

COABE JOURNAL

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WELCOME



Welcome to the Workplace Literacy edition of the COABE Journal.

Why a workplace-focused edition of the journal? Adult education programs are a natural pipeline for a competent and motivated workforce, and many adult learners enter our programs with the expressed goal of improving their skills to succeed in the workplace. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) standards require that adult education programs integrate workforce competencies into their settings and partner with employers to help better prepare our learners for the workplace.

This edition of the COABE Journal features contributions from leaders in the adult education field who have taken time to share their perspectives, innovations, and successes in helping adults reach their educational and workplace goals. As you read these contributions, I am confident you will see the potential to equip yourself and your program as you serve your learners.

I frequently remind folks of COABE's mission of inspiring educators, so adults succeed and communities thrive. Every page of this workplace-focused edition has been crafted to meet that goal. As you read, I hope that you will be inspired and gain renewed energy and great ideas to further your calling to aid your adult learners in reaching their goals.

I also wanted to say that I appreciate all of you and your excellent work, especially with the challenges brought by COVID-19. In closing, I challenge you to share what you've learned with your colleagues. On your social media, please post links to the articles that have inspired you and tag #COABEHQ and #AdultEdu.

I wish you well as you continue your great work in serving adult learners!

Don Finn, PhD
COABE President and Journal Chairman

WELCOME



I am excited to welcome all of you to the Workforce Development Edition of the COABE Journal.

When I began working in adult education 20 years ago, I was inspired by the social justice roots of this field. The work that adult educators do each day to help learners develop the academic, digital, and essential skills needed to advocate for themselves and their families has motivated me throughout my career. Today, we must also ensure that we help adult learners to access and succeed in the workforce. Providing learners the tools to identify and prepare for family-sustaining careers is the new social justice lens for our work.

Adult learners may come to us focused on the goals of a high school equivalency diploma or learning English, but we have a responsibility to also help all learners to explore the current career landscape, to understand and evaluate the educational and career pathways that can help them reach their goals and support their families.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) made clear the expectations to integrate workforce preparation into our classrooms, and to partner with workforce system partners to provide career training that helps our learners access career pathways. With two thirds of all jobs now requiring some education beyond high school, we must help learners build the skills to succeed beyond adult education—in postsecondary training and in the workforce.

This journal is evidence that the adult education field has been responding to the needs and goals of our students and is integrating workforce preparation and training into basic skills instruction, not just because WIOA mandates it, but because it is the right thing to do.

It has been my honor and pleasure to have participated in the compilation of this journal. I hope you get as much from reading these articles as I have.

Laurie Kierstead-Joseph
Content Editor
Vice President of Adult Education at Pima Community College

SIX REASONS WHY ADULT EDUCATION GRADUATES SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED CNA TRAINING A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Cathleen A. Cody, EdD
Middletown Adult Education

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand the behavioral and environmental influences on adult education graduates from central Connecticut, who successfully completed a postsecondary certified nursing assistant program in the state of Connecticut, and how those influences can contribute to the success of other adult education graduates. Eight adult education graduates from central Connecticut who had successfully completed postsecondary certified nursing assistant (CNA) programs were interviewed face-to-face in semi-structured, one-on-one interviews to gather data. Six themes emerged from the data: the participants perceived they were successful in completing a postsecondary CNA program because they loved helping others and were in it for the right reasons, (2) had matured and no longer acted like they were in high school, (3) found the structure of the program and the teachers helpful to their learning style, (4) had inner strength, (5) had support in or out of the classroom, and (6) wanted more or better for themselves.

Keywords: adult education graduates, high school dropouts, certified nursing assistants, postsecondary education retention

INTRODUCTION

Students who enroll in adult education high school completion programs do so because they failed to achieve in the traditional K-12 U.S. school system for any number of reasons. The reasons students drop out of traditional education range from family issues to economic issues, to personal problems and behavioral issues (Sahin, Arseven, & Kiliç, 2016). These barriers to education do not disappear once a student has earned a high school credential. Adult education graduates may lack appropriate preparation for college level courses, have little guidance in navigating the confusing world of financial aid, and have poor transition planning, yet almost half of adult education graduates succeed in graduating from community colleges (Hector-Mason, Narlock, Muhsani, & Bhatt, 2017; Lott, & O'Dell, 2014). By the time these students earn a high school credential and go on to postsecondary education, they are

generally older than traditional college students (mid to late 20s or 30s instead of 18-22) due to loss of credit, or time elapsed before returning to school. In addition to being older than traditional college freshmen, adult education graduates often have other responsibilities such as families and employment, which leads to dropping out of college.

Failure to retain students in college is not a new problem. Research has been conducted for more than half a century to examine why traditional students drop out of college beginning with Kunhart and Roleder in 1964; Rose and Elton in 1966; Rugg in 1982, Edwards, Cangemi, and Kowalski in 1990; Barefoot in 2004; Daley in 2010; and more recently, Gray and Swinton's study in 2017. Research has been conducted to discover why adult education graduates drop out of college (Bailey & Phillips, 2016; Zacharakis et al., 2015), but there is little literature exploring the influences on adult education graduates who successfully complete a certified nursing assistant (CNA) program. Although there have been studies about traditional and non-traditional student retention and social programs to aid retention (Harris, 2017; Hlinka, 2017; Peña, 2013; Tovar, 2015), the information from that research is specific to certain ethnicities in community colleges or four-year colleges and not on adult education graduates or CNA certification programs.

Research was needed to explore the importance of behavioral and environmental influences on students who have graduated from adult education high school completion programs and have succeeded in completing postsecondary CNA certification programs. It was not enough to know why adult education graduates fail. The reasons for success needed to be discovered so they can be replicated with other adult education graduates to increase the number of trained direct care workers. CNAs work directly with older patients and patients with disabilities in nursing homes, residential facilities, and in clients' homes. Gao, Tilse, Wilson, Tuckett, and Newcombe, (2015) noted the current need for more direct care workers, and that need will grow even more dire as the population ages. Students who graduate from adult education facilities are more likely to attend community colleges and certification programs, such as CNA training courses (Prins & Kassab, 2015).

A phenomenological study was conducted to understand why eight adult education graduates who had completed a postsecondary CNA program felt they were successful. Eight adult education graduates from central Connecticut who had successfully completed postsecondary CNA programs were interviewed face-to-face in semi-structured, one-on-one interviews to gather data. Data were analyzed using Giorgi's (2009) Descriptive Phenomenological approach. Six themes emerged from the data to answer why the participants perceived they were successful in completing a postsecondary CNA program because they (1) loved helping others and were in it for the right reasons, (2) had matured and no longer acted like they were in high school, (3) found the structure of the program and the teachers helpful to their learning style, (4) had inner strength, (5) had support in and out of the classroom, and (6) wanted more or better for themselves. While adult education programs or CNA training programs cannot use some of these themes (love helping others, inner strength, maturity), they can use other themes to better prepare adult education graduates for success in postsecondary CNA programs.

METHOD

In a phenomenological study, the researcher is interested in studying the lived experiences of the participants; therefore, the sample size is small so that adequate time can be spent gathering in-depth, rich, data via face-to-face interviews. Eight adult education graduates who had successfully completed a postsecondary CNA program in Connecticut were interviewed for this study. The participants came from three different adult education programs and attended five different CNA training programs. There was a variety of ethnicities and ages (see Table 1.)

The interviews were conducted at a time and place of the participants' choosing to make the participants as comfortable as possible, and all participants signed informed consent forms and were told they could stop the interview at any time. While the researcher had a list of prepared questions and follow-ups, the interviews were semi-structured to enable the participants to tell their stories in their own words. The interviews lasted between 60-90 minutes and were recorded with permission. Interview observations of nonverbal cues were noted as well. After each interview, the researcher transcribed the interviews and sent the transcripts to the participants for member checking. When all interviews were transcribed, the researcher had 130 single spaced pages of data to examine.

Data were analyzed using Giorgi's (2009) approach to phenomenological data analysis which incorporated key words in context, thematic analysis, and three reductions. In the first reduction, 36 units of meaning were identified. The second reduction looked at the units of meaning through the lens of the research questions. (RQ1: How do adult education graduates who completed a postsecondary CNA program perceive the role of behavioral influences in their successful completion of the CNA program? RQ2: How do adult education graduates who completed a postsecondary CNA program perceive the role of environmental influences in their successful completion of the CNA program?) By using the research questions as a focus, the units of meaning were reduced to 17. These 17 units of meaning created nine codes that were then applied to data in the third reduction.

RESULTS

Six themes emerged from the data after three reductions. The participants believed they succeeded in completing a postsecondary CNA program for the following reasons:

- Love helping others/in it for right reasons
- Matured/ not in high school anymore
- Structure of program/teacher
- Inner strength
- Had support in and out of class
- Wanted more/better for self

Table 2. details the number of times each code occurred.

