

CONNECTIONS

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“All-American Success Stories” winners include Adult Secondary, GED students

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Lauren Bogar,
Rockledge Adult High School



Sgt. Denis Ray Rigsby
St. Johns River CC



Krista Blasberg,
Sumter County Adult Ed.



Yvonne Boykin,
Bradford-Union VTC

Determination to succeed in spite of formidable obstacles characterized all of the winners in the Florida Department of Education Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Education’s “All-American Success Stories” 2004 program.

Among the winners were four adult education graduates: **Yvonne Boykin** of Starke in Bradford County, after working fulltime and bringing up two children, got her high school diploma, graduated from Lake City Community College, and is now a corrections officer encouraging young people to take charge of their lives; **Sgt. Denis Ray Rigsby** of Fort Benning, Georgia, who passed the GED tests at St. Johns River Community College, has served in Bosnia, and is now pursuing a college degree. **Lauren Bogar** is a single mom who earned her high school diploma through the adult high school program in Rockledge is now an electrical engineering student; and **Krista Blasberg** of Spring Hill, once a teen runaway, who completed the GED program and received a certified nursing assistant’s (CNA) credential through the Sumter County Adult Education Center., is now a nursing student at Pasco-Hernando Community College in Brooksville.

Winners were honored at an awards ceremony in Tallahassee February 11th, at which Commissioner Jim Horne and Chancellor David Armstrong presented their plaques. The programs in which they had been enrolled also received \$10,000 each.

Applicants were nominated by teachers or program administrators at the schools they attended. They had either demonstrated success in their chosen field since leaving school, or enrolled in postsecondary training.

Nominees were evaluated based on their “employment, promotions, demonstrated leadership skills, longevity, initiative, motivation, dedication to the profession, dual roles, socio-economic conditions, single parenthood, determination to succeed, volunteer efforts, and community involvement.”

Dr. Dorothy Bouie, director of the Office of Best Practices and Marketing, coordinated the “All-American Success Stories” program, which was also sponsored by the Adult and Community Educators of Florida, Inc. (ACE of Florida) and the Florida Association for Career and Technical Education (FACTE).



If you have comments or questions about this issue of CONNECTIONS, contact: **John Wigley, Facilitator ASE/GED/VPI/FVALS Committee** (321) 633-1000, ext. 375 wigleyj@brevard.k12.fl.us To download this or earlier issues, go to www.floridatechnet.org

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Rochelle Kenyon has been named the moderator for the Learning Disabilities Discussion List on the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) website. A retired teacher and administrator in the Florida schools, and a longtime advocate for adult learners, Dr. Kenyon is a NIFL Master Trainer for Bridges to Practice. "Having her as the moderator will provide the nation with an invaluable resource for those working in the field of learning disabilities," June Justice Crawford, interim deputy director of NIFL said.

Few studies exist, more research needed in adult reading instruction

by Rochelle Kenyon, Ed.D.

Students who enroll in Adult Secondary, GED Preparation, and VPI classes come with strengths and weaknesses. Adults bring greater experiential background to the reading process. Some have a strong vocabulary learned through listening to others, but they also bring poor habits that have been practiced for years, and frustration about reading when they return to school. If they cannot read well, they may have been victims for many years of verbal abuse from their classmates because of their reading problems. Adult students may also bring a sense of insecurity to the learning environment. They have probably learned to hide their reading difficulty from others by finding ways to compensate. They may have listened to tapes, or watched videos of books they were assigned to read.

Millions of dollars in grants have been awarded to researchers to investigate how children learn to read. Coordinated through the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development, studies are being conducted using scientific methods of inquiry. Control groups, exacting methodology, and quantitative reporting of results were required for the studies. The initial findings of these studies have been disseminated, but the debate about reading instruction continues.

Reading researchers do agree on one thing. The major factors about reading instruction identified in the adult studies were similar to those in the teaching of reading to children. There are basic skills all readers need. Adult new readers have to acquire these skills just as children who are new readers need to acquire them. Teaching techniques may differ, but reading instruction based on these skills appears to be required if an adult is to be successful.

Research studies of how adults learn to read are sparse. A review of the published research about adult reading, sponsored by the National Institute for Literacy provided some guidance.

The requirements for inclusion in the review were stringent and many studies were not included because they did not meet the scientific requirements of the survey. Unpublished studies were not considered. The results of this review indicate that additional research is needed in adult reading education.

