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SABES

System for Adult Basic Education Support

Funded by the Massachusetts Department of Education

Following a Route to ABE Licensure

BY ANDREA O'BRIEN

Editor's note: Although Andrea's experience precedes the final revised guidelines for ABE licensure, her insights are still valuable to practitioners as they compile a portfolio documenting their practice.

Compiling a portfolio for ABE licensure wasn't as easy as I first thought it would be, but I am glad I completed it and attained my license. Documenting and presenting my years of experience in ABE provided an excellent opportunity to articulate what I believe in and to exhibit my work for critical review.

The license provides four routes, based on an applicant's years of ABE teaching experience and whether she has a Massachusetts preK-12 license. Because I have accumulated at least 2,400 classroom teaching hours in ABE, I was approved by Massachusetts DOE to pursue Route 4. Route 4 teachers have to meet eight specific standards and demonstrate their teaching. When I first looked over the standards for Route 4, I felt confident about meeting all of them with ease. After all, I had a great deal of teaching experience, coursework, and a thick file of professional development points (PDPs) from workshops I had attended or presented.

However, once I started analyzing what was needed for each standard, I realized that developing my portfolio was not going to be the quick, easy task I had imagined. The standards proved to be stricter and more thorough than I first thought. To me, though, the rigor involved made the ABE license even more worthwhile to

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F O R E W O R D

Over these last 30 years, Massachusetts ABE practitioners and policy-makers have engaged in lively and passionate discussions about what a credential for ABE teachers should look like. The discussions have started and stalled many times over these 30 years, but they were ultimately productive, resulting in a voluntary ABE teacher's license in Massachusetts.

Massachusetts believes it has accomplished what no other state in the nation has; it has developed the first stand-alone ABE license (not predicated on a preK-12 license) that has the same depth of knowledge, rigor of standards, and minimum educational requirements equivalent to the state's other teacher licenses. Massachusetts ABE is also fortunate to have its own professional development organization, SABES, to develop a licensure support model and materials to assist teachers pursuing the license—again, another first for Massachusetts.

Equally important to the product of the licensure was the process by which it was achieved. Intense and consistent practitioner input was solicited by the Massachusetts Department of Education under the leadership of Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS). Throughout the process, our professional development organizations, SABES, MATSOL, YALD, and MCAE have been willing contributors of their time and expertise, toward both shaping the license and developing professional development to support license seekers. Practitioner input was also incorporated every step of the way, from initial advisory committees to working groups to pilots. Thus, the field has had the opportunity to comment on and shape the content, terminology, and process of the ABE license.

The licensure process is voluntary. For experienced ABE teachers, the license credits them for previous experience and professional development. For new and experienced teachers alike, the license offers opportunities for growth and development in a continually changing field.

As you will see from the articles in this issue of Field Notes, some sections of the ABE license still need to be developed; the existing guidelines and regulations will need further refinement. Still, practitioners are embracing the license and the licensure process as they come to recognize the credibility of the process that reflects and celebrates the differences among us in the rich and varied field of adult basic education.

Mary Jayne Fay, ABE Licensure Coordinator
Massachusetts Department of Education

Field Notes Mission Statement and Editorial Policy

Mission

Field Notes is an adult basic education (ABE) quarterly, theme-based newsletter. 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*.

Our Funder

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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 <lballiro2000@yahoo.com>, 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.

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A Matter of Professional Pride

By LISA JOCHIM

I decided to join the SABES ABE licensure support field test for a variety of reasons but mostly because I would like to see adult basic education elevated to the same level of professionalism as K-12. I guess for me, it is a matter of pride. I have spent the last 12 years of my professional life in ABE, and if a license exists, I want to have it. In addition, I subscribe to the philosophy that we shouldn't expect someone else to do something that I wouldn't do myself.

Therefore, as an administrator, if I am ever going to expect my staff to be licensed, I think I should have the license. On a lighter note, I also must admit that part of me wants the license just to say that I was one of the first people in Massachusetts to attain it, that I was an ABE license pioneer!

I am very happy to be involved in the licensure support field test because we get to work with a cohort, a small group of ABE teachers from our own area of the state. I work with a group of teachers from the southeast. We share ideas, provide support, and help keep one another focused. We meet every month or two to share information and resources and to simply brainstorm ideas and provide feedback to each other.

Last year, our cohort primarily worked on just understanding the

ABE license process and putting together our application packages. We then went into a holding pattern as we weathered the budget crisis and waited to hear from DOE exactly what the licensure process would be and what each of us needed to do in order to get the license.



and *Planning Module*, and write a draft of an explanatory statement that addresses any standard we choose.

I strongly believe that being part of this cohort will help me to complete and submit my portfolio much faster than I would ever be able to do without it.

Working in a small group on this is essential to me. Like everyone else, I have a very busy work and home life. When I start on a new project, I need a lot of structure and deadlines. Our cohort does this for me. I consider our group to be the perfect amount of positive peer pressure.

In fact, one of the reasons I agreed to write this article is that now there will be even more peer pressure on me to get my license. The entire *Field Notes* readership knows I am going for it! So to see me out, the next time you see me ask, "Hey, Lisa, did you get your ABE license yet?"

This year, we plan to work on or finish our portfolios so we can submit them to the ABE License Review Panel. Each time our cohort meets, we set goals for ourselves and then set off to accomplish those goals before the next meeting.

For example, the assignment for our meeting this month is to set up our portfolio binder with tabs, complete the *SABES Self-Assessment*

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obtain. For each standard there were two components. I not only needed evidence from a course syllabus or series of lessons; I also needed to explain how my evidence showed that I met the standard. The guidelines governing the license (See <www.doe.mass.edu/educators/abe.html>) warn candidates to be selective rather than to submit anything and everything that might apply.

