



adult learning

quarterly

Ohio ABLE and Even Start Programs Work Together to Help Clients Help Themselves

IF YOUR FOCUS is putting food on the table, you don't think about education. If your car breaks down and there is no money for repairs, it stops your life – cold. If you believe that an aid program will try to “run” you, you won't make contact.

At the Northwest Family Resource Center in McDermott, Ohio, the Adult Basic & Literacy Education (ABLE) and Even Start programs join forces each day to tear down such barriers.

Barbara Nourse, Even Start Coordinator, and Charley Flaig, Coordinator, Northwest ABLE, do much more than teach classes or schedule programs for their rural service area.

“We are like advisors, Mom and Dad, social workers rather than teachers,” Flaig says. “Nowadays, that's just the reality.

It's hard for an adult to be worried about fractions if he's wondering how to feed his child.”

“When people first come to us,” Nourse adds, “they don't feel free to share (their concerns and

issues). Later, when they feel comfortable, they talk. There are different organizations around to help, if they just know about them.” ABLE and Even Start refer to other agencies – and to each other – for a wide variety of needs.



The Even Start program, one of three in Scioto County and 38 in Ohio, is staffed by a parenting education teacher, early childhood teacher, two home visitors and two aides; and serves about 40 families per year. Clients participate in interactive parent-child literacy activities to help parents understand the value of reading to children, both as an enhancement of literacy skills and as a bonding experience. ABLE, with 13 sites in the county, serves about 400 people each year with programs ranging from literacy to GED preparedness. A typical scenario might have children attending Even Start to increase their literacy skills, while the parent is in ABLE's GED classes.

KET's *GED on TV* series was a weapon in ABLE's arsenal for years, Flaig says; and the new *GED Connection* is available to all literacy programs in the state through a lease obtained by the Ohio Literacy Network. The series “is very well done. The segments are interesting, and most people are really video-oriented.” Young males, Flaig adds, can get bored in a traditional classroom setting, or feel that they're not getting enough attention. “But put them in front of the GED series and a computer, and there are better benefits.”

Through a grant from Verizon, ABLE soon will open a Community Technology Center, where people can e-mail, fax and use computers. For example, a parent will be able to e-mail his child's teacher or visit the public school web site. “It's a convenience, but these activities also reinforce the involvement of the parent in the child's education,” he notes.

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TV411 Family Learning Kit Brings Parents and Children Together

THE FAMILY LEARNING KIT was the brainchild of Iliana Delgado, training coordinator for the Adult Literacy Media Alliance (ALMA), which produced *TV411*.

“After I joined ALMA, one of my first assignments was to see what we could do to help family literacy programs,” says Delgado. “I came to ALMA from the Literacy Assistance Center in New York City, where I part of my job was to encourage adult literacy practitioners to consider family literacy issues, and to encourage adult literacy practitioners in family literacy programs to use different techniques to engage their learners. I also did some work with education in the arts and I wanted to combine that focus with family literacy, in a multimedia context that would address different learning styles.

“I called Trina Lyon, an artist who does a lot of creative work with interactive books, and asked her to come look at the *TV411* material and see if she could come up with a book idea.”

Lyon did, indeed, come up with interactive book ideas; one for each of the six thematic units in the Family Learning Kit. Each book can be colored by a child or a parent, then cut out and assembled. “Pages” in each book consist of pictures relevant to the lesson theme. Many of the pictures offer opportunities to practice skills, such as a telephone in the health unit, to practice calling 911.

The Family Learning Kit consists of six units, chock-full of directions and materials for activities that can be completed by parents alone, parents and children together and children alone. Every unit includes a 3-5 minute video segment that introduces key themes and models important behaviors, and activity guides with instructions for discussion, reading, writing and arts activities.

Each unit focuses on a different theme. *Feeling Fit*, addresses

family health; *What's Cooking*, focuses on nutrition; *Surfing Cyberspace*, helps learners feel comfortable using a computer; *For a Rainy Day*, explores family finances; *Lots of Letters*, addresses different ways of writing for different purposes; *We The People*, covers politics and government.