DISCUSSION

Students who have dropped out of high school often have behaviors that affect their ability to persist in education, such as chronic absenteeism, poor study skills, and poor time management skills (Archambault, Janosz, Dupéré, Brault, & Andrew, 2017). For many students who graduate from adult education programs and wish to pursue postsecondary education, the factors and behaviors that induced these students to drop out of high school are still relevant. According to Hester (2017), 60% of non-traditional students, which includes adult education graduates, fail to complete the programs in which they are enrolled.

By investigating the perceptions adult education graduates have about the influences that enabled them to complete a postsecondary CNA program, more information can be gathered to aid adult education programs and CNA programs to increase the completion rate. According to the United States Department of Labor Occupational Outlook Handbook (2018), the need for CNAs is projected to grow by 11% by the year 2026. The need for home health care is projected to increase by 49% between 2012-2022 (United States Department of Labor, 2018). Understanding the influences on adult education graduates that help them successfully complete a CNA certification can address this growing need for skilled health care workers in the United States.

Two research questions were used to guide the study. The first research question was, how do adult education graduates who completed a postsecondary CNA program perceive the role of behavioral influences in their successful completion of the CNA program? Results indicated the following behavioral changes helped them complete the CNA program in descending order of frequency: they found they loved helping others and were in the program to help others, not for the money; they matured and could no longer act the way they had in high school if they wanted to succeed; they developed or found an inner strength they did not have in high school to persevere when the class got difficult or when obstacles got in their way; and they wanted to have more for themselves or their children so they needed to complete the program in order to have a better job and therefore a better life.

The second research question was, how do adult education graduates who completed a postsecondary CNA program perceive the role of environmental influences in their successful completion of the CNA program? Results indicated the following environmental influences enabled them to complete a postsecondary CNA program, in descending order of frequency: the structure, short length, small class size, hands on nature and flexibility of the program; the supportive nature and one-on-one attention from the teachers in the program; support from family and friends outside of the classroom; and a supportive bond with people in the CNA class.

This study provides six themes about how and why adult education graduates were able to complete a postsecondary CNA program. Not all of these themes can be applied by adult education or CNA programs; however, the information gleaned from the participants does offer insights for ways to improve the graduation rate of adult education graduates in postsecondary CNA programs. Adult education facilities can counsel potential graduates who express a desire to go into the medical field about what is expected of a CNA. Offering job

shadowing or an internship at a residential facility would expose potential graduates to the realities of the job before they waste time or money entering a CNA program. The participants uniformly agreed that going to the clinical experience opened their eyes to what it was really like to be a CNA. Several participants noted that it was at this point when people dropped out of their class because they realized it was not for them (they were not in it for the right reasons).

CNA programs in Connecticut vary in class size, length, location, and structure. The participants who had the largest percentage of students drop out of the class (50%–75%) were in programs that began with 30 or more students. The programs that had 90%–100% retention were smaller, approximately 14 students or fewer. Having smaller class sizes offers more one-on-one support with the teacher and a chance for students to form a bond with each other that could help them persist when confronting barriers to learning. Implications from this study show that CNA programs can improve retention by informing participants of what exactly a CNA does before they enter the program so the students will be starting for the right reasons. Having smaller class sizes, offering support in and out of class, and hiring supportive, knowledgeable instructors are also keys to successful programs. All the participants mentioned their instructors as having a large influence on their success.

Participants in this study identified several barriers to completion including lack of transportation, lack of support from family members, child care issues, balancing family life with work and going to school, and having to learn better time management and study skills. Some students had to take two busses for over an hour of commuting time, each way, to get to class. Other participants recalled leaving work and rushing home to get dinner on the table for the babysitter, so they could get to class on time. Two participants spoke to the lack of support from family members. These two particular participants believed that the bond they created with the other students in the class helped them to succeed. Some of these barriers can be addressed by adult education or CNA programs. For example, adult education programs can offer CNA classes on-site and provide child care, so current and former students have familiarity with the area, are closer to the location than if they were going to a community college or other CNA program, and would not have to struggle to find child care. Some adult education programs in Connecticut do offer CNA training, and they are very successful. Adding child care could help even more.

Universally, all participants felt their CNA instructors were dedicated professionals who were willing to help the students succeed. Every participant had an example of a teacher going above and beyond the norm to help them with the material and the course as a whole. The hands-on nature of the course and the support of fellow classmates were important aspects that led to eventual success for the participants. While not all programs can offer small class sizes or have such dedicated instructors, those factors should be considered when advising adult education graduates who are transitioning out of adult education and into a postsecondary program.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study addressed the gap in the literature about why adult education graduates complete postsecondary CNA programs. The main strengths of the study are the six themes that adult education and CNA programs can apply practically to help increase retention. One weakness of the study is the sample size. Only eight participants were interviewed for this study. Although saturation was achieved, the participants were from a small geographic location and many attended the same postsecondary CNA programs. Results of the study could vary if the population was changed to traditional high school graduates or to programs in other states.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study addressed the issue of how and why some adult education graduates were able to successfully complete a postsecondary CNA program in central Connecticut. Some themes offered practical steps that adult education and CNA programs can use to help more students, adult education graduates or otherwise, complete the program to help fill the growing need for CNAs in the workforce. Adult education programs can prepare potential graduates, who are interested in taking a CNA course, for success by offering them internships and job shadowing opportunities in health care facilities, so the students know what they are getting into before entering a CNA program. Both CNA training and adult education programs can screen potential students more thoroughly to ascertain why the student is entering the program and if the student is prepared for the reality of such a physically and emotionally demanding job. CNA programs can offer smaller class sizes, in central locations, with skilled instructors who offer a great deal of support to students. Either CNA or adult education programs can offer assistance with transportation such as bus passes or rideshare coupons to enable students to get to class. Offering on-site child care could help relieve some barriers to attending class and therefore aid in improving attendance and completion of the program.

Adult education programs can help their students by pooling resources with local community colleges who offer CNA programs to create programs that are adult education student friendly. The need for trained healthcare workers is only going to grow as the baby boomer population ages. Enabling adult education students to succeed in the healthcare field is one way adult educators can not only help their students, but also help the community as a whole. ☞

Cathleen Cody, EdD, has been an adult educator for 22 years. She started working part-time at Middletown Adult Education shortly after her first daughter was born and has never left. She teaches English full-time in the Credit Diploma Program. Dr. Cody lives in Connecticut with her husband and a revolving door of college-aged daughters who move in and out of the house.

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Table 1. Demographic Information for Participants.

Name	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	No. of Children
Abby	35	F	White	2
Alice	24	F	Black	0
Bob	24	M	Hispanic	0
DJ	25	M	Black	0
Isamar	25	F	Hispanic	1
Lucy	24	F	Hispanic	3
Sierra	28	F	Black	1
Tyanna	23	F	Mixed (White/Black)	2

Note: All names are pseudonyms chosen by the participants.

Table 2. Occurrences of Most Common Themes.

Theme	Appearances
Love helping others/in it for right reasons	81
Matured/ not in high school anymore	61
Structure of program/teacher	58
Inner strength	46
Had support in/out of class	41
Wanted more/better for self	39

OPENING DOORS TO APPRENTICESHIP FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Jennie Mollica
Jennie Mollica Consulting

ABSTRACT

Employers and labor organizations in the United States use apprenticeships to provide workers with technical education and paid on-the-job training leading to wage increases and higher-skilled jobs. When English learners participate in apprenticeships, employers benefit from an expanded pipeline of qualified employees and a more diverse workforce, and immigrant workers gain the qualifications and experience they need to realize their potential at work. This research study involved 66 interviews with ESL instructors, program staff, and thought leaders to learn to what extent English learners are participating in apprenticeships, what are the key elements of apprenticeships serving English learners, and what will be needed to sustain and scale apprenticeships equitably. Findings suggest that adult education providers have the tools to support ESL students' successful participation in apprenticeships, and that additional guidance and alignment of public and private resources will be needed to sustain and scale a more inclusive apprenticeship model.

Keywords: adult education, apprenticeship, training, immigrants, English language learners, ESL, integrated education and training, IET, career technical education, CTE, on-the-job training

INTRODUCTION

Apprenticeships are receiving increased attention as a strategy to prepare Americans for higher-skilled jobs. The federal government has invested \$665 million in apprenticeships since 2015, and more than half of the states now have an apprenticeship initiative (Whinnery, Anderson & Kiely, 2019). Pre-apprenticeship, too, is gaining recognition as an important step on the apprenticeship pathway, designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in an apprenticeship. Apprenticeship expansion should be good news for the many adult English language learners who remain in low-wage positions because of limited English and technical skills. But are we doing enough to ensure apprenticeships are accessible to English language learners?

This question was significant for me as I reflected on my years of teaching basic English to immigrants and later contextualized English to adults in the workplace. The apprenticeship approach seemed to fit perfectly with the needs of my English as a second language (ESL) students who required income right away and who had years of work experience, but whose limited English excluded them from both good jobs and valued career education. The opportunity to learn both English and work-related skills and earn an income while being trained on the job would be a dream come true for many of my adult education students.

