NDE meetings, perhaps knowing the obstacles will determine how to approach a recruitment process.

Since July, 2012, the volunteers in the BPS Adult Education Program have logged 1,484 hours. One volun-

teer has given of her time an average of 75 hours a month, and she is a retired high school English teacher!

Can you imagine the growth the students are able to make in reading and writing literacy due to her efforts?

The volunteers represent many facets of the community. We have a few gentlemen who are retired from the air force, and some others are retired educators.

This group of proud, retired professionals includes a special educator, middle school History teacher, an elementary teacher and substitute teacher. Another volunteer is an aspiring educator who will be student teaching next semester, but wishes to work with youth in an alternative setting.

We must continue to strive to develop literacy skills and the appreciation of literacy in our students. At the Leadership Academy in January, we heard the importance of developing reading skills, not just comprehension, but decoding, fluency and vocabulary. Ironically, this is a primary goal for the BPS Adult Education program this year.

Marilyn, our volunteer who taught elementary school for over thirty years, meets with students in literacy groups four days a week. She has the ability to provide solid instructional opportunities for students to become better readers through their development of the literacy skills.

ESL students are not only learning to read but they are comprehending our culture as they read novels. It is miraculous to watch this in action.

The volunteers in the Bellevue Public Schools Adult Education program are effective, committed to student

improvement and conscientious.

The volunteers enjoy working with the students and working together; they are good to the students and the students treat them well.

Additionally, another layer of support provided through the volunteer grant is the volunteer coordinator. The Volunteer Coordinator ensures that each new volunteer is given a program orientation.

New volunteers are introduced to the director, instructors, and other staff members. They are given a tour of the facility and permitted to observe the ESL and ABE/GED classes, small groups and independent study sessions.

New volunteers complete a registration form and are asked to provide information regarding day, time, hours and preferred topics to assist.

The Volunteer Coordinator will then coordinate schedules to best match the needs of the program and the preferences of the volunteers.

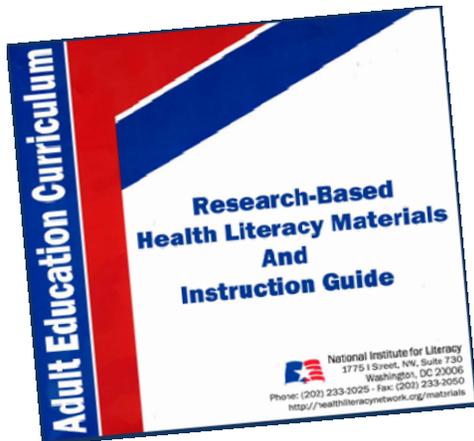
New volunteers are given a Volunteer Handbook. The Volunteer Coordinator will be responsible for periodic revision and updating of the materials and information contained in the handbook.

The instructors will provide hands-on, guided practice in using the materials when a volunteer first begins working with students. The instructors will provide feedback to the volunteers on their performance.

Bellevue Public Schools is grateful for the volunteer coordinator grant that supports the volunteer program. But, even more so, we are quite fortunate to have quality volunteers who are professional, sensitive and experienced.

Health Literacy in the Classroom

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



In the February issue of Nebraska AE News, we began a series of articles exploring the *Research-Based Health Literacy Curriculum Materials and Instruction Guide* which was developed by the National Institute for Literacy in Washington, DC.

Each AE program in the state has received a copy of this notebook. It is easily identifiable in a bright red, white, and blue format on the cover. It is probably also the largest notebook in your collection; so it should be easy to find. *I can attest to the health benefits of this book as I have been lifting it several times a day and my upper body strength is improving rapidly.* It also has a lot of good content for you and your students.

Since the Health Literacy curriculum is usable at all levels, a good place to start, after looking through the introduction, would be the Health Literacy Assessment which begins on page 56 of the introduction.

This assessment gives an idea of the level of health literacy you are dealing with and also has several questions to prompt class discussion.

The questions start out on a fairly basic level and, while staying relatively simple, do get a bit more detailed as the assessment continues. The first 23 questions are multiple choice.

An example is:

You are at the physician's office. You don't have health insurance. What should you do?

- Go to the emergency room
- Work out a payment plan
- Go to a different doctor
- Go to the pharmacy

The question that threw *me* was "What could you do to prepare a healthy meal?" And the correct answer was to "broil fish and steam potatoes" rather than my choice of "roast beef and buttered potatoes."

