

Ever Learning

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Branching Out to All

*SDALL is the South Dakota Education and Literacy Resource Center (SDAELRC)
Funded through the South Dakota Department of Labor-Adult Education*

South Dakota Association of Lifelong Learning Distinguished Award of Merit Educator of the Year 2006 – 2007

Doris Patten began working for the Aberdeen Area Career Planning Center (AACPC) in October 1997 as a part-time Adult Basic Education (ABE) Instructor. Doris became the first ever full-time ABE instructor in Aberdeen shortly thereafter. Since that time, she has overseen the expansion of the Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) in Aberdeen to include more staff and to service more communities.

As the overall coordinator of AEL services for the Aberdeen, Mobridge, Redfield and Eagle Butte communities, Doris has the responsibility for not only ensuring the obtainment of the program's goals, but also the program's growth, expansion and continuation as well. Doris has streamlined the delivery of service, with a significant increase in completions and numbers of persons served. Doris oversees the overall operation of all AEL services and provides guidance and supervision to three AEL staff members. She serves as a resource to the staff as well as to members of the community. She developed the AACPC's Blueprint Reading and Shop Math Training Programs that have been purchased by local industry over thirty times.

As an active participant in the STAR Reading Pilot and Bridges to Practice Program, she has continually worked to build her knowledge and expertise. Doris has served as adjunct staff at Augustana College and has presented at the North Dakota State Convention.

As a staff person, Doris is extremely reliable, dependable and conscientious. She never backs away from work and goes out of her way to ensure her clients get the best opportunity to achieve their educational goals. Firm, but fair, Doris has a reputation for getting even the most resistant students to complete their education and move on in life.

Doris holds both a Bachelors Degree in Education (biology/elementary education) and a Masters Degree (elementary/special education) from Clarke College and Northern State University, respectively.

As South Dakota's Adult Educator of the year, Doris will also be the recipient of the Missouri Valley Adult Education Association's Achievement Award in the spring of 2007. She is an outstanding educator who has the respect and admiration of her colleagues throughout the state.



President Kim OLson
present Educator of the
Year Award to Doris
Patton



Congratulations from Past
President Jeff Mitchell

Submitted by Renee Peterson

SDALL Summer Conference



Cornerstones CLC
in their matching shirts



Group Activities



Presenter Beth Bigman
from NCSALL



More Group Activities



Outgoing Board Members
Sylvia Hollow Horn, Becky Schlomer,
Stephanie Rittberger



President Elect
Renee Peterson



Past President Jeff Mitchell



Tony Hill receiving SDALL Award
of Merit AEL GED Student of the
Year from
Kim Olson, SDALL President



Presenter
Myron Fuerst



Tim Mills - Hawaiian Shirt
Contest Winner



Working Hard



Lori Yost & Friends



Kay Tschakert with her
winning Flip Flops

The annual SDALL Fall Conference was held in Pierre on September 22. A Pre-Conference session was held on September 21. The theme for the conference was Maui WOWi, and participants were encouraged to wear their Hawaiian shirts and flip flops to create a fun and festive learning atmosphere.

The Pre-Conference session was facilitated by Beth Bingman from the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL). Each participant received a copy of the *Program Administrator's Sourcebook: A Resource on NCSALL's Research for Adult Education Program Administrators*, which Bingman co-authored. She then guided the adult educators in methods for using research to build an evidence-based AEL program. The session gave educators valuable tips for using research in their everyday planning as well as program design and grant writing.

Thursday evening featured the SDALL Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet. For more on the awards presented, see the related articles in this issue of the Ever Learning.

On Friday, Myron Fuerst from VOA-Dakotas and Teresa Johnson from The Right Turn provided a summary of the US Dept. of Education Mathematics Training Institute which they attended in August. They shared instructional strategies to use in teaching GED Math skills. The session provided examples of ways to integrate real-world math skills into classroom activities, as well as helpful references and websites for GED math instruction submitted by Becki Lemke

Adult Education

Many of the old farmer's advice statements are great writing prompts. They require critical thinking to interpret and then inspire students to develop paragraphs or essays explaining what they think was meant by the old farmer. I would also have them include in their writings how it could apply to their lives or if they think this is a good rule to live by. Not all the statements are appropriate to write about but I picked the ones that inspire provoking thoughts and pasted them around my white board in the classroom. They will be used for daily journaling and hopefully be enjoyable topics to write about. They are great discussion topics for my Corrective Thinking students also. Old farmer's may just have a few things to teach us...even if their grammar isn't proper!