I set out to learn who is offering apprenticeship pathways that benefit English learners and what they are doing to prepare their students to succeed. This article summarizes what I heard in more than 60 interviews with ESL teachers, program administrators, and state and national thought leaders about what can be done to expand immigrants' access to apprenticeship. I found that promising models exist, and that valuable lessons have been learned about the important role adult education providers can play in shaping a more equitable apprenticeship landscape.

BACKGROUND

Limited English proficiency is a significant barrier to immigrants' advancement out of poverty-level employment. In the United States, 60% of immigrant workers in lower-skilled jobs have limited English proficiency (Bernstein & Vilter, 2018), and nearly all jobs that offer higher wages require education beyond secondary school (Wrigley, 2015), for which English fluency is typically a prerequisite.

Integrated education and training (IET), which integrates basic skills education, career training, and workplace readiness instruction, has shown promising outcomes in terms of adult learners' basic and technical skill attainment and employment success (Wachen, Jenkins, Belfield & Van Noy, 2012; Zeidenberg, Cho & Jenkins, 2010) and is now incentivized through the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and many state initiatives. Key characteristics of successful IET programs for English language learners have emerged in the literature and been promoted in practitioner resources and policy guidance. These include:

- instruction in English that is contextualized for the occupation or industry (Baker, Hope & Karandieff, 2009; Nash & Hewett, 2017);
- ESL and career technical education (CTE) that are co-taught or connected by teachers who integrate content and language instruction. (Fedele-McLeod, Whalen, Mason & McGavock, 2017; Wachen, Jenkins, Belfield & Van Noy, 2012);
- instruction on the culture of the workplace and career training, social and legal issues, and the language used in interactions in these settings. (Wrigley & Wisell, n. d.);
- partnerships with employers to inform curriculum and ensure the relevancy of course content to job qualifications (Wrigley, 2015), and potentially leading learners directly to employment or on-the-job training; and
- advising and supportive services to help students persist and succeed in training and transition to postsecondary education or employment (Rutschow, Beal & Johnson, 2019; Wachen, Jenkins, Belfield & Van Noy, 2012).

Relatively few existing programs combine IET and on-the-job training. A combined model should interest educators, employers, and students for several reasons, including:

- Adults acquire new information well through problem-centered, hands-on, and applied learning modalities (Knowles, 1980).

- Training programs' connection to employers can inform their relevance to the workplace and value in the labor market (McCambly, 2016; MDRC, 2017).
- Apprenticeship, in particular, structures wage increases and higher-skilled employment into progression through the program, with tangible economic benefits for workers and employers (Holzer & Lerman, 2014; Lerman, 2010).
- The IET model's integration of language instruction can make apprenticeships and other work-based learning opportunities accessible to English learners who would otherwise be excluded from participation due to language ability (Sandwall, 2011).

Connecting an ESL or IET program to on-the-job training, such as through apprenticeship, has not been incentivized by public funding, and few adult education students gain access to these work-based opportunities (Cahill, 2016). A shift is occurring, however, as state systems of adult and technical education adopt student outcome metrics related to industry-recognized credential attainment, job placement, and wage increases. In California, for example, the state community college system in 2018 adopted a performance-based funding formula that rewards colleges for graduates' employment within a year of completion, with bonus incentives for serving economically disadvantaged students (Fain, 2018). This is boosting interest in employer engagement, tailoring of curriculum to address requirements for hire, and direct connection to employment.

Little is documented about apprenticeships' reach into immigrant communities or accessibility to English language learners. In 2016, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) awarded contracts to "equity intermediaries," charged with supporting the expansion of apprenticeship access to underrepresented groups, such as women, people of color, and individuals with disabilities (Hank, McGrew & Zessoules, 2018); however, no data are collected on how apprenticeships advance economic opportunity for marginalized populations (Crane & Colborn, 2016). Several case studies available on the internet (Bergson-Shilcock, 2018a and 2018b; Murray, 2018; National Immigration Forum, 2016) describe promising practices in this area. What we do know about the positive value of IET and of apprenticeships (Hollenbeck, 2008; Novella & Perez-Davila, 2017; Reed et al., 2012; State of Washington, 2014) points to an opportunity: the integration of ESL, CTE, and on-the-job training to make apprenticeships accessible to English learners.

METHOD AND PARTICIPANTS

I conducted 66 interviews between May 2019 and January 2020 with ESL teachers (8), program staff (38, including coordinators, deans, mentors, counselors), and thought leaders working at a national (8) or a state (13) level.

The interviews were semi-structured, with questions adapted to the individual's role and experience related to the topic. Interviews addressed these research questions:

- Are English language learners participating in apprenticeship pathways?
- What are the key elements of successful apprenticeship pathways serving English language learners?

- What would it take to sustain and scale apprenticeship pathways inclusive of English language learners?

Interviews with ESL teachers also explored their programs' integration of ESL instruction, career education, and on-the-job training; their approach to identifying students' work-related language needs; and their instruction's connection to students' workplace experiences to address these needs.

Are English Language Learners Participating in Apprenticeship Pathways?

Teachers and program staff who participated in interviews represented 30 programs that aimed to integrate ESL, CTE, and on-the-job training. Not all of these programs were pre-apprenticeships or apprenticeships. Of the programs participating,

- eight involved apprenticeships (with state and/or federal registration);
- eight offered pre-apprenticeships with strong ties/facilitated entry to an apprenticeship; and
- fourteen had certain characteristics of pre-apprenticeship but had not partnered with an apprenticeship program or did not facilitate entry into one. Several of these programs were in conversation about developing the program into a pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship. Others partnered with employers to secure entry into permanent employment, but without the continued training and assured wage increases of apprenticeship. Five of these programs were actively trying to become pre-apprenticeships or apprenticeships.

The participating programs led to employment in hospitality, culinary, healthcare, janitorial, building trades, business, early childhood education, and agriculture professions in California, Idaho, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Washington.

The ESL components of the programs were delivered by a community college (15), an adult school (6), a labor-management partnership (4), a community-based agency (4), or a high school (1). This ESL instruction served a diversity of students who were unemployed/underemployed or currently working; with limited formal schooling, or with professional education overseas; with or without prior experience in the industry; in English-learner-only cohorts or in mixed groups of English learners and non-English learners.

Interviewees described building their programs upon various foundations, depending upon their existing programs and resources. Figure 1 illustrates the core elements of these programs—ESL, CTE, and on-the-job training—and the combinations of these that were the starting points of the pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship programs. For example, existing IET programs explored potential to provide students with paid on-the-job training by building a new apprenticeship or partnering with an existing one. Workplace English programs looked at ways to leverage their employer partnerships, linking to apprenticeships or serving as a pre-apprenticeship. Existing apprenticeship programs assessed opportunities to prepare English learners for entry through pre-apprenticeship, ease language-related entry requirements, or facilitate English learners' success in apprenticeship.

The programs took several different approaches to integrating English language instruction. About one third (11 programs) used a co-teaching IET approach. Six programs had only a CTE instructor or mentor who supported language learning (in several cases relying on their bilingual skills). Six programs had only an ESL teacher who delivered contextualized language instruction. Three programs used an alternating IET approach, with ESL and CTE teachers coordinating their instruction during separate class times. Finally, three programs recruited English learners who had already reached a required English level and provided more limited ESL support, such as tutoring or optional online ESL modules. A few programs intentionally supported English learning during on-the-job training through a bilingual mentor or supervisor.

Are English learners participating in apprenticeship pathways? The answer is yes, though these programs are few, far between, and typically in a pilot stage. Only one of the programs interviewed was a new pre-apprenticeship-to-apprenticeship pathway created for English learners. Fourteen of the programs were newly created to prepare English learners for apprenticeship (or for other employment opportunities), though many of these had not yet made a “direct entry” connection. Other programs were built to make existing apprenticeship pathways more accessible to English learners, either by adding an English learner cohort to a pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship program (5) or by adding supports for English learners participating in a mainstream pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship (10). We might conclude that there is much room for learning and growth in this space, and that adult educators should have a seat at the table as we innovate and develop new program models.

What Are the Key Elements of Successful Apprenticeship Pathways Serving English Language Learners?

Much can be learned from the pioneering efforts of ESL educators and their partners who are expanding access to apprenticeship pathways for immigrant adults. The recommendations below, which emerged from the interviews, are framed as recommendations for adult education program developers and instructors and can be understood as key elements of successful apprenticeship pathways serving English language learners.

Begin With Clarity About “Why Apprenticeship?”

According to interviewees, large investments of time, effort and resources went into creating the pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs, as well as many others that were ultimately not successful. Teachers and administrators emphasized their reasons for persistently pursuing the “gold star” of apprenticeship: paid, high-quality training, and leading to high-quality jobs. Apprenticeship offers a structured career pathway that builds industry-valued competencies in the context of the workplace and doesn’t leave graduates hunting for work. A commitment to immigrant students’ equitable access to in-demand skills and well-paid employment drives this work.