The second set of questions ask the student how likely they are to do some activities. The example used is "How likely are you to call a doctor if you have a fever?" The questions are answered on a scale of 1 to 6 for "very unlikely" to "very likely."

For the clients who might have test anxiety, there are no correct or incorrect answers in section 2, however many of the questions are thought provoking and can elicit a response from the students.

The third set of questions are identical in format to section two but ask the students about their confidence in their ability to respond to queries they may get at a physician's office. Examples are "How confident are you that you can answer family health history questions?" or "How confident are you that you can follow the directions on over-the-counter medications?"

The last two questions are also in the value-format but ask about the degree of comfort or discomfort in certain situations such as calling for a doctor's appointment or accidentally taking too much medicine. Again these questions are not only educational but also thought-provoking and can lead to in-class discussion.

Section 1 of the Health Literacy Materials is "Health Professionals." This section gives a basic introduction to what different health professionals do, and what to expect from a routine visit to the doctor.

"Health Professionals" is divided into several sections: Basic Skills and Vocabulary; Graphics; Reading and Comprehension; Supplemental Activities; and ESL Activities.

The vocabulary section contains basic terms that could come up in a visit to a doctor or a clinic, such as "hospital," "examine you," and "diagnose your problem." Students can discuss the meanings and give examples to help clarify the concepts.

Supplemental vocabulary words go up a step into more complicated words that could come up in a visit with a physician such as "procrastinate" and "proactive."

A third part of the vocabulary contains "sight" words, or words that are not pronounced phonetically, as the authors say, "words that do not play fair." These are words that must be recognized on sight, such as where, said, weigh, and thought.

The vocabulary words all appear again throughout the section, especially in reading passages.

The graphics section presents the concepts of the unit in picture form and can be reproduced for handouts, a classroom picture set, or as flashcards.

The Reading and Comprehension section starts with a pre-reading discussion inviting student input into their current health care and to compare it to that of their childhood.

Continued on page 4

Health Literacy in the Classroom, Continued

Continued from page 3

The reading passages put the concepts that have been discussed and shown through pictures into words for the students to read in-class or by themselves, as the teacher prefers.

This is followed by a cloze activity which tests the student comprehension of the passage read.

Each section has a supplemental activity. Section 1 has a “copy the phrase” worksheet in which the students read and write common phrases that an English learner might run together.

The ESL section is divided into word focus, grammar focus, sentence

focus and conversation focus in which the student can demonstrate understanding and correct usage of the concepts presented.

If you have not already done so, please check out the Health Literacy Materials and Instruction Guide that is available to your program.

Social Media in the Classroom

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

How aware are you of the extent to which your students and colleagues utilize social media? Social media, when used responsibly, can give students control of their learning.

Hesitation on an administrators' part is often cited as a top barrier to incorporating more social media tools in classrooms. But with a carefully crafted social media policy, educators and administrators can learn to use social media tools quite effectively with students.

Advocates of social media in the classroom say that, when used properly, social media tools can boost student engagement, link students to content experts and real-

world examples of classroom lessons, and help them establish an online body of work.

Social media can help students develop proficiency with technology; learn to create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multimedia text; and manage, analyze, and synthesize multiple streams of information.

In order for this to happen, school leaders and teachers have to be made comfortable with social media so that they can help students use it responsibly and effectively.

Social networking tools can help to open lines of communication between teachers and students and

also among the students of a class.

This can help to expand the reach and educational opportunities in the classroom.

Since the improper use of social media can rapidly escalate into a free-for-all, it is necessary to get ahead of the game and establish basic guidelines for the proper and safe use of social networking tools, personal as well as professional accounts, in the classroom.



First BEST Plus Verification Class Completed

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

Eleven new BEST Plus Test Administrators met with BEST Plus trainer Kathy Croson at the Metro College Campus in Fremont to complete the first Verification session of the BEST Plus Training program. The BEST Plus test, 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.

Test administrators complete an eight-hour training to administer the test. Previously, new administrators could go as much as a year without meeting with the trainers again. It was decided that new test administrators should meet with the trainers within 60 days of the initial training to reaffirm the standards learned during the first meeting. New test administrators Stephanie Ahlmann, Emily Duncan, Jennifer Harmon, Cynthia Hruby, Sandra Kriz, Beverley Moore, Lourdes Pena, Mary K. Pound, Vicki Pribil, Beth Roberts, Katia Valencia and Becky Zessin participated in the program. Each member of this group had taken the original training at Mahoney State Park on June 3.

