

Nebraska Adult Education
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.....Message from Carol Grell

Here it is January already; time for another Nebraska ABE newsletter. First I want to say Happy New Year to you and your families. I hope 2006 will be a good year for you!

Last year was a busy and successful one for the NDE office. I want to thank all of you who attended our training events throughout the year. A few of them follow:

Of course the big one was the annual ABE Conference. Based on your comments on the evaluations, it was helpful and enjoyable to all who attended. If you did not attend last year, make it your goal to attend this year on October 12 and 13 in Kearney!

During 2005, we held a conference for Volunteer Coordinators that we hope was very timely and beneficial for those who attended and participated. We conducted training for AIMS users, sent about 12 people to the Iowa ESL Conference and 25 people to the COABE Conference in Anaheim, and held workshops on Rosetta Stone; On Common Ground, Madison Heights and Lifelines; and Low-Level Reading and Writing with Neil Sturomski.

As you read this newsletter you will find articles submitted by some of those who attended past conferences – some this year and some longer ago. I think you will find them interesting and informational.

Upcoming ABE Events

February 15 & 16, 2006 — Iowa ESL Conference, Des Moines, Iowa
August 9 & 10, 2006 — ABE Directors' Meeting, Kearney, Nebraska
October 12 & 13, 2006 — 25th ABE Conference, Kearney, Nebraska

Chalk Talks

COABE Session 2005—Submitted by Raychel Youngblood, Crete Public Schools

This workshop was presented by Norma Shapiro, from the "Picture Dictionary." It was for teachers of all levels of ESL and K-12. She taught us a systematic way of drawing/using pictograms, symbols and "stick and blob" figures. This procedure is much quicker than writing words themselves. She proceeded to show us how to draw round, square, triangular things and profiles. My skills as an artist leave much to be desired, but after her tutoring, I found I was able to understand how to draw chalk symbols. It is even fun! The teacher can use these symbols to tell stories, ask questions and bring the students' everyday lives into the classroom. The lessons usually break down into one of the following four types:

- 1) Relating a story
- 2) Asking for information
- 3) Expressing opinions
- 4) Sequencing actions

Any question that has many answers and is of interest to your students starts a good lesson. The book "Chalk Talks," by Norma Shapiro and Caron Genser, Command Performance Language Institute, 1994 is a great resource with simple lessons and a dictionary of symbols.

Working With Multi-Leveled ESL Classes

2005 Iowa Culture and Language Conference—Submitted by Angie Ulrich, Crete Public Schools

Multi-level ESL classes have many different factors to contend with, such as the amount of schooling students have in their native language, their native languages, their learning style, and personality – just to name a few.

To make your multi-level class a positive experience for all your students, you need to know your students' goals, levels and back-

grounds. You also must set realistic individual goals for each student. Instruction should be individualized as well as presented in a group setting.

In the session, we discussed various learning station ideas and group projects. Lessons should begin and end with a whole group activity, with groups of the same level working together in the middle

of the class time. Begin by working with the beginning group and then have them work on an activity (usually in pairs) while you work with the advanced group (who had worked on an activity while waiting). Sometimes it is good to pair an advanced student with a beginning student.

Multi-leveled teaching can be very successful.

Dyslexia Symptoms and Solutions

COABE Session 2005—Submitted by Jan Sears, Crete Public Schools

This double session presented by Susan Barton from Bright Solutions was a fascinating and enlightening one on a subject that plagues many of our adult education students.

The speaker presented, in the form of a story, as she talked of her nephew and their struggles to help him learn to read. She describes it as a learning difference; not a disability.

She said the brains of dyslexic people are actually larger and more superior in many ways. According to Ms. Barton, colleges and universities do a poor job of training teachers to diagnose and help these students.

Ms. Barton combined some facts about dyslexia with her own observations. Following are some the highlights:

Cursive is difficult; students can't make the letters join smoothly because of the difficulty visualizing the letters and words.

Memorizing multiplication facts is difficult.

Dyslexia is often combined with ADD.

Dyslexia first shows up as a spelling and penmanship problem in the early grades; and as a reading problem beginning in about Grade 3.

Students often fail even at "inventive spelling—leaving out vowels." Phonics is of no help to these students.

Teachers may first notice a child having an odd pencil grip with the thumb on top controlling the fingers.

Students have a hard time copying from the board because they can't remember whether the letter goes above or below the line and which way it faces. Spacing is off; inconsistent slant of the letters, odd beginning and ending points for letters. Most of this should be gone by Grade 2.

Dyslexic students are often directionally challenged having difficulty with left and right, maps, finding their way if they take a different route.

A writing sample is the most "telling" in diagnosing dyslexia.

Dyslexic people learn to guess and compensate in many ways.