Assemble the Right Partners to Champion English Learners’ Access to Apprenticeship.

Rarely was the adult education provider the lead convener of partners involved in developing an apprenticeship pathway, but it was important that ESL providers—and students—be at the table early and consistently, expanding the conversation about the assets English

learners bring and the return on investment in language education. Leaders in program development—educators, employers, unions, community-based organizations (CBOs), workforce development representatives, and others—brought creativity to the process and established a common sense of purpose around immigrant inclusion. As a collective, they envisioned the pathway, initiated pilots, built momentum, and in some cases have moved on to identify opportunities to sustain and scale.

Work With Employers and Unions to Identify the Right Jobs.

Adult educators connected to employers and labor in various ways, such as via a local workforce development board or other intermediary, a labor-management training fund, a regional sector strategy, or active outreach, and in some cases participated in the selection of target occupations suitable for English language learners. Planning teams identified occupations that anticipated hiring needs, were on a career pathway, and would require an appropriate level of English ability. Sometimes, employer conversations revealed that large numbers of current entry-level employees were English learners, or that English learners were being turned away from apprenticeship slots due to language level, or that bilingual skills would be especially valued in the occupation of interest. In some cases, adult education providers, unions, or immigrant advocates voiced the opportunity to professionalize next-step jobs for entry-level workers by defining competencies and standardizing training pathways. Adult education providers' knowledge of ESL levels and teaching methods contributed to these conversations.

Investigate, Reform, and Align Curriculum With Apprenticeship Entry Requirements.

As trusting relationships developed between ESL providers and other partners, opportunities arose to discuss hiring practices and shine light on possible barriers to entry for English learners. For example, some apprenticeships required candidates to pass technical exams or complete phone interviews in English that systematically excluded immigrants. Opening up a conversation about entry requirements allowed for investigation of the language ability truly needed for success in training and on the job. ESL providers were involved in problem-solving, such as integration of exam preparation into pre-apprenticeships or proposals to revise screening practices to better align with work requirements and accommodate language needs.

Rely on the Cultural Competency of CBOs, Day Laborer Centers, and Unions.

While ESL instruction was a critical component of the apprenticeship pathways interviewed, many also built in an array of supportive and language-appropriate services to ensure immigrant participants' success. Some partnerships included an organization with deep roots in local immigrant and worker communities to provide outreach and recruitment, career coaching, wrap-around support services, barrier removal, and training. Agency staff or union representatives with bilingual skills played important roles in building the trust of potential apprentices, opening communication about the apprenticeship opportunity, addressing challenges during training, and inviting workers' voices in training design and improvements.

Invest in Assessment of Workers' and Employers' Needs.

Programs took a variety of approaches to student needs assessment, using tests such as CASAS or TABE, career interest inventories, interviews, focus groups, and in-class exploration of

communicative needs through role-plays and reflective activities. Because of their employer-driven nature, apprenticeship pathways also responded to employers' needs identified through advisory group meetings, job classification analysis, industry standards, worksite observation, interviews, and focus groups. ESL providers described tailoring curriculum to address workers' communication needs specific to technical skills training, an entry exam or interview, and employment in the targeted occupation; as well as their assets, such as aptitude for technical learning or industry knowledge gained in prior roles. With an understanding of the career pathway and the worker population, programs also determined whether bilingual instruction, sheltered ESL, or mainstream programming with ESL support would be most beneficial.

Get Creative About Layering Supports for English Language Learning.

Designers of these programs were intentional about creating alternatives to prerequisite, remedial ESL classes for immigrants interested in apprenticeship. They consistently sought a “no wrong door” approach, so that English learners would not be turned away. There was no simple formula for their inclusion of ESL instruction and support. Programs offered contextualized, job-specific ESL classes prior to required instructional hours, or used IET to integrate ESL into apprenticeship instruction, or provided access to optional online modules or tutoring to reinforce language development. Several apprenticeship programs included ESL hours within the total required apprenticeship instructional hours, while other programs hoped for this in the future. Language support also came from bilingual and culturally competent CTE instructors, mentors, coaches, and peer cohorts.

Design CTE and On-the-Job Experiences With English Language Learners in Mind.

Having adult educators at the table helped to inform programs' delivery of hands-on, problem-based career education that leveraged immigrant students' assets and did not pose their English language level as a barrier. The apprenticeships supported English learners on the job with bilingual mentors and supervisors who were sensitive to the demands of applying a new language in a professional context. Partners committed to immigrant access and integration advocated for culturally competent work environments where apprentices would feel respected and their contributions as professionals would be valued.

Emphasize Workplace Communication Skills in English Instruction.

Programs described roles for the ESL teacher that went far beyond English grammar and vocabulary to address soft skills, cultural norms, professional identity, confidence, and conversational proficiency. As English learners negotiated the workplace and changing responsibilities, they identified communicative challenges that were shared and worked through in the classroom. Employers expressed the importance of reinforcing these communication skills in class, since technical skills instruction was typically the focus of on-the-job training.

If Pre-Apprenticeship Is Essential to Apprenticeship Access, Give It Value.

Some interviewees prioritized access to apprenticeship itself as the best option for English learners, but others found reason to build on-ramps that prepared workers for

apprenticeship. Federal and many states' guidance describes the importance of pre-apprenticeships' "documented partnership" with one or more registered apprenticeships, training and curriculum approved by the apprenticeships, and facilitated entry into apprenticeship; yet, there remains confusion about what pre-apprenticeship means and what it must deliver. Interviewees suggested that pre-apprenticeships should be customized to specific talent supply issues and should remediate specific barriers to employment, as determined through local needs assessment. They agreed that pre-apprenticeships should facilitate transition to apprenticeship, but in reality, this more often involved a guaranteed interview or warm introduction, rather than direct entry. They felt pre-apprenticeship should offer benefits to participants who do not transition directly to apprenticeship, such as college credit, certification, or transferable skills. Many insisted that quality pre-apprenticeships should provide income during training, to facilitate participation among low-wage workers.

What Would It Take to Sustain and Scale Apprenticeship Pathways Inclusive of English Language Learners?

The interviews surfaced three recommendations that could inform apprenticeship advocates' and policymakers' efforts to sustain and scale apprenticeship pathways inclusive of English language learners. An overarching theme of these was that building inclusive apprenticeship programs takes time, effort, and intention, but that it can be done using the resources we have and should be done to achieve social equity and economic prosperity objectives. These three actions will support the work of apprenticeship partnerships—inclusive of ESL teachers and students—to innovate and demonstrate effective apprenticeship practices for English learners.

Provide Guidance Related to Adult Education's Role in Apprenticeship Pathways.

The U.S. DOL and many state labor and apprenticeship agencies have issued definitions of quality pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs, but questions remain. Additional guidance is necessary at the state and federal levels to elaborate on the role of adult education in apprenticeship partnerships, provide quality standards related to integrated basic skills instruction for apprenticeship, and define allowable uses of public funding to support apprenticeships for populations with basic skills needs. This guidance could provide practitioners with clear parameters for new program development and, more importantly, with inspiration to seek innovative solutions to local needs.

Align Workforce Development, Community College, and Adult Education Systems Around Apprenticeship Equity.

The WIOA-funded workforce development system, community colleges, and adult schools play important roles in making apprenticeships accessible to immigrants and others with basic skills needs. At the state and local levels, these partners can align planning processes, facilitate collaborative pathway development, and gather data to ensure accountability for serving English learners. They can provide guidance and share best practices related to the use of public funding to deliver on key elements of apprenticeship for English learners, and they can convene and support communities of practice that involve partners across systems.

Facilitate Partnerships Between Adult Education and Employers.

ESL providers need to be part of conversations about how to expand access to apprenticeships, but they may not have established networks with industry and labor leaders driving these conversations. With a seat at the table, adult education can offer solutions to employers' hiring or upskilling needs, building awareness of instructional and support models that can expand and diversify the pipeline of qualified job candidates. In some communities, an intermediary organization helps to establish these ties, or a regional sector strategy or industry advisory board provides a forum for collaboration. More investment and attention may be needed to facilitate and incentivize adult education-industry connections.