The end result of the morning was that the new test administrators completed the training activity with much more accuracy than has been previously expected of first year administrators doing the recalibration a year after training. Additional trainings, both face to face and electronic, are being put in place to improve the accuracy of the BEST Plus Test in Nebraska.

Spotlight on...

Northeast Community College

GED® Computer Based Testing

By: Nancy Schultz, AE Director, Northeast Community College — nancyjs@northeast.edu

In June 2012, Northeast Community College volunteered to be one of the pilot sites for computer-based testing. Since the college was already a Pearson Vue-approved testing center, we were able to get everything in place to begin offering this method of testing to our students very easily.

I was very disappointed that most students chose to take the paper-pencil testing option over the computer-based option. Even after explaining the advantages to both students and staff, the paper-pencil option continued to be the method of choice in most cases.

In talking with students and staff, I was told that the cost difference was a primary factor since the computer-based option cost more. I also asked if students had issues with knowing how to use a computer and I was told that most of our Adult Education

students knew more about computers, in many instances, than we do!

Although there have been some students who have taken computer-based tests, it has only been recently that this number has increased.

The increase appears to be directly tied to the fact that the same fees now apply for both the paper-pencil and computer-based testing.

Not only are instructors more on board in supporting this testing option, but students are reporting that they appreciate getting score results so much faster and being able to type their essay without hand cramps from writing the required essay in long-hand!

As the chief examiner for Northeast Community College, I can attest to the fact that I often see students

shaking their hand midway through an exam. Many times students have told me that it was hard to write so much because with the technology now available, they no longer have the need to write in either cursive or by printing.

The bottom line for me is that I'm seeing some very good scores from the computer-based testers.

With costs now comparable, I continue to emphasize that the value of a State of Nebraska High School diploma and the potential for future success, starting with that diploma, is worth far more than the \$120 charged for testing.

After receiving free instruction/test preparation through our state-wide adult education services delivery system, students can be assured that the cost is well worth it!

What is a QR Code?



The processor locates the three distinctive squares at the corners of the image, and uses a smaller square near the fourth corner to normalize the image for size, orientation, and angle of viewing. The small dots are then converted to binary numbers and their validity checked.

Originally designed for industrial uses, Quick Response (QR) codes are becoming common in consumer marketing and advertising. Smartphone users can install an application (app) with a QR-code scanner that can read a displayed code which will take them to the website of a company, store, or product associated with that code. A QR contains data that can be read by a phone's camera.

Smartphone users can install an app with a QR-code scanner that can read a displayed code and convert it to a URL. Most smartphones come equipped with software that allows them to download a QR-code reader.

Once you download a reader, the phone's camera acts like a scanner, allowing it to "read" the barcode. These codes, once scanned by your phone, can provide you with a URL, contact information, Short Message Service (SMS), or similar links to information right on your phone. In order to read a QR code, your phone needs to have a code reader.

Gaming in the Classroom

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



The following story appears in the eSchool News on January 8, 2013 (Dennis Pierce, Editor).

The story describes efforts by teachers in some schools to take the enthusiasm and know-how which their students have for video games and translate it into additional learning opportunities.

This is not suggesting that you should turn ESL classes into a video arcade or that GED programs be run on the basis of World of Warcraft, but it is meant to be thought-provoking. **It does not hurt to venture outside your comfort zone just a bit.** You may wander right into the comfort zone of a student with whom you were having a difficult time connecting.

Advocates say that good video games can be used as teaching tools to help students develop an array of skills from writing and physics to teamwork and problem solving.

Many of your students are quite acquainted with video gaming and social media and may well be surprised and pleased that something from their world can be of assistance in the educational process.

The moral of the story is to not be afraid to try something. Not many great accomplishments came about from “playing it safe.”

Mainstream video games used as teaching tools

People who worried that the technology boom would lead to kids playing video games in class were right: In schools around the country, students are playing such games as “Minecraft,” “World of Warcraft,” and “Angry Birds” and their teachers are encouraging it.

“Video games are not the great evil that people make them out to be,” says Trish Cloud, technology instructor at Torrence Creek Elementary School in Huntersville, N.C., where she created a popular “Minecraft” club.