“Family literacy has four components: an adult literacy component, a parenting component, an early childhood component and a time for interaction between parents and children,” says Delgado. “The Family Learning Kit addresses three of the four. Not all family literacy programs have the unity and structure to present thematic units, so the Kit is put together to make it easier for them. It's simple and it's all in one convenient package.”

The TV411 Family Learning Kit is now available through KET. Call KET to request more information.

Note: You can learn more about TV411, on the Internet, at www.tv411.org; for the Literacy Assistance Center of New York City, visit www.lacnyc.org.



Free Calculator Brochures Still Available

GED Math Teachers: KET still has a fair quantity of calculator brochures showing the Casio fx 260 solar calculator, with notes about its special features and math tips for the GED exam. The brochure gives information from the *GED Connection* math workbook about the new grid answer formats, math terms, common fractions, decimals and percents, English measurement equivalencies, and the formulas students will be given to use on the exam.

The brochure folds to the size of the calculator, but there are also some unfolded 8 1/2" x 15" laminated posters available. KET will be happy to send two laminated posters and up to 10 folded brochures to math teachers free of charge. For more than 10 brochures, we charge 20 cents each, to cover our printing cost.

Please fax your request to KET at (859) 258-7396. Be sure to give us your name and mailing address.

Washington Prison Finds Inmate Education 'Pays for Itself' in Lowering Chances of Recidivism

THE MORE EDUCATION prison inmates receive, the lower the chance of recidivism.

That fact drives many correctional education programs, like the one at Coyote Ridge Correctional Center, a minimum security prison in Connell, WA, serving about 600 male inmates.

Washington state prison education programs are run in conjunction with community colleges, explains Gary Isakson, Education Director/Instructor at Coyote Ridge.

Columbia Basin College in Pasco, WA is Coyote Ridge's partner in programs for inmates, who register just as any other student would and receive certificates or degrees as appropriate.

Coyote Ridge receives both inmate transfers from other prisons who are nearing the end of a longer sentence, and those with shorter sentences who come straight to the facility. Assessments on arrival gauge reading ability, math skills and other factors. Then, teachers create an educational plan for each inmate.

Most attend Offender Change Classes, one on Victim Awareness and another on Anger Stress Management. Many also participate in chemical dependency sessions. In addition, "they're expected to work," he says. "Some have jobs in the facility – janitor, clerk, etc.; and some are on work crews that go out to community and work for Parks & Recreation, or maintain grounds at college, etc."

Then come academics and/or vocational training. Inmates under 22, by state law, must attend GED classes for three hours/day, five days/week. Those over 22 and seeking the GED certificate attend classes one to two hours/day, five days/week.

GED classrooms are open labs, with 10 to 12 students per class, each working at his own speed. Teachers and aides are on hand to answer questions. Isakson has been using videotapes to support the curriculum,

because "they are really popular" with the inmates. He had been hoping to add *GED Connection™* to his arsenal, and was delighted when he won a complete set of the tapes and workbooks at a recent conference.

"I had been looking at those," he recalls, because different tools complement different learning styles; and tapes provide another means of reaching learners, in addition to books and computer activities. He plans to let learners check out the tapes and work at their own speed.

Isakson, who had not used KET programs before, thinks that *GED Connection* will be a good fit for his students. "I had no idea I would win," he adds. "I had wanted them, so it's kind of neat that I won them."

Proctors visit Coyote Ridge once a month to give the GED tests, and four to five inmates per month pass.

In addition to GED classes, courses run through the College include English as a Second Language; Adult Basic Education; computer science (a vocational offering



available after the GED is obtained); and building maintenance, a quarter-long class exposing learners to the construction industry and covering the "very basics" in carpentry, plumbing, and heating/air conditioning. "This would qualify the inmate to be in building maintenance, for example. Or, he can go deeper into one field, like carpentry," Isakson notes.

