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Transition: Not Just Another Word for Change

BY ELLEN HEWETT

I think about transitions a lot these days. This spring I became the director of the National College Transition Network (NCTN) at World Education. I accepted the job after an almost thirty-year run as a college faculty member and administrator. Although I worked exclusively with non-traditional learners in my previous work, my new job at World Education was a big change; it landed me right into the emotional wilderness at the very core of any major transition.

Even though I have made transitions before, I was surprised by the strength of the transition-related feelings I experienced when I started my new job: sadness for what ended, disorientation while adjusting to new expectations, and fear of the unknown. What had I done? As old work and life patterns disappeared from my reality and new ones started to replace them, I experienced self-doubts and misgivings.

First Special Skill

In the midst of this emotional wilderness, I heard an echo from an orientation course I taught for adult students years ago: whether the change is as significant as starting a new school year or a new job, or something much smaller, transitions call for some special skills. I felt a tremendous sense of relief; I remembered that I had not suddenly become a less competent person—I was going through a transition. This moment of recognition, I remembered, is the first special skill any transition requires.

William Bridges, author of *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*, calls this emotional wilderness the neutral zone. It is the place between an ending and a beginning. Staying in this neutral phase is not easy. Bridges advises, "It is important not to be surprised by this neutral zone, for

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FOREWORD

Talk about great timing. The publication of this issue of *Field Notes*, with its focus on transitions, comes just weeks after our November election signaled a significant transition in national leadership. It also comes in the middle of transitions in the economic picture—on the international, federal, state, and municipal levels. We have much to look forward to in the next four years; we have a great deal to struggle with, too, especially within the next few months.

Educational and social services across Massachusetts are dealing with transitions as a result of budget cuts. After this issue, *Field Notes*, a publication of SABES funded by the ACLS at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will be published online only. By “going green” we save money on printing and mailing.

And as a transition from a print to an online publication, we are mailing copies of this issue to programs only rather than to individual practitioners, our past policy.

We hope you continue to read *Field Notes* online at the SABES Web site <www.sabes.org>. We will alert you through a variety of listservs and emails when each issue is posted. Of course, you are free to print copies yourself as you need them.

Oh, and about this issue. Practitioners around the state have contributed articles on program models, classroom ideas, and lesson plans that can help strengthen ABE to college transitions.

I hope this last print issue of *Field Notes* is one you earmark, coffee stain, highlight, and mark up.

—Lenore Balliro, editor

Field Notes Mission Statement and Editorial Policy

Field Notes is an adult basic education (ABE) quarterly, theme-based newsletter published online at <www.SABES.org>. It is designed to share innovative and reliable practices, resources, and information relating to ABE. We attempt to publish a range of voices about important educational issues, and we are especially interested in publishing new writers, writers of color, and writers who represent the full range of diversity of learners and practitioners in the field.

Field Notes is also a place to provide support and encouragement to new and experienced practitioners (ABE, ESOL, GED, ADP, Family Literacy, Correction, Workplace Education, and others) in the process of writing about their ideas and practice. Editorial support is always provided to any writer who requests it. Teachers, administrators, counselors, volunteers, and support staff are welcome to write for *Field Notes*.

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Our Editorial Policy

Unsolicited manuscripts to *Field Notes* are welcome. If you have an idea for an article or wish to submit a letter to the editor, contact Lenore Balliro, editor, by phone at 617-482-9485, by email at <lballiro@worlded.org>, or by mail at 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210. Submission deadlines for upcoming issues are published in each issue of *Field Notes*.

Opinions expressed in *Field Notes* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editor, SABES, or its funders. We do reserve the right to decline publication. We will not publish material that is sexist, homophobic, or otherwise discriminatory.

Our Reprint Policy

Articles published in *Field Notes* may be reprinted in any publication as long as they are credited to the author and *Field Notes*.

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Engaging Adults in Active Learning: The TechSMART Project-Based Learning Program

By ESTHER LEONELLI

I like learning math like this, when it's connected to real life...

This spontaneous outburst by one of my math students came just after we had done a problem using Ohm's law and power formulas taught in our morning math and science classes during a four week study of electricity.

The class came at the end of the third module in the TechSMART Program at Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology (BFIT). During the previous day, two teams of adult learners completed, practiced, and then conducted oral presentations with poster-board displays of their solutions for creating an employee break room before an audience of their teachers, case managers, BFIT faculty, and invited guests. This day we were reviewing math applications prior to their unit test. This article is about the joys and the challenges of an engaging curriculum where math and science are contextualized, hands-on, and motivating to adult learners in transition to college.

TechSMART is a BFIT 28-week college prep program for adults interested in technical careers, conducted in partnership with Jewish Vocational Services (JVS). One of three Math and Science Pathway programs funded by the City of Boston Neighborhood Jobs Trust to improve the academic skills of unemployed and low-income residents, TechSMART stands

out with its problem-based curriculum integrated with math, science, and communications courses.

The TechSMART curriculum was adapted by a team of BFIT faculty from The SCATE Technology Gateway curriculum for high school and college developmental students. The TechSMART modifications include six modules tied to college majors offered at BFIT:

- What it is to be TechSMART (Introduction to the scientific method and measurement);
- Motion and Simple Machines (Automotive and Marine Technology);
- Heat (HVAC);
- Electricity (Practical Electricity Certification/Electrical Engineering Technology);
- Light and Optics and Medical Technology (Opticianary, Pharmacy Technician); and
- Career exploration project.

The heart of the curriculum is the team solution of a workplace scenario from industry. Math and science learning objectives are met through varied formats: workshops, labs, mini-lectures, and tutoring. The communications course engages students in oral and written activities that reinforce the subject matter through discussion, written reflection, research, and memo-writing, and teaches language arts skills needed for the workplace and college writing. The project products serve also as assessments as part of student portfolios for final evaluation.

The SCATE Gateway pedagogy is based upon active and "just in time learning." That is, the subject matter presented and researched by the students is that which is needed to solve the problem at hand. It is constructivist in that it builds on the individual and collective knowledge—both prior learning and experience and new learning—of each student and student team working in collaborative groups.

An instrument that drives the teaching and learning is the Problem-Based Learning Need to Know chart. Prior to starting a project, students as a class and in teams read the problem and complete an initial chart, answering the questions:

- What do we know?
- What do we need to know?
- How do we find out?

The problem scenario is first presented in communications or science class. I encourage the students to use the chart to identify the math questions that evolve as they get deeper into solving the problem. I also use the chart as a model for tackling traditional word problems students might find on a test. Since there is no "right answer" to the scenario, the Need to Know chart also serves the teaching team in identifying the issues we want the students to address. From this chart and the students' questions, research, and answers, I learn along with the students on how to solve the problem.

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Engaging Adults...

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In their first project students were presented with the problem of moving 500 boxes of aluminum coil from a basement storage area to the loading dock on the first floor of a warehouse. They had to devise mechanical means to minimize the effort of the workers while at the same time ensuring workplace safety. They also had to present the costs of their solution. Several different solutions finally presented by the teams used inclined planes, block and tackle pulleys, and actual equipment students found on the Web. One student constructed a 3-D model of the warehouse with scale-model boxes and hand-truck and ramp. The math skills needed to solve this problem included area, perimeter, geometry (Pythagorean Theorem), ratio and proportion for finding the mechanical advantage, and formulas for work and effort. Their confidence in their learning and the teamwork of the students in their solutions were evident in their PowerPoint presentations.

A second scenario is the designing of an employee break room with one 120-volt 20-amp circuit, fluorescent lighting, and a priority list of employee-chosen appliances. The constraints posed by the problem included electrical code limitations of power load (using Ohm's Law and electrical power calculations) and a limited capital budget. Students researched appliances, local electrical rates, and electrical codes to resolve the power-load issues and to calculate the monthly operational and capital costs. In this module,

students used Excel spreadsheets for their calculations and presentation. Some were able to stay within the constraints. Others solved the problem by installing a second circuit, using natural lighting from windows, using donated labor and materials, and "holding" fund-raisers to stay within budget. Others reduced the wattage of the lighting and found energy-saving

constructivist learning and my direct teaching facilitates that process.

What was most challenging for the instructor team was the teaching of teaming skills. Students experienced frustration dealing with absentee team members and delegating and collecting work products, but they demonstrated great generosity and flexibility in handling

As a math teacher I was amazed by the motivation, creativity, and persistence of the students.

devices on the Internet to meet the power limits.

As a math teacher I was amazed by the motivation, creativity, and persistence of the students. What I found most exciting was the engaged and active learning by students collaborating on the projects. Students did their own research, came up with their own solutions, and communicated their learning publicly through different media—PowerPoint, memos, display boards, brochures, and even scale models. Finally, the math skills were learned in a context of real-life workplace applications.

What was most challenging was adapting my constructivist teaching style to the "just in time" teaching approach. That required the direct teaching of the math needed to be applied to the problem at hand. I used some discovery activities for teaching math principles. But I see now that the collaborative solving of problems is indeed

these issues. To meet students' needs to demonstrate their own independent work, we modified the curriculum a bit to allow for independent projects in several of the units.

The TechSMART project-based learning curriculum used with adult learners is now being integrated into BFIT's developmental education program. I recommend such a curriculum to GED programs that want to create realistic contexts for math and science learning.

Esther Leonelli is the director of the Worker Education Program at the Service Employees International Union in Dorchester, MA. She can be reached at <eleonelli@workereducationprogram.org>.

Notes:

South Carolina Advanced Technological Education Center of Excellence (2000). *Technology Gateway Instructor Guide – An Engineering/Technology Curriculum Guide*. Retrieved April 15,

A Student's Perspective of a College Success Class

By KATIE SHAW

There is a class at Greenfield Community College designed to help students be successful in college. It is called HUD114, but it is more commonly known as College Success. When I took this class, we were introduced to different departments in the school. For example, one day we took a visit to the library and met the librarians, who then introduced us to

stroll over to the Fitness Center, and most of us were shocked to learn that the college gym is open nearly every day. And the best part—for free!

