NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Nebraska AE News

A Newsletter for Adult Education Staff in Nebraska

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http://www.education.ne.gov/ADED/index.html

June 2011

Disclaimer

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Another Program Year Drawing To A Close

By: Vicki Bauer, State AE Administrator

As we wind down the program year, with lots of post-testing in BEST Plus and TABE going on throughout the state, I thought this might be a good time to re-visit or address some topics of interest to those of us in Adult Education. So, a potpourri of items follows……

First, the new 5th edition series of GED tests will be released sometime in 2014; the exact date is yet to be determined. (About a month ago I had e-mailed GED examiners and AE Directors that January 1, 2014 would be the start date; I have since found out that this is not the case.) As soon as we know the exact release date, we will let you know.

As you can imagine, the Nebraska Adult Education and GED Testing programs will have an enormous amount of work to do in preparation for the new GED test series. Our curriculum will be changing; teachers and students alike will need to have computer skills that are required for the computer based GED tests; GED testing centers will become Pearson-Vue testing centers; and all this means lots of professional development will be needed to get us all "on board" with the new GED testing system.

GEDTS will be creating a new assessment system, not just a new test. The assessment system contains three distinct parts:

PREPARE — The development of a stronger system of learning pathways to support GED candidates;

PERFORM — The development of a test that certifies readiness for careers in addition to a high school credential; and

PROGRESS — the connection of GED test-takers with resources to enable their progression into career and college.

We now know that there will be four tests on the 5th edition GED test series, which will be aligned with national standards for career and college readiness. The Language Arts Reading and Language Arts Writing tests will be combined into the **Literacy Test**.

The mathematics test will include a more advanced level of math than what is assessed in the current series of GED tests.

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Mark Your Calendar!

BEST Plus Recalibration Training ***(April 26 session rescheduled)***	**June 3**	**Columbus**
BEST Plus Recalibration Training	**June 18**	**MCC Fort Campus - Omaha**
ESL /EL Civics Workshop	**June 16 & 17**	**Kearney Holiday Inn**
BEST Literacy Pilot Follow Up	**June 20**	**CCC Kearney Campus**
TEAL Team Meeting	**June 21**	**Mahoney State Park**
Workplace Essential Workshop	**July 14**	**Kearney Holiday Inn**
Workplace Essential Workshop	**July 15**	**Lincoln**
BEST Plus Recalibration Training	**July 20**	**Mahoney State Park**

Another Program Year Drawing To A Close, Continued

Continued from page 1

This summer, there is a wealth of professional development available to Nebraska AE staff. At the request of ESL staff, we are having an **ESL workshop** just for YOU in Kearney on **June 16 & 17**. Nationally known experts will be here to address disabilities/learning differences and preparing ESL students for employment; both of which are very pertinent and important as we serve adult ESL students.

Contact your program director or Jeanette Evans for more information – **this is a workshop that shouldn't be missed!** There will also be BEST Plus re-calibrations and initial trainings across the state.

At the State Directors' meeting in Washington, DC a few weeks ago, a major theme was **transitions**. Now, more than ever, it is essential that Adult Education prepare students for transition to employment and/or post-secondary education/training.

Our bar has been raised and we have a responsibility to go beyond the minimal skills needed to pass the GED tests. Scoring a 450 average on the GED tests is not sufficient to prepare our students for college. And, the 5th edition GED tests will be based on the new national common core standards, which means that the tests will be more rigorous. Did you know that 63% of jobs in 2018 will require a post-secondary education?

This tells us that our students need to and must take advantage of all the assistance we can offer them.

To assist our Adult Education programs in helping our student prepare for employment, we are offering two workshops this summer on **Workplace Essential Skills (WES).** One workshop will be held in Kearney on July 14, and one in Lincoln on July 15. The featured speaker will be from KET, the creator of WES.

These excellent materials will provide you with the information you need, including lesson plans, to assist your students in preparation for the workplace. All programs are expected to have representation at the workshops. Contact your program director or Jeanette Evans for more information. jeanette.evans@nebraska.gov

Last, but certainly not least, is a **heartfelt thanks** for all the work you do in Adult Education. We at NDE appreciate your devotion to your students and commend you for "going the extra mile" for those students who need just a little more of your help or encouragement to succeed.