- * Your fences need to be horse-high, pig-tight and bull-strong.*
- * Keep skunks and bankers and lawyers at a distance.*
- * Life is simpler when you plow around the stump.*
- * A bumble bee is considerably faster than a John Deere tractor.*
- * Words that soak into your ears are whispered...not yelled.*
 - * ! Meanness don't jes' happen overnight.*
- * Forgive your enemies. It messes up their heads.*
- * Do not corner something that you know is meaner than you.*
 - * It don't take a very big person to carry a grudge.*
 - * You cannot unsay a cruel word.*
 - * Every path has a few puddles.*
- * When you wallow with pigs, expect to get dirty.*
 - * The best sermons are lived, not preached.*
 - * Most of the stuff people worry about ain't never gonna happen anyway.*
 - * Don't judge folks by their relatives.*
 - * Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.*
- * Live a good, honorable life. Then when you get older and think back, you'll enjoy it a second time.*
 - * Don't interfere with somethin' that ain't botherin' you none.*
- * If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop diggin'.*
 - * Sometimes you get, and sometimes you get got.*
 - * The biggest troublemaker you'll probably ever have to deal with, watches you from the mirror every mornin'.*
 - * Always drink upstream from the herd.*
 - * Good judgment comes from experience, and a lotta that comes from bad judgment.*
 - * Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier than puttin' it back in.*
 - * If you get to thinkin' you're a person of some influence, try orderin' somebody else's dog around.*
 - * Live simply. Love generously. Care deeply. Speak kindly. Leave the rest to God.*

ADULT ED

SDALL Award of Merit AEL GED Student of the Year Tony Hill

Tony Hill started working on his GED at Cornerstones Career Learning Center in 2001. He followed what is unfortunately a typical course among GED students. Tony stopped out of GED classes several times over the next three years. He was always working, and found it hard to fit study time in with work and the social life of a young adult.



Tony Hill with his family

Tony began working on his GED in earnest in December 2004. By that time, he was working two jobs: at Taco John's during the week and delivering for Coca-Cola on weekends. But in spite of his hectic work schedule, he was determined to pass the GED. Even though he thought he had a reading comprehension problem, his TABE scores and Official GED Practice Test scores indicated that he was ready to take the Reading, Science and Social Studies tests with a minimum of preparation. His schedule made it difficult for him to come to testing, but when he did complete these three final tests, his average score for the three was 680. He passed his Writing final in May 2005, leaving only the Math test. Tony had taken, and failed, high school algebra three times before dropping out of school. As a result, he was not confident in his math skills, and was nervous about taking the math final. Tony worked hard to overcome his math phobia, and in October 2005 he passed his final GED test. His cumulative score for the GED was an impressive 3040 points.

Completing his GED had a real and lasting impact on Tony's life. He was able to go from two jobs to one. He has worked at the Center for Independence as an instructor for developmentally disabled adults since October 2005. Without his GED, he would not have been eligible for employment with the Center for Independence. Having a job with a good salary and benefit package became even more important to Tony when he was married in May 2006. He now shares responsibility for his two stepchildren, and he and his wife are expecting another child this fall. Being able to make a living wage to support his family while still having time to spend with them would have been much more difficult for Tony if he had not completed his GED.

Because of his perseverance in completing his GED, and the positive changes he made in his life after obtaining his GED Certificate, the staff at Cornerstones Career Learning Center is proud to nominate Tony Hill for the 2006 SDALL Award of Merit.



Training is everything. The peach was once a bitter almond; cauliflower is nothing but cabbage with a college education.

Mark Twain

ADULT ED

Automaticity and the GED

By: Carol Plant, Meade School District 46-1

When you drive your car, you probably don't think much about how far to turn the wheel to go around a corner, or how hard to press the accelerator to start moving. Most of your driving skills have become automatic. Research shows it is also essential to teach automaticity in education, primarily in reading and math. Daniel Willmington, a professor of cognitive psychology, has this to say about automaticity. "Automaticity is vital in education because it allows us to become more skillful in mental tasks...In each field, certain procedures are used again and again. Those procedures must be learned to the point of automaticity so that they no longer consume working memory space. Only then will the student be able to bypass the bottleneck imposed by working memory and move on to higher levels of competence."

Many of our students with low reading skills may be able to dramatically improve their reading skills if they improve their automaticity in phonological skills. Below-average readers lack the phonological skills in which above-average readers excel. One study quoted in the Journal of Learning Disabilities states, "There are generally robust findings across the literature showing that below-average readers experience phonological processing problems, involving tasks such as nonsense word reading." Working with students on phonological awareness and processing can improve reading ability.

