

NEVADA

Connections

Bringing Resources to Nevada's Adult Education Community

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Give yourself the  Edge!

18-24 Initiative expands market, opens study centers

The 18-24 Year Old Initiative has become the 18-24 *and more* Credential Initiative. Its new purpose is to increase the GED and high school diploma completion rate for Nevadans between 18 and 64 years old. Approximately a quarter of a million of these adults lack a high school diploma or GED.

The statewide Initiative, directed by Vicki Newell, executive director of the Northern Nevada Literacy Council, hosted two collaborative forums in January. Mid- and high-level managers from adult basic education, the adult high school system, human service agencies, Nevada JobConnect, and various other service providers met to discuss current services, the components of an integrated adult learning system, and how their agencies could collaborate.

“In February, with the help and support of Nevada’s Certified Literate Communities, we opened seven GED Study Centers to provide free computer-based training to students seeking a GED,” said Newell.

Working under the direction of professional educators, trained volunteers assess students. Those ready will be able to enroll in McGraw-Hill/Contemporary’s *GED Integrated Online Solution* at the study centers. They may continue to access the Internet-based program from the study sites or work from another location at their own pace. Seasoned teacher Terry Lewis is available to answer content questions via e-mail, and Ken Zutter, program information specialist at the Nevada Department of Education, administers the software program’s tracking system.

If students need remedial instruction before studying online, they will be referred to an Adult Basic Education program in the area or may begin using the *Lifetime Library Basic Skills Literacy* software at any of the study sites

“By leveraging Adult Basic Education and Adult High School Diploma funds, we can offer these instructional services free to adults age 17 and over who lack a high school diploma or GED,” said Newell. However, the \$50 fee to take the GED Test may be a barrier to some students. The Initiative is seeking sponsors for these test fees.

Contact information for Nevada’s Statewide 18-24 *and more* Credential Initiative: www.nevada18-24.com, 866/444-1824.

GED Study Centers

- Las Vegas Library
- North Las Vegas Library
- Henderson Library - Pittman and Gibson branches
- Northern Nevada Literacy Council
- Washoe County Library
- Sparks JobConnect

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CD-based Pre-service Training updated

The purpose of this self-paced, interactive training is to provide information common to all AEFLA-funded programs in Nevada so new hires and volunteers can work independently to become acclimated to teaching and tutoring adult ABE/ESL students. The course is **FREE** to all adult educators who work in Nevada programs funded through AEFLA (the Adult Education and Family literacy Act) and to all other adult educators as resources permit.

To request a copy, contact Sharyn Yanoshak, saylv@cox.net, 702/253-6280.



Metacognition

Excerpted from *The OLRC News*, Spring/summer 2004

Metacognition is essential to successful learning because it enables individuals to better manage their cognitive skills and to determine weaknesses that can be corrected by constructing new cognitive skills.

Almost anyone who can perform a skill is capable of metacognition – that is, thinking about how they perform that skill. Promoting metacognition begins with building an awareness among learners that metacognition exists, differs from cognition, and increases academic success. The next step is to teach strategies, and more importantly, to help students construct explicit knowledge about when and where to use strategies. A flexible strategy repertoire can be used next to make careful regulatory decisions that enable individuals to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning.

Metacognition: the process of thinking about and regulating one's own learning. Metacognitive activities include recalling or reviewing what you already know about a subject, identifying gaps in your knowledge, planning strategies to fill those gaps, assessing the importance of new information, and revising your views about the subject.

Recent research indicates that metacognitively aware learners are more strategic and perform better than unaware learners, allowing individuals to plan, sequence, and monitor their learning in a way that directly improves performance. Metacognition is separate from other cognitive constraints on learning such as aptitude and domain knowledge.

There is strong support for the two-component model of metacognition that includes knowledge and regulation of cognition. Reflective aspect of learning: Knowledge about cognition corresponds to what students know about themselves, strategies, and conditions under which strategies are most useful. Declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge can be thought of as the building blocks of conceptual knowledge.

Control aspect of learning: Regulation of cognition corresponds to knowledge about the way students plan, implement strategies, monitor, correct comprehension errors, and evaluate their learning.

A strong correlation between these factors suggest that knowledge and regulation may work in unison to help students become self-regulated learners.