Whether the student is 16 or 60, **you** make a difference in your students' lives...like seeing that student participate in a GED graduation or another student mastering English and getting a job. And the list goes on... Have a wonderful summer!

English Language Acquisition

Participate in the Discussion!

There will be a discussion on the adult English Language Acquisition (ELA) list next week beginning Tuesday, May 31 and continuing through the following Monday, June 6.

The topic is Transitioning Language Minority Adults to Work and Training. The guest facilitator is Heide Spruck Wrigley. Your participation in the discussion with comments and questions about the math and numeracy needs of adult ELLs transitioning to work and training would certainly enrich the discussion.

Discussion Description

Millions of adults whose first or native language is not English are seeking ways to improve their English so they can find employment that can sustain a family. For many, this means looking for programs that offer a focus on English for work and finding training programs that integrate language development with job-specific training. In this forum, models are highlighted for meeting these needs, and approaches and instructional practices are discussed that help adults who are not yet proficient in English to access and succeed in training and at work. For a brief biography of the facilitator, a more detailed discussion description including the focus for each day's discussion, and a link to a reading related to the discussion, go to http://lincs.ed.gov/lincs/discussions/englishlanguage/11transitioning.

Look forward to a lively and useful discussion on this important topic. If you are not currently subscribed to the adult English language acquisition (ELA) list, please go to http://lincs.ed.gov/mailman/listinfo/englishlanguage#sub.

Spotlight on...

McCook Community College

International Club is Revived

By: Shannon Schaben, AE/ESL Instructor, McCook Community College schabens@mpcc.edu

Members of McCook Community College's (MCC) newly revived International Club is comprised of local and International students who have a passion for connecting and sharing their cultures. According to club sponsor and ESL Instructor Shannon Schaben, the club was formed out of discussions between her students in the Adult Education/ English as a Second Language classes as well as MCC International students. Schaben said the club's goal is to create a better awareness of international students and to interact and share with American students.

In October 2010, Shannon began working on the bylaws with club sponsor Sherry Mihel from the North Platte Community College as well as students from McCook and North Platte. In February, the McCook campus took the bylaws to Student Senate to make the process official.

Between March and May, four more meetings were held. These meetings consisted of students taking turns each week to share about their country (they were all so creative and brought items from their homeland and some even made food to sample). Students presented on Brazil, the Philippines, Thailand, and Croatia. At the conclusion of each meeting, we brainstormed ideas for next year.

The club is looking forward to the 2011-2012 year and continuing to gain a better understanding of the wider world in which we live.

Members for the 2010/2011 year included: Martin Mlinaric (President)/ Croatia; Staci Lawless (Vice-President)/America; Lodia Whitson (Photographer) /Philippines; Pilar Eason/Philippines; Sopistha Hayes, Thailand; Jerimiah Johnson/ The Gambia; Tyler Leak/America; Senamon Rogers/America; Monique Stineman /America

Lodia Whitson & Sopistha Hayes

GED Examiners Trained to Spot Fake IDs

By: Vicki Bauer, State GED Administrator

Marlan Hohnstein & Sid Yardley

Over 80 GED Examiners met in Kearney and Lincoln in May for their annual examiners' training. A great deal of conversation centered on the 2014 series of GED tests. This summer, GEDTS will conduct a detailed survey of each state and will assist with developing a plan to incorporate computer based testing (CBT) in the jurisdiction. As we learn more, we will share that with you.

A revised GED Application Form was distributed to Nebraska GED Testing Centers. The new form must be used for all new examinees starting July 1, 2011. http://www.education.ne.gov/ADED/pdfs/GED_Application_Form.pdf

A very informative and interesting session on Fraudulent IDs was presented by Marlan Hohnstein and Sid Yardley from the Motor Vehicle Fraud Unit. They gave examiners a detailed look at the different types of Nebraska driver's licenses, ways to recognize a fraudulent license, and pointed out some of the new security features that are not easily detected.

The annual "GED Knowledge Check" and "State Office Update" presented at the meetings served as a reminder to examiners of test administration policies and guidelines necessary for having an ideal GED testing center.