CONCLUSION

This research study has shown that adult education providers have the tools to open doors to apprenticeship for English learners. Whether through a pre-apprenticeship program that establishes foundational skills and links learners to apprenticeship, or through an inclusive apprenticeship training model that accommodates language-learning needs, adult educators can partner with apprenticeships in their communities to secure the vital connection between the classroom and career opportunity. These partnerships require effort and resources to establish and nurture, but the rewards are great: employers benefit from an expanded pipeline of qualified employees and a more diverse workforce, and workers gain the qualifications and experience they need to realize their potential at work. Adult education leaders may need to begin the conversation that will push the doors open. ☞

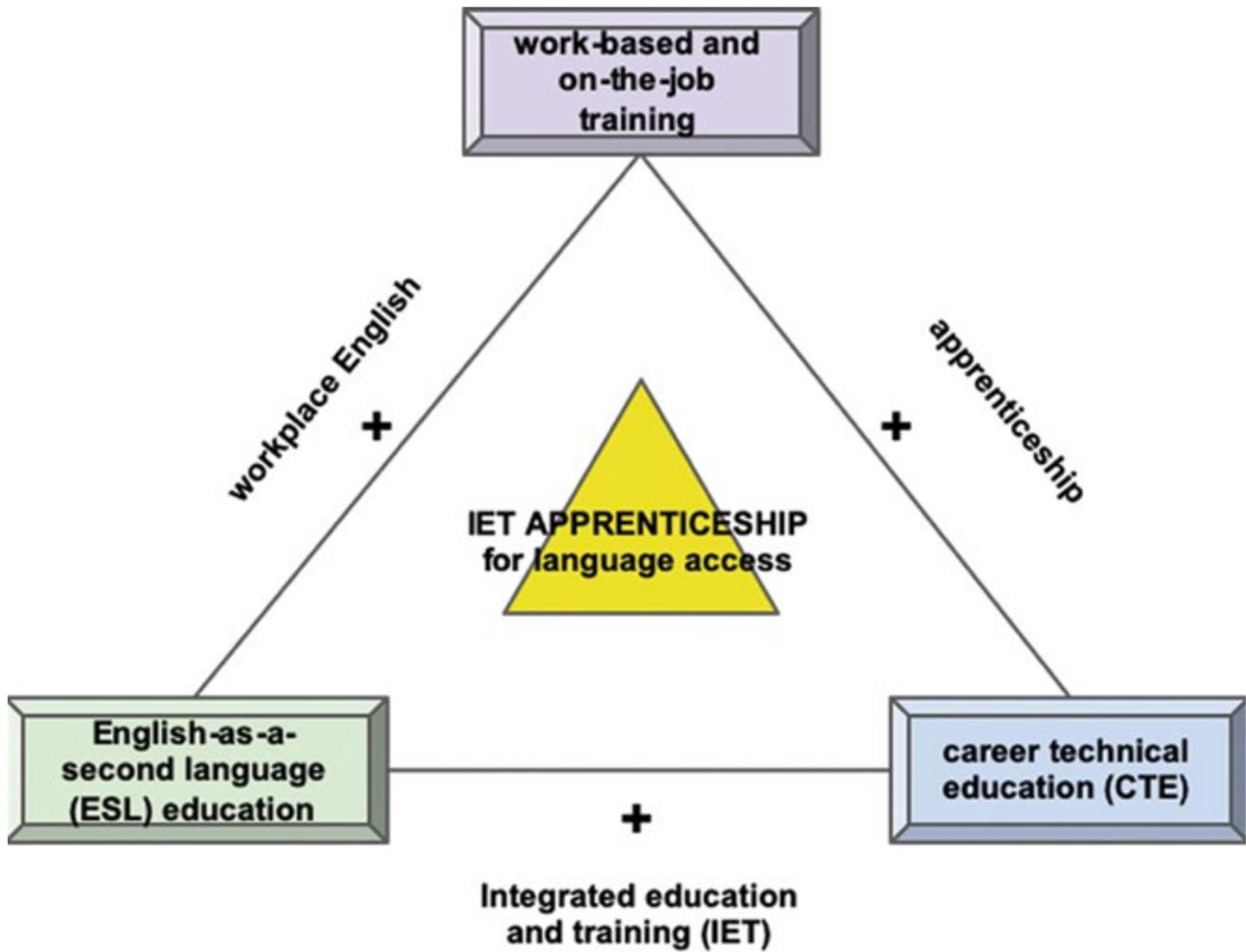
Jennie Mollica consults on planning, evaluation and fund development for basic skills and career training programs at community colleges, adult schools, high schools, and community organizations. She has taught English in Vietnam, Laos, and Costa Rica and for immigrants and refugees in California. In 2019, she began researching English learners' access to career training and earn-and-learn opportunities, which informed this paper. She holds master's degrees in TESOL and in Public Administration.

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FIGURE 1. CORE ELEMENTS OF APPRENTICESHIP FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS



PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIONS

WHAT ADULT EDUCATORS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT APPRENTICESHIP

Amber Gallup
University of New Mexico

ABSTRACT

Apprenticeship is an internationally recognized model of learning receiving increased attention as it evolves to meet the needs of modern workers, employers, and the labor market. As apprenticeship expands, and new industries explore the model, adult educators are being asked to help develop programs and pathways, write curriculum, serve as teachers, and troubleshoot to help diverse learners succeed within the model. This article, based on both evidence and the author's long practical experience in apprenticeship programs, discusses what adult education practitioners need to know to be effective contributors to learner-centered apprenticeships.

Keywords: apprenticeship, adult education, workforce learning, registered apprenticeship, adult learning

INTRODUCTION

What comes to mind when you read the term *apprenticeship*? For many of us, the word is closely tied to the building trades labor unions and brings to mind young plumbers and electricians working and learning under the guidance of older, more experienced journeymen. For others, the term conjures up an ancient image of apprenticed cobblers, bakers, and tailors, learning from and often living alongside master craftsmen. Apprenticeship, with roots in both the Middle Ages and the Industrial Revolution, is indeed an old and venerable model of learning.

Despite its long history, apprenticeship is not generally well understood in the United States. In many other countries, including Canada, Australia, Germany, the U.K., and Denmark, apprenticeship is a common, highly respected form of work-based learning (Fuller & Unwin, 2013). Though systems of apprenticeship vary widely, all integrate classroom instruction with on-the-job learning. These dual components of the apprenticeship model reinforce each other, and resulting gains in knowledge and skill are clearly tied to career advancement and raises in pay (Lerman, Eyster, & Kuehn, 2014). In other words, apprentices earn while they learn and

progress up a career ladder. The apprenticeship is designed so that learners can directly apply what they learn in the classroom to their daily work, while their daily work informs their understanding in the classroom.

In this essay, I describe the strengths of apprenticeship as a model for promoting the acquisition of work-based knowledge and skills in precisely the populations we serve in adult basic education. I also begin to address a gap in our knowledge and skills. As apprenticeship expands in the United States, adult educators are increasingly being asked to play a part in that expansion: as teachers, experts, curriculum developers, and program designers; and as employees of community colleges, CTE programs, and vocational schools that partner with employers, unions, and joint labor-management partnerships. Though we adult educators may respond gamely to these requests, not many of us have a background in apprenticeship or organized labor. As such, we do not fully grasp the complexities of this work-based learning approach and how it differs from the more traditional educational contexts to which we and our students may be accustomed. As adult educators, our experience and expertise are needed. We can promote and safeguard the elements of apprenticeship that can benefit diverse learners. We are uniquely positioned to advocate for the learner-centered orientation to teaching, learning, and instructional design that we know is best practice. With this essay, I mean to raise awareness among educators in our field about the power and potential of apprenticeship for adult learners, as well as the responsibility we undertake when we choose to lend our expertise and energy to such an initiative.

A ROBUST, PRACTICAL MODEL OF LEARNING ON THE RISE

As a model of learning, apprenticeship can be powerful; its resilience attests to its effectiveness. Apprenticeship's work-based approach encourages learners who do not thrive in a traditional classroom context and feel they learn best by hands-on application. At the same time, employers can use the model to invest in a diverse, adaptable workforce that is strongly enculturated in company values and processes (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2016). Apprenticeship is also cost-effective for disadvantaged students. For the worker-learner, an apprenticeship costs much less than a college education, is more likely to lead to a marketable work credential (Lerman, 2016), and is linked to high rates of employment retention after the learning experience ends (U.S. Department of Labor, 2020). In their investigation in Washington State, Hollenbeck and Huang (2013) found that both short-term and long-term impacts for apprentices are very positive, and that the net benefit of apprenticeship to the public and individuals is much greater than any other type of training funded by public dollars in that state.

The building trades—particularly the building trades unions—have always dominated apprenticeship in the United States; the construction industry as a whole is responsible for two thirds of all registered apprentices in the U.S. (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2016). The unions are a formidable force in apprenticeship, and we can learn much from their example. While percentages of apprentices in the workforce do not approach those in Germany and many other countries, the U.S. is now experiencing an apprenticeship boom—and not only in the building trades. Apprentices have increased by over 707,000 since January 2017

(U.S. Department of Labor, 2020). These are largely registered apprenticeships, a form of apprenticeship certified by the U.S. Department of Labor as meeting specific federal standards for classroom instruction, on-the-job learning, regular raises in pay, and a clear path to career advancement. With this increase, the apprenticeship landscape is beginning to change.

