

NCSALL

National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy

John Comings, Director

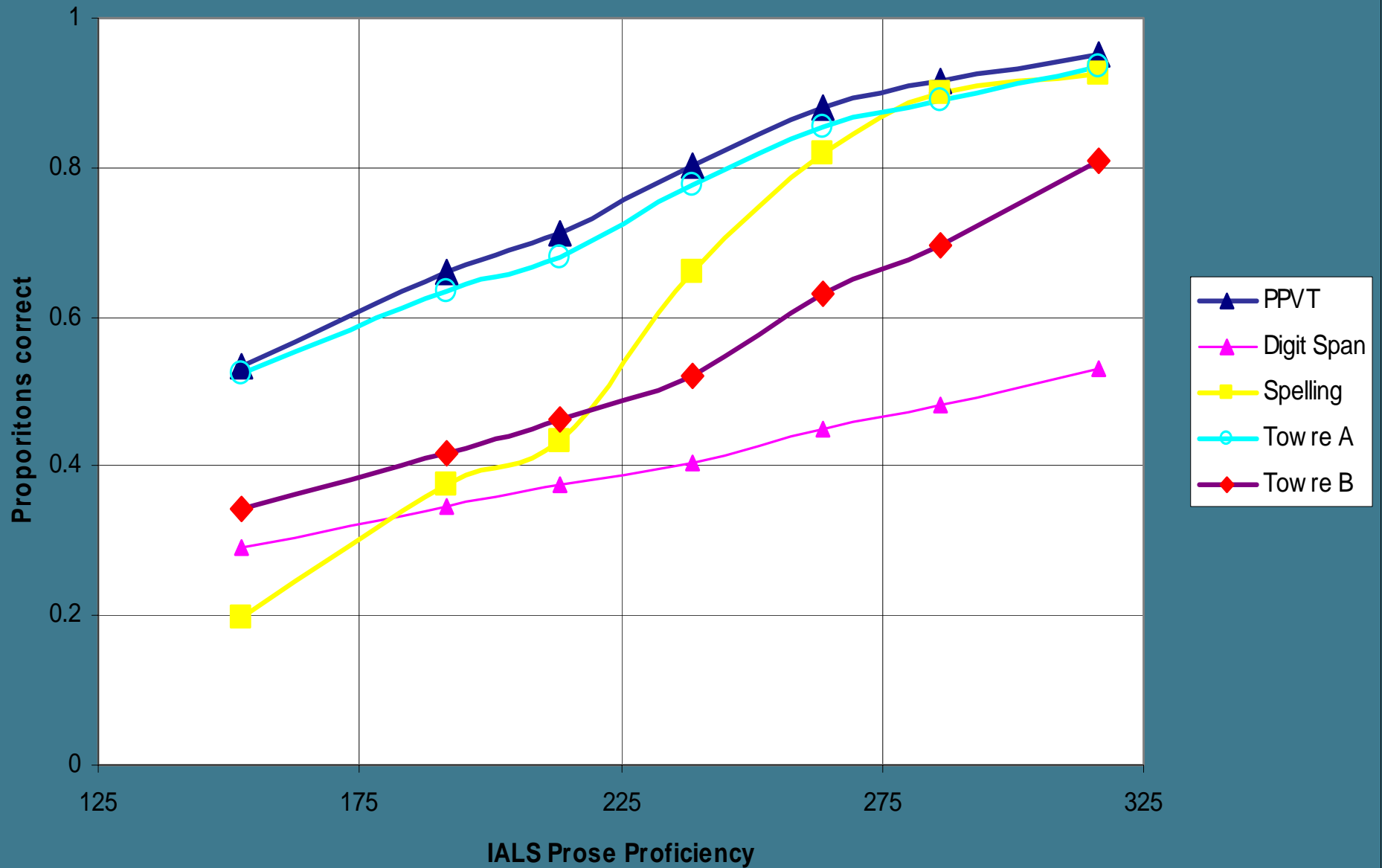
Harvard Graduate School of Education with
Portland State University, Rutgers University,
University of Tennessee (Knoxville), Brown
University, University of Texas (Dallas), and
World Education