During this class we participated in many group activities. This allowed the students to develop some great friendships at school. One of our assignments was to create a “code of conduct” that we thought would

classroom was always a safe environment, and she became a good friend as well! For the three days a week we spent in College Success class, every idea, problem, and concern was somehow addressed and used as a learning experience.

The College Success class is a great tool. It helps all new students learn the ropes of the school and lets them ask all of the questions they may have as they occur. The class is also great for students who are returning to college after a period of time off; it helps them reacclimate to school. After surveying several of the students who have taken part in the college success class, I learned that the most important aspect of the class is the environment. Students are able to meet people who are in their shoes—people who have the same questions and concerns about successfully completing their college education. This class is necessary for those who normally may not feel comfortable speaking up to ask questions that they need answered to be successful students.

Katie Shaw is a student at Greenfield Community College's Next Step Up program. She can be reached at <katieshaw18@yahoo.com>.

As part of the class we were able to take a stroll over to the Fitness Center, and most of us were shocked to learn that the college gym is open nearly every day. And the best part—for free!

all the resources available there. The next week one of the counselors came in and we spent the class in a quiet meditation period. We were then informed about the various confidential counseling services that are available.

A visit from the Learning Center staff was great; most of us did not even realize that tutoring was an option! As part of the class we were able to take a

be reasonable to follow. This activity allowed us to fully understand the behaviors that are acceptable in a school environment while also helping us to understand how to do a research project. All the while the project allowed us to work with the students that are now such great friends.

This atmosphere was created by the wonderful teacher we were privileged to have. Her

Community College Students: Goals, Academic Preparation, and Outcomes

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003164>

G. Hoachlander, A. C. Sikora, and L. Horn (2003)

This report provides information on the varying goals, preparation, and outcomes of community college students using three different data sources. While one of the data sources is comprised of students coming directly from high school, the other two sources include older learners.

Transition...

Continued from page 1

several reasons. First, if you don't understand and expect it, you're more likely to try to rush through or even bypass the neutral zone — and to be discouraged when you find that doesn't work. Second, you might be frightened in this no-man's land and try to escape. Third, if you escape prematurely from the neutral zone, you'll not only compromise the change but also lose a great opportunity." (Bridges, 2004)

Not Just Another Word for Change

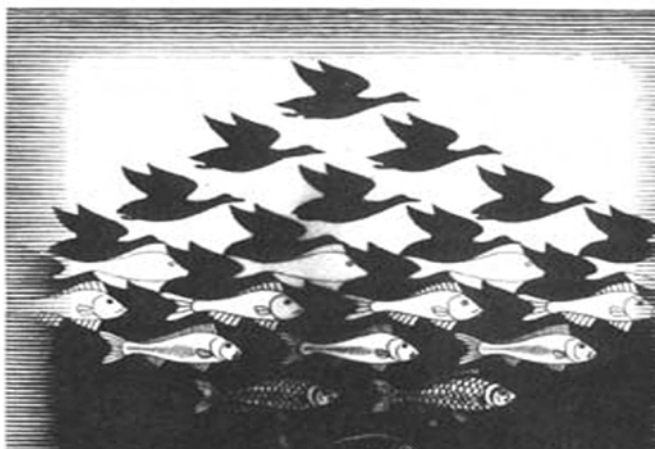
Think of a big change in your life: moving to a new town, coming home from the hospital with your first child, being promoted to a more demanding job, earning a college degree. Each change required you to unplug from your old world first. Each change involved loss or letting go of your old life before adjusting to a new one.

That's where the transition part comes in. A transition is the inner process through which we come to terms with a change. For example, moving to a new home is a change. Reorienting yourself to a new home is a process of transition. In the land of transition, endings come first and beginnings come last.

Second Special Skill

Whether the transition is one that we welcome (like starting school) or one that we don't (like getting laid off), it's important

to know that there are pluses and minuses with every change. Recognizing and honoring the feelings associated with any transition is the next special skill required for this process. Recognizing and honoring my feelings as I made the transition to my new job allowed me to feel less distracted and more focused. In very concrete, practical ways, my thinking became clearer. This change in my own behavior



led me to wonder how my experience might be useful to ABE students.

Consider the changes in the lives of adult learners as they return to school. In order to succeed as learners they first need to change their self-concept to include "being a student." This change requires a bigger adjustment than, say, learning algebra or expository writing.

Their adult education programs may tell them that they made a wonderful change coming back to school; they may even be encouraged to go on to college. At the same time, friends and family members might make them feel their choice for change was a terrible mistake. While their families want them to succeed, they

might fear the loss of the person they know. As a result, the adult learner may experience (as I did) self doubts and questioning about their choice for change.

As ABE practitioners, we can help students identify all these ambivalences, doubts, and fears and where they come from. We can also help them recognize, name, and honor the feelings that accompany this major life transition of returning to school.

Once they can recognize and honor these feelings, as I did, they can move forward.

As a start, we can share our understanding of the three phases of transition: (letting go, reorienting, making a new beginning) to help our students manage their transition. In the classroom, we can provide learners with literature—short stories and memoirs, for example—that speak to change and successful transitions as a way to share this understanding. Well-written, captivating material, and excerpts from longer works can be very effective. (*The Autobiography of Malcolm X* comes to mind.) In fact, even a sentence or two from a work of literature can serve as a catalyst. Consider how the following conversation between Alice and the Caterpillar in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* could spark a conversation about being in the "emotional wilderness" described earlier.

"Who are you?" said the Caterpillar. "I – I hardly know, Sir, just at present," Alice replied rather shyly, "at least I

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Transition...

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know who I was when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then."

Developing life-history exercises can help students articulate critical turning points in their lives and explore how they moved forward during those times. This promotes confidence in moving ahead. Sharing these exercises shows students they are not alone in their struggles. Supporting students in guided journal writing can work as a reflective tool for understanding their new reality.

As I move more into my new beginning at the NCTN, I feel refreshed and ready to greet the new opportunities that await me. I made the right decision. Also, I have deepened my understanding of the universality of the transition process. Whether you move from faculty member to a director or from single mom to GED student, the developmental path is the same. We all need to notice and honor the change taking place in our lives by pausing, reflecting, and beginning again.

Reference:

Bridges, W. *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*. Cambridge, MA: DaCapo Press, 1991.

Ellen Hewett is the director of the National College Transitions Network. She can be reached at <ehewett@worlded.org>.

Math Matters

BY PATRICIA DONOVAN

There's nothing quite like an economic crisis to highlight the importance of numbers. But are we preparing ABE students to grapple with them? Three years ago SABES formed a team of math practitioner leaders committed to

- forming partnerships with fellow teachers, programs, and each other,
- exercising leadership and
- reaching important goals—among them improving math teaching and learning.

The practitioner leaders this year plan to offer two sets of workshops: Fun with Fractions (Decimals and Percents) and Algebra for All. Each set involves two sessions—one centered on content and one on instruction. A Teacher to Teacher (T2T) math sharing session connected to each topic will also be scheduled.

These SABES-designed and sponsored workshops continue the SABES Math Initiative efforts to reach ABE teachers and program directors with information and activities that promote understanding of numbers and math concepts for practitioners and for students.

Two Positive Findings

Recent research data tell us good and bad news about numeracy education:

- Math education produces greater economic returns than literacy education.
- On average, the more math you study, the more money you make (84% of workers with well-paid professional jobs had taken Algebra 2 or higher).

Three Not-So-Positive Findings

- Math GED test failures exceed literacy test failures in Massachusetts (for those considered capable of potentially passing the GED within a year).
- More than 50% of Americans lack the numeracy skills needed to manage 21st century decisions and demands.
- Those who score poorly on quantitative literacy (math tests) are three times more likely than high scorers to require state support at some time in their lives.

The need for improved ABE math learning and teaching is clear. Your commitment to change provides the only pathway to that improvement.

If you haven't already registered for one or all of these workshops in your region, now may be the time to do so. The need is compelling. Contact your regional SABES office for details.

Patricia Donovan is a training and development specialist at SABES/CRC. She can be reached at <pdonovan@worlded.org>.

Spell Checker Activity Sharpens Skills

By CYNTHIA ZAFFT

Spell checkers are a wonderful invention. They transform our rough drafts into well-written prose. Or do they? While spell checkers are helpful, they are not perfect. The following activity was designed for adults in an online study skills course designed to help them prepare for college. In observing the changes a spell checker makes, students become more savvy writers and computer users.

(Note: The reader will see underlines indicating the errors in this print version of the sample lesson. You would see wavy lines if the file is accessed via word processing. The lesson is intended as a word processing activity and can be copied as such. If you copy it, remove the underlines from the words first.)

Directions

- To begin, quickly scan this document. What do you see? Those wavy lines below words are the places that your spell checker will stop and give suggestions for you to think about.
- Then, read to this document to the end. As you go, think about why a word has a wavy line under it.
- Finally, spell check by following the directions at the very end of the document and see what you learn. Please excuse all the errors!

What a Spell Checker Can and Can't Do for You

Notice the little wavy lines under some of the words on this

page? Most word processing programs put little wavy lines under words that

- might be spelled wronge,
- might have extra _ spaces between words or extra letters in words,
- might be repeated repeated,
- might need different punctuation, or
- might have grammar that ain't correct.

Spell checkers also give you suggestions on how a document might look. These are considered formatting options. For example, some of you may have wavy lines under the first word in each entry in the bulleted list above because your program will be asking if the first word should start with a capital letter. This is a formatting option that many spell checker programs suggest for a bulleted list.

Spell Checking Pitfalls

Spell checkers are great and they do remove many misstakes; however, they can also create their own errors..

Spell checkers compare words in in your document with a list of correctly spelled words. Obviously, this list does not include all words. Proper names, slang, or alternate spellings (for example, color for colour) may not be in the spell checker's dictionary. If a word that you think is spelled correctly is flagged by the spell-checker with a wavy line, check it with a regular dictionary or other source.