GED Boot Camp

By: Colleen Ernesti, ABE Instructor—Northeast Community College

My favorite session at COABE was ***GED Boot Camp*** presented by Teri Zutter, Director, Adult Literacy and Language, Western Nevada College and Angela Andrade, Instructional Specialist, Adult Literacy and Language, Western Nevada College. This college is located in Carson, Nevada. Two years ago they started this program and have had 128 students enrolled in the program with a 56% success rate.

If a student is interested in this program, they must attend a registration session and take the TABE locator to see if they qualify for the camp. Originally, anyone from level E to level A could enroll. However, they have modified the requirements so that a student must be at least a level M. The class runs for six weeks, four days per week and 3.5 hours per day. They were in the process of changing some of the requirements for the camp that was to start last month.

There is a camp held in Fallon, Nevada that is run by a single GED instructor and she has close to a 70% success rate. Unfortunately, this instructor was not at the conference to ask how she has her class set up.

The class covers all areas of the GED exam with five weeks of classes and one week of review. One day Math is covered by a Math instructor, another day English is covered by an English instructor, etc. In the Fallon class, the GED instructor covers each area on the given day. At the end of the six weeks, the GED exam is administered.

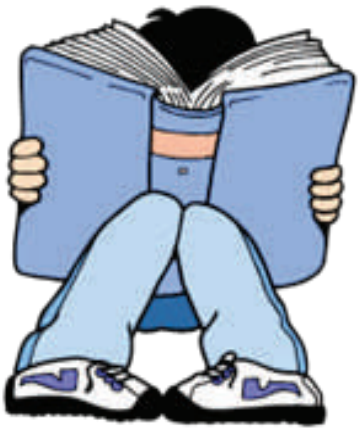
It would be interesting to try this at one of the community colleges and I would like to try parts of this program in my class which is only held one day a week for 2 hours. The students in these camps become very close and encourage each other to cover all areas of the exam. If a student fails the exam, there is follow-up by the instructors to give the individual additional help or even to enroll in the next boot camp. I found the information encouraging and would like to contact the Fallon instructor.

Sowing Seeds of Success: ESL/EL Civics Workshop

By the time this newsletter reaches you, all the registrations for this exciting workshop should be in!! If you are an ESL or EL Civics teacher or administrator and you didn't Register, you are going to miss out on a very special learning opportunity!!!!

Robin Lovrien (Schwarz) will be presenting a 6-hour workshop on working with the struggling ESL Learner both Thursday and Friday. A bonus for this presentation is that a cohort group of 20 will be identified to work with Robin online from the June workshop until the October AE Conference. What a great way to continue and extend the learning! Rosemarie Park will be presenting a 6-hour workshop as well. She will be spending each morning working on communication skills for ESL Learners and the afternoon session focusing on workforce skills for the ESL student. There will be a $60/day stipend for those who attend and are eligible to receive it. **See you in Kearney for this exciting 2-day event!**

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. http://www.education.ne.gov/ADED/documents/AEResourceLibrary.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 Jeanette. 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 Jeanette at: 402/471-4806 jeanette.evans@nebraska.gov

!! FLAG DAY !! Holiday Match Game !! FLAG DAY !!

President Truman signed an Act of Congress on August 3rd, 1949 designating June 14th of each year as National Flag Day. The United States Flag Code (Public L829) as found in Title 4 of the United States Code, provides instructions and rules on how to display and show respect for the flag by civilians.

See if you can correctly fill in the blank on each of the following rules using the words found in the column on the right. (*Answers found below.*) http://www.senate.gov/reference/resources/pdf/RL30243.pdf

1. The flag should not be displayed on days when the weather is _____, except when an all weather flag is displayed.
2. The flag should be displayed during school days in or near every _____.
3. The flag should not be displayed on a float in a _____ except from a staff.
4. The flag of the United States of America should be at the center and at the _____ point of the group when a number of flags of states or localities or pennants of societies are grouped and displayed from staffs.
5. The term _____means the position of the flag when it is one-half the distance between the top and bottom of the staff.
6. When the flag is used to cover a casket, it should be so placed that the union is at the head and over the left shoulder. The flag should not be lowered into the _____or allowed to touch the ground.
7. The flag should never be displayed with the union side down, except as a signal of dire _____ in instances of extreme danger to life or property.
8. The flag should never touch anything beneath it, such as the _____, the floor, water, or merchandise.
9. The flag should never be used for _____ purposes in any manner whatsoever.
10. The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by _____.
11. On the admission of a new State to the Union, one _____ shall be added to the union of the flag; and such addition shall take effect on the fourth day of July.
12. It is the universal custom to display the flag only from sunrise to _____ on buildings and on stationary flagstaffs.