Cloud is part of a community of educators who love gaming and want to share that passion to help students learn by introducing video games in class. Those educators say that good video games can be used as teaching tools to help students develop an array of skills—from writing and physics to teamwork and problem solving.

Lucas Gillispie, a former biology teacher in coastal Pender County, helped to create a language-arts curriculum tied to “World of Warcraft,” and he launched a grant program for local teachers to incorporate “Minecraft” into their classes.

He notes that the fast-paced, globally connected world of digital learning lets educators create new career paths and emerge as leaders, no matter where they work or what their job titles are. And that is exactly the kind of versatility teachers are trying to spark in their students.

What about parents, who might feel clueless and confused? Cloud and Gillispie say the answer is simple: Play the games with your kids. “Just pay attention and be willing to set aside those tired stereotypes,” says Gillispie, now an instructional tech-

nology coordinator for Pender County Schools. “We’ve come a long way since ‘Pac-Man.’”

Learning in Azeroth

Gillispie, 37, grew up playing computer games. He enjoys talking with his high school students about gaming, and it was a student who introduced him to online role-playing games such as “World of Warcraft,” often known as “WoW.”

“WoW” players create an avatar who completes quests in the fantasy realm of Azeroth. They choose a profession, join guilds, and ally themselves with one of two warring factions—the Alliance or the Horde—then face creatures such as orcs, dwarves, and trolls. Players interact with others around the world.

Gillispie’s love of gaming led him from the classroom to the district technology job, where he created a “WoW” club for at-risk middle-school students. He teamed up with a New York teacher launching a similar club, and they created a guild.

That experience evolved into the *“WoW” Curriculum*, which is designed to meet the standards set in the new Common Core curriculum. For instance, one “quest” requires students to study riddle poetry and share their notes within the guild. They write their own riddle poems based on Azeroth, edit and critique each other, then take their riddles into the wider game world to challenge outsiders.

The free-form nature of gaming creates unexpected lessons, Gillispie says. Once, he says, a group of his students figured out how to cheat another player out of gold coins. The kids were triumphant until Gillispie confronted them about their ethics.

Continued on page 7

Gaming the Classroom, Continued

Continued from page 6

They agreed to return the money and write an apology—and they were delighted when the other player commended their honesty.

“It was a moment for us to teach some morality in the virtual world,” he said.

While “WoW” isn’t graphically violent, it does involve battles, which might make it inappropriate for younger students.

Virtual Legos

Enter “Minecraft,” a game that pops players into various environments and requires them to construct shelter from roving creepers, spiders, and zombies. There’s also a creative mode that lets players build without attacks.

“It is an infinite sandbox made up of Lego-like blocks,” says Cloud, who learned about the game from her students and her own children, ages 10 and 13.

Cloud, a self-professed “Star Wars” geek, started playing “WoW” a couple of years ago—at age 50—and grew to love it. A teacher’s assistant, she was assigned to run one of Torrence Creek’s two computer labs. When the PTA bought 60 iPads, Cloud says, “It was love at first sight.”

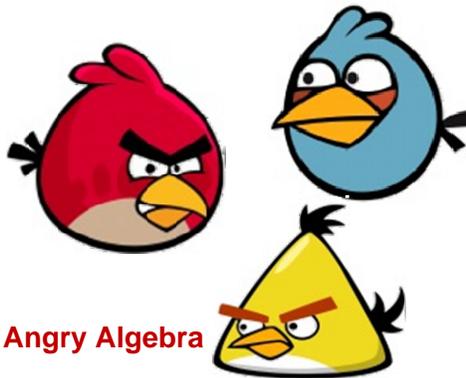
When she announced the “Minecraft” club at the start of this school year, the 60 slots were filled in two days—with almost 40 more students on the waiting list. It’s an after-school club, but Cloud is talking to classroom teachers about ways to use the game in lessons.

For instance, she has her older students research North Carolina landmarks and build them to scale in “Minecraft.” Sam Gilbert, a fourth-grader, has built a model of the Cape Hatteras lighthouse.

On a recent afternoon, second-grader Ross Dorfman was tunneling deep into his world, while third-grader Maddie Kester built a house of diamonds. Maddie said when she’s waiting for dinner at home, she asks to use her parents’ iPad to play “Minecraft.” “It makes time go by fast,” she said.

Cloud calls that “flow,” a total absorption that characterizes people playing challenging computer games.

“If we can turn this in a way to take it and make it our own, there’s no limit to what they can do,” she says.