In the past, Coyote Ridge held annual graduation ceremonies for inmates who earned the GED or reached other educational milestones. But because length of sentence is so varied in the population, many graduates would be released before "their" ceremony. Today, the facility recognizes achievement each month. Graduates of any program don a cap and gown, and are photographed with the appropriate certificate or diploma. They receive a tassel and photos, which can be sent on to loved ones. "We hear inmates say, 'I'm the first one in my family that graduated,'" Isakson says. "They're proud."

Success Stories

For many inmates, Coyote Ridge provides the first exposure to computers, "and they really like that," Isakson says.

He recalls one inmate who served as a clerk in the computer science room, earning 35 cents per hour. After his release, he interviewed to manage the computer network for a trucking company. When asked what he had earned in his previous position, he answered, "35." The company hired him, at a salary of \$35,000 a year.

Inmate success stories are many. "We're just here to meet educational needs. Before I got into adult education," notes Isakson, who taught GED classes for the college before entering correctional education, "I had no idea there were so many dropouts and so many illiterate adults." Many Coyote Ridge inmates "dropped out of school, and had negative experiences in traditional education. Here, the students like coming to the classes, and it surprises a lot of them that they can do it. We treat them differently. We encourage them."

Teaching adults is very satisfying, he adds. "Adults want to be there (compared to a high school situation). Students get the GED, experience successes, and the teacher reaps benefits; the teacher helped them. The learners put forth the effort; the teacher just steered and guided. It's rewarding to hear students say thanks.

"He recalls one inmate who served as a clerk in the computer science room, earning 35 cents per hour. After his release, he interviewed to manage the computer network for a trucking company. When asked what he had earned in his previous position, he answered, '35.' The company hired him, at a salary of \$35,000 a year."

"Inmates learn about themselves and human relations, and that can make them different when they leave here than when they came in," he adds. "We just need to get them educated."

In addition to education's life-changing impact on individual inmates, there is a social benefit. "Education is a small part of the corrections budget, but we know that education reduces recidivism," Isakson says. "The higher the (educational) level inmates reach, the more recidivism drops. They can go out and be successful. It's a good investment. The public resists sometimes, but it does pay off." In the 2001 *Three State Recidivism Study* (focusing on Maryland, Minnesota and Ohio), recidivism rates are "37% for those without education, vs. 27% for those with education. In the big picture, that's a lot. It's expensive to keep inmates. Education pays for itself." 📖

Ohio ABLE and Even Start Programs continued from page 1

In addition, “we help them get ready for parent-teacher conferences – what to expect, what their rights are. A lot of these adults had bad experiences in school.”



Nourse, Flaig and others also meet as Common Good, a group facilitating access to dental care, transportation services, a clothing bank and other resources. The goal is to assist, not manage, the client. “We try to let the adults work situations out first; it helps give them a greater sense of independence and control over their own destiny,” Nourse notes. “Our parents get to know each other and form their own ‘support group’ to help each other.”

“They’re really good about car pooling,” for example, Flaig adds. If these methods fail, Nourse, Flaig and their colleagues will seek out funds for repair of a client vehicle, or simply “go by and pick them up.”

Clients ‘Cheerlead’ for Programs

Welfare to Work initiatives and aid cutoff deadlines have increased utilization of both programs, Flaig points out. “One problem (for this population) has been trying to avoid authority,” he notes. “Some don’t want to be here; but once they’re here and realize that we’re not judgmental, that they are safe, they come around.” They see that they can benefit; and “they have to see that, or they won’t be back.”

But they do come back.

Flaig recalls a woman who came to ABLE reading at the second grade level, making no eye contact, convinced she was “dumb,” living on welfare. ABLE staff encouraged her and she kept coming. Eventually, she

took the GED exam. She didn’t pass the first time, “but she kept at it, and she accomplished three goals: She got her GED, she got a job as a nurse’s aide, and she got off welfare. She represented the third generation of her family on welfare, and she has broken that cycle.”

Nourse recalls a learner who lost her child and husband in a tragic accident. “She cried every time we came (for a home visit). She didn’t know how to write a check, what size her children’s clothes were. Her husband had done all that. Now, she stands up for herself (as evidenced in her handling of a dispute with her landlord). We can see growth.” This learner is working on her GED.