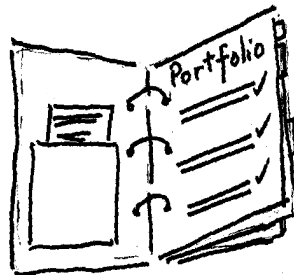
Picking and choosing documentation for my portfolio took time. I used the self-assessment worksheets that SABES had developed (See <www.sabes.org/license>) as I began wading through my collection of workshop agendas, course descriptions, syllabi, and old lesson and unit plans for evidentiary documentation. (See "Where You Can Get Help on Licensure" on page 6.) As I looked for documentation, I focused on the questions I had to answer in the explanatory statements: what I did to show that I met the standard, why I chose it, and how it applied.

For example, in my explanatory statement for the first standard, in answer to what developmental theory was employed, I stated "As I developed my series of lessons, I focused on the constructivist theory and the sociocultural factors of adult development. I depended on the theories and the work of Mezirow, Kegan, Belenky, Perry, Merriam, and Caffarella." (See references at end of article.) I consulted several resources to help me to define and articulate my approach.

I explained that I relied on these theories because it was helpful in explaining the transitions in identity my students were going through as immigrants and how

often they had to redefine themselves in a new culture. I connected the theory to a lesson that included an activity where students were asked to define their current roles, for example, as parents, students, and workers

I fulfilled the standards in a variety of ways. I determined that I could use coursework to fulfill the second standard. I used two graduate courses: "Teaching Reading to



Adults" and "The Bilingual Child with Special Needs." I used the course description and the syllabi as evidence and needed only a brief explanation of how the courses fulfilled the standards. Because my coursework was completed at the University of Massachusetts in Boston and the University of Massachusetts in Lowell, it was not difficult to obtain my course descriptions and syllabi. I was also able to use my experiences with Young Adults with Learning Disabilities (YALD). Through the YALD project, I had attended a three-day series on learning disabilities and later had presented several workshops. As evidentiary documentation, I included the PDP certificates and the agendas.

Getting the Most from Previous Lessons

To satisfy requirements for the rest of the standards, I wanted to be as economical as possible. That is, I wanted to use the same series of eight lessons and reference them in my explanatory statements. So, I

searched for a series of lessons I had previously taught that could relate to all of the remaining standards. These lessons would have to include the following:

- ◆ Development of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills
- ◆ Encouragement of learner input
- ◆ Use of technology
- ◆ Validation of learners' experiences
- ◆ Use of learners' prior knowledge
- ◆ Use of a variety of assessments
- ◆ Acknowledgment of different learning styles
- ◆ Flexibility so lessons could be modified for individual learner needs

Finding all of these characteristics in one series of lessons seemed like a tall order, but with very little adaptation, I was able to use a unit I had developed and taught several times on the topic of personal identity and diversity. This unit illustrated all of the attributes described above and satisfied the remaining standards.

Most Challenging Standard

The first standard (about adult development theory) was the most difficult for me. I had no coursework in this area, and my thoughts were really muddled about the distinction between adult development theory and adult learning theory. I knew the basic theory, but I didn't have the language to explain myself clearly. To help articulate my thoughts, I borrowed some materials from my regional SABES regional support center. The October 2001 issue of *Focus on Basics* (Volume 5, Issue B), published by the National Center for

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the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL), was particularly helpful because the entire contents focused on adult development. After completing some reading, I was able to refine and express my thoughts more clearly and to make connections to my series of lessons more distinctly.

Organizing the Portfolio

It took me a while to decide how to set up the portfolio. It was a challenge to clearly reference the evidentiary materials in the explanatory statements and to decide where to place them in the portfolio so that the review panel could locate my references. The explanatory statements were a total of 10 pages long and the evidentiary material was 68 pages long. I used the same lessons for evidentiary materials for several of the standards, so it was confusing to put the evidentiary material after each explanatory statement.

I decided to put all of the explanatory statements together and then all the evidentiary materials together in an appendix. As I wrote the explanatory statements, I referenced the pages in the appendix. For example, when I cited my coursework, I noted: "See page A-1 in the appendix for the course description," or when I referred to a graphic organizer in a lesson, I said, "See sample on page H-1 in the appendix." I included a table of contents with clear titles and numbered all of the pages.

Demonstration of Teaching

After I finished my written portfolio, I still had to complete a demonstration of teaching. Since I am currently a staff developer, not a classroom teacher, I had no class of adult learners of my own to use for my demonstration. "Borrowing" someone else's class was an option, but it didn't feel authentic to me. Instead, I decided to teach a mock lesson for the review panel, which is allowed in the guidelines. For consistency, I chose one of the lessons that I had included in my portfolio. I had taught this interactive lesson many times before so I was comfortable with it.

Mock Lesson: What I Learned

Before my actual demonstration, I gave all of the review panel members a handout with a brief class profile, an explanation of why I chose this particular lesson to demonstrate, an outline of the entire unit so

they would understand the context of the lesson, and a copy of the lesson plan. I asked them to read it over while I was setting up my materials.

Although I was satisfied with my demonstration of teaching, I would do things differently if I were to repeat it. For example, I would give each participant (members of the review panel) a separate role card instead of the general description of the learners in my imaginary beginning ESOL class. The participants did not stay in character during the lesson, which made it difficult for me to complete the lesson. I also had little control over the setup in the room. Instead of the overhead projector I had originally planned on using, I used a laptop and a digital projector that was already set up in the room to display a graphic organizer. It was set up away from the learners so it was awkward to use. These little details threw me off and made me nervous. If other ABE practitioners choose to do a mock lesson for licensure, they might want to do a trial run before presenting it to the review panel so these little details will not get in the way.

