



Nebraska AE News

A Newsletter for Adult Education Staff in Nebraska

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July 2016

Career Pathways Workshops Held Across Nebraska in June

By: Vicki Bauer, Nebraska AE Director

Two hundred and seventy-three Nebraska Adult Education (AE) staff members attended the six Career Pathways workshops held last month in Omaha, Grand Island, Lincoln, Scottsbluff, North Platte, and Norfolk. As we incorporate Career Pathways (CP) into our NE AE programs, we are providing our students with the opportunity to gain the academic and employment skills needed for their next steps in life. **How exciting is that?!**

Tate Lauer, AE Assistant Director for Southeast Community College-Beatrice campus, shared his knowledge and expertise in working with youth and adults and in helping those individuals determine their employment/educational goals. His background in the Department of Labor and AE made Tate the *very best* person to be sharing information about the CP component for AE. Participants were very complimentary of Tate's ability to share a great deal of information in a format that was easy to understand and left them excited and enthused to offer CP to Nebraska's AE students.

Handouts from the workshops were sent to the AE directors on July 7 and they will be sharing them with local staff. The handouts are accessible on NDE's AE website: education.ne.gov/ADED/Career%20Pathways.html. Note that the links shown on the NE AE Career Pathways "wheel" websites are live. Visit the websites on the CCR wheel so that you are familiar with the material and can recommend pertinent and applicable sites.

The CCR wheel contains timely information on the three sections – employability skills, career readiness, and college readiness. Websites noted on the wheel assist students in such topic areas as keyboarding/computer skills, Nebraska Career Connections, American Job Centers, H3 jobs, NEworks, Dress for Success, Communication Skills (non-verbal, verbal, and written), resumes and application forms, basic money management, college search and admissions, etc. etc. – all areas for our students to explore.

Be sure to register on the EducationQuest website so that you can receive information that is beneficial to our students as they look at post-secondary education. The website is <https://www.educationquest.org/>. Note: on the lower right hand corner of the pages on EducationQuest, you can have them translated into six languages other than English (Spanish, Arabic, Russian, French, German, and Vietnamese.) Click on ScholarshipQuest, to find a free database containing over 2,000 Nebraska-based scholarships. The website has a separate section for Adult Learners along with areas about getting started, how to pay for college, exploring careers, and Nebraska colleges. There are articles about advice for adult learners heading back to college, surviving the juggling act that adult learners face, and resources for military veterans. Be sure to check out all that EducationQuest has to offer our students. **Their resources are FREE!**

AE Program Directors will be meeting with their program staff this summer to determine the best way to incorporate CP into their programs and individual classrooms. A focus of this program year for the CP committee will be resources for our ESL and Corrections students. Two make-up sessions will be held in August. The *anticipated* dates and locations are Friday, August 5 in central Nebraska and Saturday, August 6 in Omaha. Registration information will be sent to AE program directors early next week, so please make plans to attend one of the make-up sessions if you were unable to attend one of the workshops held in June. If you have any questions/comments/concerns, please contact Tate Lauer: tlauer@southeast.edu or me at vicki.l.bauer@nebraska.gov.



Tate Lauer, AE Assistant Director for Southeast Community College-Beatrice campus and Vicki Bauer, State Director-NDE, presented information on WIOA and Career Pathways to 273 AE instructors and personnel at workshops held last month in Omaha, Grand Island, Lincoln, Scottsbluff, North Platte, and Norfolk. Make-up sessions for additional staff are tentatively scheduled for August 5 and 6.

Do You Want To Work On Keyboarding Skills With Your Students?

By: Emily Duncan, Adult Education Coordinator, Northeast Community College

The College and Career Readiness Committee has the perfect site for you (www.typing.com). This site is free and easy to use! Typing.com allows teachers a place to monitor their students as they are working on keyboarding skills. To create an account, go to www.typing.com and register as a teacher. Once you are registered as a teacher, you can create classes and then a username and password for each of your students. If a student registered on their own, they will not be able to join your class unless you create a different login for them. By giving them a username and password, you will see all their lessons, words per minute, and how long they were working on that skill. It very interactive and interesting to see the sections on “your words per minute” and “accuracy.” Check it out!



