

CONNECTIONS

Volume 4, Issue 1, 2003

December, 2003

FCAT Review classes build students' skills

by Susan Kraul

THIS ISSUE AT A GLANCE

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We hope that you enjoy this issue of **Connections**. If you have any comments or questions, please contact:

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To download this or earlier issues, go to

www.floridatechnet.org

1 **M**any adult educators are faced with the dilemma of preparing adult education students for the FCAT exam if enrolled in a high school credit program. Additionally, adult educators are being asked to assist area high schools with students who have not passed the FCAT. What are we to do?

2 Leon County Schools Adult & Community Education has implemented an FCAT Review class that meets the needs of both full-time adult education high school credit students and co-enrolled students. The course code#1000420 is being used, since students can earn multiple credits. Many of these students need more than one exposure or prolonged remediation to master the necessary skills.

2 The class is divided into two separate sections taught at two separate times. A certified math teacher teaches FCAT Math Review for two hours two days a week and a certified reading teacher teaches FCAT Reading Review for two hours two days a week. The classes are offered back to back on the same two days so students needing both sections remain on campus.

3 Students may enroll for only one or both sections based on their FCAT scores. Classes are purposely kept small so that teachers are able to spend one-on-one time with each student each class period. This individual tutoring in conjunction with group skills lessons has been well received by students.

A variety of software is also available for student use. FCAT simulation exercises and Pass Key software allow students opportunities to practice both math and reading skills. Students have commented that the computer exercises at times make a math concept clearer after having had individual tutoring and a cooperative learning activity. Essentially, students have three exposures in addition to written practice materials to master a skill.

We are all responsible for the success of our students. FCAT remediation classes are a great vehicle, not only to enhance the educational level of our own high school credit students, but also as a means to assist area high schools with students who need additional remediation. It's a win-win situation for everyone!

Dear Adult Educator,

With this issue, the GED Connections Newsletter is being re-named simply **CONNECTIONS**, and expanding its focus to include all areas of the ASE, GED, VPI & FVALS Committee of the Practitioners Task Force.

We are working to provide information and resources for all Florida adult educators, and we always welcome your contributions.

**John C. Wigley, Facilitator,
ASE, GED, VPI & FVALS Committee**

CONNECTIONS

Published by:

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Office of Adult and
Community Education
An equal opportunity agency.

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**“I read myself out of
poverty long before I
worked myself out of
poverty.”**

Walter Anderson, CEO, Parade
Publications 4/10/03, keynote
address at the Florida Literacy

This newsletter was developed by the Adult Secondary/GED/VPI/FVALS Committee of the Practitioners Task Force, with an Adult Education State Leadership grant, 2003-2004, from the Florida DOE, Office of Workforce Development.

Dyslexia hampers many struggling adult readers

by Rochelle Kenyon, Ed.D.

Acquiring a good education is key to an adult's potential earnings, lifestyle, personal contentment, ability to be independent in society, and 'success' in later life. Think about how difficult this would be for an adult who is not able to read. Our daily exposure to words is constant, as we encounter words when we speak, read, spell, and write, as well as in mathematics and in organizing, understanding, and expressing thought.

Adults with reading difficulties may have been the victims of many years of verbal abuse from classmates when they were children because of their problems with literacy. They have probably learned to hide their reading difficulty from others. They may experience frustration about reading and anxiety when they come to class or to a tutoring situation. They usually recognize there is a problem but don't know how to get the help they need to 'fix' it.

The National Literacy Survey estimated that 44 million adults in the United States experience difficulties in literacy. The relationship between serious reading problems and learning disabilities is key to understanding the crisis in literacy.

About 50 - 80% of students in ABE and literacy programs with low reading skills (below 5th - 7th grade level) may have either a suspected or diagnosed learning disability (*National Institute for Literacy*). Based on the newest research, dyslexia appears to be more widespread than previously thought, with 15-20% of school-age children being diagnosed. It is understandable why so many of our students don't read at grade level, drop out of school, or fail to progress. The challenge becomes ours as these students enroll in our adult programs.

In reading instruction, the most commonly recognized type of learning disability is dyslexia. The word dyslexia is derived from the Greek *dys*, difficulty with, and *lex* (from *legein*, to speak), having to do with words. Approximately 85% of all individuals with learning disabilities have difficulties in reading – or dyslexia. According to the International Dyslexia Association, “dyslexia is a specific language-based disorder

of constitutional origin characterized by difficulties in single word decoding, reflecting insufficient phonological processing.”