Completing the licensure process gave me more than a professional "ticket." It also allowed me the time to reflect on my practice and articulate my experience and beliefs to a group of knowledgeable peers.

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Andrea O'Brien is an experienced ESOL teacher and is currently the staff developer at the Lawrence Adult Learning Center. She is one of the first two recipients of the Massachusetts adult education license. She can be reached by email at <aobrien@lawrence.k12.ma.us>.

Where You Can Get Help on Licensure

By MARY JAYNE FAY

Department of Education

The ABE teacher's license is overseen and administered by the Massachusetts DOE's Office of Academic Affairs and Educator Licensure. You can direct questions about the adult basic education license to <licenseabe@doe.mass.edu> or call 781-338-3000.

DOE also maintains a web site at <www.doe.mass.edu/educators/abe.html> where all regulations, guidelines, and documents relating to the ABE teacher's license can be viewed and downloaded.

SABES

SABES is developing support for license seekers in several forms. Support information, worksheets, lists of resources, and local contact people are posted on their License Support web site at <www.sabes.org/license>. You can direct questions to Carey Reid at 617-482-9485 or send him an email at <creid@worlded.org>.

Each SABES regional support center (RSC) is committed to helping license seekers as well. Primary staff contacts for licensure are as follows:

- ◆ **Southeast SABES** —Annemarie Espindola
508-678-2811 ext. 2782 or <aespindo@bristol.mass.edu>
- ◆ **Northeast SABES** —Janet Fischer
978-738-7307 or <jfischer@necc.mass.edu>
- ◆ **Greater Boston SABES** at ALRI —Maria E. Gonzalez
617-782-8956 ext. 15 or <maria@alri.org>
- ◆ **Central SABES** —Merilee Freeman
508-854-4296 or <mfreeman@qcc.mass.edu>
- ◆ **West SABES** —Pat Mew
413-552-2393 or <pmew@hcc.mass.edu>

The librarians at each RSC are also standing by to help with resources you might need to meet standards.

NCSALL Focus on Basics

The editors of *Focus on Basics* at NCSALL have generously provided suggested readings for each of the Route 4 standards. Individual volumes can be printed out or downloaded from <ncsall.gse.harvard.edu>. There is also a subject index linked to the main page.

Discussing Immigrant Issues in the Classroom

By SILJA KALLENBACH

Many New England communities from Portland to Burlington have experienced a surge in their immigrant populations, swelling the ranks of ESOL students. In addition, in some states, Massachusetts, for example, immigrants make up over 50 percent of ABE and GED students. The changing makeup of the communities calls for adult educators and other community members to learn more about the newcomers, and vice versa. ABE and ESOL teachers frequently weave activities into instruction that help students from different backgrounds to get to know one another. Now there is a new resource that can add another dimension to these discussions, that of racism and exploitation that immigrants of color face in this country.

Echando Raices/Taking Root is a new educational video produced by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC); for which New England Literacy Resource Center's Andy Nash wrote a discussion and education guide. This thought-provoking video tells the stories of immigrant communities and the struggle for immigrants' rights in three different parts of the country: California's Central Valley, a major agricultural area; Houston, Texas, where immigrants have reshaped the city's political and economic landscape; and central Iowa, where newly emergent immigrant communities face a host of challenges. It features the stories and reflections of immigrants and refugees from Mexico, Guatemala, El

Salvador, Colombia, Cambodia, and Laos. A special feature is the inclusion of testimony by indigenous people, including Hmong refugees from Laos, Mayan refugees from Guatemala, and Mixteco immigrants and refugees from Mexico. Also included are perspectives from



researchers, African American and European American community activists, local officials, displaced workers, and more.

Echando Raices/Taking Root offers an opportunity for adult students, who often are part of marginalized communities, to think about the impact of immigration and immigration policy on their lives. The film validates the struggles they have endured, and the good will they bring to this country. The issues raised in the film touch on themes that resonate with most poor and working people—unsafe workplaces, torn families, discrimination and bigotry, and struggles over inadequate resources. If the

viewers are not immigrants, the film invites them to think about their beliefs, where these beliefs come from, and whose interests they serve. All viewers are prompted to consider their own place in this dynamic: Whose fears do they identify with? Whose strengths?

The video is accompanied by a discussion guide that includes activities for adult education settings as well as background information on a range of immigration issues. The guide offers step-by-step guidance in facilitating a one- or two-session viewing of the film. It includes suggestions for pre-viewing, during viewing and post-viewing discussions, and other educational activities. The activities invite the viewers to reflect on and discuss their own experiences, reactions, and opinions. They develop students' communication skills, and their knowledge of history and geography. The final chapter provides background information on various immigration issues. The first section of this chapter covers basic statistics about immigrants in the United States, their countries of origin, changes in immigration pattern, and the labor force. The other sections cover immigration law and policy, the roots of immigration to the United States, tensions between different immigrant groups, anti-immigrant movements, as well as movements for immigrant rights.

Echando Raices/Taking Root is an open-ended educational resource designed for use by adult educators, service providers, other community

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The ABE License as Staff Development Toolkit

By CAREY REID AND JANET FISCHER

The new ABE license contains many concepts and ideas that lend themselves to staff development, regardless if you want to obtain the license itself. The license represents literally 30 years of discussion among Massachusetts practitioners about what teachers should know and be able to do to be effective ABE instructors. We propose using parts of the license, like a collection of useful tools, throughout the career lives of Massachusetts ABE teachers.

Let's look at some of the license components we feel can be put to wider use.