Approximately 20% of the population is dyslexic. If one parent is, statistically speaking, 50% of the children will be; if both parents are, all of the children will be.

Most ambidextrous students are also dyslexic.

Being dyslexic can come in many forms from mild to extreme. Even those with a mild form will tell you that school was difficult and they worked very hard.

One remark impacted me greatly. She said that like most of us in the room, she learned in a normal fashion. "Thank God I was tested on the things I was good at!"

Many of our adult students have never been tested on things they are good at and come to us feeling they aren't good at anything." What a shame.

Practical Approaches to Reading Instruction With Adults: Using Research Base

COABE Session 2005—Submitted by Robin Rankin, Mid-Plains Community College

I attended this session to gain information to help instructors with low-level reading instruction (0-6) with ABE students. The first part of the session dealt with NCSALL (National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy).

The gentleman spoke about studies done to improve the effectiveness of reading for adult learners. The best part of the presentation was the free materials to help with low-level reading. Go to www.ncsall.net to get information or to download free copies of NCSALL publications or to purchase bound copies.

We received a copy of "Understanding What Reading Is All About: Teaching Materials and Lessons For Adult Basic Education Learners" and it should

be out now for free download. There are 13 reading lessons that he suggested to use as a supplement to your regular reading program. For ESL students he suggested "How Should Adult ESL Reading Instruction Differ from ABE Reading Instruction?" Available at <http://www.cal.org/caela/index.html>

The second part of the session dealt with research based adult reading instruction study circles for ABE reading instructors. There is a plan for this tool at the above NCSALL web site entitled: "NCSALL Reading Study Circle." This presenter talked about having people meet and work on strategies for teaching reading.

She pointed out the three different models that people believe in teaching reading. You would

pick one of the models that closely align with your beliefs and go from there. The models are:

Skills-Driven Model

Rationale: When readers don't decode fluently, it takes work to do so. Understanding the meaning also takes work. So, getting good at decoding comes before comprehension is possible.

Comprehension-Driven Model

Rationale: Readers have background knowledge from their life that they use when they read. Because of this, they can understand text even if they don't yet decode fluently.

Integrated Model

Rationale: Readers can do both at the same time: focus on letters AND get the meaning. One helps

Oxford Picture Dictionary CD/ROM

COABE Session 2005—Submitted by Raychel Youngblood, Crete Public Schools

Norma Shapiro, co-author of the "Oxford Picture Dictionary," gave an excellent presentation on the use of the Picture Dictionary and the CD/ROM.

During the beginning of her presentation, she said she was responsible for half of the pages in the book. She related a story about the difficulty of finding a place to put the word "scissors" – should it be in the kitchen, in the school or in the classroom?

Nothing seemed just right and because the number of words on a page was limited, it was a real struggle. Finally it ended up on a page with sewing items.

Along this line, she told stories about a number of the selections in the book and how many of the pages tell a story of their own.

For instance, the kitchen page tells a story of a son and his dad making French toast for the mom. Only upon careful inspection does one notice a rose and Mother's Day card on the corner of the table. She was careful to point out that one should never try to teach all of the vocabulary in one lesson and that the easiest questions for a beginning student to answer usually have to do with a number or color. Ms. Shapiro pointed out the letters (A, B, C, etc.) on a page indicate the verbs

while numbers (1, 2, 3, etc.) indicate words. This came as a surprise for many that have used the "Picture Dictionary" for years. There are 3700 words in the book and 370 verbs.

She told us that there are more than one million words in the English language. The average college graduate knows about 100,000. An ESL student needs 3,000 words to be fluent. At the end of the session, each participant was able to use the CD/ROM to play games and listen to words being pronounced. It was pointed out by other participants that even young students enjoy the variety that the CD/ROM provides.

Developing Reading Proficiency for English Language Learners

*Presented at the 2005 Iowa Culture and Language Conference (ICLC), February 17, Des Moines, IA by Dr. Yvonne S. Freeman and Dr. David E. Freeman, University of Texas-Pan American
Submitted by Ruth Beethe, Metropolitan Community College, Tecumseh State Correctional Institution*

Drs. Yvonne and David Freeman, Professors of Bilingual Education and Reading, respectively, at the University of Texas-Pan American, were keynote speakers at the Iowa Culture and Language Conference in Des Moines, IA, on February 17, 2005. However, the concurrent session they led earlier that morning was the highlight of my first-time attendance at the conference.

Supported by a Power Point presentation featuring facts, photos, lists, and examples, they presented "Developing Reading Proficiency for English Language Learners" before a packed, standing-room only ballroom. In a delightful, almost playful manner, they passed presentation duties back and forth between each other, totally captivating their audience.