parade
ground
star
inclement
schoolhouse
burning
sunset
advertising
distress
grave
half-staff
highest

1. inclement 2. schoolhouse 3. parade 4. highest 5. half-staff 6. grave 7. distress 8. ground 9. advertising 10. burning 11. star 12. sunset

A special thank you is extended to everyone who contributed to the Learning Links Section this month

http://www.anymeeting.com/
Here's a FREE webinar service that might be helpful. It is called Any meeting and is totally free. It does all that GoToMeeting, GoToWebinar, and WebEx is able to do, plus much more. You can see videos on YouTube that train on how to use the service. The videos are here: http://support. anymeeting.com/index.php?title=Main_Page. You can register for free webinar trainings here: http://www.anymeeting.com/SupportTeam

Here's an impressive collection of smart phone applications, mostly free or very inexpensive, and useful for adult or family literacy.

http://www.androidapps.com/

http://us.blackberry.com/apps-software/appworld/

http://www.pocketgear.com/us,en,usd/index.html

Google Earth lets you fly anywhere to view satellite imagery, maps, terrain, 3D buildings, galaxies in outer space, and the depths of the ocean. Take a tour of Google Earth and see all the places you can go. Watch the tutorial videos to help guide you through the features in Google Earth. *www.google.com/earth/index.html*

Pumarosa.com is a free, bilingual, phonetic, and interactive English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) website for Spanish-speaking students of all ages. The website was created by Paul Rogers, a veteran ESL teacher in California. Pumarosa was designed to teach basic English to Spanish-speaking students, but its graded structure can be easily adapted for teaching English to students whose first language is not Spanish.

Pumarosa is divided into two sections: Beginning and Intermediate. It contains about 30 lessons, arranged step-by-step, from the alphabet to lessons on all the verb tenses. The website also serves as an effective introduction to the use of computers because it is easy to navigate. Pumarosa has expanded its offerings to include civics and history lessons. Future lessons on Pumarosa will also include essays, poetry and songs geared to adult learners. The website is funded by Susan Polis Schutz, a well-known and respected poet and her husband, Stephen Schutz, a psychiatrist and an artist.

BrainPOP is an animated educational site with animated science, social studies, health, technology, math, arts & music and English movies, quizzes, activity pages and more! *http://www.brainpop.com/*

These easy to navigate health-related sites have simple visuals with large and clear fonts and a nice balance of text, graphics, and blank space.
http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/default.aspx
http://www.healthfinder.gov
http://www.healthliteracymissouri.org
http://www.medlineplus.gov

http://freeology.com/
Freeology provides free school resources like graphic organizers, teacher forms, printables, worksheet makers, calendars, clean jokes and journal topics.

Combating Boredom—Anger—Humiliation

Excerpted from "Changing the Way We Teach Math," A Manual for Teaching Basic Math to Adults
By: Kate Nonesuch http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/mathman/cover.htm

Kate Nonesuch has an excellent book entitled, ***Changing the Way We Teach Math.*** *The following excerpt is used with her permission. If you would like to read Ms. Nonesuch's book in its entirety, click on the link above, or request it from your local program director.*

BOREDOM

I'm bored. I'm tired of this. I feel blah!

I have a rule in my class, that I follow myself: refuse to be bored. I find it very useful to encourage students to say when they are bored, and to refuse to be bored in math class.

The rule introduces something new. Generally, they expect to be bored in math class; for many, mix of fear and boredom is exactly their experience of math class. So, when I ask them to commit to saying it out loud when they are bored, and suggest that math class should be exciting, or at least interesting, I have changed their expectations.

What happens after the student says he's bored? Again, the way the teacher takes this feedback is important. Sometimes the temptation to retaliate is great. When someone says it's too easy, the temptation is to leap up six levels and give him something really hard! After all, he messed up your lesson plan; so you want to mess up his.