NALS Levels

U.S. Adults 16+ Years of Age

- Level 1: 000-225 (22%)
- Level 2: 226-275 (26%)
 - 90,000,000
- Level 3: 276-325 (32%)
- Level 4: 326-375 (15%)
- Level 5: 376-500 (5%)

Proportions Correct by IALS Prose Proficiency



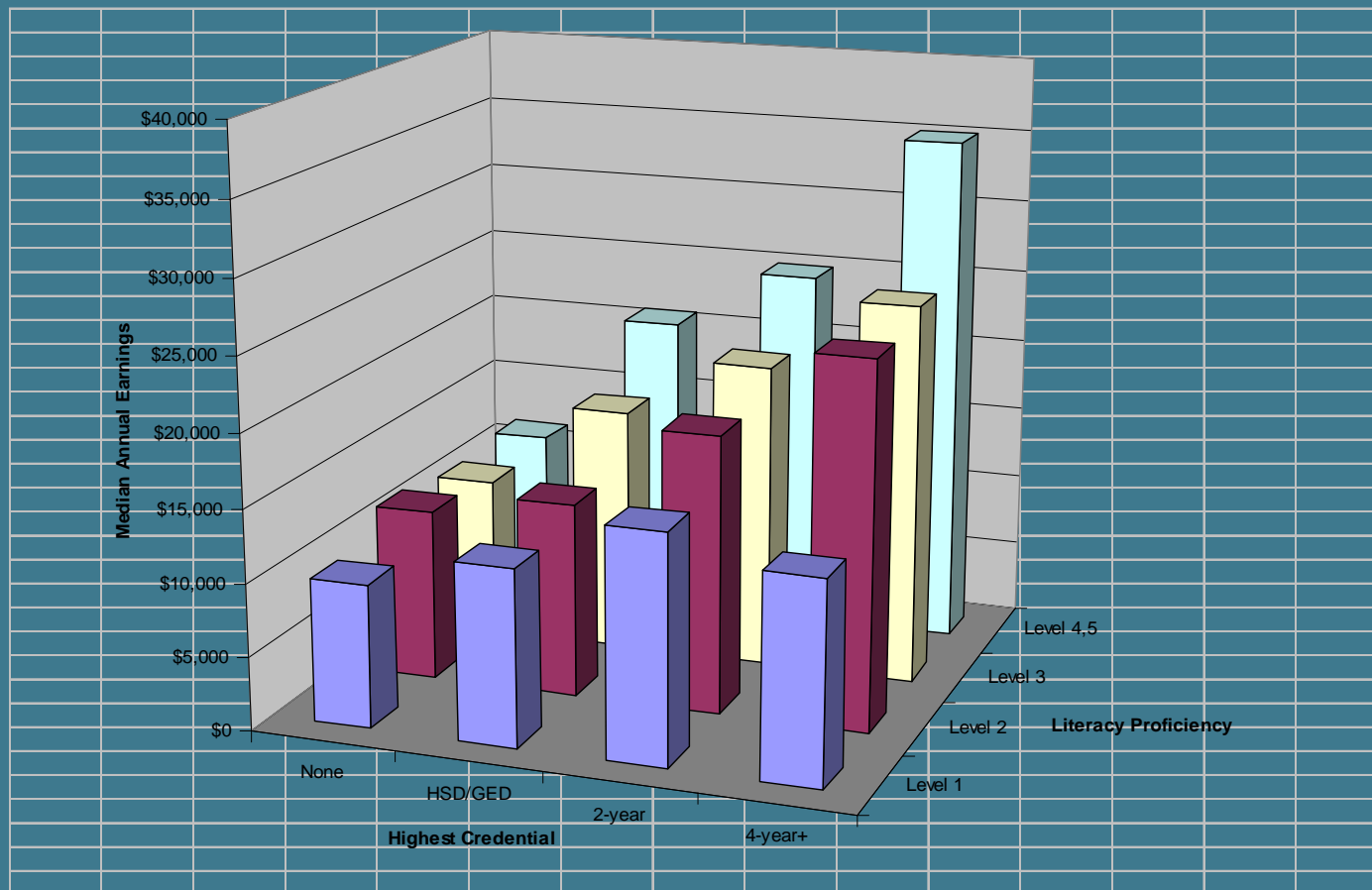
Components Assessments

- PPVT: Receptive Vocabulary
- TOWER A: Real word reading accuracy and speed (word reading efficiency)
- TOWER B: Pseudo word reading accuracy and speed (decoding efficiency)
- Spelling
- Digit Span: Short term auditory memory