Flaig tells of another learner who eventually went to college, got her Master’s degree and now runs a school. “It’s like (the movie) *It’s A Wonderful Life*,” he notes. Without programs like ABLE and Even Start, the talent and fulfillment in that learner might never have been realized.

Successes come back and cheerlead, Flaig adds. “When a new client says, ‘I can’t,’ a graduate will be the advocate. ‘If I could do it, you can,’ they’ll say. They’re our best recruitment vehicle; they see people who need our services and tell them about us.”

Community Support Is Essential

Nourse and Flaig cite invaluable community support for Resource Center programs. County Commissioner Opal Spears is a “special lady” and very supportive, Flaig says. The Portsmouth Public Library has a branch at the Center, a great resource for a rural area. The Scioto County Department of Job and Family Services contributes financial support. The local school board provides the old school building that houses the Center, and School Superintendent Robert Ralstin and Supervisor Michael McCoy are faithful friends of the programs. “We’re pretty fortunate to have that kind of support,” Nourse adds. 📖

Solid Training, Support and 7 Succeed In Pittsburgh Reemp

WELFARE TO WORK programs once saw “getting a job” as a final goal for clients. But a sick child, lack of transportation and many other issues can easily derail the new worker, thrusting him or her back into the welfare system.

These days, goals include keeping a job.

That’s where Pittsburgh’s Reemployment Transition Center (RTC) comes in, according to Paula G. Hustwit, Site Manager. The Pittsburgh facility, and sister centers in Philadelphia and Detroit, offer free work skills and life skills training, then help the

some even knew the woman.”

“We are different in that we are for-profit.” Hustwit notes. “The reason that we thought we could be successful at this is that everyone here is from a business background. We know what an employer wants. If someone wants to work, we can find them jobs.” RTC staff do not focus on barriers clients may face, because clients might “buy in” to that and hinder their own progress. “We talk to and treat people as adults, not someone with problems. We try to be upbeat. People want to come here; they like it here. We reach people who haven’t been reached before.”



RTCs are part of Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI). The Dearborn, Michigan firm didn’t start out matching employers with qualified applicants; that focus evolved gradually. First, EDSI retrained dislocated autoworkers and

unemployed find – and keep – jobs. *TV411*, with videos, workbooks and online lessons, is one of the tools used in the RTC process.

TV411 episodes are useful and entertaining tools in this process, Hustwit says. “*TV411* is a good match for us. There are short segments on how to get a job, how to prepare for work, and health issues for children – that’s a big barrier for our population; if a child gets sick, there is no backup system, so the parent has to stay home and loses her job. These are the same issues we talk about.

“One of the women in an episode was actually from Pittsburgh,” Hustwit adds. “The story showed how she improved her reading level and got out of a dead-end job. People liked it because they recognized the scenery, and

assisted with job searches. Next came development of the Occupational Skills Analysis System (OSAS), a job analysis and skill inventory software program. Interest in that tool led to a contract from a Pennsylvania aid agency to develop a job readiness program for clients aged 40-60. After that, EDSI won another contract involving single Pittsburgh mothers who had completed state-funded training, but still needed help in finding jobs. These efforts led to the opening of the Pittsburgh RTC in 1994, and additional centers in 1997. Today, EDSI is a recognized leader in reemployment transition training.

RTCs offer structured workshops. Clients attend for four hours a day, working on everything from job search techniques to customer service issues. “These are very

TV411 Help Learners Employment Centers



Produced by ALMA, the Adult Literacy Media Alliance, *TV411* materials include 20 Emmy award-winning half-hour video programs, companion 12-page workbooks (one for each video), user's guides, an index, a teacher's guide, and online modules for learners and for teachers. *TV411* is now available through KET. Call (800) 354-9067 to find out more.

structured sessions – not lectures, but interactive,” she says. Instruction goes beyond job skills. For example, “we talk about how to get references and about asking permission to use people’s names, not just writing them down.” Clients also learn to field “tough questions (for example, ‘Have you ever been arrested?’). Honesty is very important on those.” In sessions on interviewing, clients are taped “so they see how they look sitting across a desk.” Additional instruction focuses on stress management, conflict resolution, positive parenting, good nutrition and other life skills.