Kathy Boshart
IT Application Developer, NDE

Transition Time in AIMS

By: Kathy Boshart, IT Application Developer, NDE

I accepted another position last March at the Department of Education and have been transitioning my role in supporting Adult Education systems to other staff. I have enjoyed working on these projects over the last 13 years that I've been with NDE.

Every day has been another piece of the puzzle to solve--whether it's been a new data piece or a new data report. There are 100 different ways to get our work done, and I get to use my creative side every day to work on each piece.

I would like to introduce you to the new Adult Education data analyst. His name is Kor Tot. He comes to us from State Patrol, and has been an extremely fast learner of the AIMS website and the data behind it. Please direct your data cleanup requests (deleting test scores, deleting duplicate students, etc...) to him via email at Kor.Tot@education.ne.gov. (Always remember to cc: Vicki Bauer on those emails!) He can always ask me if you guys give him a really difficult question, but I have full faith in his abilities to continue to provide you a high level of support.

Thanks for the memories!!!

Thank you Kathy for your outstanding service to Nebraska Adult Education!

Teacher Efficacy in Adult Education

By: Kale Riley, Doctoral Student

I have been working professionally as a teacher for 13 years and I have been in education for over 25 years. For six years I taught Adult Education for the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services. I believe in a dialogical approach to education and the need for Adult Education reform. Adult Education instruction has remained largely unchanged since Malcolm Knowles established it back in 1968. With so many possibilities and so many dynamic things happening within the world of Adult Education, the question becomes: *Where to begin?* I narrowed my focus to one idea: *Teacher Efficacy*. Significant research exists defining both individual teacher efficacy and collective teacher efficacy and showing the importance of teacher efficacy. What seems to be missing is research into the importance of teacher efficacy among teachers of Adult Education (AE).

For the purpose of my study, I am limiting my focus to an area of AE which is often overlooked by researchers and teachers: *correctional education*. The AE world is expanding and becoming more widely recognized by researchers, teachers, educators, legislators and laymen as part of mainstream education. Corrections Education, however, is a subset of Adult Education about which there is still a need for research.

Efficacious teachers tend to have efficacious students. Considering efficacy among AE instructors, it seems prudent to consider both individual and collective teacher efficacy. My own experiences as an AE instructor suggest that when studying teacher efficacy, it is imperative to consider *collective efficacy* as well as individual efficacy. The relationship between individual and collective teacher-efficacy is reciprocal. Meaning that a teacher with high self-efficacy will contribute positively to the instructional environment thus fueling his or her sense of self-efficacy, however, a teacher with low self-efficacy will contribute negatively to the environment. It is this reciprocal relationship between efficacy and environment that I find most fascinating. I view understanding teacher-efficacy, both collective and individual, as the first step toward improving education for students.

I believe myself to be a strong teacher: I have a strong sense of self-efficacy. It seems clear that we each have a fairly strong sense of individual teacher self-efficacy but that our sense of collective self-efficacy—our efficacy moderated by our teaching environment is waning. This started me wondering. ***How is teacher efficacy in the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services different from teacher efficacy in the rest of the Nebraska Adult Education?***

That question is the focus of my doctoral dissertation; it is a narrow one and seeking to answer it will only begin the professional conversations about teacher efficacy. But that is my goal: Start the *research into teacher efficacy* ball rolling. Studies indicate that teacher efficacy has a direct correlation with student efficacy and suggest a correlation between student efficacy and student achievement. This means that looking at teacher efficacy is a good way to understand and predict student efficacy and therefore student success.

The next step in my research process is to administer both an individual teacher efficacy survey and a collective teacher efficacy survey to the teachers of Adult Education within the state of Nebraska. Each survey is short and will take respondents no more than ten minutes to complete. The surveys were developed by researchers in the field of education and have been beta-tested to ensure validity. Once the surveys are returned, *if it is decided by my doctoral committee* that interviews are necessary, I will select and interview teachers who responded to the survey and agreed to be interviewed regarding their survey answers.

If you are an AE instructor, you should expect to see a survey about your efficacy in your email within the next couple of months. I will be sending the survey link to Nebraska's AE Program Directors and asking them to distribute the link to all teachers. Participation in the survey is voluntary and, unless you choose to provide your contact information, anonymous. Although participation is voluntary, the more responses I receive, the better my data will be.