NEW APPRENTICESHIPS ENGAGE THE LEARNER POPULATIONS WE SERVE

In recent years apprenticeship has been expanding into new industries and companies that have not traditionally used the model in the U.S., including healthcare, long-term care and home care, and hospitality (U.S. Department of Labor, 2020). With this incipient expansion, workers in occupations labeled *low-skill*, *low-wage*, or *low-prestige* are engaging with the apprenticeship model for the first time. Knowledgeable educators will take issue with the accuracy of some of these labels, but we recognize that the populations who often hold these positions overlap significantly with the learner populations we know well from our careers in adult education. For example, in the homecare industry—which is beginning to embrace apprenticeship—one quarter of workers were born outside of the U.S., nearly one quarter live in households below the federal poverty line, and more than half have no formal education past high school (Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute, 2016). These demographic characteristics suggest potential challenges in both language and literacy for some learners.

Over the last 15 years, I have worked within a number of apprenticeship programs. Early in my career, I taught trade-focused English as a second language for foreign-born apprentices in local unions of Ironworkers, Electricians, Insulators, Laborers, and others. Later, I designed curriculum for these and several other building trades labor-management training partnerships and international unions. More recently, I have worked on teams to design pre-apprenticeship programs and registered apprenticeships for workers in frontline healthcare occupations such as home-care workers, hospital-based janitors, and dietary workers. In all these programs, many of the students have been members of underrepresented and disadvantaged groups. While these apprentices have been highly competent workers in their occupations, many have struggled with foundational and digital literacy, with numeracy, or with understanding and using English in the classroom and on the job. Many worker-learners excelled in the hands-on portions of the apprenticeship but struggled to comprehend long PowerPoint-aided lectures, textbooks written in college-level English, and standardized multiple-choice tests that were common in the classroom-based component of their program.

For these reasons, I have always interpreted one element of my role as that of advocate, when needed, for apprentices with learning differences, with lower levels of literacy, and those who speak English as a second language. I have made the point to stakeholders that these characteristics do not disqualify an apprentice for success, and that the program and curriculum can be designed to accommodate and support these learners. I also make a point to speak with employer stakeholders about the time investment that learning requires. In my experience, employers who are less experienced with workplace learning programs often believe the desired outcomes will be achieved in unrealistically short amounts of time; my job includes helping employers understand the principles and processes of adult learning.

I mention these roles of mine because, in a stark departure from the way building trades apprenticeships are typically designed, the newer apprenticeship and workplace learning programs commonly partner with community colleges and CTE programs. As such, many adult educators around the country are now taking on the same roles that I have had in my career.

WHAT ADULT EDUCATORS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT APPRENTICESHIP

The unprecedented boom and decentralized nature of apprenticeship in the United States means that adult educators across the nation can and do play important roles in apprenticeship programs. In the paragraphs below, I offer some considerations for effective engagement with this learning model and the multiple stakeholders that often accompany it. These recommendations assume that adult educators have some kind of role in the instructional design or delivery of the classroom portion of the apprenticeship program.

Design Contextualized Curriculum and Instruction Collaboratively

In apprenticeship, the curriculum must be closely tied to *apprentices'* needs, interests, daily work, and career aspirations, as well as to the needs of several stakeholders. Goals, learning objectives, curriculum, and instructional materials should all be clearly linked to the outcome of a needs assessment and developed in a close collaboration with stakeholders. These stakeholders may include the employer representatives, direct supervisors, union representatives (if present), worker representatives, and instructional designers, teachers, and other instructional or programmatic staff. Stakeholders may also include funders, specialists in the target occupation, representatives of upper-level management with an interest in the outcomes of the program, and perhaps still others. Clearly, many people have a legitimate interest in the design and delivery of any workplace learning program, and particularly an apprenticeship.

Responding to and balancing the interests of so many people is challenging and carries the potential for conflict. Excluding or disregarding the needs and priorities of any stakeholder group could seriously jeopardize the success of the program. For example, I once made the mistake of communicating only with upper-level management when seeking employer input on the instructional design process. I did not think to engage the workers' *immediate* supervisors and obtain their buy-in. Immediate supervisors often have the authority to grant or deny leave from work. Excluding them from the design conversations could—and in this case, did—carry serious repercussions for the apprentices' ability to participate in the program. As adult educators, many of us are accustomed to autonomy in our instructional design and classroom delivery. Ideally, the designer/instructor should exercise less autonomy and more collaboration in an apprenticeship context; this is not easy for many of us. I have experienced conflicts with adult educators who do not welcome the input of so many stakeholders. Nonetheless, success for the apprentices depends largely on the ability of program designers and contributors to effectively collaborate. Remember: first and foremost, an apprenticeship is a job, not a class. Stakeholders will be prioritizing the learners' roles as workers.

Consider Much More Than Job Skills in Your Instructional Design and Delivery

Apprenticeship is workplace learning. However, the modern workplace is not the cobbler's shop of yesteryear, and the shifting, volatile job market calls for nimble, well-prepared workers. Today's apprentices need to develop not only specific skills for their current positions, but also the foundational knowledge, critical reflection skills, and authentic learning experiences that will prepare them for novel problem solving in unforeseen contexts (Poortman, Illeris, & Nieuwenhuis, 2013). Too often, apprenticeship and other forms of workplace learning are designed "top-down" to meet only the immediate needs of the employer, without building and maintaining a solid foundation upon which learners can continue to develop competencies. Adult educators can advocate with program stakeholders for a more "bottom-up" approach that meets worker-learners' needs for lifelong learning skills.

As I mentioned above, apprenticeship can be a helpful learning model for those who are not fully served by traditionally academic, classroom-based learning. Historically, apprenticeships help socialize people into work (Vickerstaff, 2003). Modern forms of apprenticeship are informed by social theories of learning and occupational identity formation, such as Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning in communities of practice, Mezirow's (1990) theory of transformative learning, and Illeris's (2003) approach to learning, which includes social, cognitive, and emotional dimensions. Poortman and colleagues (2013) argue that though traditional education and training emphasize the content dimension of learning, the social and emotional dimensions are equally important, and the design of an apprenticeship should take into account all three dimensions. For example, designers and teachers should quickly connect to learners' prior knowledge and personal motivations. They ought to attend also to the social atmosphere in the learning environment as well, carefully building community among learners and between learners and compassionate instructors.

Materiality is another crucial element of a high-quality modern apprenticeship. The material conditions, the environment in which workers learn, and the materials with which they interact (the tools and other items they use as they learn), are critical to the learning process and the development of professional identity. Alongside the theoretical, social, and reflective components of learning, apprentices must have continued opportunities to interact with the material world of work in the classroom as well as in the job-based portion of the apprenticeship (Jaarsma, Maat, Richards, & Wals, 2013). Depending upon the field, incorporating real-life materials in the classroom context may mean not only interacting with tools but also role-playing job tasks and typical interactions in a realistic environment and visiting job sites.

Own Your Expertise and Advocate for Learners With Differences

As adult educators, one of our potential contributions to apprenticeship programs is our knowledge about how people learn, how to design learning environments that promote success for all, and how to accommodate those with barriers. We must advocate for workers with learning differences, emerging literacy or numeracy, and particular needs (such as those who speak English as a second language), which may not be as well understood by other stakeholders. In my career, I have known many well-meaning apprenticeship program staff

and stakeholders who have unfair expectations for learners. High expectations are necessary, but they must be fair. Our advocacy may be particularly important when potentially flawed or inappropriate assessments serve as key gatekeeping functions in the program. For example, a computer-based standardized test is not appropriate for an apprentice who lacks digital skills.

Of course, learning does not necessarily happen automatically in even the most well-designed apprenticeship. Here, too, adult educators can use their pedagogical skills and experience to make a difference. Filliettaz’s (2013) research shows that guidance by experienced workers, supervisors, and other mentors can help apprentices learn; however, the guidance should be of high pedagogical quality (which we are qualified to provide). Adult educators may consider agitating for opportunities to mentor other stakeholders—particularly those who have direct, guiding contact with apprentices on the job—in *how* to give guidance in a way that aligns with principles of adult learning.

Hold the Line for a Truly Worker-Centered Apprenticeship

In any workplace learning context, there is always tension between the needs of the learners and the needs of the employer. Being responsive to the needs of all stakeholders is essential to effective adult education programs. The employer and the union, where present, are integral contributors to the program. I have observed too many situations in which adult educators and well-meaning program staff tend to “side” with the employer and present themselves as gate-keeping authority figures for students. Still others have given workplace advice to students that contradicts the employer or the union. Both of these are inappropriate positions for adult educators to assume.

Adult educators accustomed to traditional classrooms with power imbalances can take inadvertently patronizing stances toward learners. We often work with learners who are disadvantaged compared to us, which can exacerbate our unconscious tendencies to believe we know better and must transmit our superior knowledge to willing and passive students. We need to recognize and actively work against this tendency in ourselves, when it exists. In apprenticeship, even more than in other adult education contexts, the students are our peers, our fellow workers, and co-creators of their own meaning and futures. Our job is to support them in the hard work they are doing to move ahead, and to recognize that they, not we, define their own success. Humility, a sense of partnership, a respect for the worker and a willingness to take their lead, can help make apprenticeship a learning model for our future. ☞

Amber Gallup is an adult educator and instructional designer specializing in meeting the learning needs of adults with limited literacy and those with limited English proficiency. A consultant, her areas of expertise include second language acquisition and instruction, workforce learning, and apprenticeship. She is a doctoral candidate at the University of New Mexico in the Department of Organization, Information, and Learning Sciences, and holds an MA in Spanish Linguistics and an MA in TESOL and Applied Linguistics, both from Indiana University. Amber lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, with her husband and daughter.