Automaticity is also important in other areas besides phonological processing. Multiplication tables, simple addition and subtraction facts should be memorized. I am sure you all have seen students that cannot automatically subtract 8-4 in their head. How can we expect these students to solve word problems if they are putting all their mental energy into solving simple math facts?

Since most of our students are striving to obtain their GED, making the basic reading and math skills automatic will improve the student's ability to complete the tests in the allotted time and devote most of their mental energy to problem solving skills. A few minutes a day devoted to phonological awareness and to memorizing math facts can make a significant difference for struggling students. There are Internet sites that can free up your time and make learning more fun for your students. These three may help you get started.

<http://www.aplusmath.com>

Math drills (online flash cards) and games.

<http://www.programmingart.com/free/games/> Timed math drills.

http://weallcanread.com/online_instruction.htm Includes free sample online audio/paper lessons. Gives good ideas for nonsense words/instruction and specific instruction plans for adult learners.

Hovland Award

Becki Lemke of Cornerstones Career Learning Center in Huron was awarded the Hovland Development Fund award at the 2006 SDALL Fall Conference. The Hovland Development Fund was created to make small grants available to SDALL members for activities that will increase the knowledge or effectiveness of adult education in South Dakota. Activities which may be funded include - but are not limited to - professional development workshops, seminars, research projects, innovative adult and continuing education activities, and special projects.

Becki's proposal, entitled "The Impact of Learning Styles on Student Persistence," focuses on the idea that student retention might be increased by helping students become more aware of their personal learning styles, and how those learning styles might affect their educational progress. The primary purpose of this activity is to conduct learning styles inventories on all GED and ESL students who participate in programs at Cornerstones Career Learning Center. Students and instructors will discuss the meaning of individual learning styles and their implications for study. Students and instructors will use learning style inventory results when setting goals and formulating study plans. Instructors will help students to develop strategies to adapt material to their own personal learning styles in those situations where direct instruction does not match their learning style. Students will be surveyed on their use of the learning style inventory results, and their perceptions of how the learning styles inventory assisted in their educational planning.



As part of the Hovland Award, Becki is required to report on the findings of this project in a future edition of the Ever Learning. Watch future issues for results!

Best Plus Refresher Course

“Technology Always and Forever”

By Lara Ann Frey and Amy Vander Lugt

“Technology: Always and Forever” was the theme for the *BEST Plus* Refresher session at Summer Institute 2006. Video clips from “Napoleon Dynamite” were used to “inspire” and explain the changes that have been taking place within the Adult Ed. ESL programs. One of the biggest changes has been the implementation of the computer based oral language assessment – the *BEST Plus* test. For the past year the testing of Adult Ed. ESL students have seen a transition from the “old” Best test paper and pencil interview to the “new” computer based *BEST Plus* test which assesses oral language proficiency. As with all new technology, there have been some bumps in the road with how the test works and how to score it.

So...let’s do a quick quiz to see if you were listening at the refresher training this summer. (Sometimes more than one answer is possible.)

1. What is the BEST Plus?
 - a. An oral proficiency assessment for adults
 - b. A performance-based assessment
 - c. An assessment for functional oral language skills
 - d. A language assessment administered in a group
2. What aspects of language does the BEST Plus measure?
 - a. Perfect grammar and pronunciation
 - b. How well we comprehend the student’s response
 - c. Communication skill
 - d. Complexity of the student’s language
3. What does scoring for Listening Comprehension (the first category of scoring) involve?
 - a. How well the student understands the setup
 - b. How well the student understands the question
 - c. How well the test administrator listens to the student
 - d. The ability of the student to ask for clarification
4. What are the areas assessed under Language Complexity (the second category of scoring)?
 - a. Vocabulary and grammar
 - b. Pronunciation
 - c. Detail and elaboration
 - d. Organization
5. If a student answers “yes” to the question “Do you work?” what is the Communication score (the third category of scoring)?
 - a. 0
 - b. 1
 - c. 2
 - d. 3



How did you do? Did these terms sound familiar? See the bottom of this article for the answers.

Some important things to remember about the *BEST Plus* test:

1. Keep the scoring rubric (the yellow sheet) handy and use it. Not only does it define the three scoring categories, it also provides guidance which keeps scoring consistent.
2. Talk about scoring with other testers. Communication with other testers allows one to maintain consistency and makes sure all testers are testing and scoring the same way.
3. The test cannot be taught in class because the test is different each time it is administered. This also means that the test does not get boring for the you, the tester. Isn’t technology wonderful?