Many spell checkers will make suggestions for a corrected spelling but they will not pick a

spelling for you. Be careful. The misspelling "thier" can turn up "thief" in addition to "their" (and several other words), so read the list carefully before you choose. For example, writing about a news report on America's viscious cycle of crime could end up as a viscous (thick fluid) cycle or a vicious (violent) cycle using your spell checker.

Many of the specialized terms in technical writing, especially health care, may not be in the spell checking system. Let's see which of the medical terms can be spell checked in this list: tachycardia, pericarditis, cardiogram, angiogram, vasospasm. Not bad! Let's see if I misspell one or two: tachicardia, vasaspasm.

The spell checker will not differentiate between many words that sound alike (called homonyms), such as you're and your. So your spell checker program may not notice if you're using the right word. And, as you notice, it didn't pick up the errors in the previous sentence.

The spell checker may not find a spelling error if your error is an actual word, such as form/ from. You must proofread your paper to ensures that you have the correct words. For example, let's see if it catches the word at the end of this sentence: "What team are you form?" There is a wavy line so it caught something, but not the word: form for from. In this case, the spell checker is picking up a possible subject-verb disagreement.

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Next Step Up Program Supports Student Leadership

By LINDY WHITON

A large part of a successful ABE transition to college program in a community college is providing students with opportunities for leadership. Positive leadership experiences help students overcome isolation in the new college environment, foster self-confidence, and replace past negative concepts of “school” with more positive perceptions. Positive leadership roles can also provide constructive experiences for students who enter community college with strong leadership qualities but also a set of risk factors that may prevent them for identifying suitable paths.

Because most community college students commute to school, college remains only a part of their lives; it is hard to find a time and place to find a role outside the classroom. The Next Step Up Program (NSU) at Greenfield Community College recognizes that participation in extracurricular activities improves student retention in community colleges. For this reason, NSU provides opportunities for students to come together as a group (cohort), where leaders can naturally emerge in a supportive and resourceful environment.

NSU supports students who have their GED and want to enter college successfully. They are mandated to take the College Success class, and they take an English course with their cohort

members. They meet regularly with their advisor. NSU is funded through the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as a transition to college program.

College Success Class

The first opportunities for leadership arise in the College



Katie Shaw and son Jarod

Success class. This participatory class offers students a place to develop individual projects or to engage in group projects. The College Success class places students in learning teams where they stay throughout the semester to investigate college success skills. Students’ projects are connected to the skills they need for their college journeys; therefore, they get to practice essential skills in their first semester.

For example, one College Success class read *Eight Rules to Live By: From the Heart* by Robin Roberts, cohost of *Good Morning America*. The class wrote to Roberts and explained how their

experiences related to hers and how the book motivated them. She invited them to come to a taping of the show in Times Square in New York City. For some students this was their first opportunity to leave Western Massachusetts, and for many of them it was their first trip to a big city. For all of us the trip provided an opportunity to see a major broadcast show taped.

To pay for the transportation to NYC, students did some fund-raising. They invited another College Success class to join them, and together the group raised the money. On November 28, 2007, we boarded a bus to NYC at 2:30 A.M. This highly successful trip united the group, providing a sense of belonging and “we can do it” spirit. When we returned, the president of GCC refunded the money students had spent and gave them the opportunity to use the money to continue their sense of group connection. Students then created the Breakfast Club, an online network of student support and a great example of what a College Success class can accomplish.

Work Study

Research has shown that work-study positions enhance retention by helping students feel a valuable part of the com-

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Next Step Up...

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munity (Laux '05; Austin & McDermott '03). Work-study positions at GCC provide valuable opportunities for leadership development, and the NSU program uses these positions successfully. The college admission department provides three 10 hour slots for work-study positions; over the past several semesters those slots have been filled with NSU students. These positions carry responsibility (and some stress), but they also afford some flexibility in case of sick children or unreliable transportation—common reasons for absences and lateness. The work-study supervisor mentors his students with care. He provides a strict work code, but he also provides opportunities for students to make mistakes and still feel comfortable coming back to work. The supervisor has observed growth in the quality of students' work and an improvement in academic work as well.

One former work-study student said that since she started working for admissions, she comes to school more often and

has more investment in doing well academically because she believes she belongs someplace.

In addition to on site positions, the financial aid department also coordinates some work-study positions with nonprofit organizations in the county. These include local adult education programs, the Orange Library and Big Brother Big Sister of Franklin County. NSU students are encouraged to apply for these positions, and several have been hired.

Another opportunity for leadership development through NSU is found at statewide workshops and conferences where students are encouraged and supported to facilitate sessions. This year several members of NSU will present at local conferences such as the Massachusetts Alliance for Adult Literacy (MassAAL), Network '08, and the National College Transitions Network (NCTN) conference. In addition, students were invited to do a presentation at the GCC Dean's Committee. Several students have participated in other classes and college projects. These opportunities take students beyond their own world

and help them see themselves in the larger college community.

Student One's Story

Student One, the single mother of a bright 3-year-old, had tried college twice before returning to GCC. She had heard about NSU through a local adult education program's transitional coordinator. Student One was laid off from a long term job and decided she needed a career and a means to support her family. She felt that with support from NSU she could complete an associate's degree.

Student One led her class with enthusiasm and took advantage of everything it had to offer. Since enrolling in NSU she has been on the dean's list every semester. When a work-study position opened in admissions, the director of admissions asked her to apply and she was hired. She had been given the valuable opportunity to shine in a safe environment. Passionate about the issues that single parent students face going back to school, Student One asked for help from NSU to start a single parents' network on campus. Through her experiences with the network, Student One is learning how to facilitate meetings, to oversee activities with students, and to organize groups, all important and transferable leadership skills.

Student One won the Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education (MCAE) volunteer award in 2007 for her work with the Parent Network and volunteer work at The Literacy Project, Inc.

At the Network '07 conference Student One stood in front

Massachusetts Adult Literacy Hotline



800-447-8844.

Free information on GED, ESOL, literacy, and citizenship classes for adults offered throughout Massachusetts. Information online at

800-447-8844.

www.sabes.org/hotline

Next Step Up...

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of about 400 people and gave a speech, something she thought she could not do. Since then she has won several scholarships. She left her work-study position for a job with Big Brothers-Big Sisters of Franklin County where she now works for the executive director.

Meanwhile, Student One remains involved with both NSU and the college in general. She plans to transfer to Smith College after she completes her associate's degree in liberal arts with a focus in law. "I find that balancing college, work, and parenting is very challenging but the support from everyone around me provides me with the motivation to be involved and successful." She also says, "College is expensive, but worth every penny. I have never felt as confident and happy in my life as I do now."

Student Two quit high school to have her first child and never returned to graduate. In her early fifties, she entered the North Quabbin Adult Education Center (NQAEC) where she prepared for and passed her GED. Student Two attended an admissions visit that I did at NQAEC for their transitions program. Intrigued, she called and made an appointment to visit the college and soon enrolled. During her second semester she was offered one of the off campus work-

study positions at NQAEC. She has worked there ever since, helping other adults and youths to complete their GEDs.

Student Three, a quiet and unassuming student, might have been overlooked as a leader. However, she made the most of the opportunities available to her through NSU. In addition to her own success, which includes a consistently high academic average, an academic award, and

Student Four's self-image as a natural leader.

Nine NSU students are work-study students; three are interviewing for off-site jobs. Eight students are planning conference presentations. A new group of 20 are just starting College Success; no doubt, leaders in that group will emerge as organically as the ones who preceded them. They will volunteer to redo the bulletin board,

recreate the brochure, or lead class projects.

When ABE transitions projects and community colleges provide opportunities and support for student leadership development, as NSU has done, students are more likely to succeed.



Katie Shaw and Cathryn LaMontagne

special scholarships, Student Three provides support to other transitions students by cheering them on and by providing transportation to class.

Student Four, a vibrant 17-year-old, sees her role in her NSU cohort as a leader. She especially enjoys leading outdoor activities and plans to get a degree in outdoor leadership. Because of her work in her College Success class, she was nominated by NSU teachers to sit on the Governor's Youth Council and was appointed. Even though she is young, her classmates recognize her energy and creativity and feel confident about letting her lead projects. These opportunities help shape

Lindy Whiton is the coordinator of Next Step Up at Greenfield Community College. She can be reached at <WhitonL@gcc.mass.edu>.

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Spell Check...

Continued from page 8

Words like team (family, class, etc.) are collective nouns, which are singular but we think of them as a group!

Spell checkers are best at picking up basic spelling mistakes, typos, and simple punctuation and grammar errors. You might find that spell checkers are usually helpful in catching subject-verb agreements. For example: Along with computers, teachers is helpful with subject-verb agreement.

When it comes to spell checking, here is a helpful tip: Remember that you alone are responsible for your paper. Regardless of what anyone or anything may advise or suggest, *you make the choices!*

Now, follow the directions that follow and spell-check this paper.

To spell check this document: (*Note:* Again, this activity works when the article is a text document on screen.)

- Move your cursor over the menu bar at the top of your word processing program. It probably contains words like: File, Edit, View, Insert, Format, Tools, Table, Window, Help.
- Click on Tools and choose Spelling and Grammar. See what the program catches.
- When you are done using the spell checker, you will notice that all the wavy lines disappear, even if you have made some wrong choices. You will also notice that just understanding what a spell checker can and can't do can help you learn more about spelling, grammar, and formatting.

For the instructor

You will need:

- computer with a word processing program, such as Microsoft Word or free applications, such as OpenOffice or the Web-based application called Zoho Writer (available at www.zoho.com).
- document with the file name: spellcheckeractivity.doc.

You will notice:

If students wish to redo this exercise, you will need to give them a copy of the original file that has not been spell checked.

Cynthia Zafft is the director for the Health Care Learning Network. She can be reached at <czafft@worlded.org>.

THE COLLEGE TRANSITION TOOLKIT

CD & PRINTABLE MATERIALS

The College Transition Toolkit was written for adult education programs and their college partners to assist with the development of college transition components and services.