Coming into the ballroom at the last minute, I braved going down front where I was fortunate to find the last chair...fortunate because the Drs. Freeman very skillfully involved the audience in the lively presentation. Their handouts included thorough notes on what they would be presenting.

The Freemans based their presentation on Goodman's model of reading, stating that reading is a process of constructing meaning from text, readers use background knowledge, readers use linguistic cues from three systems, and readers use strategies to construct meaning as they read.

The importance of background knowledge and culturally relevant texts were emphasized while telling us that Krashen and others

argue that written language can be acquired when readers receive comprehensible input.

Since readers use background knowledge, second language readers benefit from the use of culturally relevant texts. The Freemans' handouts included an extensive list of such texts. I would highly advise ESL teachers to obtain this list.

The three cueing systems referred to by the Freemans, and by Goodman, are graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic. Graphophonic cues, which help readers recognize words, involve subconscious cues from sounds and sound patterns, letters and letter patterns, and the relationships between the sound and letter patterns.

Syntactic cues allow readers to predict upcoming text and divide text into meaningful parts. Applied at the sentence level, they are the subconscious cues from the order of words in a sentence, such as the subject-verb-object pattern in an English sentence.

Semantic cues help readers determine word meanings. Applied at both sentence and text level, they are subconscious clues from word meanings involving words that co-occur and words that link or show relationships among parts of a text. Struggling readers rely heavily on graphophonic cues, while more proficient readers rely more heavily on syntactic and semantic cues.

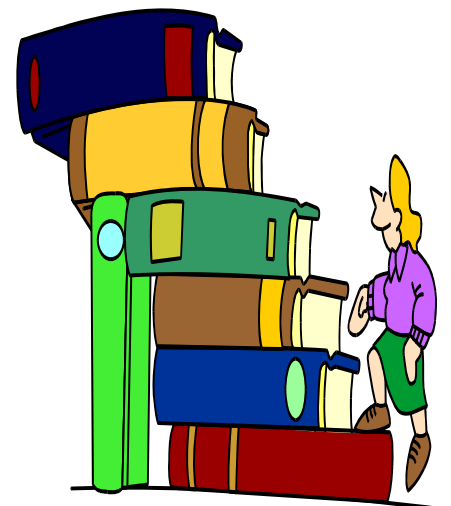
The Freemans showed the audience a passage containing

mostly nonsense words. I watched (and participated) in amazement as we, the audience, read and then proceeded to answer questions (correctly) about this passage, using the three cueing systems. This demonstrated to me not only how students effectively use cueing systems, but also showed me that, unfortunately, our students can correctly answer some types of questions without actually comprehending what they have read.

The Freemans continued to tell us about psychological strategies used during reading, including sampling, predicting and inferring, confirming and disconfirming, and integrating.

As they shared with us their vast list of culturally relevant texts, the Freemans encouraged extensive reading by also sharing research showing that students learn only 1.2 words per hour from direct study of vocabulary, but 15 words per hour through reading.

I am grateful for the opportunity to attend the ICLC Conference and to participate in the session by Drs. Yvonne and David Freeman.



Increasing Retention Through Student Orientation

COABE Session 2005—Submitted by Sheila Tomjack, Northeast Community College

I was fortunate enough to participate in the COABE conference in Anaheim, California May 3-7, 2005. There were dozens of interesting and useful sounding conference sessions to choose from, and many that I wanted to attend. One session in particular that I chose, has provided my program and me with more valuable information than the others.

The session, entitled *Increasing Retention Through Student Orientation*, was presented by Jack Bailey, ESL Program Coordinator at Santa Barbara, California Adult Education.

Bailey provided an overview of his program's design and use of a "student orientation guide" for the purpose of increasing student retention in their ESL classes.

The student orientation guide or "The ESL Student Guide," as the book is titled, provides ESL students with a wide variety of reference information including: a list of program services, schedules and calendars, maps, program overviews, statistical data and information about skills needed, American culture and laws, basic civics, basic English grammar, community resources, and various other reference items too numerous to mention. This is an incredible resource and reference guide for both ESL students and instructors!

The student orientation guide is available online at <http://ce.sbccc.edu/esl.htm>, and is reproducible. The guide consists of six sessions and 112 pages, and does take some time to print. Much of the material is program specific to

the Santa Barbara program; but, because of the layout it could easily be adapted to fit most ESL programs.

I have shared the guide with my teaching staff and curriculum consultant; and we have already pulled parts of the guide to be used in our ESL classes here at NECC. Because our ESL programs are always striving for more program consistency between classes and ways to increase retention and student success rate, I would like to coordinate with my staff to create a similar student guide using the Santa Barbara guide as a model.

I encourage other programs to look at Santa Barbara's guide online and use what you find valuable to your instructors and students. Why re-invent the wheel?