By comparing the survey means, I will be able to see if there is a significant difference between the collective efficacy of the teachers within the Department of Corrections and the collective efficacy of the rest of the Adult Education teachers in Nebraska. The results of this study will guide future research into the collective efficacy of AE instructors and the Adult Education system as a whole. I hope you will consider participation in the survey as it will help further our understanding of teacher efficacy among corrections educators.

BEST Plus Changes; Stays the Same

By: Jim Lukesh, Nebraska Adult Education Consultant

As of July 1, 2016, BEST Plus, a test used across the Nebraska Adult Education programs, became BEST Plus 2.0. The test has been brought up to date in many areas, thus becoming more relevant to the test taker, but has maintained the structure and integrity of the original test. Users of BEST Plus were promised that the changeover would be seamless and, so far, they have been proven correct.

BEST Plus 2.0, 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 2.0 is a performance-based test that measures an ESL learner's oral skills in three areas: Listening Comprehension, Language Complexity, and Communication.

In plain language, BEST Plus 2.0 is the test used to make sure that persons coming into the Adult Education classes are placed at levels commensurate with their use of English. The student placed at too low a level for his or her skill is liable to grow bored and quit the program. The student placed at too high a level is liable to grow frustrated and quit the program.

Since we do not want either of these scenarios to take place, it is necessary to accurately place our students and to continue to test them at proper intervals to ascertain whether they are making progress within the program. This is called gaining an EFL (Educational Functioning Level) and soon to be called, under WIOA, an MSG (Minimum Student Gain).

Not only is the information derived from the BEST Plus 2.0 test critical in helping the student progress at the best level, but the gains are important to the Adult Ed programs across the state in that program performance, including EFL movement, will become even more critical as WIOA is fully implemented. Thus, for both our students and our programs, it becomes vitally important to achieve the highest possible degree of accuracy in BEST Plus testing.

With that in mind, the Nebraska Department of Education, in collaboration with Nebraska's three fine BEST Plus 2.0 Trainers, (Carol Leonhardt, Sharon McClaren, and Kathy Croson-Harlow) have been conducting trainings for both new test administrators and for those who have been administering the BEST Plus 2.0 assessment throughout our programs.

Three all-day trainings have taken place for potential new test administrators. Two of the trainings were at the Metropolitan Community College Express Center in Omaha and a third at the Holiday Inn Express in Kearney. At these sites, 37 new test administrators were trained and approved to administer the BEST Plus 2.0 test. The new test administrators will return in two months for a refresher, called "Verification," so that any questions or problems they are experiencing can be taken care of.

The other part of BEST Plus training is called Recalibration which is a half-day training which test administrators attend once a year. The goal of recalibration is also to make sure the administrators are functioning at a high level of accuracy and to address any question that may be brought to the attention of our trainers. The culmination of the Recalibration is for the administrators to view and score a series of interviews with potential students to assure accuracy.

Test Administrators will either pass the test or receive remediation if the test indicates a need. Thus far, 45 test administrators have passed Recalibration at sites ranging from Metro in Omaha to Mid-Plains in North Platte, and Southeast in Lincoln. An additional 18 are registered for Recalibrations to take place July 20 at Central Community College in Grand Island and at Metropolitan Community College in Omaha on July 30th.

BEST Plus 2.0 is a standardized test which requires consistency among the administrators to achieve the necessary accuracy. The Nebraska BEST Plus 2.0 trainers and test administrators are striving to make that accuracy a big (BEST) Plus for the students of Nebraska.



Latino Center of the Midlands Celebrates Students in GED® Graduation and Recognition Ceremony

By: Juliana Garza, Communications and Donor Relations Associate

The educational achievements of adult students were celebrated before family members and guests at a GED® Graduation and Recognition Ceremony organized by the Latino Center of the Midlands' Adult Basic Education (ABE) Program on Sunday, July 3, 2016.