Other RTC services include a computer lab, where clients learn to use a scanner, make their own business cards, and search the web. They send and receive e-mail, make calls, send out resumés, write thank you letters and have access to fax and copy machines.

Counselors help participants evaluate current job skills, interests and career plans; develop strategies for finding a job; and determine short- and long-term goals. RTC staff work with local employers to develop job opportunities.

The atmosphere is nurturing and supportive. “We have whistles and horns when people get a job. People don’t go home first (to announce that they’ve found a job), they

come to RTC and tell us. To see the smiles on their faces when they say, ‘I got the job’ ... they’re so proud.”

The relationship doesn’t end with the new job. Support and incentives combine to help the client keep on track.

“We serve the working poor,” Hustwit says. “Some of the barriers to keeping a job don’t just go away. For example, if a car breaks down, these clients won’t have the reserves for repairs. We have funds to help.” RTC can also cover things like childcare, or help with the first month’s rent and security deposits so clients can move out of public housing.

RTC also rewards milestones like 90 and 180 days of continuous employment, or an increase in wages and/or hours. Rewards can be redeemed for assistance with paying bills or car insurance; gift cards; household items, family activity memberships and more.

“...a group of banks, fast-food restaurants, hotels, hospitals, department stores and other businesses cooperate in a tier system... A tier path might go from parking lot attendant to van driver to city bus driver; from fast food cook to hotel food service to restaurant prep cook/chef; or from dietary aide to hospital housekeeping to patient care representative.”

Especially attractive is the Tiered Employment incentive. Workers who successfully pursue training only to get a dead-end job may become discouraged. To prevent that a group of banks, fast-food restaurants, hotels, hospitals, department stores and other businesses

cooperate in a tier system. After employees do well, they are eligible at the end of six months to apply for better-paying Tier II positions with their current employer or at another company in the program. If they do well at Tier II for one year, they can apply for Tier III. Tier I pays \$5.15 to \$7 per hour with no benefits; Tier II, \$7-\$9 with benefits; Tier III, \$9+ and benefits. A tier path might go from parking lot attendant to van driver to city bus driver; from fast food cook to hotel food service to restaurant prep cook/chef; or from dietary aide to hospital housekeeping to patient care representative. The worker is motivated to stay with that first job and perform well, even for minimal pay. Employers benefit because entry-level performance is better, employees don’t suddenly disappear and the six-month turnover can be anticipated, with another motivated worker ready to fill the gap.

It is the combination of solid training and support that makes RTC services work.

Hustwit recalls a woman who “came through a job-readiness program and got a job at a market. She took two buses to get there, because her mother lived near the store and she could leave her kids with their grandmother.” The client was a low-level reader, but an RTC instructor helped build her confidence. She studied the *TV411* videos and workbooks at home, going to her instructor with questions. She was enrolled in a GED program when her hours at the store were cut. The client’s confidence was damaged, so an RTC staffer accompanied her on the job searches nearer her home. After she found a job at a motel, RTC assisted with funds for childcare and the client pursued and obtained her GED. Her next goal was a driver’s license. Once that milestone was reached, she sought a job in security; and when she wanted to take classes that would certify her to carry a weapon, RTC paid for the training. “Now, she is a Mellon Bank security guard,” Hustwit says. “She is so happy. She really used the work that *TV411*

has put into their materials. Her reading levels improved so much through *TV411*.”



RTC participants need two things, Hustwit says:

- “A mentor – most of our clients have never had a strong role model. We often assume everyone has had access to a support system, but we find that’s not true. Most of our instructors are female and are adopted as role models.
- “A good teacher – the one who made the light go on, made you want to learn. We want everyone to have that.