Angry Algebra

The best games, whether digital or physical, motivate players to master skills, says Tim Chartier, an associate professor of math at Davidson College. Classroom math, on the other hand, can seem painfully abstract.

Chartier taught a session on math and pop culture for the Charlotte Teachers Institute, which brought together K-12 teachers from public and private schools.

During one class, he mentioned that “Angry Birds,” a popular video game that involves catapulting cartoon birds at pigs, uses a parabola without air resistance for the red birds’ trajectory. Kristianna Luce, a math teacher at North Mecklenburg High, seized that remark and started working “Angry Birds” into her algebra classes. Chartier built on her work to create teaching tools for using

“Angry Birds” in algebra. The dynamic nature of video games entices students in a way that simply working toward a grade might not, Chartier says. “Self-motivation does a lot to keep people moving forward,” he added.

Sharing Ideas

As Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools works toward expanding digital access, the district has formal groups and central-office staff dedicated to sharing the best ideas about technology in the classroom. Cloud says a CMS technology specialist helped her develop the “Minecraft” club and ideas for linking the game to lessons.

But avid gamers are just as likely to be sharing ideas with online communities. Gillispie has become devoted to the use of “WoW,” “Minecraft,” and other games in education.

Cloud ticks off a long list of websites and blogs she visits to check in with other educators using games.

There’s even a “WoW” guild, called Cognitive Dissonance, made up of educators who share classroom tips while they play, she says.

Valerie Truesdale, who recently took CMS’ top technology job, says she’s fine with the array of alternatives to the traditional chain of communication.

“I think that digital learning and mobile devices are shaking up how everybody learns,” she said. **“It’s all-the-time, everywhere learning. Everybody’s a teacher, and everybody’s a learner.”**

What do you think of these stories—and the use of video games as teaching tools in particular? Do video games have a place in the classroom? Why or why not? Are you using video games as teaching tools in your own schools—and if so, how?

Brigetta Post
Celebrates 25 Years!
Mid-Plains Community College
Adult Education



Mid-Plains Community College Adult Education Program has had the privilege of working with Brigitta Post for the past 25 years.

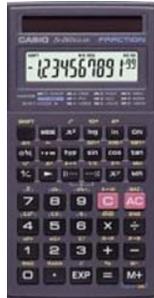
Brigitta has touched the lives of so many students throughout the years. She has worked tirelessly with students, helping them work towards meeting their goals.

In addition, she also works closely with staff to meet performance measures and even does so with a smile! We are so lucky to have Brigitta as part of our team.

Congratulations on a quarter of a century Brigitta!

Calculators for the GED® Test

Help your students prepare for the GED® test by learning about the approved calculators. The GED® Mathematics Test is divided into two parts and each part has 25 questions. Examinees can use one of the two approved calculators in an Official GED® Testing Center™ on Part I of the test, depending on the test delivery format (paper or computer).



Calculator for the GED® test on paper

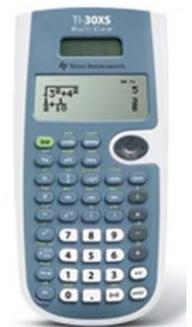
The testing center will provide a Casio FX260 handheld calculator.

Watch the FX260 demonstration video (English)
Watch the FX260 demonstration video (Spanish)

Calculators for the GED® test on computer

The Texas Instruments TI-30XS on-screen calculator will be available when examinees sit for the GED® Mathematics Test on computer.

Watch the TI-30XS introduction video (English)
Watch the TI-30XS introduction video (Spanish)
View the TI-30XS demonstration video (English)



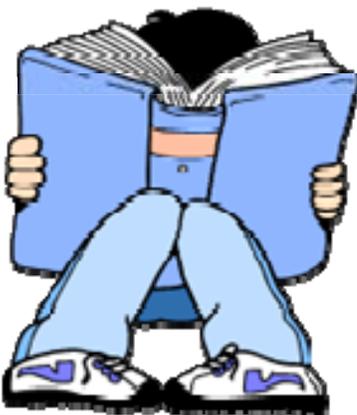
Watch GED® Webinars

GED® Testing Service continues to take giant strides toward the January release date of the new tests. Visit the 2014 GED® test webinar archives to keep yourself up to date on all the details! Watch some webinar videos and catch up on the latest news and information available. Each webinar features a playback video, slideshow presentation, and slides. Each video page also features a certificate of completion that can be personalized and printed.

gedtestingservice.com/educators/new-assessment



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

Building Student Literacy Through Sustained Silent Reading

By: John W. Miller, AE/GED Instructor, Alliance Public School — jmiller@apschools.org

What is a good way to foster adult student literacy in Nebraska's Adult Education? As an experienced educator, I am convinced that there are ways to improve students' readings and that it is the key to open the doors to all other subjects, cognitive processing, reading math word problems, and improvement in written expression.