The ceremony, which took place at the Metropolitan

Community College Connector Building in the South Omaha Campus, recognized adult students who have passed their official GED® exams and obtained their GED® certificate as well as those students who have completed an Adult Basic Education class this year at the Latino Center of the Midlands. The ceremony was made possible through the generous support of the Lincoln Financial Foundation.

Latino Center of the Midlands (LCM) has provided GED® instruction since 2004 and more than 1,200 adult learners have benefitted from this program. Additional classes provided by the Adult Basic Education program include Pre-GED, Literacy, English as a Second Language, and Computer Literacy. In 2015, the ABE program served 456 unduplicated adult learners. Classes at the LCM are supported by United Way of the Midlands, Lincoln Financial Foundation, The Sokolof Foundation, and First National Bank.

"We believe that education is the foundation that builds strong individuals, strong families, and in turn, strong communities. So, whether it is a student taking computer literacy courses to live in our ever changing technological world or the need is to obtain high school education, the Adult Basic Education program is empowering students to equip themselves with the skills to advance in today's workforce," said Carolina Quezada, Executive Director of the Latino Center of the Midlands. "We were honored to coordinate this first annual graduation and recognition ceremony and highly commend the efforts of each of our students in reaching their goals," said Quezada.

For adult learners like Maria Quiroz, obtaining her GED® and being recognized for her efforts, serves as a great motivational tool not only for herself, but for her entire family. "I have three children who have already graduated from high school. For them to see me at the GED® graduation ceremony and being recognized for my efforts was very emotional," said Maria Quiroz. "I never thought I could achieve this because of my age. I had always devoted myself to work and didn't see an education as an option. Thanks to the fact that I came to the Latino Center of the Midlands for support in studying for my U.S. Citizenship exam, I learned I could also study for the GED®. I am happy to say that I have accomplished much--thanks to the support from the Latino Center of the Midlands. I am now a U.S. citizen and a GED® graduate. Before, I couldn't apply for jobs that asked for a minimum high school diploma and now my educational and employment opportunities have expanded," said Quiroz.

GED® students who demonstrate readiness to take the official GED® exams receive assistance to register for the exams online. Students choose to take their exams at a testing center most convenient to them. One of these locations includes Metropolitan Community College (MCC), whom the Latino Center of the Midlands has partnered with to make this graduation ceremony possible. "MCC is proud to partner with the Latino Center of the Midlands to help the GED® student look towards their future and achieve their career goals," said Tammy Green, Grants Program Manager at Metropolitan Community College. "The next step to achieving those goals is through the excellent educational certifications and degrees at MCC," said Green.

Other satellite locations for the GED® program include inCOMMON Community Development, The Salvation Army Kroc Center, and Liberty Elementary through a partnership with Completely Kids. For more information about the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program, please contact Raul Muñoz, ABE Program Director, at rmunoz@latinocenterofthemidlands.org. For more information about the Latino Center of the Midlands, contact Juliana Garza at jgarza@latinocenterofthemidlands.org

Developing Mobile Friendly Content for Adult Education (COABE Presentation)

By: Jim Lukesh, Nebraska Adult Education Consultant

What are the three most frequent activities you perform with your mobile device? Nell Eckersley began her COABE presentation on *Mobile Friendly Content* with a brief survey answering the above question. Many answers came up: call or text friends; business; check or write email; play games; take photos or watch videos; listen to music; use twitter or other social media; and even get driving directions.

The second task was to list two ways you have used mobile devices with your students. The answers were a bit more sparse, especially considering that the persons attending COABE are more likely than the average person to use mobile devices in education.

The Museum and Library Services Act of 2010 defined Digital Literacy as the skills associated with using technology to enable users to find, evaluate, organize, create, and communicate information. Studies by Pew Research show that 91% of American adults have a cell phone, 56% have a smartphone, 28% own an Android while 25% own an iPhone and 34% of American adults own a tablet and 26% own an e-reader. What this basically means is the educator who does not utilize the mobile devices in reaching the students is missing a big opportunity.

Eckersley, as she always does, proceeded to present an array of new technology and new ways to use older technologies but cautioned that one should not always use all the technology available just because you can. She suggested when integrating technology into your lessons one should use what she call SAMR: Substitution; Augmentation; Modification; and Redefinition. Broken down the parts are as follows. Substitution – What will I gain by replacing the task with new tech? Augmentation – Does the technology add new features that improve the task? Modification – Does the task significantly change with the use of tech? Redefinition – Does the tech allow for creation of a new task previously unconceivable?