“Some clients think it’s punishment to come here; some don’t think they want our help,” Hustwit admits. “But we see a different person walk out 60 days later.” 📖

LitLink Online at Home on KET Server

YOU WERE PROBABLY ASLEEP

at 4:00 AM on November 25th when the LiteracyLink® Web site moved from a PBS server in Alexandria, Virginia to a KET server in Lexington, Kentucky. The switch happened so smoothly the transition team could have dozed through it; instead, they've worked hard to make sure the learning environment changed as little as possible for visitors as they incorporate new technologies behind the scenes to make the site function more effectively.

What's different?

- You'll see a new GED Test Taking Tip of the Day on the home page. If you can't wait for tomorrow's tip, you can click through more than 100 tips – some general, some specific to math, reading or writing – all from the GED Connection™ workbooks.

- More "Save" buttons, strategically positioned by each Internet activity box, help learners store work in their portfolios.
- When learners click a link to a new Web site in some of the exercises, the new site will open in a new window, allowing the learner to see both pages/sites at the same time. They'll also be able to "toggle" (move back and forth) between the two web sites, gathering information on one to help them complete activities on the other. Toggling has come into common practice as computers have become more powerful and web sites have been designed for faster loading. Now LiteracyLink learners will have a chance to practice another way of navigating the Internet

"We're very pleased to have LiteracyLink Online housed at KET," says Paul

Stackhouse, KET's Webmaster. "It's a rich, substantive site with a wealth of information for learners and some great tools for teachers. Naturally, with a site this large, more than 2,300 pages, maintenance is a concern, especially since so many activities relate to outside Web sites. Our top priority has been to correct problems teachers brought to our attention. That's pretty well under control at this point, so now we're addressing some structural issues. Our focus, from the beginning, has been to make sure this site provides a positive experience for learners and teachers."

Before the addition of LiteracyLink, KET's Web site already comprised more than 150,000 pages, including a multidisciplinary interactive Distance Learning section developed under Stackhouse's leadership.

Wayne Godwin, Chief Operating Officer at PBS, announced the LiteracyLink transfer to KET earlier last year, stating, "We are extremely gratified to be able to place this vital educational service under the care of KET, one of LiteracyLink's original co-creators and an institution with a long and distinguished record in the field of literacy."

Find out more about *GED Connection* and pre-GED level *Workplace Essential Skills* lessons, activities, and teacher resources at the LiteracyLink Web site: www.pbs.org/literacy.



New GED Test Taking Tips box on the LiteracyLink Web site

Crossroads Café Helps Learners Move to Higher Levels of Education, Employment

NEW YORK CITY is the dream destination for thousands of immigrants. They come from Africa, Haiti, Brazil, and dozens of other countries; most in their 20s and 30s. Most find jobs – as on-call chauffeurs; or in fast food; or as employees in private homes.

Now there is a new dream: Improving English language skills and pursuing further academic or vocational education. But working all day; shifting schedules frequently; or sleeping during the day and holding night jobs – none of these easily accommodate traditional classes. In addition, family needs may leave little extra cash for education.

"New York is a city of people who come from someplace else," observes Joan Uchitelle, who teaches at the Workforce and Career Center in nearby Mt. Vernon. "We are very aware of that. It is second nature (for New Yorkers) to help people who are new here."

One way to help is *Crossroads Café*, a 26-part video series offered free at the center and designed to allow learners to study where and as they can. *Crossroads Café* characters face the challenges of life and work in a new country. Each episode includes *Word Play*, demonstrating

a specific language function, and *Culture Clips*, a documentary-style look at the citizenship process and other issues.

The center makes services known through literacy programs and area libraries. "Learners have to be literate in their own language," Uchitelle explains, and "people who are literate find their way to libraries." Inquirers are tested to determine educational level and other factors. Those at the intermediate level, who speak and read some English, are good candidates for *Crossroads Café*.

The learner signs a "contract" agreeing to devote six hours per week to the program and to complete lessons on dates assigned. Videos and workbooks are mailed to the learner, who checks his/her own work against answers in the book. Videos and completed assignments are mailed back, postage free.