The Standards

At the heart of the new teacher's license are 29 standards, which cover practitioner skills from understanding individual learner needs through assessing your own professional development needs. We invite you to read through the standards (See pages 16-17); in our opinion, they provide useful benchmarks for professional development. Program directors, staff development trainers, and individual teachers often believe they know what ABE teachers need to know or be able to do, but here is an actual list to guide one's thinking. Not many states can boast such clear consensus on standards, so why not take advantage of them?

In themselves, the standards could form the basis of staff development needs surveys, teacher evaluation instruments, or orientation and training plans. Their use need not be very formal; an indi-

vidual teacher, for example, could simply consult the list when thinking about what training, coursework, or reading she might want to do in the coming year. Just as important is for teachers to learn how much they might already know; if a teacher has brought herself far, it's very empowering to have that fact confirmed or reinforced.



Good Practice

The approved Regulations and Guidelines that govern the license do not make light reading—they are documents that need to meet legal criteria, after all—but both DOE and SABES are busily developing more reader-friendly support materials (see <www.sabes.org/license>). By just skimming the official documents, however, the reader will come away with some valuable impressions—for one, the importance of keeping up

with new research; for another, the value of curriculum and lesson planning. Even the best teachers fall behind on new and promising ideas, or lapse into "winging it" rather than planning out lessons. From influences such as the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards project, or NCSALL's theory-to-practice efforts, the new license has been instilled with an emphasis on life-long learning.

Feedback on Actual Teaching

There is a license requirement for a demonstration of teaching because everyone who worked on the license believes that teachers need direct feedback on their actual practice. Many programs might find the demonstration model useful. Briefly, teachers are asked to find a qualified observer (e.g., someone with ABE classroom and supervisory experience). Prior to the class observation, the teacher describes her learning objectives for the class; after the class, the observer indicates whether the teacher succeeded in meeting her objectives. This simple format can be expanded or contracted as programs, or groups of colleagues, see fit. By the same token, it can be as formal as an annual evaluation or as informal as peer feedback.

Sneaking in the License

We are not trying to be sneaky, but we would like to point out that teachers who use the license to

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The ABE License...

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guide their professional development (and keep relevant documents in a file cabinet or box in the attic) might wake up one morning and discover that they have met all the requirements for obtaining the actual license. It's important to realize that you do not need a big chunk of evidence for every single license requirement; a solid set of lesson plans, for example, could be used to cover half-a-dozen standards. The license is actually pretty efficiently designed, and it lets teachers meet standards through direct experience and in a flexible array of ways.

We hope you are now convinced that rifling through the license "toolkit" might have some solid advantages. We can report without reservation that teachers with whom we are working attest time and again that elements of the license are challenging them in exciting and rewarding ways.

Carey Reid is a staff development specialist at the SABES Central Resource Center. His job is to help practitioners obtain the ABE teacher's license. He can be reached by phone at 617-482-9485 or by email at <creid@worlded.org>.

Janet Fischer is an associate coordinator and ESOL specialist at Northeast SABES. She has taught ESOL in ABE programs in Lawrence, Boston, Chelsea, and Westborough, as well as developmental ed courses at Mass Bay and Bunker Hill Community Colleges. She served as a member of the ABE Licensure Work Group. She can be reached by phone at 978-738-7307 or by email at <jfischer@necc.mass.edu>.

Discussing Immigrant Issues...

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organizations, labor unions, faith communities, and immigrant organizations. The complete production is one hour long and each of its three sections may be used either separately or together.

Echando Raices/ Taking Root is available from AFSC in both English and Spanish. It sells for \$99.99, plus shipping. For more information, go to <www.takingroot.org>. Additional questions may be directed to <cruweb@afsc.org>.

Silja Kallenbach is the director of the New England Literacy Resource Center at World Education, Boston. Additional literacy resources are available online at <www.nelrc.org>. She can be reached by email at <skallenbach@worlded.org>.

Teaching for Change: Popular Education and the Labor Movement

ISBN 0-615-12275-2

Featuring essays by
Susan J. Schurman et al.

Teaching for Change: Popular Education and the Labor Movement is the first book to capture the stories and experiences of popular educators in the U.S. labor movement. From the Highlander Center in Tennessee to the Justice for Janitors campaign in Los Angeles, from the National Labor College in Maryland to the Avondale Shipyard workers of Louisiana, popular education has played a critical role in organizing workers, developing new leaders, and strengthening labor and community alliances. While drawing from the rich history of popular educators nationally and internationally, popular educators today are forging a new path based on the changing needs and conditions of workers and unions.

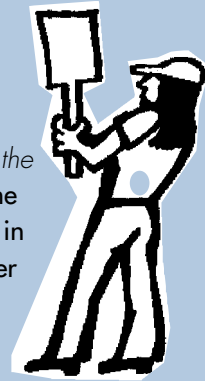
\$20.00 (includes shipping, handling, and tax)

Contact: Julie Monroe

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Los Angeles, CA 90095-1478



Frequently Asked Questions About ABE Licensure

BY MARY JAYNE FAY

Below are several frequently asked questions regarding the guidelines for the routes to the ABE license. For more complete information and for updates, please check the Department of Education's (DOE) web site: www.doe.mass.edu/educators/abe.html. Periodically the DOE will hold Q&A sessions across the state. Please watch the ABE Teacher's License Updates for more information www.doe.mass.edu/acls/abecert/.

? **What is the difference between a teaching portfolio and a performance portfolio?**

A teaching portfolio is a demonstration of the overall abilities of a teacher. The performance portfolio is more targeted and focuses only on the demonstration of the teacher standards required by the candidate's route to licensure.