MA Estimate of Adults Facing Three Challenges

	Language Challenge	Credential Challenge	New Literacy Challenge	Total
Number of MA Adults (18-64)	195,000	280,000	667,000	1,142,000
Percent of Total MA Adults (18-64)	6.10%	8.75%	20.85%	35.70%

Income by NALS Level and Education



GED STUDIES

- 10% TO 20% higher income for low skilled adults who pass the GED
- Much of the increase comes 4 years after passing test
- Score predicts income, higher differential for minorities
- Two years postsecondary needed to come out of poverty, but only 12% go on to postsecondary education.

Differences between K-12 and Adult Education

Existing education research is a valid source of advice, but it should be adapted to four key differences between the schooling system and the adult education system

1. The Student Profile Difference
2. The Persistence Difference
3. The Participation Difference
4. The Content Difference

1. Student Profiles Difference

Adults who have the same grade level score on a comprehension test might have very different sets of skills, knowledge and abilities, while most children who are in the same grade and have the same test score have similar sets of skills, knowledge and abilities.

Two learners with GE 4 comprehension... but *very* different reading profiles



Reading Profiles

- Advanced: 35% need
 - a GED and transition to post-secondary education or training
- Intermediate: 50% need
 - Vocabulary and background knowledge,
 - Fluency and word recognition, or
 - Both
- Beginning Readers: 15% need
 - structured teaching (O-G, Wilson, Barton)

Age and Reading Improvement

- Those under 30 improve their reading as measured by the TALS, with achieving a GED as a predictor.
- Those over 30 expand their reading practices, with program participation as a predictor.

2. Persistence

- Support to persistence in adult education serves the purpose that compulsory attendance serves in child schooling.
 - 100 hours required for a 1 GLE increase.
 - 75 percent chance of making a 1+ GLE increase at 150 hours.
 - 58 hours leads to .40 GLE increase.

Theoretical Models

- Persistence is a balance between motivation and barriers.
- Persistence is a balance between perceived benefit and cost.
- Persistence is a balance between supports and barriers.

Adult Student Characteristics that support persistence

- Immigrant status, age over 30, and parent of teen or adult children.
- Involvement in previous efforts at basic skills education, self study, or vocational skill training
- Specific goal

Adult Student Characteristics that did not influence persistence

- Gender and ethnicity
- Single parent status
- Employment status/working hours
- Negative school experience
- Parent's education

Persistence Supports

- Management of forces
 - human and life context
- Building self-efficacy
 - mastery, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and opportunities to address emotional states
- Establishment of clear goals
- Progress toward reaching goals

Pathways

- Long-term
- Mandatory
- Short-term
- Try-out
- Intermittent

Persistence Interventions

- Add a set of services to existing programs
- Redefine participation

Entrance into Services

- Identify a clear goal
- Develop a plan for instruction and support services that assumes episodes of participation and self-study

Participation in Program Services

- General improvements in instruction
- Expansion of support services
- Multiplicity of instructional modes that are linked