Will learners have access to VCRs? Yes, Uchitelle notes. "Having a computer, TV, VCR, cell phone and car means (to them) that you have made it in America," she says, adding that she would like to see center programs on the Internet, as well. "50% of our students have computers, because that is how they

communicate with their families back home." The remaining 50% can access computers in other ways – at local libraries, for example.

Uchitelle and four other teachers review and correct original writing assignments; serve as telephone tutors, and provide ongoing assessment. For example, if a learner demonstrates a need for additional work on verbs, the teacher can send supplementary materials with the next lesson. If a learner demonstrates high competency in a particular area, he/she will not be given unnecessary assignments. "It's nice when you can do the work when it's convenient for you, and not do exercises you don't need. It's like having a private tutor," she notes.

The program does make a difference.

"Students tell me they have gotten promotions, raises; have moved from menial work to more sophisticated jobs," she says. "One was working in the back of a bridal shop, sewing, and now – as her English has improved – is going out and doing fittings and talking to customers. Bus boys at the country club are moving up to waiters. One man moved from the assembly line in a factory to foreman. Many graduate from the program and go on

to community college and/or their GED."

Learners *enjoy* the program, she adds. "The whole family watches It's like a soap opera. All of the characters have problems, and there are not always solutions. It's not sad," but is designed to make viewers think, and to reflect real life. One character takes a second job, and the children react badly. A character who was a professional engineer in his native Egypt must work as a handyman in America. The café cook's boyfriend wants her to marry him and move back to Mexico, but she wants to open her own restaurant in the US.

Some assignments lead to a greater sense of community among the 150 learners, most of whom never meet. For example, "one of the assignments is to write a restaurant review. We've gotten wonderful reviews of restaurants all over Westchester County. We gathered them into a book and sent them to all of the learners at Christmastime. It was fun. Some people think they are the only student."

Uchitelle adds: "Distance learning is a real important way to reach people. This is a very effective program. My students tell me the thing *works*."

Utah Office of Education Joins with Libraries, Public Schools To Reach Adult Learners

UTAH ADULTS have two avenues to complete their schooling: Pass the GED battery of tests or pursue an adult high school diploma.

Many adults seek the GED; in fact, in 2001 Utah was second only to Alaska in the percentage of people taking the GED test, says Murray Meszaros, State Administrator of GED Testing with the Utah State Office of Education, referring to the National GEDTS Annual Report. But many of those adults do not access traditional classroom

“Adult education is a much-needed program in each state. If this nation wants productive, self-sufficient, contributing members of society, we need to assist individuals in obtaining knowledge and basic skills for survival.”

programs, because their culture and background do not endorse “going back to school”; because they had negative experiences in a traditional setting and fear failing again; or because those from remote rural areas would have to drive for hours to get to a program.

For adults facing these and other barriers, the State Office of Education works closely with various local facilities and programs to encourage and support distance learning. Incentive grants through the US Departments of Education and Labor under provisions of the Workforce Investment Act have made assistance possible. For example, “when we found out about *GED Connection*[™] (the PBS LiteracyLink[®] series of 39 half-hour videos with complimentary workbooks and online activities), we purchased the materials and delivered them to all libraries – every library, not just the big ones; all adult education programs; any educational entity

that would be appropriate,” says Shauna South, Program Specialist. Or, if an organization wants to buy a set of materials, “we can duplicate them, because we bought the rights,” she adds. (Purchasing statewide licenses from KET is another way of making materials widely available to adult learners and learning centers.)

Distance learners can register through Utah’s GED hotline. Adults can follow along with *GED Connection* telecasts. They can also check out the videos at local libraries, using the tapes to reinforce lessons seen on TV; or as a primary teaching aide if they can’t access telecasts. Learners also receive information about online resources and locations/phone numbers of area adult education programs that can answer questions.