? **When introducing which theory, concept, principle, or research I have used, how much information should I include about it in my explanatory statements?**

Typically a one- to two-paragraph summary should provide enough information for the evaluators to determine whether you have a grasp of the salient points of a theory, concept, principle, or research. Think about how best to show evaluators that you have the knowledge, which will also be exhibited through your attached documentation (e.g., knowledge of theory might be demonstrated through successful completion of relevant coursework), or curriculum materials that show appropriate application (e.g., intent, population, purpose) of that theory in the classroom. Put yourself in the position of the evaluators, "If I were reviewing this portfolio, is it clear that I have the requisite knowledge and skills to be considered proficient in this standard? Have I met the criteria asked for?"

? **What if I don't have a copy of the course syllabus for a course that I'm using for coursework evidence?**

If you've taken a course and want to use it to demonstrate a standard, but don't have a copy of the course syllabus, you can request a copy from the college/university. Colleges/universities are required to keep copies of all course descriptions and syllabi on file for accreditation purposes. Many colleges now keep them on microfiche.

? **May I use coursework to demonstrate the standards that have been identified for the demonstration of teaching?**

No. You may not use coursework solely to demonstrate any of the standards that have been designated for the demonstration of teaching because the purpose of the demonstration is to ensure that the candidate can facilitate learning that meets the standards for licensure. However, coursework may be used as additional support. These standards cannot be evaluated without the benefit of the demonstration of teaching.



What is the difference between adult human development and adult learning theory?

Adult human development refers to the psychological, sociological, cultural, moral, ethical, and biological changes adults undergo as they move through their lifespan. Adult learning theory addresses the reasons adults return to the classroom, the ways adults learn, and the methods and/or strategies that are most effective in teaching them.



How do the explanatory statements and the evidentiary documentation work together?

The explanatory statements are your understanding of the “what,” the “why,” and the “how” of the content of the standard. The evidentiary documentation shows that you know how this particular knowledge is used in context. For evaluation purposes, you must make direct connections between your explanatory statements and your documentation (see the example below). For the statements that also require a demonstration of teaching, you must also make connections between the demonstration and your explanatory statements and documentation. These connections are how you will “prove” to the review panel that you are proficient in the standards for the license.

Example of providing connection between explanatory statement and evidence:

“There are several principles I use to guide me in selecting reading materials for adult learners and in determining strategies for teaching both reading and writing. One of the most important is to select literature that reflects the diversity (age, racial/ethnic background, etc.) of learners. (See Attachment A-3, for a list of reading materials for this curriculum.)”



May I use PDP courses/workshops that were taken prior to the 10-hour minimum requirement? For example, I have several workshops that were for 2, 3, or 4 hours.

PDPs (professional development points) that do not meet the Department’s current guidelines for professional development may be used in support of meeting the standard, but will not fulfill it by themselves. For example, a 10-or-more PDP training under the new Guidelines could be used as coursework in itself to cover a standard, but several similar trainings of less than 10 PDPs could be used only to supplement experiential evidence, such as a set of lesson plans. (See www.doe.mass.edu/recert/2000guidelines/ for the professional development guidelines.)



If I use coursework to fulfill criteria for a standard, does the Department need an official transcript?

You should submit an official transcript with your application to validate your bachelor’s or master’s degree. In your performance portfolio, you may use a copy of that transcript; however, if you are citing coursework in your portfolio that was not covered by the transcript(s) submitted with your application (e.g., isolated courses taken beyond a bachelor’s or a master’s degree), then you must submit an official transcript citing those courses to the Department, separate from the copies you are providing in your portfolio.

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Frequently Asked...

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Hints for Official Transcripts:

- ◆ When submitting an application, if you are having your transcripts sent separately, please have them sent to the attention of the ABE Licensure Coordinator. This will help to expedite the review of your application.
- ◆ When you request an official transcript from your college, also request an unofficial copy for your self. You can copy the unofficial transcript for use in your portfolio and the Department will have your official transcript on file.



How will applicants know ahead of time whether coursework will satisfy the requirements so that they don't have to submit other documentation to meet the standards?

Candidates should review the course description and/or syllabus along with the evaluation rubrics in the Guidelines and decide whether the content of the course, perhaps even combined with their experience, will help them to complete an entry for their performance portfolio that will meet the rubric. If candidates do not feel reasonably confident that their coursework alone will meet the standard, they should consider providing additional experiential evidence to meet the criteria required within the rubric.



Are there circumstances when my professional development portfolio will be returned to me before the review panel has seen it?

Yes. If you have not demonstrated, or adequately demonstrated, each of the requirements for your route to licensure; if the portfolio is not well organized or easy to follow; if it contains irrelevant documentation and is unwieldy; and if it has too many spelling and grammatical errors, it will be returned for completion and/or editing. Portfolios that are disorganized, unwieldy, and rife with grammatical and spelling errors are difficult for reviewers to evaluate and therefore the Department may return the portfolios for resubmission. Remember, running the spell check on the word processor is only the first step in the editing process. We strongly encourage candidates to have their portfolios edited by a third party. Please remember, poor grammar and spelling reflects poorly on applicants applying for a professional license and your performance portfolio is also a reflection on all ABE teachers.



I have applied for the Provisional level of the license and have taken the Communication and Literacy Skills Test. Should I fax a copy of my test scores to the Department when I receive them?

No. The Department receives your test scores directly from the testing company. Much like an original transcript, we need the original scores and will not accept faxed or photocopied results from applicants. Once we receive the scores from NES, it will prompt further movement on your application and you need not contact the Department.