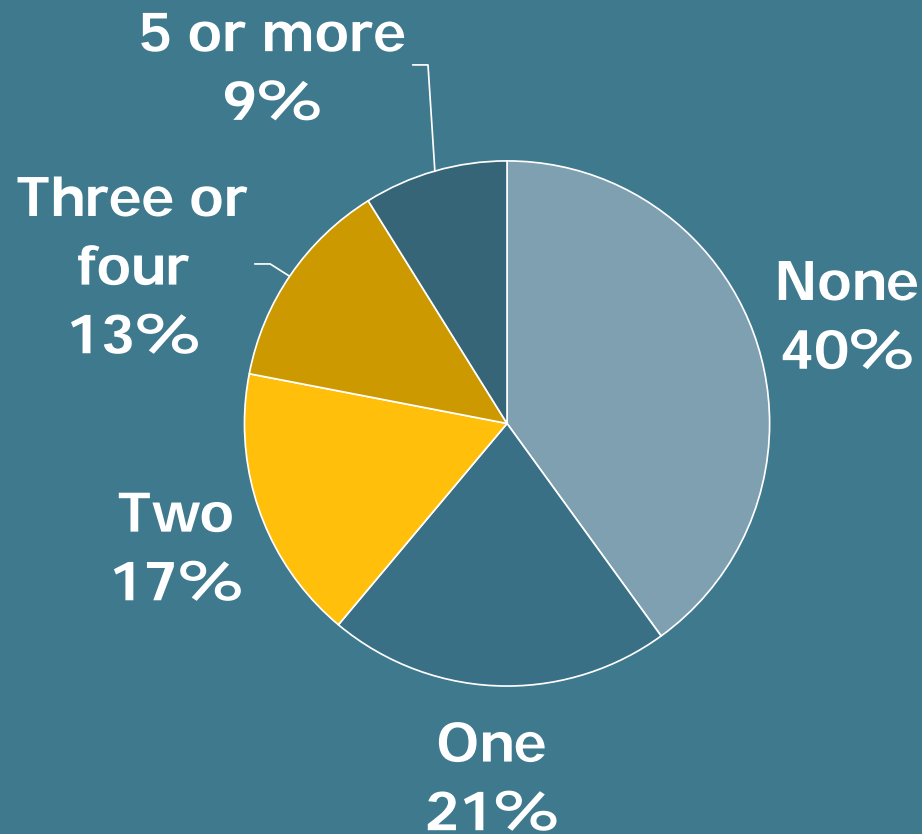
Reengagement in Learning

- Reengagement should be part of a student's plan
- Supports to learning during times of nonparticipation
- Supports for reengagement and transition into other programs or postsecondary education

3. The Participation Difference

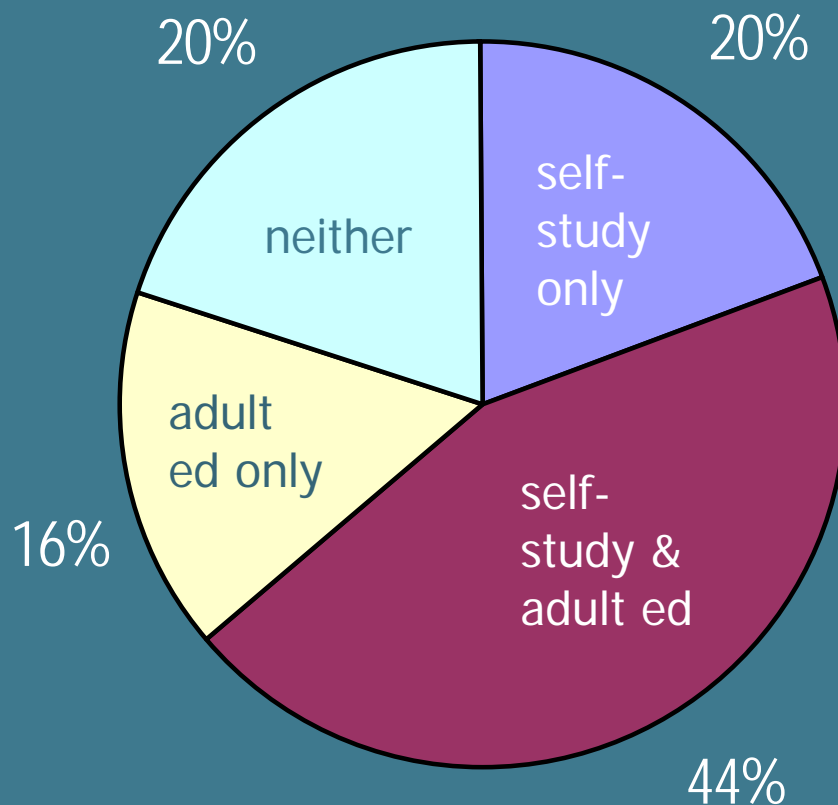
The provision of a range of services could provide the opportunity for continuous learning in adult education programs that the child schooling system provides through specific places and set schedules.