If you have any questions about this quiz or in the administering of the *BEST Plus*, reach out and “touch” us. The *BEST Plus* Geek Squad of South Dakota (Lara Ann Frey and Amy Vander Lugt) can be reached at lara.frey@lsssd.org

Answers:

1. a,b,c
2. b,c,d
3. a,c,
4. a,c,d
5. d

ADULT ED

Videos Showcase the Research on Persistence and Reading



National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy

The National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) and the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) announce two, 30-minute videos:

Persistence Among Adult Education Students Panel

Dr. John Comings, principal investigator, presents a working definition of persistence, examines existing research, and describes NCSALL's three-phase study of the factors that support and inhibit persistence. Other panelists include two practitioners, Kathleen Endaya and Ernest Best.

To view in streaming format, go to: www.nifl.gov/nifl/webcasts/persistence/persistence_cast.html

To order in DVD for \$5.00 from NCSALL, go to: www.ncsall.net/?id=675

To order DVD version from NIFL, send request with mailing address to: info@nifl.gov

Adult Reading Components Study Panel

This panel discussion focuses on adult reading research, and in particular on the Adult Reading Components study (ARCS). The ARCS was conducted by John Strucker, Director, and Rosalind Davidson, Assistant Director, who are researchers at the NCSALL.

To view in streaming format, go to:

www.nifl.gov/nifl/webcasts/20040204/webcast02-04.html

To order in DVD for \$5.00 from NCSALL, go to: www.ncsall.net/?id=675

To order DVD version from NIFL, send request with mailing address to: info@nifl.gov



Teachers and Tutors, Take a Web-based, Self-study Course!

Explore the research and its implications for the development of you curriculum, instructional techniques, and program practices. Choose from one (or more) of the following topics:

- Authentic Context
- Adult Multiple Intelligences
- Adult Student Persistence
- General Educational Development
- Reading

Each self-study has three steps:

Step 1: Read the related research.

Step 2: Reflect on this research and your practice.

Step 3: Focus on an aspect of your practice.



National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy

To take a self-study course, go to: www.ncsall.net/?id=591.

ADULT ED

NCSALL Research: Improving the Instruction of Adult Basic Education Intermediate Readers



National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy

Accelerated growth in reading has been documented with older adolescents reading at the 4th to 8th grade level, using an approach developed at Girls and Boys Town.

(See <http://www.ncsall.net/?id=466> “Reversing reading failure in young adults” in

Focus on Basics, 1:B, for more on the model.) NCSALL researchers, John Strucker, Mary E. Curtis, and Marilyn Jager Adams, adapted this approach for use by adult intermediate readers, and refer to the adaptation as Adult Fluency and Vocabulary. This research represents the first systematic attempt to assess the program. Because lack of practice time is a persistent problem for ABE students, the effectiveness of Soliloquy Learning’s Reading Assistant, a speech recognition reading tutor, is also being evaluated as a means of providing distributed practice in fluency and vocabulary (for more on Soliloquy Learning, see <http://soliloquylearning.com/product/dr.ager.html>).

The researchers are using a quasi-experimental longitudinal research design in which 24 intermediate ABE classes (totaling about 300 learners) were randomly assigned to one of four instructional conditions at seven sites in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire. The study lasted only one semester to minimize the effects of student dropouts, which occurred at an acceptable rate of about 25 percent. The four instructional conditions are: Adult Fluency and Vocabulary and Reading Assistant practice; Adult Fluency and Vocabulary and hard copy practice (same texts as used by the Reading Assistant); traditional curriculum and Reading Assistant practice; traditional curriculum and hard copy practice (same texts as used by the Reading Assistant). Students have been pre- and post-tested in word recognition, fluency and rate, oral vocabulary, and reading comprehension. A similar battery will be administered in a follow-up interview in the fall of 2006.

Data are being analyzed using a hierarchical nested design combined with individual growth curve analyses. In addition to investigating the effectiveness of Adult Fluency and Vocabulary and the Reading Assistant, they also expect to shed some light on how fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension occur and interact in adult learners.

Define Performance:

When employees miss their performance targets, the problem may be that they honestly don’t know what those targets are.

That begs a couple of questions: If your people don’t know what they’re suppose to be doing, then what are they doing? And how much is it costing you to pay people for doing the wrong things?

Whenever a new hire comes on board, take these steps to give them a productive start:

- Identify clearly what top performance in your department looks like.
- Provide written job standards and descriptions if possible.
- Explain how the job standards tie in with departmental organization goals.