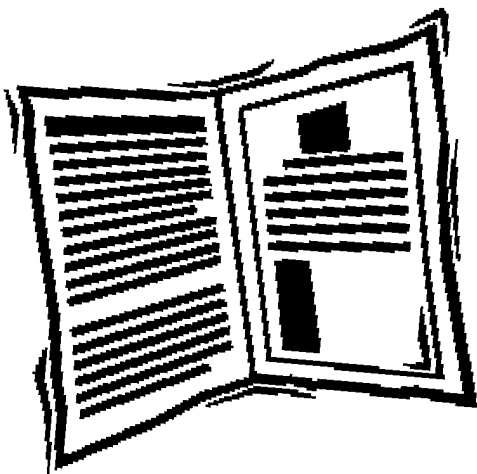
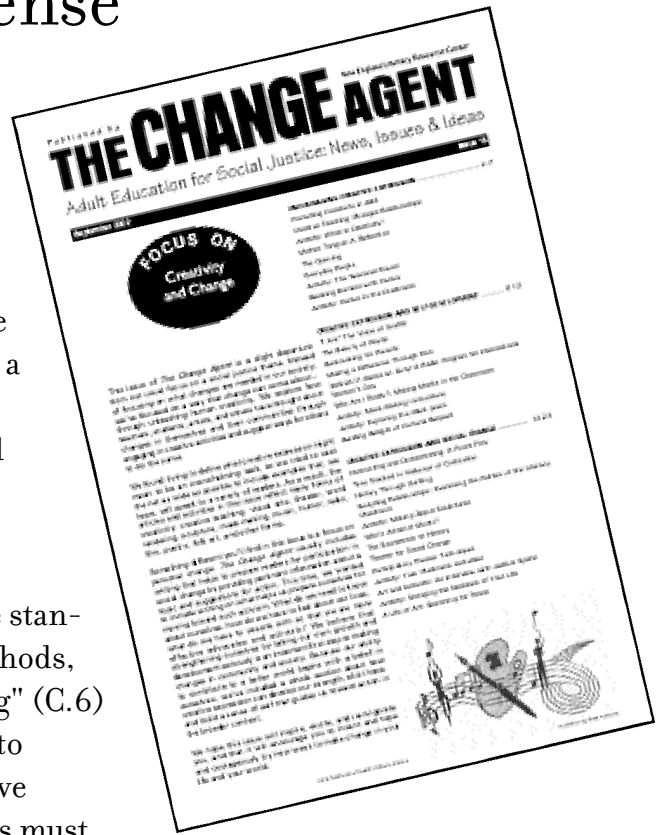
Mary Jayne Fay is the ABE Licensure Coordinator with the Massachusetts Department of Education. She is currently writing her doctoral dissertation on the intergenerational transmission of educational values from working-class mothers to their daughters. She can be reached by phone at 781-338-3000 or by email at <mjfay@doe.mass.edu>.

Great Resource for License Seeking Teachers

The Change Agent is a theme-based newspaper that offers news stories, opinion pieces, student and teacher writing, graphics and cartoons, and lessons and activities specifically designed for the adult education classroom. Each issue focuses on a different topic relevant to adult learners' lives—e.g., immigration, money, the environment—and includes challenging classroom-ready activities keyed to content.

A resource like this could be used to meet license standards such as "Uses a variety of instructional methods, techniques, and tools that facilitate adult learning" (C.6) or "Uses strategies that are effective for learners to develop and use critical thinking skills and to solve complex problems" (C.7). Both of these standards must be met by all candidates for the license.

To learn how to get *The Change Agent*, via subscription or downloading, visit their web site at www.nelrc.org/changeagent.



Student Writing Wanted for *Field Notes*

Field Notes is interested in including at least one or two pieces of student writing in each issue. If you would like to highlight some of your students' writings, please contact Lenore Balliro, *Field Notes* editor, by email at lballiro@worlded.org.

I Took the Communication and Literacy Skills Test and Lived (I Also Passed!)

By CAREY REID

The new ABE teacher's license has two levels, provisional and professional. The main requirements of the provisional level are a bachelor's or master's degree and passing scores on the Communication and Literacy Skills test of the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL). The provisional license might come in handy for teachers who need a Mass. educator's license for employment, e.g., with public school programs or correctional facilities. After getting the provisional license, the teacher has five years in which to get the professional license.

The Communication and Literacy Skills subtests are two separate tests—reading and writing—that are given at the same time and at various test locations, about four times a year. Portions of the tests are multiple choice (using fill-in-the-bubble forms) and actual written response (with space provided in the test booklet). You are given four hours to complete the tests. The total application cost is \$80.00, and more if you apply for a certain test during its additional

"late registration" period. You can download a copy of the Registration Bulletin from <www.doe.mass.edu/mtel>. At the same site, you will find information on the tests and sample questions (the same that you would receive in paper form if you sent in \$8.00 to order a test prep booklet).

In my opinion, the tests are looking for a reasonable level of competency, not total mastery of the English language. While the ABE license was being developed, members of the MATSOL board were given permission to review sample questions and concluded that they did not discriminate against non-native English speakers.

Here are some observations and tips to demystify the tests and to help you pass them.

Reading Subtest

You are asked to read several passages of roughly 750 words and then answer several multiple-choice (MC) questions about each. The questions deal with main idea, writer's purpose, author's assumptions, and so forth. Expect to find a

chart or table embedded in one or two passages, to check your ability to understand and draw conclusions from graphics. You are asked for definitions of vocabulary too, but I seem to remember these were MC also. Personally, I did not find the vocabulary beyond the usual magazine and newspaper range.

Writing Subtest

There are several parts to this test, which taken together are meant to test your skills in accuracy of expression, conciseness, organization, sentence structure, usage, and grammar and mechanics.

Written Summary: For this section, you are given a passage of about 600 words and asked to write a one-paragraph summary with a word limit (I can't remember exactly how many, but I think it was around 150 words). The passage I was given was disorganized and lacked focus, so I tried to correct for that in my summary. That decision was a mistake, test-taking wise, because I think the scorers read my "creative solution" as simply not completely understanding the passage. I would advise, therefore, that if you're given a passage (as I was) where the main idea is not very clear, just do your best but keep your approach simple and straightforward.