The presenter also emphasized that today many more programs, apps, etc. are being designed for handheld mobile devices, particularly smartphones. A problem in the past was that programs designed for computers do not look good on a smart phone screen. The situation is now being reversed with many applications being designed specifically for a smart phone and the computer user then has to adjust them to the computer screen. Eckersley centered her presentation around four platforms: Google Forms, Vocaroo, QR Codes, and Kahoot. Google Forms gives the user a multitude of forms which can be used to create tests and quizzes, administrative forms, and study aids. Google also opens the user to a great deal more of “computing in the cloud.” Google Forms can be accessed at <https://sites.google.com/site/kernkelley/forms>

Vocaroo is a recording service through which lessons can be made or students can record answers, projects and whatever else your creativity can devise. Vocaroo can be found at <http://vocaroo.com/i/s1vpFDGJLr9> and if you sign on, you get a free one month trial.

Kahoot is a platform that allows you to create fun learning games (kahoots) in minutes and use a series of multiple choice questions, videos, images and diagrams. Surveys can also be conducted. The site for making Kahoots is <https://kahoot.it>. However, if you have not been on Kahoot, the site will ask for a pin number to enter and you will have to go to <https://getkahoot.com> to sign up (a free option is available) and get a pin number.

QR Codes (short for quick response) are the advanced generation of bar codes and is the jigsaw puzzle appearing codes that appear more and more often. A QR code is a mobile phone readable bar code that can store website URL's, text, email address, phone numbers, and other alphanumeric data and is easily sharable with others. The QR code is a good way to share information with students or among students. Eckersley said that QR Code readers are readily available by doing a search on the app store of your smartphone. She stated that some are expensive and some are free and that the free versions will be adequate for whatever most people want to do.

Eckersley stated that hundreds of good content platforms are available for content including writing videos, sound files, podcasts, links, images, uploaded documents and interactive content such as quizzes and surveys which as they are answered can be compiled for you by the smart device.

Mark Your Calendar! 35th Adult Education Conference - October 20-21, 2016

By: Jim Lukesh, Nebraska Adult Education Consultant

The Nebraska Adult Education Annual Fall Conference XXXV, "Look How Far We Have Come," will take place at the Holiday Inn of Kearney on October 20 and 21, 2016. Plans for a possible pre-conference session on October 19 are in the works, but not yet complete. Building on the success of previous conferences, the 35th edition will feature 35 concurrent presentations (we didn't actually plan on 35 for the 35th conference, but it works) on Thursday and four focus sessions on Friday. The focus sessions are presented in the morning and repeated in the afternoon to allow each attendee to take part in two of the sessions.

The conference features outstanding speakers, success stories, group breakfasts and lunches which not only offer great food but a chance to network with your colleagues, and door prizes that are sometimes too numerous to count but will be kept to a manageable number this year. Vendors will be present to help you keep up with the latest resources in the field and you will have a couple of evenings to join friends to sample some of Kearney's fine eateries. The Guidebook App, which works on smart phones and computers/tablets, will be available again this year and we hope to improve on its successful debut last year.

The Conference Planning Committee is currently putting together a schedule of presentations that will match those of the previous years with nationally-known speakers as well as in-state experts making presentations. To enable all of our teachers and volunteers to attend, classes are not to be held during the days of the conference (October 20-21) so that staff are free to attend this professional development opportunity.

Convenient Communications Tools For Educators

Laura Devaney, Director of News at eSchool News shared some convenience tools

Submitted By: Jim Lukesh, Nebraska Adult Education Consultant

As mobile technology becomes more commonplace in classrooms the convenience of having access to emails, text messages, social media and other tools might be taken for granted. Using smartphones and tablets, educators and administrators have at their fingertips a variety of tools, strategies and digital coaches designed to make their instructional and organizational goals a reality. These "convenience" tools are here and easily present in the classrooms where statistics show that the teacher can expect over half of the students to have a smart phone and many more to have access to mobile devices and computers on which the apps can be used. To not look into the "convenience" tools is to deny yourself a chance to make your classroom for efficient and exciting for the learner. Following are a handful of such tools.