— Adapted from “Seven Things Workers Need to Perform at Their Best”, Terrence Donahue, *Cleaning and Maintenance Management* magazine, www.cmmonline.com

ADULT ED

Renee Peterson Attends Conference

Renee Peterson recently attended the Strengthening Partnerships and Resources in Communities (SPARC) Conference in Concord, California. The Career Learning Center of the Black Hills participated as a partner with Youth & Family Services, a non-profit agency that delivers Head Start, Early Head Start and Home-based Head Start services to Rapid City and the surrounding area. The National Head Start Family Literacy Center at Sonoma State University funds SPARC. The weeklong conference focused on the four components of the 1998 Head Start Act:

1. Interactive literacy activities between parents and their children
2. Training for parents on how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children
3. Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency
4. Age appropriate educational approaches that prepare children for success in school and life experiences

Over the next eighteen months, Renee will work with a team from YFS/Head Start to build a stronger partnership that will work to assist families who are participating in Head Start and AEL.

STRATEGIES TO HELP ADULTS LEARN ABOUT LIBRARIES

* Bring a variety of items found in the library to the tutoring session. Include easy readers, books with tapes, ESL picture dictionaries, pronunciation tapes, foreign language materials (especially newspapers), music CD's, videos

and artwork. Include flyers about special events like story hours for children.

* Develop research assignments on topics that can be completed at the library. There are incentives available for adults who complete the assignments.

* Library Lottery - Students who submit proof of using 5 library services during any quarter are given a lottery ticket.

At the annual appreciation event, winners are drawn for prizes donated by local businesses. Feedback from local libraries has been positive and the lottery winners love it.

* Part of the library orientation includes the information that videos and magazines are available at the library. The library's borrowing policies are often more economical than the local video stores. Learners find out that they can borrow a video or go into the library to sit and read a magazine.

* Libraries are used as tutoring sites. The initial orientation then introduces the learner to the library with a tour guided by maps and a card application when needed. Using the library site enables the tutoring pair to use the materials such as newspapers to expand on lessons. It also enables them to use the equipment such as copiers or computers.

* Students are rewarded with a fast food gift certificate when they show their new library card to the staff. Those

learners who have a card receive the gift certificate the first time they show their tutor that they have

used their library card.

Susan Gunn



ADULT ED

Writing Study Circle

A Writing Study Circle began at the South Dakota Penitentiary in September with five instructors and the AEL program administrator participating. It has expanded to include six instructors.

The purpose of the study circle is to discuss writing instruction as it relates to a prison setting, provide instructional strategies in writing that can be used in all GED subject areas, and develop a support team where members are there for each other outside of class and meetings.

Instructors read and discussed two NCSALL articles relating to writing programs offered in a correctional setting. One program was designed for an all female population, and the other consisted of collaboration between the county jail and four social service agencies. After comparing and contrasting the information with their all-male, maximum-security prison, it was determined that a successful writing program must be tailored to meet the needs, concerns, and goal of a particular institution. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' writing program.

Program teachers received a copy of Baca's book, *A Place to Stand*, which describes one man's prison experience and how he went from being illiterate to an accomplished poet. One of the instructors used the prologue with her advanced students in a lesson on punctuation. In the future, the study circle will be discussing Maya Angelou's *Caged Bird*.

Instructors have requested more information on writing activities that can be incorporated into all subject areas. Two instructors who have the same students have begun sharing information relating to class assignments and student progress.

Phyllis Olson, program administrator, developed four essay topics for those studying for their GED. The idea for the topics came after the presentation by Jim Spate at Summer Institute 2006. The topics are:

- The Benefits of a GED
Intrinsic Motivation: The Key to Earning a GED
- Self-esteem
- Economic Benefits of a GED

The study circle began with a face-to-face meeting. Other meetings have been via a conference call.

Although the study circle will end in January, the teaching staff at SDSP believes the implementation of strategies, commitment, and support for improving student writing will be ongoing.

Submitted by Phyllis Olson and Susan Gunn



Sometimes I lie awake at night, and I ask, "Where have I gone wrong?"
Then a voice says to me, "This is going to take more than one night."

Charles M. Schulz

ADULT ED

NIFL: Bridges 2 Practice Training Part II

The second week of B2P training for Susan Heathershaw and Doris Patten was held July 31 – August 4. The team once again met at the Double Tree motel in Missoula, MT. The location was just as beautiful as the first week. Doris was not exaggerating when she said it was like heaven!