Writing Composition: For this section, you are asked to write a short essay in support of or against a stated issue (e.g., Should there be a

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The Massachusetts Adult Literacy Hotline

800-447-8844

The Hotline is a statewide information and referral service. It serves adults who seek a basic education program, volunteers who want to tutor, and agencies seeking referrals for their clients.

I Took the ...

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federal tax on gasoline?). Again, I can't remember the limit, but I do recall that my two pages of normal-size handwriting fulfilled the limit. I passed this portion easily by falling back on the time-honored "five-paragraph essay" format: introductory paragraph with a thesis statement that lists three points I will cover; three paragraphs developing each of those points, in order; and a final summary paragraph with a bit of projection-into-the-future thrown in.

Grammar and Usage: This is a multi-part section, which begins by asking for written definitions for half-a-dozen grammatical terms, such as "preposition" or "noun." Luckily, I've done lots of teaching of expository writing, so I did not find

this section difficult. Robert Allison, a teacher in Corrections, advises that test-takers "bone up" a bit by reading through a common grammar handbook. That strategy worked well for him.

In another section, you are asked to read a few sentences with grammar and usage errors and then rewrite them in a correct form. Most of you will find the errors fairly apparent, and evidently there is some flexibility on how you can correct for them.

In another section, you'll be given short passages that contain grammatical, usage, or structural errors and asked to choose among the best MC entries for correcting specific problems. I found that the best options stood out fairly strongly from the other choices given.

Finally, you'll be asked to do a bit of dictation. A paragraph of about 150 words will be broadcast

via audiotape, and you'll be asked to write it down. You'll need to make choices about spelling, punctuation, and capitalization as you write. There's no need to worry about missing any of the passage, or getting too rushed to think, because it's played three times, from a very slow version read in sections with lots of pauses, to a final read-through.

If you have any questions, feel free to give me a call.

Carey Reid is a staff development specialist at the SABES Central Resource Center. His job is to help practitioners obtain the ABE teacher's license. He can be reached by phone at 617-482-9485 or by email at <creid@worlded.org>.

Write for *Field Notes*

If you are a teacher, counselor, administrator, teacher aide, curriculum developer, program specialist, staff developer, or if you work in any other capacity in adult basic education, we'd like to hear from you.

*You can get PDPs for writing an article that gets published in *Field Notes*. You can expect editorial support with your drafts if that's helpful. Please contact Lenore Balliro, editor, for submission guidelines. First-time contributors to *Field Notes* are especially encouraged.*

Upcoming Issues of *Field Notes*

Summer 2003—Open Issue

Here's your chance to submit an article, review, or lesson on any topic at all!

Submit by April 15.

Fall 2003—Counseling in ABE

Call with an idea by June 15.

Submit by July 1.

Winter 2003—Social Justice in ABE

Call with an idea by Sept 1.

Submit by Sept 15.

The Standards Behind the License

Here are the 29 professional standards that form a kind of backbone for the ABE teacher's license. These standards (plus a set of subject matter standards not shown here) represent nearly three decades of discussion across Massachusetts on what competent teachers should know and be able to do.

A. Understanding the Adult Learner:

1. Incorporates theories of and research in adult development in designing effective instruction appropriate to the learning environment (e.g., in the classroom, workplace, homeless shelter).
2. Incorporates theories of and research in adult learning and in learning disabilities in designing effective instruction appropriate to the learning environment.
3. Uses knowledge of the factors that influence adult learners' participation and persistence in adult basic education programs to increase learner success.

B. Diversity and Equity:

1. Interacts equitably and responsibly with all learners.
2. Provides learners with strategies and tools to collaborate with other learners, co-workers, and community members.
3. Draws on the range of interests, needs, and approaches of learners in planning instruction.
4. Promotes learner understanding of American civic culture, its underlying ideals, political principles, institutions, procedures, and processes in the design of curriculum.
5. Uses, in appropriate contexts, instructional materials conveying a range of contributions that various immigrant and native groups have made to American society.

C. Instructional Design & Teaching Approaches:

1. Draws on the history, structure, purpose, and critical issues of adult basic education in planning instruction.
2. Uses needs analyses in the design of instruction.
3. Designs curriculum relevant to the experiences, interests, and goals of learners, the particular instructional setting, and the Department's adult basic education curriculum frameworks.
4. Integrates appropriate use of technologies into the adult education teaching and learning process.
5. Sets forth the learning objectives, instructional methods, and their rationale in the design of instruction and makes them available to colleagues and learners.

6. Uses a variety of instructional methods, techniques, and tools that facilitate adult learning.
7. Uses strategies that are effective for learners to develop and use critical thinking skills and to solve complex problems.

D. Learner Assessment and Evaluation:

1. Creates and uses formal and informal assessments for the purpose of placing learners at the appropriate instructional level.
2. Creates and uses formative and summative assessments to evaluate learner progress.
3. Confers with colleagues, supervisors, and community resources when special assessments are required.
4. Evaluates the effectiveness of instruction and modifies it based upon results and student feedback.
5. Uses data collection systems for program improvement.

E. Facilitating the Adult Learning Environment:

1. Communicates effectively and appropriately with learners.
2. Creates an environment conducive to adult learning.
3. Promotes learner involvement in community and societal issues.
4. Refers adult learners with challenging life issues to the appropriate resources.
5. Uses resources available to learners to develop employment readiness skills.
6. Collaborates effectively with learners, colleagues, and relevant members of various educational settings (e.g., family literacy, corrections, or workplace education) and the community at large.
7. Incorporates the principles of lifelong learning (e.g., modeling self-application methods) to prepare learners for continued education and training outside the classroom.