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LOCAL, STATE, AND NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ABOUT INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING (IET)

INSIGHTS FROM OCTAE'S IET SYMPOSIUM, JANUARY 2020

Judith A. Alamprese
Abt Associates

ABSTRACT

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education convened the Integrated Education and Training (IET) Symposium on January 15, 2020, to obtain information about the progress with and challenges in implementing IET models in adult education programs. Forty-five representatives from adult education state offices, adult education local providers, national adult education technical assistance organizations, research organizations, advocacy groups, and federal program offices participated in the symposium. This article synthesizes information provided during the day's activities. Discussed are key elements of well-implemented IET models, factors that should be considered in preparing adult learners to succeed in IET services, and the types of partnerships that are critical to designing and carrying out IET services. The article also provides examples of the ways in which adult education state offices support adult education providers in their IET activities, and suggests state and federal actions that could help expand IET services.

Keywords: integrated education and training, IET, adult education, occupational training, workforce development, U.S. Department of Education, symposium

INTRODUCTION

Integrated education and training (IET) services are opportunities for adult education learners to develop their foundational skills while participating in workforce training that leads to educational credentials and jobs in a career pathway. This approach can shorten the amount of time learners spend in education and training and facilitate their development of a career pathway. Authorized by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Title II: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), IET has specified components and requires that "adult education and literacy activities be delivered concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, 2014; please see Section 203(11) of WIOA and 34 C.F.R. § 463.35)" IET is further described in the regulations at 34 C.F.R. §§ 463.36-463.38 (OCTAE, 2019). IET services also are to support the local and state workforce development boards as required under WIOA.

Adult education providers' implementation of IET is expanding as adult learners seek services that can efficiently move them into high-demand jobs in a career pathway. Since program

year 2016, the number of adult education learners enrolled in Title II-supported IET services has more than doubled, with 51,925 learners participating in an IET during program year 2018 (OCTAE, 2020). Positive results on adult education learners' educational outcomes from evaluations of models such as the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) program and variants of I-BEST in the Accelerating Opportunity initiative contribute to interest in IET as a promising approach (Anderson et al., 2017; Glosser et al., 2018).

As part of its activities to support adult education state and local implementation of IET, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) convened the Integrated Education and Training (IET) Symposium on January 15, 2020, at OCTAE's offices in Washington, DC. Forty-five representatives of adult education state offices, adult education local providers, national adult education technical assistance organizations, research organizations, advocacy groups, and federal program offices participated in the symposium (see Appendix for list of participants). The symposium was designed to: (1) provide information about the progress with and challenges in implementing IET models; (2) create awareness of the current and future conditions affecting the U.S. workforce and its development; (3) explore emerging approaches and potential promising practices in adult education and literacy; and (4) provide opportunity for collaboration and networking among participants.

OCTAE's leadership opened the symposium and provided context for the day's discussions. The Director of OCTAE's Division of Adult Education and Literacy noted how adult education state offices and local programs are eager to learn about strategies for carrying out the multiple components of IET services, particularly concerning partnerships to support occupational training and job attainment. OCTAE's Assistant Secretary confirmed the administration's support for IET and its desire to expand the number of IET programs as an efficient approach to meet the education and training needs of adults that can help them advance along pathways with progressively higher-paying jobs as well as to address employers' needs for skilled workers.

During the symposium, participants made observations about processes for designing, developing, and implementing IET services based on their experiences as adult education providers, technical assistance providers, and researchers. They posed questions about what is needed for IET models to be successful from state and local perspectives and offered examples of processes and approaches for implementing IET. Participants also considered the implications of technological change and evolving forms of work for existing IET models. During the morning following the symposium, I summarized the key points discussed during the symposium using the "Framework for Implementing IET in Adult Education" that I developed based on participants' comments and related research. After this presentation, symposium participants met and provided feedback on an IET technical assistance initiative that OCTAE is supporting.

This article synthesizes information symposium participants provided during the day's activities based on analyses of the symposium's transcript and my research in this area, and includes the framework I presented at the symposium. Discussed in the article are the key elements of well-implemented IET models. Factors that should be considered in preparing

adult education learners to succeed in IET services are addressed, as well as the types of partnerships that are critical to designing and carrying out IET services. The article also provides examples of the ways in which adult education state offices support adult education providers in their IET activities, and it suggests additional state and federal actions that could help expand IET services.

Vision of Well-Functioning IET Services

IET models can be challenging to implement given that adult education activities are to be delivered concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training. Symposium participants identified challenges associated with the development of IET services and discussed the types of staff, program activities, and services needed for a well-functioning IET implementation. Below is the conceptual framework (Figure 1) that was presented at the end of the symposium. Such a framework can be useful in visualizing how IET services are implemented and relate to each other in adult education programs.

This framework specifies the components of an adult education program identified under previous work (Alamprese, 2003). The components were customized to IET based on symposium participants' observations about the design and implementation processes needed to support promising IET services.

As shown in the framework, partnerships between adult education programs and postsecondary education institutions, occupational training providers, workforce agencies, supportive service agencies, and employers can be instrumental to adult education programs' delivery of IET services. Workforce and other agencies serving low-skilled, underemployed, or unemployed adults can be sources of clients for IET services, and workforce agencies can provide financial support for technical training. Postsecondary education and occupational training providers can supply staff with the necessary technical skills and credentials for designing and delivering the career and technical education (CTE) training component of an IET program. Human service agencies can provide supportive services such as childcare and transportation to help learners participate in IET programs, and the American Job Centers (AJCs) can assist IET learners in securing employment. Employers can play varied roles in IET services, such as assisting in the development of technical training, providing financial support for training, and hiring adult education learners who complete an IET program.

Because of the complexity of IET models, adult education programs should undertake a planning process before designing IET services. This process involves gathering information about high-demand local labor markets, employers, CTE training providers, and other partners needed to support IET services; identifying the skill levels and other characteristics of adult education learners who could benefit from these IET services; specifying the types of data that will need to be collected to guide services and report outcomes, and sources for these data; and identifying sources of financial support for the technical training. Having a well-articulated plan can facilitate adult education programs in moving forward in delivering the components of IET services.

IET services involve recruiting adult education learners who are a good match for the types of CTE training that the adult education program offers as part of its IET model; administering

pre-assessments to determine learners' baseline skill levels and whether their skills meet the level required for the occupational training component; delivering basic skills instruction that is given concurrently with workforce preparation activities and is contextualized to the occupation that is the focus of the IET; including job readiness skills so that learners understand the pathway for the occupation they are training for and the types of further education that they will need to move forward in that pathway; and providing job search activities to enable learners to obtain employment upon completing the IET program. When learners' concurrent education and training activities are almost completed, the adult education program administers a basic skills post-assessment to measure their growth. Learners who are also preparing to earn a secondary credential would complete the testing requirements for that credential, and learners involved in occupational training that leads to a state or national certificate would prepare for those examinations.

Throughout the delivery of the education and workforce activities, adult education staff will need to monitor learners' engagement, academic performance, and other aspects of their progress toward completion. Of particular importance are learners' access to supportive services and financial aid so that they have sufficient resources to complete their training. With the exception of the basic skills assessments, the implementation of most IET activities will likely require an adult education program to form partnerships with other providers and employers to have a well-functioning IET model that enables learners to achieve their outcome. As shown in the framework for implementing IET in adult education, the outcomes range from learners' development of their basic skills to their placement in a job, which ideally will lead to progressive jobs in a career pathway.

Considerations in Preparing Learners for IET Services

In implementing IET services, adult education providers should take some important steps in identifying learners for whom the services are a good “match.” Symposium participants reflected on three considerations that adult education staff should take into account in selecting and orienting learners who enroll in IET services.

Adult education providers point to the following three strategies that help ensure a successful match between adult education learners and their IET services. The strategies are: (1) providing career awareness activities to check that learners are aware of their skills, abilities, and interests and how these match the in-demand jobs that interest them; (2) exposing learners to the physical, cognitive, and psychosocial demands of the jobs that interest them so they understand the daily routines of these jobs and will know what to expect if they are hired; and (3) providing information about the outcomes from the IET services, such as a certificate, and the types of near-term jobs that this credential will enable learners to obtain. State adult education offices are supporting local providers' use of these strategies by requiring learners' completion of career pathway plans (e.g., Kentucky) or supporting the development of Career and College Awareness Courses that include activities related to the three strategies (e.g., Oregon).