If I can take this feedback less personally, I can begin a conversation about what makes the material boring. A bored student is a disengaged student, but a student who says he is bored gives you an entryway into dealing with some math difficulties, and into re-engaging the students. I try to find out if the student is bored because it is too hard. (I know from personal experience that frustration gets boring very quickly.)

Is he bored because it is too easy? Because he doesn't see the point of this particular thing? Because they've done it all before and nothing seems different this time around? Whatever the reason, it is sometimes easier for students to admit to being bored than to admit to being scared or frustrated.

ANGER

I'm frustrated; I'm irritated; I'm mad

I like to say when I'm irritated or frustrated, or mad, for two reasons. First, saying it helps me calm down a little. Second, it gives me a chance to make it clear what I'm frustrated about. Even if I don't say anything, the students know I'm irritated about something—the emotion leaks out in my voice or my body language, and they are past masters at reading voice and body language of teachers. They often assume the worst—That I'm mad at them because they are stupid. Saying what I'm frustrated about is useful to them as well.

For example, I might say, "I'm feeling frustrated with myself. You and I have been working really hard n this, and I can't seem to find an example or an explanation that will help. My brain seems to have frozen solid. Can you let me think about it overnight, and maybe I can come up with something that will be useful to both of us?" (Here I make it clear that I'm frustrated with myself, not with the student. The student gets to see that I'm human, that teaching is work, and also gets a chance to be generous with me by giving me some time to come up with something new.)

Or "I'm frustrated when you miss so many classes. It's hard for me to help you catch up, and I worry that even if you catch up today, you might not come tomorrow, and then the next day we'll be back at square one. That makes things harder for you, and it makes my job harder too." (Here it is clear that the attendance is the problem, not that the student is stupid. It seems to me that it is easier to come to some solution about lack of attendance than to cure stupidity. It also makes it clear that his absences have an effect on me, that I want him to attend regularly not "for his own good," but because it makes my job easier and more fulfilling.)

Students also get angry in math class, and often they direct their anger at the instructor, "You don't like brown people." "You only work with the pretty girls." "You don't care about people who've been out of school a long time." "You don't understand youth." "You don't……." Students lash out, and it hurts, and your own emotion interferes with your ability to teach that moment or that student. Once again, this is a place to acknowledge my feelings, figure out where the student's anger is coming from, and go on from there.

HUMILIATION

I feel like I'm in kindergarten

Often students haven't done many participatory activities since they were in early elementary school.
I hear many reports that my students were so far behind in school that they didn't work with the rest of the class, rather worked alone in a workbook that the teacher marked and gave back to them. So when I ask them to use manipulatives, for example, I know they sometimes start by feeling humiliated, because in their experience, manipulatives are for babies.

I know that a student whose mind and heart is occupied with feeling humiliated and resentful about using the manipulatives will not see that 2/6 = 1/3, and since my interest is in exactly that, I'll do something to help express the feelings, so we can both get on with the job we came to do!

Developing Critical Thinkers

Curriculum Review

By: Victoria Hecker, AE/GED Instructor, Metropolitan Community College vhecker@mccneb.edu

Critical thinking. The government wants us to teach our students to practice it. More importantly, *we* want to teach our students to practice it. But many of us would be hard-pressed to define it, let alone know how to teach it. Even worse, much of the educational material purporting to teach critical thinking limits its application to the classroom, which makes it appear irrelevant to our students.

In the book *Developing Critical Thinkers,* author Stephen Brookfield addresses these issues. He explains what critical thinking is, shares approaches and techniques for teaching critical thinking, and demonstrates the practical role of critical thinking in adult lives. For the sake of space, I will focus on his thoughts on defining and teaching critical thinking.

Brookfield spends a good deal of space explaining what critical thinking looks like. In the first few chapters, he describes critical thinkers as people who are "identifying and challenging assumptions, coming up with alternative possibilities," and "becoming 'reflective skeptics who look beyond what is presented to them as true." (p. 7-9).

They can analyze their own beliefs and thought patterns, as well as those of others, and logically evaluate those beliefs and patterns in the light of their experiences. They look beyond standard processes and pat solutions, and improve on procedures and solve problems innovatively and effectively. They do not take for granted the truth of a statement, but rather examine the strengths and weaknesses of a position.