The College Transition Toolkit is a comprehensive guide to program planning and implementation that draws on the expertise of practitioners from the New England ABE-to-College Transition Project and around the country. Chapter topics include:

- Program Models
- Partnerships and Collaborations
- Recruitment
- Assessment
- Counseling
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Planning
- Using Data for Program Development

Each chapter contains:

- **Planning Tools** — to develop and implement your program
- **Lessons From the Field** — first hand accounts from college transition practitioners
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THE COLLEGE TRANSITION TOOLKIT WAS DEVELOPED WITH FUNDING FROM THE NELLIE MAE EDUCATION FOUNDATION.



Questions?

Email nctn@worlded.org
or call Priyanka Sharma
at 617-385-3788.

Please send me _____ copies of the College Transition Toolkit at \$75.00 plus \$5.00 shipping and handling per CD. Price is for shipping and handling within continental U.S.

Name _____

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For more information on the National College Transition Network, go to [<www.collegetransition.org/index.html>](http://www.collegetransition.org/index.html).

I Wish I Knew How Heavy My School Bag Would Be: What Students Wish They Knew Before Entering a College Transition Program

BY RUTH CLARK

The Links Program at Middlesex Community College is offered to adults who hold a GED or high school diploma and want to start a college education. We are always looking for ways to better prepare students for our program, so we designed a simple survey asking students two questions: "What do you wish you knew before you joined the Links Program?" And "What would you recommend to the new students entering the Links Program?"

Identifying and Sharing Barriers

We used the survey as a classroom writing exercise. First we had students brainstorm about barriers to their education. The teacher recorded responses on the board as talking points. This part of the exercise was a big help in promoting the free flow of ideas and in establishing commonalities: everyone had fears about their education. The activity also illustrated that many students shared similar barriers, as illustrated in the following partial list:

- lack of money
- family hardships (deaths, illnesses)
- needed to work
- learning disabilities
- lack of academic skills
- getting used to homework again
- lack ability to retain information
- single parent, working

- lack of confidence/self-esteem
- overtired from employment/lack of energy
- medical problems (self and family)
- lack of support from families, teachers, etc.

For teachers who want to replicate this activity in their own transitions class, a few of the barriers from the list above can serve as a catalyst for stu-

planning homework time and locating homework places. They could also share backup plans for transportation and child care needs so they don't miss class.

In many cases, the encouragement the students gain from each other, the teachers, and staff in the adult learning centers can help them reevaluate barriers and serve as an introduction to a transition program or mainstream college.

They could share strategies for planning homework time and locating homework places. They could also share back up plans for transportation and child care needs so they don't miss class.

dents to begin brainstorming their own ideas.

Overcoming Barriers

The next step, discussing solutions to the barriers, shows students how many strategies they already have for overcoming obstacles. Here, students can be validated for what they have already accomplished. For example, the class could describe time management systems they are already using to plan for class hours that may be different from an ABE schedule. They could share strategies for

I Wish I Knew How Heavy My School Bag Would Be

After brainstorming the barriers/solutions activity, we asked students to tell us what they wished they knew prior to entering the Links Program. Their answers, partially represented in the list on the next page, provide insight into how to prepare students for transitions programs.

By using these exercises with your own students, and by considering the feedback from former students, you can plan to

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I Wish I Knew...

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incorporate classroom material

that will “plant the seed” and build on your students’ success with ABE. As with the in-class exercise, the process of forming their answers to the survey questions helped the Links students realize that they’d made positive gains in overcoming the barriers they most feared. In addition, they let us know what steps would help us better prepare our students for the Links Program or mainstream college.

I wish...

I knew my homework was going to take as long as it does.

I knew how fast paced the classes are.

I knew what to expect in college.

I knew there would be so much help available.

I knew how helpful the teachers really are.

I knew how the staff of the school is really trying to help you succeed.

I knew more about attendance policies and being on time.

I wish...

I knew that college would be as easy as it seems to be, as well as fun.

I knew about the transitions program sooner.

I knew about the tutoring help.

I knew that college would be less stressful than I thought it would be.

I had started a while ago.

I knew about the Harrington-O’Shea evaluation that will help me find academic direction toward a major.

I had better time management skills.

I had prepared better in high school.

Students’ Recommendations

By drawing from their responses, students were able to come up with a list of recommendations for incoming students.

- Do homework first. Don’t procrastinate.
- Seek out tutoring and learning centers and school counseling to help overcome obstacles.
- It’s not that hard. There is a lot of help.
- Study hard and you can do it.
- This program gives you hope and makes you feel, “yes, I can do it.”
- There are many educational opportunities to explore out there in the world for people to pursue.
- Talk to other people who are going to college to hear their opinions and how much they love school.
- Work at (someplace like) UPS because they will pay for school and insurance.
- Listen to your teachers and there will be no surprises on tests.
- Check baggage at the door.

Ruth Clark is the coordinator of the Links Program at Middlesex Community College. She can be reached at <clarkr@middlesex.mass.edu>.

Note:

Information from this article was drawn from handouts at the MCAE Network 2007 conference workshops entitled: Strategies and Information About What ABE Program Students Need to Be Ready for Post Secondary Programs and How to Get the Students Ready, presented by Diane Desmarais, Bristol Community College; Karyn Van Kirk, Cape Cod Community College; and Ruth Clark, Middlesex Community College.

Multicultural Math for College Transition

By PAT FINA

While the basic truths of math are universal, the way math is taught varies from one country to another. Significant differences in math notation and computation methods exist among different countries. These differences can cause problems for students in college transition math classes.

My own strategy for dealing with this issue at the college transition level is to give students a handout the first day of class. The handout discusses four topics: how numbers are written, how numbers are punctuated, how division problems are written, and reducing fractions to lowest terms.

For each topic, I describe the differences between U.S. methods and those used in other countries. Then I offer advice on whether the students really need to learn the U.S. method or whether it's safe for them to stick with the method they know.

To explain how numbers are written, I show students how 0-9 are handwritten American style and explain that when I'm grading homework submitted by students from other countries, sometimes their numbers have so many extra curlicues and flourishes that I honestly can't tell which number they are trying to communicate to me. My advice? I tell them that if they're taking a multiple-choice or timed test, then by all means, they should write the numbers whatever way is fastest for

them. However, if they're handing in handwritten homework to a professor, they should take extra time and try to make their numbers resemble the American style as closely as possible.

To explain how numbers are punctuated, I tell students that in the U.S., the decimal point is always shown with a period, not the comma they may be accustomed to using. Commas are used only in writing large whole numbers. My advice here is for the students to bear

sion problems correct doing it the way they were taught? If so, I advise them to go ahead and use the method that works for them. They should just be certain (1) to remember to translate the problem from the way it appears in their American textbook (switching the dividend and the divisor) before they actually do the division and (2) to write the subtraction parts of the problem instead of doing the subtractions in their head and writing only the remainders. Over the years

For division, I show students examples of how Americans do division "upside down and backward" from the way they may have been taught.

down and learn to write decimal numbers American style. If they don't switch to the American style, most Americans will think they're writing a completely different number. There are too many instances— medication dosages, money, etc—when miscommunication could lead to disaster. It's safer for the students to make the switch to the U.S. method.

For division, I show students examples of how Americans do division "upside down and backward" from the way they may have been taught. My advice here is to ask the students to be brutally honest with themselves. Do they always get divi-

I have found many students who do the division part of the problem correctly but make errors while doing the mental subtraction, resulting in wrong answers.

However, if students admit that they get answers to division problems wrong using their method, then I advise them to switch to the American method.

For reduction of fractions, I explain that the U.S. method is to express final answers of fraction problems in lowest terms. Since most American math professors will deduct points if the answer is not in lowest terms, I advise students to make the

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Multicultural Math...

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switch and always convert their answers to lowest terms.

I have had students object to reducing fractions, saying that their answer is mathematically equal to the answer in lowest terms and so should be given full credit. When that happens, I explain that Americans are very practical. They only do fraction problems when they want to build things, make things, or do something practical with the answer. I ask students to imagine how confused a pizza shop clerk would be if they were to walk in and order one hundred twenty-eight two hundred fifty-sixths of a pizza. Once students grasp that fractions in lowest terms are easier to picture mentally and easier to work with, they are usually willing to adapt.

After we've discussed these four differences in class, I spend the rest of the year reinforcing the message, making corrections as gently and humorously as I can.

The differences described above are only a tiny subset of the many computational and notational differences that can cause difficulties for students. The single best resource for math teachers and students in this area is a booklet by Mary Jane Schmitt, *The Answer is Still the Same...It Doesn't Matter How You Got It!*

Pat Fina teaches in the Bridge program at the Cambridge Community Learning Center. She can be reached at <oneleaf@speakeasy.net>.

The Answer Is Still the Same: It Doesn't Matter How You Got It!

by Mary Jane Schmitt (2006)

Snow Camp, NC: Peppercorn Books & Press, Inc.

Available at www.peppercornbooks.com.

Now in its second edition, this booklet gives a much more thorough listing and explanation of differences between the U.S. and the so-called European computation methods. It even includes a page of division exercises using the European method, which I heartily suggest to American math teachers as a professional development activity.

Although the booklet is quite useful in its current edition, Mary Jane would like to expand it even further; she is interested in hearing from other math teachers about differences they have discovered. Please email her at <mary_jane_schmitt@terc.edu> or <patfina@gmail.com> with your contributions.

The Purdue University Online Writing Lab at the "OWL" Center

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/>

This site offers exercises on grammar, spelling, and punctuation, PowerPoint presentations related to grammar, and resources for English as a Second Language learners. Printer-friendly PDF versions of all handouts are also available on grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Great for brush-ups or to answer questions students may have as they proofread their work.

Active Advisory Boards Strengthen College Transition Programs

By DIANE DESMARIS

Step Up to College is an ABE transition program at Bristol Community College (BCC) in Fall River, Massachusetts. An important component of the program's success is its advisory board. The board, comprised of ABE program directors and BCC staff, meets twice a year. One important function of the advisory board is communication among the members. BCC faculty and staff learn more about ABE programs and the students who transition from GED to their college. ABE teachers and staff expand their knowledge about academic expectations in community colleges. This information exchange strengthens the way students are supported in their transition from ABE to college.