Our days were again very full days from 7:30 – 5:00 and homework each night. Planning for Instructions, SMARTER planning and teaching techniques, proper use of graphic organizers, selecting instructional materials and assistive technologies were just a few of the things were covered. This second week of training was more intense than the first week. Mary Lou Belisle from Wisconsin returned as our Master Trainer. Other trainers to assist were from Oklahoma, Minnesota and Florida.

One of the attendees was from Missoula and was so gracious to host us at her place for a home cooked meal! The highlight of the week was when the NIFL's Director, June J. Crawford flew out from Washington D.C. to have a special dinner with us and hand deliver our certificates.

The last day of the training consisted of each state providing a 10 minute presentation of what we plan to bring back to our home state. Each state's presentation was slightly humorous. Well since the Sturgis Rally was in full force.....Susan the Biker Chick appeared lost and distraught. She had a learning disability and had a very low reading level. Leave it to Doris the ABE Teacher to help teach her to read a map so she could get to the rally on time! That would have been terrible had Susan not gotten to the rally!



Doris Patton and Susan Heathershaw putting together materials for Part 1 Training

Can't wait to provide South Dakota's ABE teachers what we learned!!
See you all then!

submitted by Susan Heathershaw

Best of wishes on your new endeavors:

Theresa Bartlett, [Meade School District](#)
Devon Bartscher, [Cornerstones Career Learning Center](#)
Sheri Bauer, [Watertown Area Career Learning Center](#)
Nancy Burt, [Volunteers of America](#)
Sue Carlyle, [The Right Turn](#)
Judy Eason, [Meade School District](#)
Sharon Johnson, [Brooking Area Career Learning Center](#)
Jo Keegan, [Southeast Job Link](#)
Jeff Mitchell, [Aberdeen Area Career Planning Center](#)
Becky Schlomer, [Aberdeen Area Career Planning Center](#)
Trudee Schur, [Southeast Technical Institute](#)
Loren Tullberg, [Career Learning Center of the Black Hills](#)
From your friends on the SDALL Board

Best Wishes!

Student Action at USD

The Student Action Office at the University of South Dakota has been busy engaging students across campus in service-learning activities this semester, and October has been a particularly busy month. The SAO has organized a few Alternative Days of Service and Alternative Weekend trips. Fifteen USD students commemorated September 11th as a National Day of Service by serving at the Welcome Table, a Vermillion organization that serves a free meal to the community every Monday. They also distributed fire safety material to the community in an effort to raise disaster preparedness awareness.

The last week in October was a campus celebration of Make a Difference Day, a nationally recognized day of service. Students participated in a variety of service projects in the campus student center. On Monday students had the opportunity to make art from recycled goods to promote recycling on campus, Tuesday they sorted through cards and earrings for the local Civic Council and on Wednesday they made birthday and holiday cards for seniors who live at Vermillion Assisted Living. The SAO also organized a forum on volunteerism and civic engagement in conjunction with the Farber Center, a political science organization on campus. The culmination of the week long celebration was a day trip to Sioux City, Iowa where students from USD worked with students from Morningside College on two projects. Some students staffed a haunted house at the Boy's Club while others worked at a senior center gathering oral histories.

Moving further beyond Vermillion, nine USD students went to Omaha, Nebraska for an alternative weekend of service in mid-October. The students worked with two community organizations: City Sprouts and the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association on their community gardens and neighborhood clean up. The USD students worked hard and cleaned out two community gardens, preparing them for winter- working side by side with Omaha youth; everyone's work was deeply appreciated.

Back on campus, the SAO received a number of applications for the Carter Academic-Service Entrepreneur (CASE) Award and are in the midst of decision making. Students came up with innovative ideas for projects that combine their academics and involve local community partners to address needs of the community. The SAO received a grant from the Vermillion Community Foundation to honor the student who receives the CASE Award. The recognition ceremony will be held in the spring as part of a celebration of service-learning in Vermillion.

The SAO has also been running a series of Brown Bag lunch workshop for community organizations and the general USD population. So far we have had held workshops building skills in areas such as fundraising, inclusion of disabled volunteers, effective lobbying of state government and how to providing services as a non-profit.

The SAO is planning many activities for the next few months and we look forward to keeping you posted.