Yet, while any belief is subject to this challenge, critical thinkers do not remain in a quagmire of questions—instead, they use their thinking skills to build a foundation for their beliefs, rather than allowing someone else to create that foundation for them.

This questioning and challenging of one's own assumptions and the messages one receives can be a threatening process, and Brookfield emphasizes that teachers of critical thinking should be sensitive to the difficult position in which this places learners. He describes the attitude of a good teacher of critical thinking, as well as some of the techniques that a teacher can use to gently lead people to attain this skill.

He says that teachers should be willing to share their own beliefs to allow the students to probe and challenge them. Teachers should listen carefully and support the students *and* their efforts, being careful how hard they push students. Challenging too many basic assumptions can scare or demean the students, because this could suggest that students should make drastic changes in their lives that they may not be prepared for.

Teachers should also be honest about the risks of critical thinking; for example, advocating for change in the workplace can lead to the loss of a job (p. 77).

Brookfield shares practical ways to approach instruction in critical thinking. Environment is key; he advises starting "each class with a problem or controversy," longer class times, small-group rather than individual seating, and planned quiet times "of reflection during which learners and teachers can quietly ponder new perspectives." (p. 82).

Training students to understand their learning styles and challenge themselves to use new learning styles is another technique. Some ways that teachers can approach critical thinking instruction include role-playing, conversation exercises, and writing exercises. In conversation, teachers can function as a mirror for the students' positions; by re-iterating students' positions, a teacher can allow students to see their own positions from another person's point of view.

Another conversation exercise involves asking questions that draw out students' assumptions. For example, a teacher could ask "Can you think of a time when you felt like a very good parent? What happened, and why did you feel that you have done well?"

These questions focus on positive experiences, while showing what students consider "good." The teacher can then use those answers to help students generalize about their own beliefs.

This can also be done in writing exercises—short paragraphs that can, if desired, be shared anonymously with the class and discussed. In their writing, students should include details by answering the "Who, what, when, where, why, and how" questions.

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Developing Critical Thinkers Curriculum Review, Continued

Continued from page 8

Another approach is to use criteria analysis. This activity requires students to specifically list the things that they think makes a job (or something else) effectively done in the workplace, in relationships, in politics, and in the media. He includes a chapter on each of these arenas.

These techniques can be tweaked—Brookfield discusses more activities that are similar—but the point is to help students identify what they consider "good" or "bad," and to work from their thoughts about specific incidents to generalizations about their beliefs.

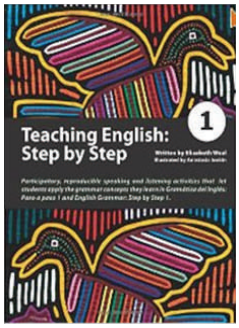
Brookfield then invites his readers to consider how critical thinking plays out in Brookfield's approach, in contrast to traditional "critical thinking" activities, to help students apply critical thinking skills to practical areas of life. By using sensitivity in our attempts to help students think critically, and by grounding our lessons in students' own life experiences, we can introduce students to a world beyond those experiences. As they expand their thinking, students will be able to become more effective employees, create stronger relationships, implement social change, and evaluate the value of messages bombarding them through the media.

Hopefully, by understanding what critical thinking is and how to teach it, we can help our students not only to succeed academically, but also to become stronger, healthier people.

Resource Materials To Review

NDE tries to add to the collection of resources available on a regular basis. A $25 stipend is paid to individuals who provide a review for publication in this AE newsletter.

This month we have: ***Teaching English: Step by Step 1, English Grammar: Step by Step 1 (both English and Spanish versions)*** This is a new series by Elizabeth Weal and published by Tenaya Press in Palo Alto, California. Take a look and see what you think!



A set of 3 DVDs entitled ***Teaching ESL to Adults, Vol. 1, 2, & 3.*** These were created as a project of New American Horizons Foundation in conjunction with consultants, MaryAnn Florez and Betsy Parrish. The 3 volumes include a wealth of information on topics such as: Life Skills, Building Literacy with Emergent Readers, and Working with Multi-Level classes. Some of the topics are approached from specific educational functioning levels. Maybe the reviewer will find wonderful things to share as part of a session for either the upcoming ESL workshop or at the fall conference!!!