District Click: This service from Permission Click helps to create forms and templates and share them. Features include custom approval workflows, accessible policy sharing, forms, and multi-site visibility.

Kickboard: This app promotes a positive classroom culture through behavior tracking, incentives and rewards, leaderboards that recognize positive behaviors and early warning indicators if intervention or additional support is necessary.

Appletree: The communication tool, in the form of a mobile app, email, or SMS, lets users add calendar events with photos and videos, send updates and reminders, share assignments, send progress reports and notifications in case of an emergency. Plans are to offer chat with multi-language translation.

Google Apps for Education: The free collaboration tools are well-known and can be used for Gmail, Google Docs, Google Classroom and for filing sharing in the cloud. They can be used to create, share and grade assignments.

Remind: This messaging tool used to be known as Remind 101. It lets teachers send announcements and group or individual messages. "Remind" is free and contact information remains private.

Participate Chat for Twitter: Designed for the Twitter enthusiast, this service will curate resources from a Twitter chat so chat participants don't have to search through the PDF chat archives. Links to all curated resources are automatically archived with "Participate." Devaney identifies this app as for the Twitter enthusiast and will curate resources from Twitter so that users do not have to spend all their time searching the archives. It organizes one's Twitter resources.

Share Your Nebraska AE Stories With Your Colleagues

Submitted By: [Jim Lukesh](#), *Nebraska Adult Education Consultant*

A couple of years ago we conducted a short survey concerning this newsletter. The results were very positive across the board until we got to the last question: "Would you avail yourself to the incredible opportunity to compose an article for the newsletter?" Crickets chirping. . . (*Editor's note: I know some of you have been faithful correspondents, but the overwhelming majority did not take advantage of this offer.*) We have decided to give the readers another opportunity to excel. I say this because I know many of our people are excelling in their roles in the AE, ESL and GED® programs and we would like you to share with your colleagues.

At the AE Program Director's meeting two years ago (late summer), I passed around a schedule and asked Directors to sign up for certain months to submit an article. I have taken that schedule and revised it a bit and filled in times for the folks that didn't get a chance to sign up. It can be found below.

Rather than list the Director's name, we have put the program name as we would like to get feedback from throughout the whole program. This can range from success stories, good ideas for class projects, college and career readiness, retention, mentoring, graduation ceremonies or just about anything else that someone in your program feels is worth sharing or that could help a colleague.

As you can see, the schedule has two programs submitting articles each month and each program gets two months in which to submit articles. I would ask the Directors to consult with members of their program who may be in a position to share and I would ask the members of the program to contact your local AE Program Director if you have something that you think would be of interest to your colleagues.

January	Mid-Plains Community College • Northeast Community College
February	Literacy Center for the Midlands • Crete
March	Southeast Community College-Lincoln • York
April	Western Nebraska Community College • Southeast Community College-Beatrice
May	Central Community College • Metro Community College
June	Plattsmouth • Northeast Community College
July	Mid-Plains Community College • Nebraska Corrections
August	Literacy Center of the Midlands • York
September	Southeast Community College-Lincoln • Crete
October	Western Nebraska Community College • Southeast Community College-Beatrice
November	Central Community College • Metropolitan Community College
December	Plattsmouth • Nebraska Corrections

Please send me a page-long article (or so) by the 25th of the month before its scheduled publication so that we can publish on or about the 10th of the month. Since we are getting pretty close to the August deadline, let's aim to start the schedule in September 2016 with SCC-Lincoln and Crete. However, I would be more than happy if the Literacy Center for the Midlands or York did get an article in for the August edition of the *Nebraska AE News!*

You can send the article electronically (e-mail), by fax (402/471-0117), or by mail. Obviously, e-mail is the easiest for us to work with: jim.lukesh@nebraska.gov. If you are sending a picture and some of your students are in the picture, please send a release so that we can publish the image. Let me know if you need a Release Form, I'll e-mail one to you. I know you have a lot of great ideas in your programs and I do hope you will share them. For our part, if you get the articles in on time we **will** publish them on time.