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

COABE Session 2005—Submitted by Barbara Kostal, Southeast Community College-Beatrice

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder is characterized by developmentally inappropriate impulsiveness, inattention, and sometimes hyperactivity. AD/HD affects three to five percent of school age children. In the past it was believed that children outgrew AD/HD. It is now known that many symptoms continue into two to four percent of adults. Individuals with this disorder can be very successful in life, but without proper treatment, AD/HD may have serious consequences, including school failure, depression, relationship problems, conduct disorder, substance abuse and job failure.

AD/HD symptoms usually arise in early childhood, unless as-

sociated with some type of brain injury later in life. Some symptoms are:

Failure to pay close attention to details, difficulty in sustaining attention, does not appear to listen, has difficulty following instructions, has difficulty with organization, loses things, is easily distracted, fidgets with hands or feet or is wiggly, talks excessively, and/or has trouble waiting his/her turn.

Many adults with AD/HD were never diagnosed as children. As a result they had many struggles as children. Approximately 79 to 80% of children with AD/HD respond positively to medications. There was significant improvement

in students who took these medications.

These are some suggestions to help the AD/HD person to manage their time: Write assignment on the board. Then tell students to write these in a notebook and then check to see if they did in fact write them down. Use an appointment book or calendar to keep track of all appointments. Set realistic achievable goals. Set deadlines. Prioritize tasks and don't procrastinate. Keep "to do" lists in a highly visible place and check them often. Leave notes in many places and do what they say. Make written notes instead of mental notes. Use closet, desk and drawer organizers to keep belongings or-

Transitioning from GED to.....

Submitted by Jeanette Evans, Metropolitan Community College

Students who complete GED instruction often have difficulty deciding on “the next step.” Achieving the GED takes time, energy, effort, and motivation. Students often juggle so many responsibilities outside of class, just to complete the course work and pass the tests, that there is little time or energy to devote to looking toward the future.

It is true that many students who complete the GED plan to go to college or other post-secondary training. Others complete the GED to keep or advance at an existing job. It is the group who complete GED for self satisfaction, to meet a program requirement, a court order etc. who often do not receive sufficient information or counseling to make an informed decision about future goals.

GED students need skills, career/educational counseling and assistance to transition into the college system. This year's COABE Conference had a Transition Strand of sessions. At the one presented by Deepa Rao, New England ABE-to-College Transition Project and Cynthia Zafft, National College Transition Network, a great deal of interesting and useful information was presented regarding the need for transition and about various formats currently in use to provide it.

Data from the Educational Testing Service reports that 10% of jobs require an associate degree or higher, 43% of new jobs require an Associate degree or higher, and 24% of new jobs require a Bachelor's degree or higher. With that in mind, it is also important to note

that there is a reported median income difference of \$6,938 between possessing a high school diploma and achieving an Associate's degree from 2003 statistics.

A \$19,096 difference is noted between a high school diploma and Bachelor's degree earnings in the same reporting period. This alone points to the need to work toward higher educational goals while finishing high school or out of high school. Educational data also shows that GED recipients are much more likely to take developmental/remedial level courses than high school graduates. If those GED students need to take developmental or remedial courses for more than a year post-GED, they have approximately a 5% persistence rate in going on to college course work.

Current models being used in programs across the country include: **1.** GED+ which integrates college transition academic skills and/or counseling objectives into GED programs **2.** College ESL and Developmental Education where additional tiers of Developmental Education and college preparatory ESL are created for students requiring such classes **3.** Postsecondary Educational Advising and Awareness where ABE students are provided with information, support, and exposure needed to enter and stay in college **4.** Postsecondary Career Pathways provides an opportunity for ABE students to have assistance in developing a higher education career pathway with a workforce development focus. **5.** Comprehensive College Transition Model that provides academic preparation,

educational and career counseling, as well as college exposure.

The models being employed have allowed professionals to identify some common factors to assure success for ABE students in the transitioning process. One of those factors is a need for multiple levels of collaboration up and down the process, carefully designed roles that need to be filled and responsibilities met, a careful assessment plan and increased counseling for students. In addition, the need for funding of these transition plans has been identified, a place found for transition in the college continuum, and recognition that one model will not serve all students.

It was also helpful to hear about ideas that can be used right now to assist current students in ABE classes, while the idea of transition is explored, funding sought, and formal plans developed. Suggestions include: inviting college personnel to visit ABE classrooms to provide presentations and answer questions, familiarize students with the Financial Aid process, arrange for ABE students to audit a college class, tour college campuses, invite former ABE students who have tackled college to return to talk to current ABE classes, include academic vocabulary in ABE classrooms, provide study skill instruction, incorporate college “lingo” into lessons, practice reading strategies, and allow for opportunities that will build student self-advocacy skills.

The session(s) were well prepared and presented, offering down to earth information.