As director of the Step Up to College program, I try to plan interesting and engaging board meetings. After nine years of facilitating these meetings, it has become more challenging to come up with creative ideas. Fortunately, the Step Up to College program is part of the Division for Developmental Education, where skills specialists for reading, writing, and mathematics work with students to support their success.

Reading skills specialist Sally Gabb and writing skills specialist Denise DiMarzio work within the Division of Developmental Education. Both have worked with students in ABE programs and with students at

BCC who have taken the college placement test, the Accuplacer. As a result they have developed some insights about differences between GED test preparation and Accuplacer test preparation. This understanding made them excellent candidates for guest speakers at an advisory board meeting.

Reading Skills: GED, Accuplacer, and College Reading Skills

I invited reading specialist Sally Gabb to speak at the fall semester meeting. Sally gave an overview of her experience and insights teaching reading to ABE students and to students enrolled in developmental reading courses at BCC. Sally shared the following observations:

- GED graduates may not be prepared for the volume of reading expected in college where they may need to read multiple chapters and hundreds of pages each week.
- GED graduates may not have enough experience with strategies necessary to get adequate meaning from their textbooks.
- Students who score below 500 on the GED reading test may not be ready to handle the reading required in college courses.
- GED preparation may not include skills development for in-depth reading in academic content areas such as

the social sciences. Students will also need to learn how to master new vocabulary associated with specific disciplines.

The Accuplacer reading test is very different from the GED test in its form and test items. For example, the GED measures skills with inference, cause and effect, and drawing conclusions. Accuplacer tests understanding of patterns of organization, purpose, and identifying the relationship of one statement to another.

ABE instructors and students can familiarize themselves with the Accuplacer reading test by going to some of the online sites that offer practice questions. Find Accuplacer information and practice tests at <www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/accuplacer/>.

Writing Skills: GED, College Placement Essay and College Writing Skills

Denise DiMarzio, writing skills specialist, spoke at our spring meeting. Denise engaged board members in a discussion of the writing skills taught from ABE or ESOL level through college developmental courses. She also provided copies of the syllabi used at the college for intermediate and advanced ESL courses and developmen-

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Active Advisory Boards...

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tal writing courses. The group exchanged observations about GED preparation and contrasted them with the writing skills used in the college courses. For example, the board learned that at BCC the Accuplacer sentence skills test is not used for college placement; instead, students are required to write an essay that relates to a reading passage given to the student. GED writing preparation focuses on the essay structure with an introductory paragraph, several paragraphs with supporting details, and a summary paragraph. This aspect of essay development helps students with form and structure. However, developing an effective essay will depend on students' ability to understand the reading passage and their ability to relate their writing to the reading.

Denise offered the following observations about college writing and how students can better prepare for success:

- Students need to understand the link between reading and writing.
- Developing a writing vocabulary through reading and discussion would help prepare students for college writing courses.
- Teachers can help students understand that good writing often involves multiple revisions with feedback and editing along the way.
- The concept of audience—defining audience for a piece of writing and making

choices according to that audience—is important.

- Students need to be introduced to the concept of academic discourse.
- Teachers can help students prepare for college by encouraging critical thinking skills.
- Teachers can help guide students toward some independent learning.

Many of the observations made by the speakers reinforced what we have learned in the transition programs over the past nine years: there are big differences in the GED and Accuplacer tests; current ABE curriculum frameworks don't necessarily prepare students for college; students are not always prepared to become independent learners and to manage the volume of work required in college.

Based on the enthusiastic discussions generated by the speakers at both advisory board meetings and the positive feedback of board members, I concluded that this was a worthwhile advisory board activity. I plan to invite a math skills specialist to speak at a board meetings this year. Conversations between ABE and college communities provide essential and practical information that can lead to stronger programs and greater student success.

Diane Desmarais is the director and advisor for the Step Up to College program at Bristol Community College. She can be reached at <diane.desmarais@bristolcc.edu>.

Writing Links

Recommended by
Denise DiMarzio, Bristol
Community College

Not Quite What I Was Planning: Six Word Memoirs From Writers Famous and Obscure

www.smithmag.net/six-words/

This site describes itself as “a storytelling community: a place to read, write, and share stories.” The editor invites readers to write their own six word memoirs and submit them for publication. Great illustration for the “less is more” maxim.

This I Believe: Modern Essays Heard on NPR

www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4538138

Listen to essays on everything from losing a child to nurturing a stray cat in prison. Great models for narrative writing.

A College Catalog Scavenger Hunt

By JOE HENNESSEY

Keeping local and regional college catalogs clearly visible in your classroom is a great practice for boosting college awareness for ABE students. Here are some suggestions for a scavenger hunt that utilizes a college catalog. The scavenger hunt will help your students better understand the process of getting started in post secondary/higher education. Along the way you can teach research skills, build vocabulary, and even conduct multistep math exercises. If you would like to infuse some technology, try a college's Web site instead of, or along with, the catalog. You can contact one of the ABE to college transitions programs in your region to get college catalogs, along with valuable information about college transition programs. (Note: A list of college transition programs can be found on page 27.) You can adapt the following suggestions to the level of your own classes.

Preparing for the Activity

The college catalog exercise is typically preceded by two sessions of college vocabulary development. In addition, prior to the scavenger hunt with the print catalog, students should be aware of using a table of contents and index. If using the Web site, students should be familiar with basic search functions.

The items to find, listed below, should be standard across most college catalogs. This exercise lends itself to group activities. Pick and choose from the list or design your own version of this activity.

Sample Items for a College Scavenger Hunt

1. What is the name of the college?
2. Name the city or town where the college is located. Is there more than one location?
3. In which building would you find the admissions office?
4. List two requirements for admission to the college.
5. On which page of the college catalog do you find a listing of degree programs?
6. Does the college offer associate degrees or bachelor degrees/? Both?
7. How many credits do you need to take to be considered a full-time student?
8. How many "programs of study" are offered in computer information systems? Name two of the programs. How many in nursing? Name two nursing programs.
9. Choose one of the programs in computer information systems or nursing. How many credits do you need to earn to graduate?
10. Find a required course for one of the programs. How many credits do you earn for that course? Are there any "prerequisite courses" for that course?
11. What is the "cost of attendance" of the college, or the per credit cost?
12. Calculate the difference between the cost of a full-time (15-credit) semester and a part-time (9-credit) semester.
13. What types of financial aid are offered at the college? Name three types.
14. What program of study do you think you would choose?

This scavenger hunt activity was adapted from a lesson found in "ALC to BCC for ME." See information below.

Joe Hennessey is coordinator of ABE Transitions/Project Link at Berkshire Community College in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. He can be reached at <jhennessey@berkshirecc.edu>.

Free College Transitions Curriculum

"ALC to BCC for ME," a six-lesson curriculum for college transitions awareness, was developed in partnership with Berkshire Community College and the Pittsfield Adult Learning Center. It can be requested by emailing Joe Hennessey at <jhennessey@

Students Leading Students: An Interactive Campus Tour Model

BY KARYN VAN KIRK

At Cape Cod Community College, our incoming college transition students participate in a nontraditional, participatory college campus tour as part of their orientation to our program. The tour sets a welcoming tone and engages students right away. It also helps to illustrate and apply practices that play a crucial role in college success: self-initiative, collaboration, and inquiry-based research learning.

We discarded the traditional college campus tour model where the insider experts-in-charge lead a group around the campus. Instead, we created a framework for a student-designed-and-led tour. The results have been very positive and well worth the extra time and planning. Here's how we do it.

We dedicate part of our two orientation sessions to the college tour activity: the first part for preparation and research, and the second part for the actual tour. First, we gather students together to share their feelings about attending college where they can voice their excitement, fears, and questions.

This exercise establishes a bond between staff and students as well as among students themselves. Students see that transi-

tion staff members understand their anxiety and stand ready to help. Students also feel relieved to discover that peers share the same self-doubts and can begin to view each other as sources of support and encouragement. This conversation evolves into brainstorming on a more pragmatic level, largely but not exclusively around posing problems and seeking solutions. We create a list of concerns



about college. Typical items include trouble doing challenging assignments; keeping up with homework; balancing family, work, and school demands; uncertainty about what to study and career choice; questions related to navigating systems—prerequisites, credits, majors, degrees and certificates; and of course, paying for college. We also ask students to reflect on enrichment and personal development experiences they might pursue at the college, like sports,

political groups, film series, and so on. Students tend to be so focused on anticipated classroom challenges that they forget to consider the possibility of having some fun along the way. In fact, students often express surprise at the vast array of beyond-the-classroom offerings on campus.

Just introducing a more holistic view of the college experience can be a satisfactory end in itself. However, it also becomes an opportunity for us to get to know our program participants a little better and for the students themselves to discover common interests—arts, culture, health and

exercise, sports, clubs.

Next, we cluster all of the issues that arise from the brainstorming session into categories, such as academic resources and support, financial and career issues, personal enrichment, and others. As facilitator, I always point out that this exercise of generating ideas, followed by organization, represents steps in the research process—a skill they will use repeatedly throughout their college careers.

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Students Leading Students...

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We then align the categories to specific college offices, departments, and areas: admissions, advising and counseling, assessment center, arts center, bookstore, financial aid, health services, library, life fitness center, center for disability services, registrar, student development, student employment, and the tutoring center.

originally generated. As they answer questions, they become familiar with college materials and resources. New questions also arise along the way, and this deepens the process.

In the next step, teams visit their specific areas. Here they start navigating the facility and meeting college personnel—both important ways to ease the transition to college. We always notify college personnel in advance about the visit and

Each team is responsible for dividing research tasks equally among themselves and for designing their section of a college tour. They also collect materials along the way to share with the larger cohort.