To register, a learner must be age 18 or over, South says. “And we deal directly with the individual”; no signing up for a family member or a friend. “We want to be sure they’re willing to do the work, are serious, and have completed the 9th Grade.” Pursuing the GED is “rigorous; learners need self-discipline to do it.” If potential registrants don’t meet the criteria, “we refer to another, pre-GED program.”

Adult High School Diplomas

The GED certificate is not the only option for those without a high school education, however. “Utah emphasizes adult high school completion,” South says. “Depending on where the student is with credits, the GED may be appropriate, or a high school diploma may be appropriate. If the student has a deficit in credits, he might pursue the GED; if he is within five to seven credits of graduation, he may go for the high school diploma.”

Because adult education is in Utah’s public school arena, traditional classes are available to assist the adult student seeking a diploma.

The adult education program is “based on competencies and a core K-12 curriculum,” South says. “An adult may get the diploma quicker than an actual high school student,”

because he can test out of courses in which he has life experience. He may also apply credits earned in a college course or via distance learning toward his diploma. “But everything else is the same; the program includes all non-academic electives,” except physical education. Compared to the independent GED student, this learner is more “linked to some type of classroom situation” – be it literally sitting before a teacher or interacting via computer.

The adult high school diploma program is just one more offering in the Utah public school system’s adult outreach, which also includes English as a Second Language (ESL) courses; workplace literacy; adult basic education and family literacy. Correctional education is yet another focus of the Office of Education.

Why Provide A Second Chance?


Adult education programs require collaboration of various state and local programs and organizations, and the dedication of a great many individuals. But the rewards are well worth it.

“People do not finish (high) school for so many reasons,” South says. “Society tends to judge them for that and say, ‘Why should we give them a second chance?’”

“But *why not*,” adds Meszaros. Leaving school “is not always their decision.” Family problems and a host of other barriers can prevent a person from completing his/her high school education. Meszaros recalls one learner who achieved “an almost perfect score” for 2001 on the GED test and is now employed. He had left school because he “was pursuing a figure skating career and came within a hair of going to the Olympics.” Ultimately, he didn’t reach that goal, “but that doesn’t make him a lesser person.”

Meszaros recently spoke with another learner who is grappling with her own bad decisions, family problems, and economic barriers. She is trying to get her GED and then join the military.

“Adult education will assist as much as we can,” he says.

“Adult education is a much-needed program in each state. If this nation wants productive, self-sufficient, contributing members of society, we need to assist individuals in obtaining knowledge and basic skills for survival. Contributing members can then build on this basic foundation and continue to be life-long learners.” 



Good/Bad News About Shipping



First the bad news: After seven years of holding our shipping fees at the same level, we're going to have to raise our rates to keep up with rising UPS and USPS shipping costs. Starting March 15*, 2003, KET will add a shipping and handling fee of \$6 to all orders up to \$60. For orders from \$61-\$1,000, the shipping and handling charge will be 10%, and a 9% charge will be added to orders over \$1,000.

The relatively good news is that before March 15 you can still get the 2002 rates of 8% on orders up to \$1,000 and 6% on orders over \$1,000, with a minimum fee of \$5.

Better yet, for a limited time, you can get **free shipping** on a starter pack (or material of comparable value) for any of three outstanding series: *GED Connection*, *Workplace Essential Skills*, or *TV411!* Each starter pack includes a full set of videos, 10 sets of workbooks and a teacher's guide, and each of these series has a companion web site with free lessons and activities for learners.

March 14th is the last day to take advantage of free shipping on starter packs, and the last day for 2002 shipping fees. If you know you're going to place an order, and the timing is going to be close, call KET at (800) 354-9067 and speak with Cynthia Barton, our customer services manager, about possible special arrangements.

*Starter pack or material of comparable value shipped inside the continental US for *GED Connection*, *Workplace Essential Skills*, or *TV411!*.

*That's right, March. We're extending the postcard offer one month.

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Articles examine methods and technologies; explore locations and applications; and feature leaders who find successful, innovative ways to reach adult learners using KET materials. Unless otherwise noted, the material in this publication is not copyrighted. Please feel free to use it in the cause of adult education.

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winter 2003



adult learning

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