What Teachers Need to Know

To be a successful teacher of reading, one must be able to adjust instruction for the individual. Teachers need professional development programs to help them learn more about reading, and curriculum and textbooks need to be revised to reflect new findings.

Research has shown us that reading problems affect success in all other areas. Teachers need to recognize the difference between reading difficulties, reading problems, and reading disabilities. Teachers also need to have a basic understanding of learning disabilities and their effect on reading.

Being an adult education teacher does not automatically mean one has had preparation in reading methods. Yet, teaching any subject requires knowledge of how one learns to read – and strategies for improvement. Can you answer the following questions?

1. How does dyslexia affect an adult's ability to learn to read?
2. How many theories about how to teach reading are you familiar with?
3. What has scientific research shown is a major impact on reading achievement?
4. Good reading instruction addresses what four areas of reading skills?
5. What percent of adult education students can read on or above grade level?
6. What is an average reading rate for an adult?

Answers to these questions will be in the next issue of *Connections*. (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.

Dr. Kenyon is Project Director and Master Trainer, *Bridges to Practice*: Florida's Focus on Adults with Learning Disabilities

Orange County Adult Education administrator analyzes FCAT results at three schools

By Lynne Voltaggio

Many adult and community education programs in school districts and community colleges have become active in offering FCAT remediation to high school students. After almost two years of offering FCAT instruction to students in three area high schools in the “West Learning Community,” each with a unique population, data has been reviewed and analyzed to determine the success of these programs.

One school targeted sophomores whose reading scores were at Level 1 or 2. Using Amsco materials for FCAT Reading, the program ran 18 weeks, 90 minutes two afternoons, or on Saturdays for three hours, with a pupil-teacher ratio of about 18:1. A review of pre-class FCAT scores and post-class FCAT scores revealed that 43 students successfully completed the coursework. Lowest pre-class FCAT reading score was 163, highest was 288, with an average of 259. Lowest post-class FCAT reading score was 203, highest, 332, and an average of 281. 88% of the enrolled students increased their FCAT reading scores, and the average overall gain among all enrollees was 31 points. Each student who completed the coursework earned 1/2 credit in Intensive Reading. 24 of the 43 students took the FCAT again in October 2003; their average overall gain since their 2002 scores was 49 points.

In another school, seniors whose reading scores fell between 275 and 300 were placed in a remediation class for nine weeks, three hours each week. 77% of these students passed the FCAT after participating in the class.

In the third high school, sophomores and juniors were placed in nine-week remediation classes from August, 2003 -October, 2003 for four hours a week. Of the 47 students who completed the course, the lowest pre-class score was 135, highest was 299; lowest post-class score was 255, highest was 348, and the average overall gain was 34 points. 53% of these students passed the FCAT after course completion.

Future research and data analysis is needed as well as feedback and evaluation from teachers working in these FCAT remediation efforts.

One such teacher offered the following comments:

- 1) Teacher instruction and individual student conferences are more helpful than a strictly independent approach.
- 2) By checking their own work, students got immediate feedback and assumed greater responsibility for their own work.
- 3) Using newspapers and magazines in addition to the text helped students realize how reading and critical thinking skills are used every day.
- 4) Students need consumable materials, rather than re-used booklets.
- 5) Smaller class size allowing for one-on-one teacher/student contact is critical.

Ms. Voltaggio is the Community School Administrator at the West & North Learning Communities, Orange County Public Schools, Workforce Education. For more information, contact her at voltagf@ocps.net

FCAT/GED Test scores: is there a correlation?

By Sue Kraul

Do you have data-based information about effective practices for helping students succeed? Contact the editor @lichtenj@brevard.k12.fl.us

With 12th grade options affecting adult education programs across the state, inquiring minds want to know if there is a correlation between how students will do on the GED test and their FCAT scores. As a first step, we looked at GED test results for Leon County students who would have been required to pass the FCAT for graduation.

We accessed student FCAT scores if they were available and learned that students who passed the FCAT benefited from a FAST-TRACK class covering GED test prep and the Official Practice Test.

Students who passed the FCAT

had no trouble passing the GED.

Students who scored at least a 250 on the FCAT and took a GED prep course passed the GED.

Students who failed the FCAT on several attempts did not increase their scores with subsequent attempts.

Students who enrolled in an FCAT Review class through adult education increased their scores by an average 30 points, but most still did not pass.

No surprises here for veteran adult educators, but it is helpful to see the data support what we have suspected. We are creating a database to better track and analyze data as it comes in. Stay tuned!