At the second session, the whole group looks at the big picture of the various college tour components, and with the help of a college map, designs a logistically flowing tour. We then set out with each team taking turns as tour leaders. Each team provides an overview of the area's services, role, and function at the college and answers questions. They also promise to get answers to anything they don't know on the spot, recognizing that research is an ongoing process.

The student-designed-and-led college campus tour is always fun and informative, builds confidence and a sense of camaraderie, and lays a foundation for active and motivational education.

Karyn Van Kirk is the coordinator of the Program for Adult College Transition (PACT) at Cape Cod Community College. She can be reached at <kvankirk@capecod.edu>.

Using both print resources—college catalog, bulletin, semester guide, among others—and the college Web site, participants begin gathering information to answer the questions they originally generated.

Team Work

Instead of asking students to work individually, we create teams. Each team selects an area in which to become "expert." Using both print resources—college catalog, bulletin, semester guide, among others—and the college Web site, participants begin gathering information to answer the questions they

its purpose to ensure that it will be convenient in terms of time and staffing. We have received a great deal of positive feedback from college staff members who enjoy meeting and collaborating with the students. A side benefit of the tour is the increased visibility it gives the transitions program on campus.

In Memoriam

Karyn Van Kirk

Karyn suddenly passed away after this issue of Field Notes was published. Those of us who were privileged to work with her will miss her creativity, humor, and generous spirit. Although the loss of someone with such extraordinary devotion to the field of adult education is immeasurable, we are heartened by our awareness that her legacy lives on in the hundreds of students whose lives she touched.

A Sneak Peek at the Revised Reading Strand of the ELA Curriculum Framework

BY CAREY REID ET AL

The Reading Strand of the Massachusetts English Language Arts (ELA) Curriculum Framework should reflect what adult basic education students should know and be able to do from beginning reading levels through transition to post-secondary education. The standards and benchmarks collected within the original ELA Framework were developed by veteran practitioners and supplemented by current research in the field.

However, a multi-year revision effort was prompted by concerns that many areas of knowledge and skill (in the original ELA Framework) were not sufficiently addressed. The revision was undertaken to

- provide a clear document that will help teachers plan and teach the skills that learners need to master the material they're reading, do well on MAPT, prepare for college and/or 21st century skills to be successful in workforce, critical thinking, community engagement, and life;
- provide a guide to help teachers be as purposeful/focused as possible in addressing learners' needs in the short amount of time they are in ABE classes;
- provide more effective ways to evaluate the students in class, so teachers know where to start, what to teach, and where the gaps are in a learner's education;

- provide teachers with more flexibility in altering or adapting instruction when the need arises;
- validate what many teachers are already doing, and
- provide more information for students about their strengths and weaknesses (e.g., why they are not "moving up").

When these revisions are completed, the Reading Strand will provide teachers with guidance in all areas that they will need to consider in planning reading instruction.

Expected Revisions

This version of the ELA Framework, when it is completed, will include a greatly expanded and refined reading comprehension section. Also reflected in the revised Reading Strand will be both the importance of readability, which is an approximation of the level of difficulty of a reading passage or text, and the variety of texts that students must be familiar with. This variety can range from simple labels all the way to the academic writing that will be encountered in post-secondary education. The new Reading Strand, for example, will provide a great deal more guidance on how texts differ structurally—(e.g., how "narrative" is centrally important to understanding a short story, or how procedural documents such as instruction manuals almost always include enumerated steps.)

In terms of readability, teachers can gauge when learners' reading comprehension is improving if an adult can read and understand passages or texts of increasingly more challenging readability, such as a greater number of challenging words and more complex syntax. Readability analysis is an essential tool for reading teachers because it helps them choose materials for instruction.

The Addition of Next Steps

The growing emphasis on preparing learners for "next steps" has led to increased attention in the ELA Framework revision to the structure of academic texts. This revision moves beyond the challenges of finding the main idea in a GED reading passage to the higher demands they will encounter in a community college or training program.

Decoding Skills

Practitioners familiar with the previous version of the Reading Strand will also discover a greater emphasis on alphabets (i.e., decoding skills and sight word recognition). Why are alphabets skills important? For one, the ability to pronounce a word provides a tool to unlock meaning. A reader may not "recognize" a word as a word when it is in print; when it is pronounced, however, it triggers recognition of a word in the

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Student-Run Open House Helps Recruitment

BY BABO KAMEL

Project Enable, a college transition program, provides GED recipients and underprepared high school graduates with support and an opportunity to earn nine college credits at North Shore Community College. The staff at Project Enable recognizes the courage students display as they transition from GED to college. Many students have negative experiences with education, due to undiagnosed learning disabilities, very difficult family situations, insensitive classroom practices, or trouble with substance abuse and mental illness.

Most students are the first in their families to earn a high school credential and have not benefited from the encouragement of role models or mentors who foster self-confidence. Moreover, it is not surprising that many potential students are too intimidated to even consider the possibility of enrolling in college. These factors create a challenge when trying to recruit new students.

Recruitment Efforts

Until recently, the staff of Project Enable had to scramble to fill classes. We visited ABE programs to extol the virtues of attending college; we connected with ABE teachers so they would refer their students to us, and we mailed flyers to every new GED recipient that tested at our college. These outreach attempts did result in increased enrollment, but we still were not generating the kind of excitement

among potential students that we were seeking. So we turned to the students.

As instructors, we have learned that students can provide constructive suggestions for the curriculum and structure of the Project Enable program, and they were particularly helpful with recruitment ideas. Our students suggested an open house where we would invite students who had just received their GED credentials or who

Planning the Open House

We gave an evening over to our students to plan an open house, using their brainstorming ideas as a starting point. They suggested an evening program primarily run by the students themselves. Accordingly, they appointed an emcee and chose active roles for each participant. Some students opted to address the guests directly while others chose to produce informational signs to designate different sta-

As instructors, we have learned that students can provide constructive suggestions for the curriculum and structure of the Project Enable program, and they were particularly helpful with recruitment ideas.

were planning on taking their GED tests in the near future. We began with a discussion about what current students thought potential students would need as they transition to college.

With eighteen students in our cohort, suggestions went flying. They listed many topics, including managing work and school, applying for financial aid, completing homework, reading descriptions of specific classes, using study groups, understanding how to take exams, researching descriptions of the teachers, dealing with stress, and most of all: receiving encouragement!

tions in the classroom where other students would be available to answer questions.

The instructor wrote all the suggestions on the blackboard. Then the students further refined the order of events through class discussions. Together we came up with an agenda for the evening that would begin with a welcome address followed by individual students describing different aspects of the program. These aspects included an overview of the classes, descriptions of instructors, and a review of the homework load. Other topics

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Student-Run Open House...

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included financial aid, cultural opportunities, group projects, stress management, and career exploration. The two instructors of the program offered to organize refreshments.

The students then went home to work on their speeches and signs; they

completed these assignments over the course of a week.

When they reconvened they engaged in a practice run of the open house during class time. Once they were satisfied with the program, they asked the in-

structors to invite students from ABE programs in our area. The coordinator emailed the invitation to the contact people at ABE centers and followed up with phone calls.

Success!

The actual open house took place three weeks after the

initial planning with over 35 guests attending. The students served refreshments, and the emcee welcomed the guests to the classroom. They also asked guests to sign an attendance sheet so follow up calls could be made by the coordinator.

To date we have held four open houses designed solely by students for students, and the re-



sults have been terrific. Because our program is one semester long, we hold the event twice a year. Our latest open house had to be moved to a lecture hall to accommodate the 60 students who attended. Not only have we been attracting more students to our program, but the hosting students take on leadership roles

and experience their own success. The hosting students often take control of this event with ease, and hidden talents surface frequently, allowing comedians, public speakers, educators, and successful and confident students to emerge.

Many of the students who enrolled last semester expressed that it was hearing the testimonies from fellow students that gave them the confidence to apply. It has become clearer to us that one of the highlights students experience in our program is being able to act as mentors and leaders to a new generation of students.

And what better way to attract new students than to employ current students in the act of recruitment?

Babo Kamel is the coordinator of Project Enable at North Shore Community College. She can be reached at <bkamel@northshore.edu>.

Updated version!

Your Rights on the Job: A Practical Guide to Employment Laws in Massachusetts

by Robert M. Schwartz

What laws protect you, and your students, in the workplace? This version of *Your Rights on the Job*, completely revised and updated, can help you answer questions about workplace rights. The question and answer format makes this a user-friendly resource. Available at a discounted non-profit rate for ABE programs. Order from :The Labor Guild of Boston, 85 Commercial Street, Weymouth, MA 01188. Or call 781-340-7887.

Technology Tools for College Success

By PAT WEISBERGER

All college students need to be able to type a paper using word processing software, to communicate with faculty and fellow students through email, and to know where to find and assess the validity of Internet resources.

Several years ago, a course called Technology Tools for College Success (CSS 15) was created at Bristol Community College in response to the rapidly changing technology skills college students need to successfully complete their degree programs. Class topics include a survey of applications (mostly word processing software), email etiquette, searching/navigating the Internet, and assessing the credibility of Internet resources.

I have taught this course for the past six years; as technology has changed and improved, I have adapted the course, but the basic elements of the course have remained steadfast. Just as our community college students come to us with a variety of academic skills, they also come with a variety of technology skills. Our traditional students, for the most part, are very comfortable with all aspects of the computer—or so they think. Non-traditional students have varying degrees of computer skills. Many of them are comfortable with email or shopping on the Web, and others are completely intimidated by the computer.

I have discovered that no matter how comfortable students are with the computer

they do not possess all of the skills necessary for college success.

Walking into the computer lab on the first evening of the CSS 15 class I am always presented with the same scene. A few students will be sitting at the computer, headphones on, listening to music or eagerly showing their MySpace page to their classmates. Others will be sitting there with a look of terror on their faces desperately trying to figure out which button not to press.

My introductory lecture has become one of my favorites of the course. In it I explain that

more experienced users feel that their skills have been validated.