Submitted by Alex Berke

ESL



Helping Adult Educators Support ESL Learners

Betsy Parrish, Hamline University

Kimberly A. Johnson, Hamline University

Of all groups of ESL learners, adult immigrants and refugees probably have the greatest number of obstacles to overcome in order to become proficient users of English. Personal factors that affect learning include differing educational experiences, level of first language literacy, family and job responsibilities, just to name a few. It is paramount that Adult ESL instruction be highly customized, learner-centered, and inclusive of all cultural backgrounds, giving learners an optimal setting for acquiring the language skills they need to function within our communities.

Content-area instructors in GED, diploma and community college classes also serve large numbers of immigrant and refugee students. ESL learners in those classes can be overwhelmed by demands of class assignments, lectures and in-class activities. There are many strategies and approaches that can help all teachers make content accessible to those for whom English is not their first language.

Since 1995, Hamline University's *Certificate for Teachers of Adult ESL* has prepared adult educators (ESL and content area) to meet the needs of all learners through appropriate instructional practices. Beginning Spring 2007, the certificate program will be accessible throughout the region through online offerings. The eight-credit Certificate includes the following 2-credit courses:

- Introduction to the Adult ESL Learner: Developing Reading and Writing Skills
- Introduction to the Adult ESL Learner: Developing Oral Skills
- Course Design for Adult ESL
- Assessment of the Adult ESL Learner

All of the courses take an experiential, practitioner-oriented approach. All of the faculty have extensive experience in adult education with diverse groups of immigrant and refugee learners. Additional on-campus and online courses leading to an advanced certificate or MA in ESL are also available.

For more information, contact:

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ESL



NOTES FROM THE ESL TRENCHES: Tackling the Multi-level thing

Seven students have been coming to my small program in Pierre the past two months or so, which is a lot for us. It has been the quintessential multi-level challenge for the small ESL program, and all the theory and strategies of multi-level teaching that I have been reading about have been put to the test. Here's the breakdown of students:

E: a very low level beginner, Spanish speaker, 17 years old. He is a quick study, but he is really starting at zero and he is a little shy about speaking. (ah – remember that silent period that often precedes production, Missy? Here it is. . .)

S: His older sister, also a beginning learner and a Spanish speaker. She is also a quick study and not as shy about practicing new vocabulary aloud.

R: brother to the first two, in his early twenties, and unlike them, extremely fluent. He tested out of ESL, and says he wants to get his GED and “How long will it take?” He has been reluctant to come to any teacher-led GED classes though, and still wants to attend ESL so that he can get his brother and sister started. His schedule is restrictive – he can't come when the teacher led classes meet. OK - he can tread water for a little bit, and then I will get him going on self-paced work on the computers. I admit he is extremely useful these first few weeks with monolingual Spanish siblings. He translates freely. We joke that he will want to be on the staff and get credit for teaching soon.

A: middle-aged woman, Spanish speaker, has lived here in the US for 9 years, and is married to an American man. They speak Spanish at home, but English with the high school age children. She is comfortable in English, but has a difficult accent and fractured grammar.

M: middle-aged Vietnamese woman who is a puzzle. She tested at SPL 0, mostly because of pronunciation. She is extremely hard to understand, and I must admit, I have 24 years in this field and don't usually have trouble understanding students. Her pronunciation is very, very difficult and she speaks practically in whispers. I have noticed that her reading and writing is better, though.

AB: young Vietnamese woman who also tested at SPL 0 and who is also extremely hard to understand. Her reading and writing skills are much higher though.

OK – ready to go. I have a total of 3 contact hours a week with this group – two 90 minute classes. I need to do some major multi-level planning from the get-go. First thing I do is to consult the SD Competency Lists Scope and Sequence document (found in the SD ESL Manual). I like how this takes all the competencies for all the levels and shows how they mesh. In fact, I make a copy to put in my planning binder, so I can mark it up.

I decide to work on the Competency of Cultural Understandings, and to start with families. The beginners need some basic grammar – pronouns and the verb “to be” as well, and everyone can work on family vocab.

I hold my classes in a small basement room. There are two long tables arranged in an L-shape and my chair (on wheels) is in the middle. I can easily scoot back and forth between groupings of students when I want to.

To start off, after the greetings and weather chat, we take turns standing and telling what clothing we are wearing today. This is a review of what we had been working on last week, and they get a kick out of it. The beginners are proud of what they remember, and the higher level students quiz them for details. Then we launch into families. I bring in a picture of my family, and draw my family tree for them. Everyone has copies of a worksheet with family vocab and small pictures, and as we go over the words the beginners label them in Spanish as well. Then I ask them to draw their family trees. The higher level learners really go to town on this, and draw quite elaborate diagrams. I work with the beginners on pronunciation and we do lots of repetition. They draw a simple family tree as well. I scoot back and forth between groups and learners, helping them each with their individual questions and needs. Whew – I am starting to feel like I am dancing!