Dyslexia is also an auditory processing disorder that occurs on a continuum from mild to severe. It often results in a profound difficulty learning to read, write, and spell despite instruction, normal intelligence, and good sensory functioning. It persists even in people who have learned to read and comprehend with accuracy. It does not mean that the person sees 'backwards.' It does mean that he or she has difficulty with phonological processing and may require more structured methods in order to learn to read and write and spell.

How does dyslexia affect an adult's ability to learn to read? That will be addressed in the next issue. (Note: for more information on dyslexia and learning disabilities go to the *Bridges to Practice* website at: www.floridatechnet.org/bridges.) For free training on reading disabilities and dyslexia, contact RKenyon721@aol.com.

VPI Vibes

by Jane Silveria

As part of the AS, GED, VPI & FVALS Practitioners Task Force, VPI has funded several projects to develop ten staff development modules and print and web-based teacher resources. In the first phase new progress checks were produced and the prescribing catalog was updated.

The ten modules can be found at: www.floridatechnet.org/inservice/vpi

The progress checks (SA 1105) and the prescribing catalog/bibliography (SA 1104) can be ordered by calling 800-342-9271.

For those labs offering Workplace Readiness Skills – VPI (9900070), a curriculum checklist has been developed to show completion of the program. It is available at: www.firn.edu/doe/workforce/pdf/vpi

VPI has also formed a partnership with the Department of Juvenile Justice to provide employability training to those DJJ students who have completed high school or earned a GED. Two trainings for DJJ teachers are scheduled at which new resource materials will be provided.

Focus on Students - Bobby Sheptock

Student's success follows school/community partnerships

by Julie Kelly



The words collaboration and partnership are words adult educators hear in grant management workshops. To the average adult education administrator, the words conjure up images of signatures in blue ink and handshakes over boardroom tables. Bobby Sheptock represents the real reason adult educators strive to make collaborations and partnerships work. Bobby could have been satisfied living in a group home in Palatka, and preparing to enter the work force through his activities with Putnam County's Arc Palm Avenue Center, a not for profit organization that supports individuals with developmental disabilities.

Bobby had bigger plans and dreams. Bobby wanted to get a "real" job as well as his GED. He found his confinement to a wheelchair and his inability to use one of

his hands kept many employers from hiring him. Bobby shared his dreams with many people in the community, at the Arc, and at St. Johns River Community College (SJRCC). Through collaboration and local business partnerships, the Arc, and SJRCC, Bobby's dreams are becoming a reality.

Bobby has a "real job" and is employed at the Palm Workshop making closet brackets for the Closet Maid Company. The Arc provides Bobby with a community coach to help him get acclimated into the SJRCC Adult Basic Education (GED Preparation) Program. SJRCC has a full-time Special Education Instructor in the classroom to assist Bobby in reaching his educational goal, a GED. If you peek at Bobby's classroom work, the teacher has left a note that he is doing basic math without a calculator. If you watch him studying computer lessons, you'll see a smile on his face. If you really get to know him, you'll see his pride and a sense of independence in his personality. You'll realize adults like Bobby Sheptock are the real reason adult educators collaborate and have institutional and business partnerships. These collaborations and partnerships help people realize their dreams.

Ms. Kelly is a lead teacher at St. Johns River Community College.

Model GED Testing Center criteria established

by Bob Wofford

Working behind the scenes, members of the Model GED Testing Center Subcommittee of the Practitioner's Task Force are steadily moving the model testing center concept to implementation. With input from GED administrators, examiners and staff, guidance from the DOE's GED Testing Services staff as well as suggestions from other adult education practitioners, criteria to qualify a testing center as a Model GED Testing Center have been established.

In January 2004, a self-assessment will be sent to selected centers throughout the state to prepare them for possible designation as one of Florida's Model GED Testing Centers. These centers will be visited by

observers who will help in determining the status of the center: Level I—meets the national and state GED testing services standards, Level II—exceeds the national and state GED Testing Services standards and is designated as outstanding, and Level III—exceeds the national and state GEDTS standards, and meets the unique needs of the community it serves; designated as exemplary. These exceptional testing centers will be honored for going "above and beyond" during a special ceremony at the ASE, GED, VPI & FVALS Symposium.

Send comments or suggestions for the Florida's Model GED Testing Center team, Christalee Burkett at aimcsb@aol.com.