Periods of Participation in Basic Skills Programs Since Leaving School (1000 high school dropouts in Portland OR)



Self-Study and Participation

(1000 high school dropouts in Portland OR)



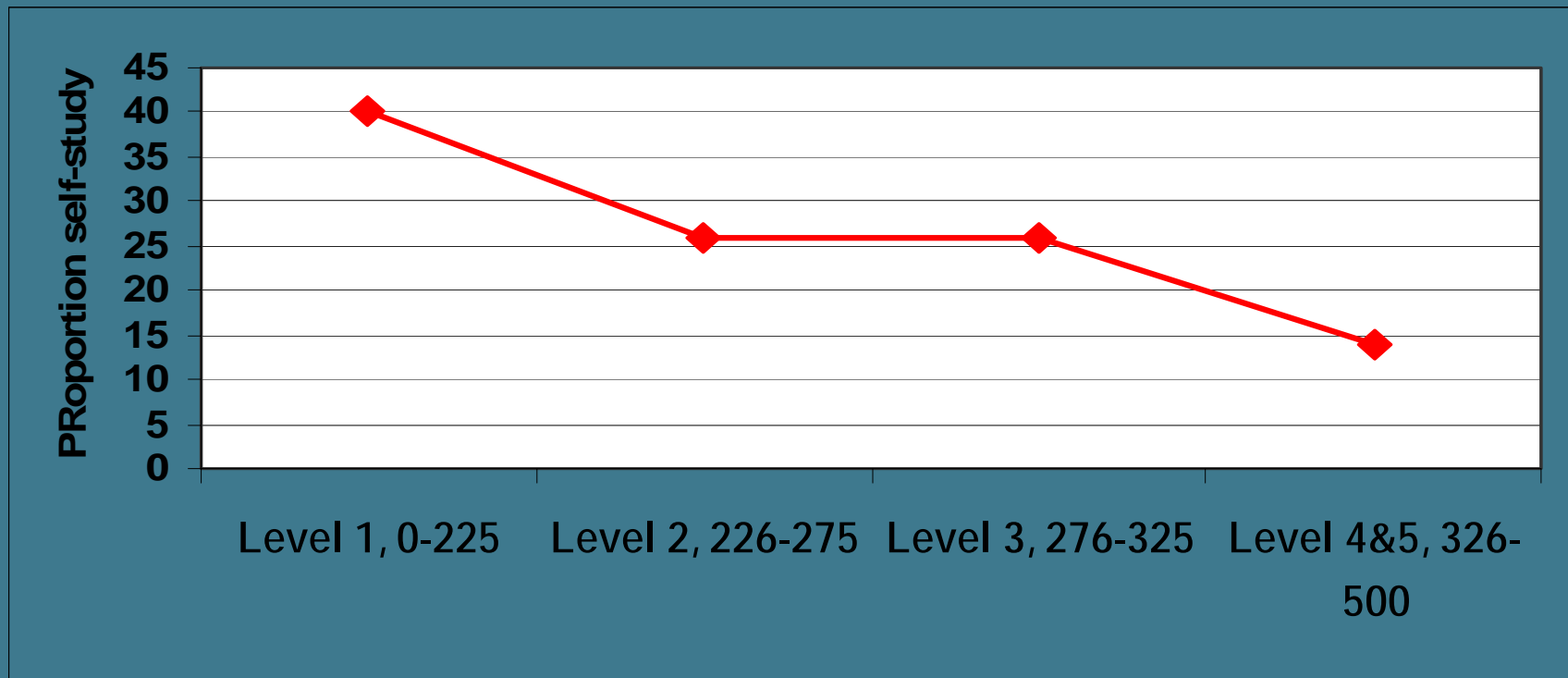
64% have self-studied

60% have taken adult ed

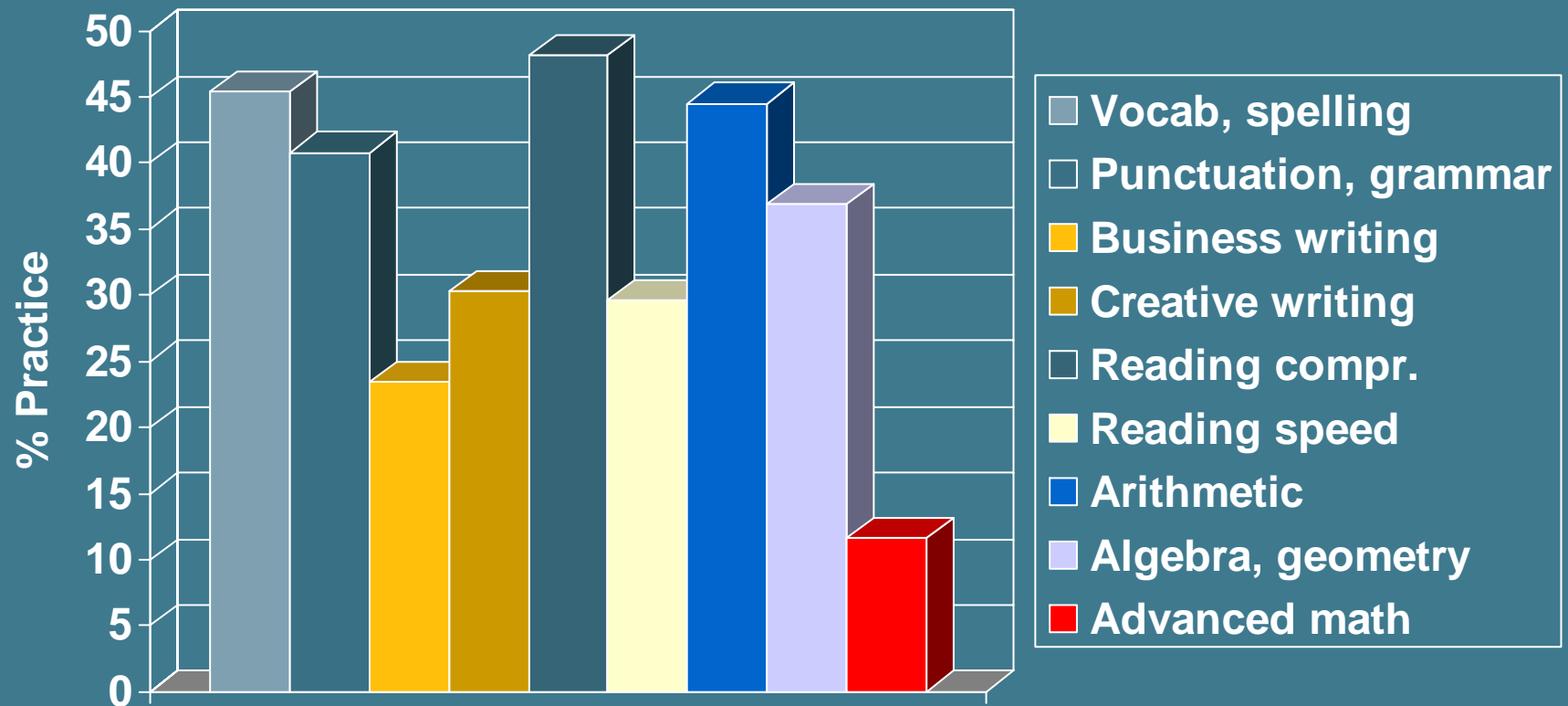
(between leaving school and Wave 4)