If students are taught metacognitive awareness concerning the purpose and usefulness of a strategy as they are taught the strategy, they are more likely to generalize the strategy to new situations. Given the importance of high-stakes accountability and the use of standards, it is imperative to teach metacognitive skills in the ABE classroom. The *Metacognitive Awareness Inventory* could be used to begin discussions in your classroom by using these guiding questions:

1. Think about your own metacognitive processes. What kinds of strategies do you use to monitor and access your own learning?
2. Of the declarative, procedural, or conditional knowledge, in which are you more proficient? More inefficient?
3. Of planning, information management, monitoring, debugging, or evaluation strategies, in which are you more proficient? More inefficient?

Access the *Metacognitive Awareness Inventory* from the Ohio Literacy Resource Center's Web site (<http://literacy.kent.edu/>, click on "publications," then on "OLRC News," then navigate to Volume 9 Number 1).

Successful adult learners employ a range of metacognitive skills, and effective teachers of adults attend to the development of these skills.

Failure is not about falling down ...
it's about staying down.

ESL curriculum gets a makeover

—Submitted by Claudia Bianca-DeBay, NV CASAS Manager & Trainer/Resource Specialist, cdebay@tmcc.edu, 775/824-8604

The ESL Curriculum Materials developed by a team of Truckee Meadows Community College instructors have a new look! To make them more adaptable to any type of adult education program, I have removed the “sessions” and replaced them with six Learning Plans with one to four lesson activities in each plan. Teachers and tutors may pick from any of the Learning Plans as well as any of the lesson activities to fit their needs.

This change creates a more user-friendly curriculum. Please visit this site for new ideas that can help your students!

Curricula are labeled ESL low intermediate, low advanced, high intermediate, and high advanced, but they work for ABE, too. To access, go to www.literacynet.org/nevada, click on the teacher/tutor button (along the left), then navigate to ESL Curriculum materials (right-hand column). All resources may be borrowed from the State Literacy Resource Center, 800/445-WORD (9673).

Toolkit review

—Claudia Bianca-DeBay, NV CASAS Manager & Trainer/Resource Specialist, cdebay@tmcc.edu, 775/824-8604

Overall I was very impressed with this toolkit! I think this document is definitely worth having at all our program sites because it offers lots of good research-based information, classroom ideas, and resources.

The frequently-asked questions are excellent with brief, succinct answers that follow. Topics include ESL acronyms, identifying ESL learners who may have a learning disability, ESL learners’ strengths, what an effective lesson plan looks like for beginning ESL students, how to promote interaction and communication in the classroom, etc.

The background information on non-native English speakers in the U.S. is very insightful and could really help new (and seasoned!) teachers in the classroom in keeping motivation high throughout the session, being aware of challenges these learners face, and pointing teachers to current resources should they want more information.

The activity packets would be very helpful for new teachers. The components, stages, and evaluations of a good lesson plan are followed by a blank format for teachers to use. The toolkit also gives sample lessons broken down into levels (some are applicable to multi-level classes) and they also offer needs assessment interviews in both Spanish and English. The activity packets include activities to promote reading development, with sample lessons for teaching reading to beginning literacy learners, techniques for teaching vocabulary, and a multilevel reading lesson plan.

I was especially interested in Part IV: research to practice. It covers what research has to say about second language acquisition, motivation, task-based learning, and vocabulary knowledge. Also covered are learning to read in English, what factors influence literacy development in adults learning English (and their challenges), and what reading skills adult English language learners need. This part ends with a three-page list of current references for anyone interested in further details on available research.

The assessments section covers definitions of validity, reliability, appropriateness, and other uses of assessment besides accountability. Another section briefly addresses adults who may have learning disabilities. Helpful methods and materials are suggested, along with a list of some references. I like that also included are other barriers to pay attention to, such as the elderly, limited formal education, victims of political torture and trauma, and those with different cultural and educational perspectives from those of the dominant U.S. culture.

The toolkit offers suggestions on ways programs and instructors can help adult English language learners transition into other or higher educational programs and resources for parent education as well.

In summary, I got a lot out of reading this toolkit and highly recommend it to new teachers and tutors!

New ESL toolkit posted

The *Practitioner Toolkit: Working with Adult English Language Learners (ELLS)*, available free at www.cal.org/ncle, provides support and resources to adult education and family literacy instructors new to serving adults and families learning English.

The toolkit was developed by the [National Center for Family Literacy \(NCFL\)](http://www.ncfl.org) and the [Center for Applied Linguistics \(CAL\)](http://www.cal.org) under the direction of the [Office of Vocational and Adult Education \(OVAE\)](http://www.oed.gov) U.S. Department of Education.