Ms. Kraul is an assistant principal, Leon County Schools, Adult & Community Education. Contact her at krauls@ACE-Leon.org

Great Moments in History

Barbara Moser, a social studies teacher in the Brevard County Adult and Community Education program, has a huge banner hanging on one of her classroom walls with the words, “Great Moments in History.” Underneath it are spaces for the names of students who have completed their coursework in social studies.

Ms. Moser said that students are eager to see their own names among those great moments in history!



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- June Alford**
Educational Consultant
GED Customer Services

TOP NOTCH choices! Staff Development Opportunities

The Road Show!

TechNet is offering free technology training between now and June 30:

- Assistive Technology:** Dr. Rochelle Kenyon
- Basic Computer Use:** Diane Merkel
- Microsoft Office:** Diane Merkel, L.Briggs
- Effective Searching:** D. Hargrove, D. Merkel
- Plugins:** Debra Hargrove, Diane Merkel
- ESOL Resources-Internet:** Robert Breitbard
- Dreamweaver:** Kimberly Updike
- Microsoft Front Page:** Kimberly Updike
- Desktop Publishing:** Kimberly Updike
- Adobe Graphics:** Kimberly Updike
DLhargrove@aol.com Subject Line: "TechNet Road Show" or 813-657-0789

ABE Summit- "Reaching New Heights"

March 30 – 31, Embassy Suites Hotel, Tampa
Contact: Lynn Cunill, cunill@ACE-Leon.org

Region III "Ruby Payne"

A Framework for Understanding Poverty,
dates and times TBA

Contact: Susan Sawyer, ajs6887@aol.com

Region IV Training Opportunities

March 20, 2004, Naples Hilton
Call Robert Breitbard, 239-593-2790

Adults with Disabilities Symposium

March 24-26, 2004, Palm Coast Resort \$79.00
Registration Fee: \$75.00 before March 5
Contact: Christalee Burkett, aimcsb@aol.com

Technology and Distance Learning Symposium April 19-21, 2004

Crown Plaza Tampa at Sabal Park: \$97.00
Registration Fee: \$135.00
aimcsb@aol.com or 407-622-8951

ESOL Symposium

April 27 and 28, 2004, Embassy Suites, Tampa
Registration Fee: \$35./day or \$70.00 for both
Contact: Lynn Godwin, ACE of Florida
lynn@aceofflorida.org or 850-222-2233

Adult Secondary, GED, VPI, FVALS Symposium

June 8-11, 2004, aimcsb@aol.com

Take your students on a field trip to the GED Testing Center

By Rochel Abrams

Taking a test that can change your life is scary. (I recently took the GRE after a year of being stressed about it.) It has made me much more understanding of the GED candidates who come to us. As a new administrator in GED Testing in Leon County, I wanted to help our students alleviate some of this stress, so we invited all our GED classes, one at a time, to come on a field trip to the GED Testing Center.

Students benefit from a trip to the GED Testing Center in several ways. First, they learn where it is, what it looks like, and where to go. They also meet the examiners, ask questions, and

hear from the "experts."

Teachers benefit by hearing information about the GED Test (many new teachers really appreciate this). They can ask questions for themselves and their students. GED examiners also benefit. They can go over rules and forms before the actual testing. They also have informed students who can market their program for them.

Our field trips take 45 minutes to an hour (for off-campus classes, we will go to them if requested). We show a 10-15 minute GED Testing Service motivational video that shows GED graduates talking about their circumstances and

how receiving their diplomas by taking the GED Test changed their lives. It shows people from different races, cultures, and backgrounds. We go over forms for registration and test taking. We talk about what to expect and when results will come.

Most importantly, we answer questions— about room temperature, going to college, getting scores early, parking, what to tell their boss, etc.. By sharing information about the testing process and answering questions students have, we are working to transform stress to success!

-Ms. Abrams is a GED administrator, Leon County.

Project ASPIRE gives students career tech options



In a new collaboration, Brevard Adult Education and the Brevard Office of Applied Technology have formed a partnership to provide hands-on career training for adult education students.

Funded by a new grant called "Project ASPIRE," up to 40 at-risk students enrolled in adult education have a choice of participating in culinary arts or construction technology at Palm Bay High School. They will receive either high school credit or a certification for their participation, which includes community service. Business partners enhance the students' learning experiences and encourage them to pursue options in culinary arts or construction. Karen D'Arceuil, assistant principal for Adult Education at Palm Bay High, is the coordinator of the project.

Left: A student in the ASPIRE culinary arts class works with Chef Amy Heins at Palm Bay Adult High.