Self-Study by Literacy Proficiency

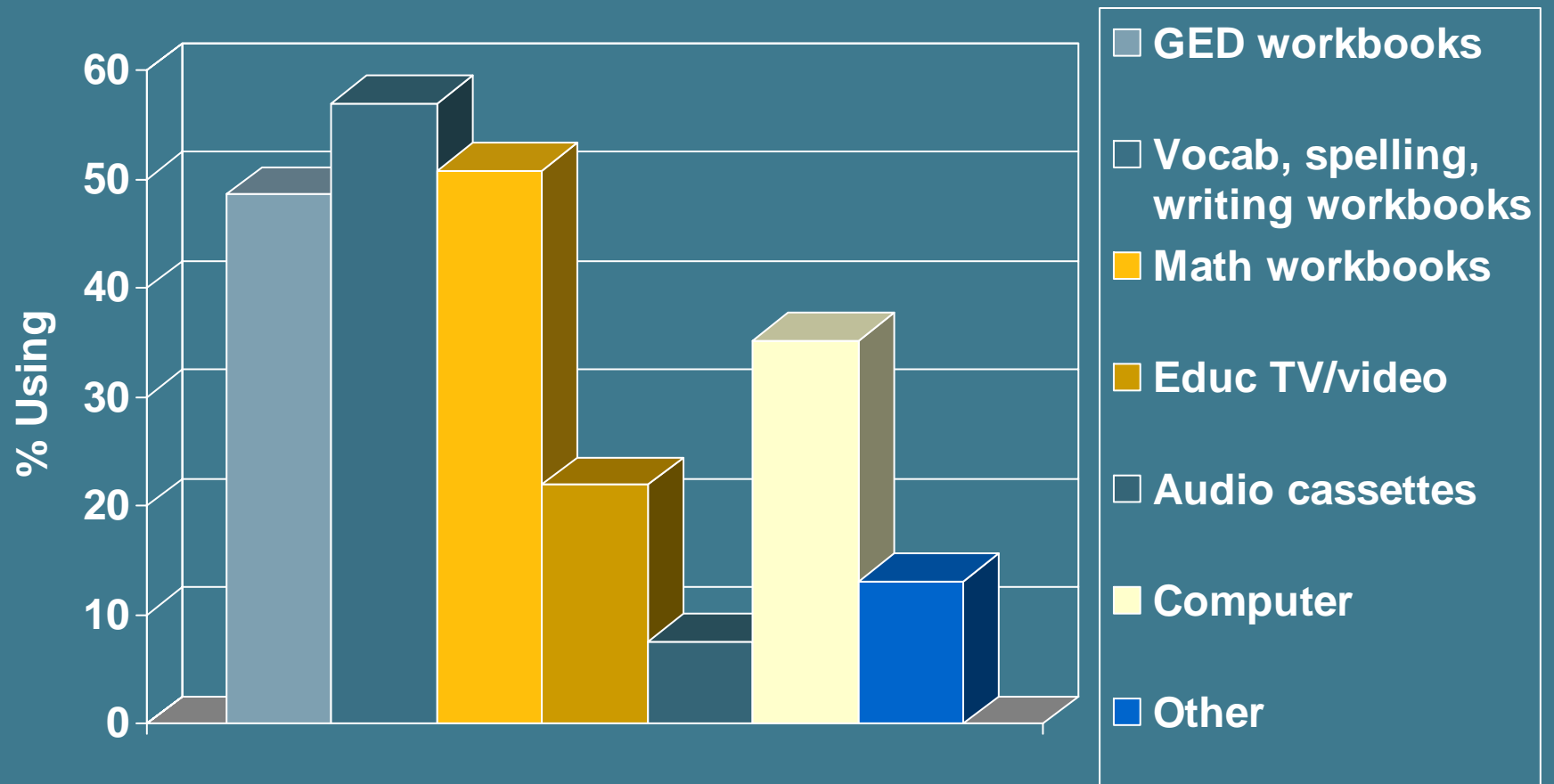
(1000 high school dropouts in Portland OR)