While CSS 15 is basically a hands-on course, I do spend a class session discussing the history of the computer. I feel it is important for the students to understand that computers did not originate with Bill Gates. In this session we discuss how throughout history humans have used machines, no matter how primitive, to make their lives easier. We also discuss the history of the World Wide Web.

Most students are surprised to learn that the Internet was originally used only by the military and research universities

Most students are surprised to learn that the Internet was originally used only by the military and research universities and that it existed years before the invention of YouTube and online shopping sites.

there is no wrong button to press, that in this very modern computer lab the teacher has control over all of the computers, and that any feelings of intimidation are normal. I also acknowledge the computer skills of the more experienced users and encourage them to share their knowledge with the class. As a result of this lecture, the nonusers leave feeling more comfortable with the prospect of operating a computer, and the

and that it existed years before the invention of YouTube and online shopping sites. I present this lecture using a PowerPoint slide show and referencing Web sites to model what will be expected of students when they are assigned research papers and presentations in their future courses. They are always very impressed by the glitz of the PowerPoint presentation and are

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Technology Tools...

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usually convinced they would never be able to create one on their own. Ironically, Power Point is the software application the students usually learn the fastest, and the slides they create for our final project are always thoughtful and creative.

The majority of the course is spent on Internet research, because over the years I have noticed that this is the area where students have the least experience. We begin our Internet journey by exploring the Bristol Community College Web site. I assign a “scavenger hunt” where the students search the Web site for answers to specific questions about the college. This activity also provides students with useful information about the college.

Evaluating Web sites

We then move on to the World Wide Web. Throughout our discussions I remind students that just because something appears on the Internet does not make it a valid resource. To exemplify this I direct them to the Web site <www.martinlutherking.org>. Looking at the web address we might assume that this is a valid page and could be used in a research paper on Martin Luther King. At first glance the Web site seems innocuous; there is a photo of Dr. King, clickable links to his writings, suggested books about his life, and an educational video.

Further exploration of the site reveals that it is hosted by Stormfront—a white supremacist organization. The site’s main purpose is to discredit King

and to promote a racist agenda. It even encourages students to print out their downloadable flyers and pass them out at school and other public places, directing people to their site. This site, more than any lecture I can give, illustrates how important it is to determine the validity of a Web site by asking who creates and supports it, along with other critical questions

As part of our Internet research we also discuss search engines. For this I use the Web site of the Teaching Library at the University of California at Berkeley <www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/FindInfo.html>. This comprehensive site offers tutorials, handouts and a glossary of computer search terms. There is also a useful tutorial and handout on evaluating Web pages. The site is constantly updated and addresses such issues as using Google and Wikipedia. While this Web site deems Wikipedia to be a reliable source, I always warn my students to remember that anyone can add or change the information on the site.

By the end of the CSS 15 course I feel the students have begun to develop and refine the skills they need to research a topic and prepare a presentation in their classes.

Questions to Consider

Here is a sample of questions I ask students to answer when evaluating Web pages.

- What is the purpose of this Web page?
- Who is the author?
- Is there any way to reach the author?
- Is the information on the page up-to-date?
- If you were the “Web Page Evaluator” for Bristol Community College would you recommend this page to teachers? Why?
- Is the content appropriate for your assignment?
- Does this page appear to be biased?

Pat Weisberger teaches in the Step Up to College program at Bristol Community College. She can be reached at <Pat.Weisberger@bristolcc.edu>.

Evaluating Web Pages: Techniques to Apply & Questions to Ask

www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/guides/internet/evaluate/html

This clear, well-organized Web site covers all the basics of evaluating Web sites: examining the URL, reviewing the author’s credentials, checking for the date of publication, scanning the perimeter of the Web page, and more.

Bookmark this Web site and share with college transition students!

A Sneak Peek...

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reader's oral vocabulary where meaning can be attached. Furthermore, research suggests that adults with strong alphabetic skills read with greater automaticity. Automaticity contributes to overall reading fluency and comprehension, because more cognitive attention can be devoted to appropriate phrasing and the construction of meaning. However, research warns us that some adult learners in mid and even high-level reading classes still need help with word analysis skills.

In addition to providing a more elaborated description of relevant alphabetic skills at each level, the revised Reading Strand will also include more information about the fluency and vocabulary subskills that contribute to meaning-making. Teachers should find that, as a whole, the standards and benchmarks work together to present an even more useful description of the knowledge, skills, and strategies that affect learners' reading comprehension, providing teachers and programs with a useful tool for targeting the specific instructional needs of students.

Next Steps

Once the ELA Frameworks Revision Committee finalizes the Reading Strand, an expert committee will review it and make recommendations. ACLS also hopes to organize practitioner focus groups to provide input. We anticipate the revisions will be finished in the spring.

Once the revisions are complete, the MAPT for Read-

ing will be aligned with the new benchmarks. Staff at the Center for Educational Assessment (CEA) will map the test items to the new benchmarks. Since there may be some gaps in the MAPT test items, new items will be written to address these

the skills they currently "cluster" in any given lesson plan. For newer teachers, the Reading Strand of the ELA Framework will provide a tool to inform the content of effective instruction. For all teachers—and for the Massachusetts ABE system

These revisions to the ELA Frameworks will reflect more of the realities that teachers encounter in the classroom while validating what good teachers already teach.

gaps, reviewed by CEA and ABE teachers, and then pilot tested with ABE learners.

Before any new items can be pilot tested with learners, ABE teachers will have the opportunity to take part in professional development to learn about the new Reading Strand and explore ways to integrate it into their teaching. ACLS and SABES staff are planning for professional development options that will take many forms. Stay tuned for more information and implementation timeline of the reading standards.

Final Thoughts

These revisions to the ELA Frameworks will reflect more of the realities that teachers encounter in the classroom while validating what good teachers already teach.

The Massachusetts ABE Frameworks are a tool, not a mandatory list of all knowledge and skills to be covered with each learner. Experienced teachers will recognize many of

as a whole—the Reading Strand will help identify areas in which more training would be helpful.

Note: This article was written by Carey Reid with input from members of the Reading Strand revision committee (Toni Borge, Nancy Sheridan, Ellen Koretz, Evonne Peters, Susan Lane Riley, Glenna Zalenski), Amy Trawick (Center for Literacy Studies, University of Tennessee), and Beverly Rosario and Jane Schwerdtfeger (ACLS).

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A Key to Success: Learning Communities, Freshman Experiences Courses and the Bristol Community College Transition Program

BY RONALD WEISBERGER

Learning communities, an important innovation at many colleges and universities over the last twenty years, are an effective way of fostering student retention and success. Learning communities can be defined as “the purposeful restructuring of the curriculum by linking and clustering courses that enroll a common cohort of students” (Cross, 1998).

Recent results from the National Survey of Student Engagement (Nessie) indicate that learning communities “positively influence student’s critical-thinking skills, self-understanding and social lives” (www.NSSC.org). Thomas Bailey, director of the Community College Research Center at Teacher’s College, Columbia University, made a similar claim, suggesting that freshman experience courses and learning communities were among the best predictors of retention and engagement at community colleges (see also the Community College Survey of Student Engagement’s recent report *Committing to Student Engagement: Reflections on CCSSE’s First Five Years*, www.CCSS.org for additional research on the subject). Currently more than 500 colleges and universities including 25% of community colleges now use learning communities.

Freshman Courses

Freshman year experience courses are also an important

innovation in higher education (Gardner, 2001). This is especially important in community colleges where students don’t live on campus and need a point of connection with the college. The college success seminar, as the freshman course is called at Bristol Community College (BCC), provides students with an extended orientation and aids in the transition to becoming successful in college. Research on these types of courses indicates that students at all levels of academic development benefit from them. Students are provided with a context for what higher education is all about and how to succeed in their studies. The courses also provide a forum for discussing and dealing with potential obstacles in the first semester.

Reading and Responding to Texts

The Transition Program at BCC includes a learning community along with a college success seminar and study skills course. This model has been very successful. Former GED students who enter the program at BCC are provided with an overview of higher education with special emphasis on community colleges. They are then introduced to BCC including its structure, personnel, degree requirements, majors and services. While discussing these subjects, students also read from

freshman experience texts. The readings, written by well-known authors as well as students who have passed through such courses, encourage personal reflection.

Students also write reaction papers to the readings; this helps develop their writing skills. In this way, Transition Program students have the opportunity to read, react to, and discuss articles that relate to their experience as a developing student. Students are often very pleased to see how their thinking changes as the semester advances.

In addition to the college success seminar, students also take a one-credit course on the development of effective study skills. Here, students learn how to manage their time, take class notes, read texts, and strategize test-taking techniques. They also learn about cognitive processing. As a result, they are able to develop a learning system that is based on current brain theory. Because they are introduced to different learning styles, students are often relieved to discover their own styles, which may be auditory, visual or kinesthetic. This awareness helps them learn how to compensate when a professor emphasizes one or the other modality.

Tom McDonough, a Transition Program graduate, says that this first semester made all the

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difference to him. "We began the program thinking we couldn't be able to do college work, but we discovered that if we did our best we could succeed." What the college success seminar and study skills course did, he notes, allowed "us to truly enter the door of the college." I think that is a good metaphor for the program. As a learning community or cohort group, students are able to support each other while gaining knowledge, skills, and encouragement from their instructors and staff. In addition

to maintaining a close to 3.0 GPA, Tom is also working in the college's Tutoring and Academic Support Center. For a school "dropout" who worked construction a good part of his life, his success is quite surprising to him. However, his own effort, as well as and the crucial academic and affective support he received through the learning community, has made all the difference.

Ronald Weisberger is an instructor for the College Success Seminar at Bristol Community College. He can be reached at <Ron.Weisberger@bristolcc.edu>.