The new GED Tests Series will be offered in Spanish in Florida for the first time in January, 2004.

The GED Testing Service currently offers the GED Tests in two other languages: a Spanish-language version and a French-language version. The Spanish-language GED Tests originally were developed for use in Puerto Rico, while the French-language GED Tests were developed for use in Canada. Their use has since been authorized in the United States.

Essays from the Spanish-language Writing Skills Test are scored by specially trained professionals whose first language is Spanish or by people who have experience as secondary or college-level Spanish instructors. Scores from the Spanish-language and French-language versions of the GED Tests may not be combined with scores from any English-language version of the GED Tests.

—GEDTS website



FL GED Testing Service
Toll Free: 1-877-352-4331
Info: 1-850-245-0449
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Acknowledgments

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Florida's 2004 Adults with Disabilities Symposium

March 24-26, 2004
Palm Coast Golf Resort
Contact: aimcsb@aol.com

Florida TechNet 2004 Technology and Distance Learning Symposium

April 19-21, 2004
Crown Plaza Tampa at Sabal Park
Contact: aimcsb@aol.com

Adult ESOL Symposium

April 27 & 28, 2004
www.FloridaAdultESOL.org

2004 Adult Secondary, GED, VPI & FVALS Symposium

June 8-11, 2004
Crown Plaza Tampa at Sabal Park
Contact: aimcsb@aol.com

"Web Quests" help build critical thinking skills

by Rochel Abrams

How can we make our lessons relevant to today's student? Using the Internet is a good way to grab the attention of our learners. Years ago, we could find a book on babies for a pregnant student or a book on motorcycles for a teenage male. Now, on the Internet, we can find information on any subject imaginable.

Allowing students to surf the Internet motivates them to read, which helps improve their reading skills. We can create questions for them to answer, essays for them to write, and graphs for them to create.

One option is to find an article in an online newspaper for students to read, summarize, answer questions about, or write an essay. Another is to survey students about their interests and create a "Web Quest."

A Web Quest is an assignment on a specific topic. It provides students with sites to look at and a specific project to complete. Creating a Web Quest requires some effort, but students will benefit from your planning. According to www.ozline.com/wequests/intro.html, "When students are motivated they not only put in more effort, but their minds are more alert and ready to make connections.

"Web Quests use several strategies to increase student motivation. First, Web Quests use a central question. When students are asked to understand, hypothesize or problem-solve a real world issue, they face an authentic task... The second feature of Web Quests that increases student motivation is that students are given real resources to work with."

Web Quests also involve students in critical thinking, cooperative learning, authentic assessment and technology integration—all areas that we should be teaching our students. Critical thinking is high on the list of skills needed for the new GED. Cooperative learning and working in groups is critical for students to survive in today's workplace. Using technology will not only motivate students, it will also require them to use skills needed for the workplace. Authentic assessment will help students see the relevance of what they are doing.

A Web Quest consists of six parts: the **Introduction** lets the student know what the topic is and what they will be doing; the **Task** tells them what they will learn; the **Process** outlines exactly what they are expected to do; **Resources** let them know what websites they should use to complete the assignment; an **Evaluation** should be included so students can evaluate their own work; a **Conclusion** sums up the expectations of the Web Quest. A rubric is a good evaluation method to introduce to students if they are not familiar with the process.

A Web Quest was designed using the winter holidays. The holidays covered (Christmas, Chanukah, Ramadan, Kwanzaa, and the Winter Solstice) do not include holidays from all religions. If there are students who celebrate holidays other than these, the teacher should find some additional websites. If there are students who for religious reasons cannot study other holidays, they should, of course, be exempt. This Web Quest can be found by going to http://www.ace-leon.org/pages/teacher_help.htm and clicking on *Winter Holiday* Web Quest. There are websites for the five holidays as well as activities including essays, chart writing, graphing, comparing, etc. A student chart and a rubric for students to evaluate their own work are also included.

Teachers can either pick certain assignments for the students to do or allow students to work in groups. If students work in groups, they can either work together or they can each take a different activity, and share the information with each other as they go. By working together, students will learn about celebrations of their group members as well.

If you go to any search engine on the web, you will find many websites that explain how and why to create Web Quests. Check these out:

<http://webquest.sdsu.edu/>
<http://webquest.org/>
http://teachers.teach-nology.com/web_tools/web_quest/
www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/BHM/AfroAm.html
www.spa3.k12.sc.us/WebQuests.html