ESL

NOTES FROM THE ESL TRENCHES (continued)

Then they take turns standing up in front of the group to describe their tree (assessment?). This lends itself well to multi-level, as the beginners can say simple phrases and are proud of that, and the higher level students can and do say much more. I give my Vietnamese lots of feedback on pronunciation, pushing them to pronounce those word-final consonants which must not exist in Vietnamese as they just completely ignore them in English! They get stuck on most consonant clusters and I point out articulation tips and do backwards build-up and compare sounds to similar words that they already know and drill until it starts to seem counter-productive. My stock phrase is “better – but we’ll work on that!” (They are finally getting used to this – at first, they had no idea what I wanted when I asked them to repeat. I don’t believe they have ever been in a classroom quite like mine before.) I worry that my better speakers will be bored, but they seem very happy to help the lower level students. This is a pleasant surprise – even the pre-GED student seems busy and content with what we are doing. Hooray! This must be one of the guiding principles of multi-level – the one-room schoolhouse approach of letting the more advanced students help the beginners. But surely not too much, or the advanced students don’t feel like their needs are being met?



With a half hour remaining, I split off my three beginners and take them down the hall to the conference room, where I have set up a beginning level video on families for them to watch. It’s very dated, but this part seemed good. They have a worksheet with the vocab and seem happy to practice by listening, watching and repeating. Sometimes I take the beginners up to the computer lab to get them online to different ESL practice websites, but I have to be careful not to take too much time doing that.

Meanwhile, I have set my higher learners to reading an intermediate level passage on families in modern day American society (on the competency list) with comprehension exercises. One of my zero level Vietnamese students stays with this reading group – her speaking is extremely low, but she wants to tackle the intermediate reading. She can do it too. So they set to work on that and compare answers when they are done. I work with the readers on the comprehension and vocabulary exercises, and we do a little reading aloud for pronunciation, but not much. If we read aloud, I always read first so they can hear it. After 15 minutes, I dash back down the hall to check on my beginners, and they seem to be doing well. I take the opportunity to ask them some questions using the family vocab, to give them more practice.

When class is over, they gather up their materials and get ready to go. I usually try to end with 5 – 10 minutes of writing in their journals about the class, but in this case they wrote a bit when they did their family trees, so I skip the journal writing.

When they have gone, I sit down and take a deep breath. I am pooped. I sketch out some plans for the next class, and look for materials to use for each level, again trying to mesh the competencies. Now – let’s just hope everyone comes again! I have to have extra work planned for each level in case they are the only ones who come that day.

So – what have I learned about multi-level teaching? **First**, it takes lots and lots of preparation and careful lesson planning and more time than you really want to think about. Hopefully the first time through a competency is the worst, and after that I will have files of copies and materials to use for all levels. **Second**, the learners like it more than I expected. **Third**, it is still really hard to have 3 people working on one thing and needing help with pronunciation, and 4 others working on something else, and wanting to ask questions about vocabulary. But we are getting better at it – all of us. This is definitely one of the hardest teaching jobs I have ever had – and I still love it.

POSTSCRIPT: When I go in twenty minutes later to put the video away, it is still running, and a man and woman all dressed up in fancy Western clothes are singing a yippee-ti-yi-yo kind of children’s song! Whew – I hope this didn’t come on when my students were watching! I laughed out loud; I have no idea what this has to do with family vocabulary! I’ll have to screen these videotapes more carefully next time.

submitted by Missy Slaathaug

People, Places and Events



EVENTS

November 14 - STARR Booster Training - Pierre
December 2 & 3 - NTT - Mitchell
January 4 South Dakota Workforce Development Council
January 8 & 9 - Booster Training - Pierre
January 23 SDALL Board Meeting – conference call
July 31 – August 2 Summer Institute 2007 - Cedar Shore



Exciting News from The Right Turn

Torry Zeller, AEL instructor at The Right Turn in Pierre, is being funded by a local organization to train full-time until his next qualifying marathon. Depending on his performance at qualifying, Torry would also be funded to train through the Olympic trials in November 2007. Torry will be spending a couple of weeks at an Olympic training camp in Arizona, then returning to Pierre to focus on his health and training in order to be able to compete at a world-class level in upcoming events. He will be taking a leave of absence from his position at The Right Turn.

SDALL would like to wish Torry continued success in his efforts to become an Olympian!



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