References:

- Cross, K.P. (1998). *What do we know about students' learning and how do we know it*. AAHE National Conference on Higher Education. Retrieved July 11, 2002, from <www.aahe.org/nche/cross_lecture.htm>.
- Gardner, J. (2001). *Your college experience: Strategies for success*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Out of the Classroom, Onto the Campus

By COLLEEN CAFFEREY

I love college campuses—they are usually lively, friendly, interesting places, where you can always find a clean restroom! Finding your way around usually just requires a couple of questions to folks you pass. Not all of our students coming to college, however, feel comfortable exploring the college campus, and may not find their way to the resources they need to succeed.

I taught a college success class last semester with fourteen students who had entered college through a state-funded "transition to college" program. Most were G.E.D. recipients, and most were fairly intimidated by the college environment. One of my major goals was to ensure that my students were aware of and learned how to access college resources, such as the library, the Learning Center, counseling services, and computer labs.

So we went "on the road". We spent a class in the library, with a librarian-guide, touring the different areas as well as being introduced to the online library resources. We spent another class in a computer lab, where the students learned how to log into the college system, access their email, and use a word processor. We went back to the library for a refresher on online databases and using the Internet for research; the students spent the rest of the period surfing the Web for information for their group presentations. And we went back to a computer lab to take an online questionnaire to assess learning preferences. Other campus resources came to us: we had presentations from both staff and peer tutors from the Learning Center, and learned about stress reduction and did a guided relaxation with a counseling staff member.

Students found our excursions around campus helpful; most students rated those activities highly on an end-of-semester assessment of the class. I plan to get out of the classroom more this semester. Instead of having in-class presentations from the Counseling and Learning Centers, we will visit, and add the Math Studio, the Fitness Center, the Financial Aid Office, the Career Center, and Health Services to our itinerary. Getting out of the classroom provides a nice change of pace, and I believe that in-person introductions to college services increase the likelihood of students accessing those often vital keys to their success.

Colleen Caffery teaches a college success course at Greenfield Community College. She can be reached at <cafferyc@gcc.mass.edu>.

Self-Editing in a Transitions Writing Class

BY TONI BORGES

The majority of the students in the Bunker Hill Community College Transition to College program are English language learners.

To help students in the program prepare for college success, we design classes to simulate college courses. My class meets one day a week for three hours. Students are expected to study at least five hours a week outside of class. This is quite a surprise for the students—they are not used to completing more class work outside of class than in class. However, I have seen my students rise to the occasion. When I set high standards for the students and tell them I believe they can do it, they come through.

Prepositions of Place

Over the years I have noticed that my students often have difficulty with prepositions of location. For example, they mix up the words “at” and “on” for “in.” Even though students know that prepositions of location are a problem in their writing, they don’t know how to analyze their own work for errors.

We have practiced many strategies in class for identifying and correcting these errors, and students responded well in class. But when they get home and work individually, they seem to forget how to recognize their errors.

Brain Writing

I kept trying different techniques to help students catch their errors; nothing seemed to work until I tried an activity called “brain writing.” Brain writing is a technique developed by the late Richard Feynman, a Nobel Prize winner in physics. Brain writing is a method that encourages multiple ideas to develop at the same time in a group thinking exercise. Brain writing is similar to brain storming.

The technique is easy. Like brain storming, students openly

might write a completely new idea for a solution. The paper goes around the room until everyone adds input. When the paper returns to the first student, the class discusses the ideas.

After using the brain writing technique, students made far fewer errors with preposition of location. This was the first technique I tried that worked! My students were excited and pleased that they had learned to self correct errors. It helped to build confidence in their writing skills. I plan to continue to use

After using the brain writing technique, students made far fewer errors with prepositions of location. This was the first technique I tried that worked!

discuss a problem first. This helps to generate ideas to solve the problem. Then the teacher breaks students into small groups and passes out a piece of paper with a question related to the problem. In my case I used the following two questions: “What can I do to recognize my errors in writing prepositions of location?” and “How can I recognize the correct verb tense?”

The first student writes an idea beneath the question then passes it on to the next student. The second student can use the idea to stimulate another idea; she might modify it, or she

brain writing in the classroom for other challenges that arise.

References

Brain Writing: A 21st Century Technique <www.brainwritingworkshop.com/Brain_Writing_History.html>

Davis, G.A. (2004). *Creativity is forever*. Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publisher.

Toni F. Borge is the director of the Adult Education & Transitions Program at Bunker Hill Community College in Boston. She can be reached at <tborge@bhcc.mass.edu>.

Resources for ABE to College

Web Sites

College is Possible for Adults
www.acenet.edu/bookstore/pubInfo.cfm?pubID=307

This site walks students through each step necessary to prepare for college, such as choosing the right program and getting credit for prior learning.

Student Success Tips

www.montgomerycollege.edu/departments/studev/skills.htm

Pulling from the best of other college Web sites, this site includes time management, study skills, test-taking, memory development, learning styles, and more.

College for Adults

www.collegeforadults.org/

The site will help you walk through the application process, find money to pay for college classes, and even provide you with resources to help you prepare for college-level work.

Creating an Alumni Newsletter for Transition-to-College Programs

www.collegetransition.org/promising/practice8.html

This promising practice describes the benefits of staying connected with alumni as well as the steps for creating an alumni newsletter for your college transition program.

National College Transition Network

<http://www.collegetransition.org/index.html>

Check out this site for research briefs, descriptions of program models and promising practices, conference listings, and much more.

Books

The Most Common Mistakes in the English Language

Thomas Elliot Berry
New York: McGraw Hill, 1971

Your College Experience: Strategies for Success

John Gardner and Jerome Jeweler
Florence, KY: Wadsworth Publishing, 2002

Diversity and Motivation: Culturally Responsive Teaching

Margery Ginsberg and Raymond Wlodkowski
Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2003

Ten Steps to Improving College Reading Skills

John Langan
New York: McGraw Hill, 2008

Strategies for College Writing

Jeanette Harris, Ann Moseley
New York: Pearson, Longman, 2008

The Book for Math Empowerment

Sandra Manigault
Stafford, VA: Godosan Publishers, 1997

100 Things Every Adult College Student Ought to Know

Charlotte Jackson Hardin
Williamsville, NY: Cambridge Stratford,

Becoming a Master Student

Dave Ellis
New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2005

Tests

Accuplacer

www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/accuplacer/

This site gives an overview of the accuplacer, offers sample tests, and provides tips for test-taking.

New Online Resource at SABES.com

The SABES Web site now offers a support page for transition programs. Go to <www.sabes.org/administration/transitions.htm> for “ABE-to-College Transitions: SABES Support Section.”

Here you will find ACLS guidelines, articles, curriculum guides, wiki sites, and more.



Mark Your Calendar

Check the SABES Web site, <www.sabes.org>, for local and regional activities. This list was prepared by Lou Wollrab.

March 11, 2009

Commonwealth Workforce Coalition
Sixth Annual Statewide Conference
Location: Worcester, MA, DCU Center
Email: Rebecca Harris <rharris@cedac.org>
Web: <http://cwc.cedac.org>

March 26–28, 2009

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
43rd Annual Convention & Exhibits
Uncharted Mountains, Forging New Pathways
Location: Denver, CO
Phone: 888-547-3369
Web: www.tesol.org/s_tesol/convention2009/

April 13–17, 2009

American Educational Research Association (AERA),
2009 Annual Meeting:
Disciplined Inquiry: Education Research in the Circle of Knowledge
Location: San Diego, CA
Phone: 888-547-3369
Web: www.aera.net/default.aspx?id=5348

April 18–22, 2009

Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE),
2009 Conference
Location: Louisville, KY
Email: Lorena.Lasky@kentuckianaworks.org
Web: www.coabe.org/

April 22–25, 2009

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)
2008 Meeting and Exposition
Location: Washington, DC
Phone: 703-620-9840
Web: www.nctm.org/conferences/

May 28–30, 2009

Adult Education Research Conference (AERC),
50th Annual Conference
Location: Chicago, IL
Email: aerc2009@yahoo.com
Web: www.adulterc.org/

ABE Transition to Community College: DESE Funded Programs

See complete contact listings, area served, and email information at <www.sabes.org/administration/transitions.htm> or go directly to each Web site below for more detailed information.

Berkshire Community College—Project Link

1350 West St., Pittsfield, MA 01201
www.berkshirecc.edu

Bristol Community College—Step Up to College

777 Elsbree St., Fall River, MA 02720
www.bristolcc.edu

Bunker Hill Community College

250 New Rutherford Ave., Boston, MA 02129
www.bhcc.edu

Cape Cod Community College

2240 Iyannough Road, West Barnstable, MA 02668
www.capecod.edu

Greenfield Community College—Next Step Up

One College Drive, Greenfield, MA 01301
www.gcc.mass.edu

Massasoit Community College

1 Massasoit Blvd., Brockton, MA 02302
www.massasoit.mass.edu

Middlesex Community College—Links

591 Springs Road, Bedford, MA 07030
mcc.middlesex.mass.edu

Mount Wachusett Community College

444 Green St., Gardner, MA 01440
www.mwcc.mass.edu

North Shore Community College

1 Ferncroft Road, Danvers, MA 01923
www.northshore.edu

Northern Essex Community College

78-82 Amesbury St., Lawrence, MA 01840
www.necc.mass.edu

Quinsigamond Community College

670 West Boylston St., Worcester, MA 01860
www.qcc.edu

Springfield Technical Community College

1 Armory Square
Springfield, MA 01103
Web: www.stcc.edu

After this issue, *Field Notes* will be available online only at the SABES Web site (www.sabes.org). If you would like us to send you an email reminder when each issue is posted online, please email Leah Peterson at <lpeter-son@worlded.org>. She will add your name to a data base. *Field Notes* will continue with its quarterly publication schedule and you are free to print it.

Peace,
Lenore Balliro
Field Notes Editor

Upcoming Themes for *Field Notes*

spring

Ten Years After

A compilation of articles that have appeared in *Field Notes* over the past ten years. *No submissions for this issue*

summer

Summer Reading

What are you reading? How is it related to your ABE practice? Send your review of any book, journal, Web site, blog, that has educated, inspired, or amused you. History, culture, politics, poetry, fiction, research, theory. It all counts.



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