We also have a new desk copy of ***Citizenship Now: A Complete Guide for Naturalization*** by Hilgeman, Roderman, Sherman and Cooper. It includes a "Pass the New Test" oral interview practice CD. This is a new product put out by McGraw Hill.

REMINDER: If you are looking for professional development materials or topics, the state resource library is the place to start! Materials available are listed on the NDE website and/or you may contact Jeanette for more information at 402-471-4806 or email: jeanette.evans@nebraska.gov

Workplace Essential Skills

A *Workplace Essential Skills* workshop will be held in Kearney on July 14 and in Lincoln on July 15. Mark your calendar to attend this chance to hear the KET trainer, Martha Fightmaster, present useful and practical applications of the curriculum materials in Adult Education classrooms. Watch for registration materials that will be out soon!

Professional Development Events

By: Jeanette Evans, State ABE Consultant jeanette.evans@nebraska.gov

Adult Education is all about "lifelong learning." Personally, I believe we are never too old to learn. Since there is a wealth of opportunity around us, we don't really even have to work very hard to search out new things to learn and do!

As a part of adult education in Nebraska, a percentage of money is set aside as "State Leadership" funds. This money is used to provide training opportunities at the local, regional and state level for the benefit of all adult education staff members and volunteers in the state.

As in almost every profession, there are subjects that require training for all who are involved in the programs. For example, the state conference expenses are paid out of this fund as are BEST Plus Administrator and Recalibration sessions.

In addition, based on local program/teacher requests and needs identified by NDE, training in other areas is made available. This would include things like Metacognition, Retention, Math, Workplace Essential Skills, and the upcoming ESL/EL Civics workshop. These training sessions are offered by the best and most knowledgeable trainers/speakers/professionals that can be found to make the sessions beneficial to all who teach and work with the adult education program in the state.

It is realized that many of our staff members hold education degrees and bring a wealth of experience to their positions. While this expertise is marvelous, education is never terminal!!! There is a definite need to stay current, hear about new ideas, approaches, materials, techniques, and applications. This is, and will continue to be, the goal in Nebraska Adult Education.

Federal initiatives must also be addressed in the state. At the most recent state directors' meeting that Vicki Bauer attended, the focus and emphasis on transition of students to career and/or postsecondary was highlighted. Nebraska cannot ignore this emphasis from the federal level as it develops training opportunities.

It is totally understandable that not everyone can be in attendance at every event scheduled. Distance, time frames and personal commitments often preclude involvement in the established training sessions.

It is, however, an expectation that all who opt to teach/volunteer/administer the programs in Nebraska will take part in any and all opportunities that they possibly can.

This is an expectation as outlined in the "Use of Travel Monies in Approved Adult Education Budgets" memo that is included in the reporting section of each Directors' Meeting binder.

The best interest of the students served in Nebraska is at the heart of the professional development offered. That interest in students should be the driving force behind everything we do. If we are making expectations of our students, we all need to be willing to step up and meet expectations as well. Whether or not we realize it, students are watching us as role models.

Lincoln Public Schools—Online Survey

LPS is conducting an online survey to improve communications. How well is Lincoln Public Schools communicating with the community? The School District is currently conducting a short; online survey to ask that question - running through **Friday, June 10**. To take the survey, please go to: www.lps.org/go/survey. Participants will be asked to answer questions about how they obtain information about Lincoln Public Schools, and about how they can do better. Results will help the school district develop better and more effective ways of sharing news and information.

The Power of the Millennials

At the 2010 Adult Education Conference, Ms. Rebecca Aune presented concurrent sessions regarding the impact of Millennials on the adult education classrooms. Many found the sessions of interest and asked for more information. Rebecca forwarded this link to us recently and suggested that the AE instructors of Nebraska might find this of interest.

"The demographic power of the Millennials is far greater than many realize. This generational cohort is about 30% larger than the Baby Boomers in terms of raw numbers and three times the size of Generation X. As more and more Millennials come of age and then enter and advance in the workforce and electorate, they will have a political, economic and social weight not seen since the Baby Boomers and the indelible mark they left on American and global politics starting in the 1960s." http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2011/02_young_leaders_singer.aspx