F. Professionalism/Continuing Education:

1. Reflects critically on the experiences of self and others, such as learners, colleagues, and supervisors.
2. Develops goals for an individual professional development plan.



Using *Field Notes* as a Staff Development Tool

BY LENORE BALLIRO

Are you looking for something to use to help structure a staff development activity during your next staff meeting? *Field Notes*, the quarterly publication by and for the ABE community in Massachusetts, can provide a variety of catalysts for staff development. Need something short and sweet for a 30-minute exercise? Go to *Field Notes*. Need something to help organize a longer, reflective process? Go to *Field Notes*. Want to help teachers publicize their work to a greater audience? *Field Notes*!

Field Notes is organized by theme. Each issue focuses on a specific topic. If you are exploring a particular area for program development (family literacy, technology, assessment, for example), you can probably find an issue of *Field Notes* devoted to that topic. Older issues from our archives may be still very relevant to your work.

You can almost always get multiple copies of back issues, free, by contacting Heather Brack at <hbrack@worlded.org>.

Back issues of *Field Notes* are also available on the SABES Web site at <www.sabes.org>. Go to resources, then *Field Notes*. Some back issues of *Bright Ideas*, the precursor to *Field Notes*, are also available at this web site by clicking on "formerly *Bright Ideas*." You can get HTML or PDF versions.

Here are some staff development ideas to get you started.

Using the resources page:

- ◆ *Explore web resources.* Each issue of *Field Notes* has a resource page. Have a few staff members take responsibility for exploring a particular web site and reporting back on its value to the program or to individual teachers. Ask staff to follow some of the links to see if they can locate additional resources.
- ◆ *Read/report out on recommended books/articles.* Same as above, but with a recommended article or book. For example, the recent science issue is packed with recommended reading, including resource books for teachers that offer creative approaches to science, and writing about science.

Article summaries: Ask staff members to select an article they found interesting and give a brief summary at a staff meeting.

Letter to the editor: If there is something provocative, disturbing, exciting, interesting, or relevant to your program, compose a collaborative letter to the editor about your thoughts. You might:

- ◆ state your disagreement/agreement with a particular point of view expressed in an article;
- ◆ share information about your program; or
- ◆ provide additional information on a particular subject.

Tools for the Classroom: Whenever possible, *Field Notes* provides a Tools for the Classroom feature.

When relevant, have teachers select a tool for the classroom (lesson plan, lesson suggestion, etc.) and have them try it out in their own classes. Then have them report back to the rest of the staff how the activity went, how they modified it, where it led, and what they learned.

Calendar listings: As a staff activity, go through the conference listings and see if any are relevant to your program and if anyone can attend and report back.

Lenore Balliro is the editor of Field Notes and she can be reached by email at <lballiro@worlded.org>.

Back issues of *Field Notes*

- ◆ Open Issue
- ◆ Science in ABE
- ◆ Youth in ABE
- ◆ Math in ABE
- ◆ Assessment
- ◆ Health Issues in ABE
- ◆ Reading in ABE
- ◆ Summer Reading
- ◆ Management (with special Sept. 11 insert)

These back issues are available, free of charge. Email Heather Brack at <hbrack@worlded.org> if you'd like back issues.

Mark Your Calendar

June 5–8, 2003

Adult Education Research Conference, AERC 2003
Location: San Francisco, CA
Contact: Alicia Jalipa, 415-338-1686
Web: <clrml.sfsu.edu/aerc/home.html>

June 7–12, 2003

Special Libraries Association (SLA), 94th Annual Conference
Putting Knowledge to Work for the Future
Location: New York, NY
Contact: SLA, 202-234-4700, Web: <www.sla.org/calendar>

June 19–25, 2003

American Library Association (ALA), 127th Annual Conference
Location: Toronto, Ontario
Contact: ALA, 800-545-2433
Web: <www.ala.org/events/annual2003>

June 26–28, 2003

Voice for Adult Literacy United for Education (VALUE),
Adult Leadership Institute
Location: Tampa, FL
Contact: VALUE, 610-876-7625; Web: <www.valueusa.org>

June 26–29, 2003

Community Technology Centers Network, 12th Annual Conference
Creating Our Future: Shaping the Agenda of Community Technology
Location: Washington, DC
Contact: Stephen Quinn, CTCnet, 202-861-1333
Web: <www2.ctcnet.org/conf/2003/>

July 6–9, 2003

Correctional Education Association (CEA), 58th International
Conference: *Synergizing for Successful Re-Entry*
Location: Oklahoma City, OK
Contact: Jan Walton, 508-242-6600; Web: <www.ceanational.org/>

August 15–17, 2003

International Development in Asia Committee/International
Reading Association, 3rd International Literacy Conference
Location: Penang, Malaysia
Contact: Dr. Amby, 04-8604181; Web: <www.reading.org/>

Literacy & Health

Summer Institute

June 26–28
Montreal,
Quebec, Canada

This three-day facilitated exchange brings together adult basic education practitioners, health care professionals, researchers, and policymakers to explore questions, enlarge understanding, and identify strategies to move literacy health policy and practice across local, national, and international boundaries.

For more information, contact The Centre for Literacy of Quebec at (514) 931-8731, ext. 1415

Web: <www.nald.ca/litcent.htm>

This conference is sponsored by The Canadian Public Health Association, World Education, and The Centre for Literacy.

Please help us update our mailing list!

We hate to waste paper, and we hate to waste copies of *Field Notes*. If you want to remove any staff names from our mailing list, please fill out the form below and mail it to Heather Brack, World Education, 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210. Or email the information to <hbrack@worlded.org>.

If you want to add any new names, please do the same. Every practitioner in Massachusetts is entitled to her own copy of *Field Notes*.

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