Six years ago, I started going to the Alliance Public Library and collecting discarded books that were culled from the shelves when they weren't checked out for a long time. It was my plan to get everyone reading.

Having studied "Sustained Silent Reading" usage, I found a program on the Internet that would calculate the reading level of a book by typing in several paragraphs from a page of the book. The free site is online-utility.org/english/readability_test_and_improve.jsp.

1. Type a page from a book
2. Click Process Text

Several grade levels will appear from your typed book page. This is what will be calculated: (Coleman Liau Index, Flesch Kincaid Grade Level, ARI—Automated Readability Index and SMOG).

I then average the three highest reading grade levels and place a sticker on the inside of the book with that average reading level on it. This year 2013, the classroom library contains 350-400 books that are grade leveled by this method from reading levels 1.0 through 13.9.

The next step is to finish scoring the pre-test TABE reading test for each student. Once you know his/her initial reading level, you hold a conference about his/her TABE results. You explain in this GED classroom, we all read a book for one-half hour upon arrival to the classroom before doing

any other academic work. (It is imperative that the teacher participates in this reading and actually is seen reading a book as the students are reading).

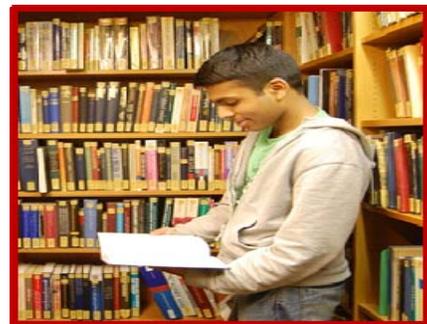
You must role model the importance of reading. The student then chooses a book from his initial TABE Reading Pre-Test Grade Level Score. It is explained to the student that he/she must keep a reading log by writing the title, author, beginning reading time, ending reading time, and the number of pages read each day. Every Thursday of each week, Academic Book Club meets and each student plus the teacher tells what book they are reading and what is going on in their book.

An extremely valuable study habit for readers doing "Sustained Silent Reading" is to give them 3" x 5" note cards. Instruct the students to use these as their bookmark. When they meet a word they've never seen before, write the word on the card.

In your instruction, tell them to go back and see if they can get the meaning from context. After their half-hour reading session, teach them to find out more about the word with a dictionary or a dictionary online and keep an "Academic Word List." This turns into their personal "Academic Word List."

Following Thursday morning's "Academic Book Club Discussion," hold an "Academic Word List" review of the words they've met that they now have discovered. As a teacher, I make a big deal about my new word discoveries from my Sustained Silent Reading book. Have each student make two words on an overhead transparency and let the students share their word discoveries.

Another writing technique to use while preparing students to write good essays is to use their (SSR)



books to study how the author put his sentences, paragraphs, and dialogue together. During journal writing time, periodically have students copy two paragraphs from their reading book and examine how authors use commas, quotation marks, ending sentence marks, questions, etc. Get as much across the curriculum use out of SSR as you can.

As the teacher, you can have students share the mechanics, usage, and grammar in cooperative learning groups or whole class presentations. Later, you can follow-up this practice with other English mechanic skills from your other texts and materials, as you discover what writing skills are lacking in your students' needs.

To conclude, here are some reading results from students:

Student 1	4.9	GE	to	10.8	GE
Student 2	5.6	GE	to	6.2	GE
Student 3	9.9	GE	to	12.9	GE
Student 4	9.4	GE	to	10.5	GE
Student 5	9.0	GE	to	10.8	GE
Student 6	9.4	GE	to	10.9	GE
Student 7	7.4	GE	to	8.6	GE
Student 8	9.4	GE	to	11.8	GE

If you want to know more about the use of Sustained Silent Reading, give me a call at (308) 760-7986.

Also, a good resource book to get and read is: *Building Student Literacy Through Sustained Silent Reading* by Steve Gardiner—Published by: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, Virginia, copyright 2005.