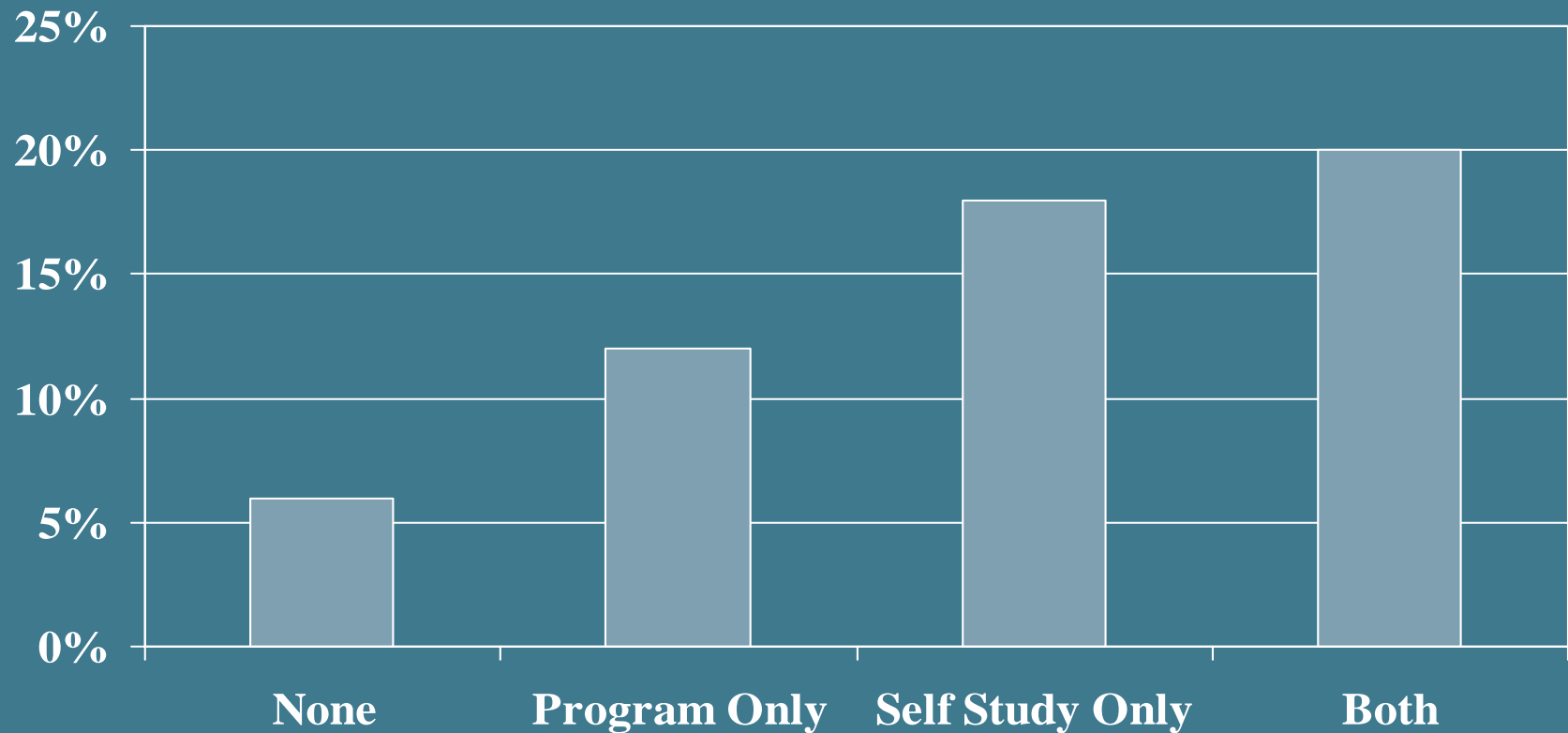
Self-Study: Skills "Practiced"



Self-Study: Materials Used



Percent GED Attainment by Participation & Self-Study



Change in Our Thinking

- From: “Helping students persist in learning in our programs”
- To: “Staying connected to our students in ways that help them persist in their learning”

4. The Content Difference

Authentic (as opposed to academic) content in the adult education system provides the motivation to learn and the opportunity to practice skills that the transition from one grade to another provides in the child schooling system.

Content...

- Use of authentic content in the classroom leads to more reading and reading of new kinds of texts outside the classroom.
- Health is key authentic content.

Evidence-based Education

“The integration of professional wisdom with the best available empirical evidence in making decisions about how to deliver instruction.”

- Institute of Education Sciences, US Department of Education

Evidence-based Adult Education...

...offers the possibility to build, over time, a body of accepted practice through a consensus on how to make decisions rather than through a consensus on a philosophy of education.

Additional Information

- www.ncsall.net