Another type of “match” to consider is the extent to which learners' skill strengths align with the skills required for the industry sectors or jobs that interest them. Learners should

be aware of the skill demands of jobs along their pathway and whether they will need to develop stronger skills to advance in jobs along their pathway.

A third consideration is providing learners with a clear vision of a long-term pathway so that they understand the types of jobs along the pathway, the educational requirements for those jobs, and the local wage rates. States' development of career pathway maps that specify this information can facilitate local providers' work in helping adult education learners select a pathway as part of planning their future.

Role of Partnerships in IET Services

Given the critical role of partnerships in IET services, symposium participants reinforced the need for adult education providers to develop approaches for planning and initiating partnerships with public and private entities in their communities and for monitoring the progress of the partnerships to ensure that they remain strong. Adult education programs' partners will vary depending on the type of organization that is the administrative base for a program; the history of the program's working relationship with potential partners; and the culture of collaboration among education, workforce development, and employers.

The administrative base for an adult education program is particularly important in planning an IET model. For example, adult education programs located in community colleges will likely have easier access to developing the training component of IET compared with adult education programs located in community-based organizations that may not have existing relationships with occupational training entities. Adult education programs without prior relationships with training entities will need to determine the benefit the potential partner will get by working with adult education, and they will need to develop a strategy for approaching that partner. The aim is to identify the circumstances when the partnership can be mutually beneficial, such as an adult education provider in a community-based organization providing training candidates for the local community college during times when college enrollment in CTE programs is low.

The prior working relationship between an adult education program, or its administrative organization, and a potential partner, such as the local workforce, can also affect the development of IET services. Adult education staff will need to gather background information about their organization's prior relationships with potential partners and the extent to which they were successful. The adult education provider should use this information to determine how to approach the potential partner. For example, adult education providers in organizations that have had successful relationships with employers may be able to leverage the organizational partnership by accessing an employer through staff who previously worked with the employer.

The culture of collaboration within a community can be difficult to assess but is an important factor that affects partnership development. Adult education providers can obtain a sense of the culture by examining the history of partnerships among key education, training, workforce, and private sector employers to assess which potential partners are more likely to be receptive to working with adult education in exploring the development of IET services.

State and Federal Activities to Support Implementation of IET Services

Adult education state offices can play a critical role in providing state guidance to facilitate implementation of IET services, offering funding incentives, collaborating with state agency partners to facilitate local interagency partnerships, and sponsoring professional development to prepare adult education providers to deliver IET services. For example, Indiana's adult education office has prepared guidance for adult education providers in implementing IET services and has delivered professional development to support adult education providers in their IET work. Washington State's adult education staff regularly meet with local agencies across the state to support adult education providers' efforts in developing IET services. The adult education management staff in the District of Columbia collaborated with the local workforce board to run a competition to fund local community-based organizations to develop IET services. Wisconsin's state adult education office is considering providing incentives for establishing IET services during the grants competition for adult basic education providers.

The U.S. Departments of Education and Labor can be instrumental in encouraging and supporting interagency partnerships at the state and local levels by providing technical assistance in implementing IET, and disseminating information about promising IET models and innovations in the design and delivery of IET. OCTAE's new technical assistance contract to support adult education providers' development of IET services is an example of one effort to expand IET models. ⌘

CONCLUSION

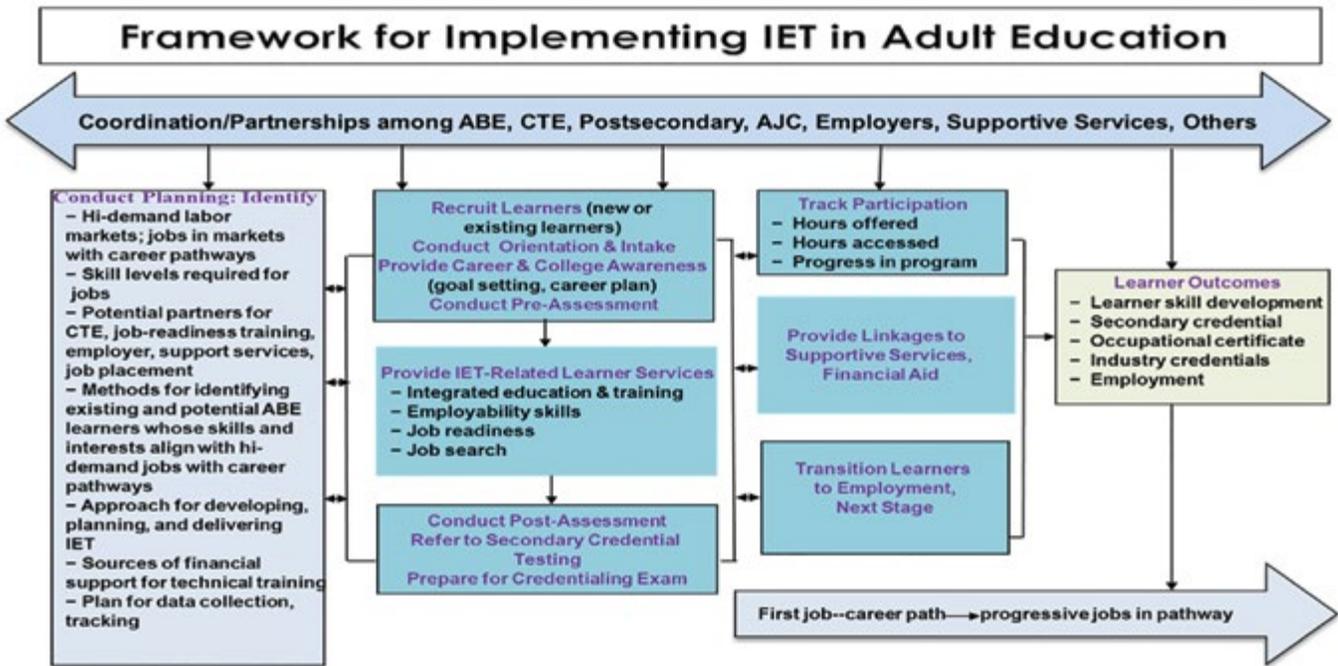
The IET symposium addressed a range of topics concerning adult education providers' development, implementation, and expansion of IET services. The discussion provided valuable information and suggestions about activities and assistance that can support successful IET services. The symposium participants made the following key points: Partnerships play a critical role in all phases of IET service development and delivery, and state and federal agencies support would help adult education providers' efforts in this area. Adult education providers can facilitate learners' success by helping them develop their college and career knowledge and assisting them in determining whether enrollment in IET services is a good match for their skills, interests, and abilities. Adult education providers' work with public and private sector employers can be facilitated through coordinated efforts with training and postsecondary education partners. Adult education providers are central to the expansion of IET services and will need a range of supports to be successful.

Judith A. Alamprese, a Principal Scientist at Abt Associates, has directed research, evaluation, and technical assistance projects in education and workforce development for more than four decades. Her work includes leading random assignment and quasi-experimental evaluations of innovative practices in education and workforce development to designing state-systemic change initiatives in career pathways. Ms. Alamprese has published and presented papers in a number of venues on topics including reading instruction for low-skilled adults, the role of interagency coordination in career pathways, and family literacy. She has served on two adult literacy committees for the National Academies' Board on Testing and Assessment. Email: judy_alamprese@abtassoc.com

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- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, 29 U.S.C. §§113-128. (2014).

FIGURE I.



APPENDIX



Participant List

Amanda Ahlstrand
Managing Director
IMPAQ International, LLC

Judith Alamprese
Principal Scientist
Abt Associates

Melanie Ali
Research Analyst
U.S. Department of Education
Institute of Education Sciences

Jody Angelone
Staff Training and Development
Coordinator
Coalition on Adult Basic Education

Nichole Braun
Program Director
Campbell County Skills U

Jessica Cadima
Senior Research Analyst
IMPAQ International, LLC

Michelle Carson
Senior Director
Safal Partners

Carole Bausell
Director of Academic and Student
Affairs
Literacy Council of Northern
Virginia

Amanda Bergson-Shilcock
Senior Fellow
National Skills Coalition

Sharon Bonney
Chief Executive Officer
Coalition on Adult Basic Education

Elizabeth Bowman
Director of Adult Education
Briya Public Charter School

Travis Combs
Branch Chief, Innovation and
Implementation Team
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Career, Technical, and
Adult Education

Christopher Coro
Deputy Director, Adult Education
and Literacy
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Career, Technical, and
Adult Education

Terese Craig
Associate Vice President
Student Success Wisconsin
Technical College System

Alicia Criscuolo
Policy Advisor
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Career, Technical, and
Adult Education

Sandy Crist
State Director
Adult Education Mississippi
Community College Board

Amy Dalsimer
Senior Technical Assistance
Consultant
American Institutes for Research

Douglas Emory
Dean of Instruction
Lake Washington Institute of
Technology

Don Finn
President
Coalition on Adult Basic Education

Sandy Goodman
Director
National College Transition
Network, World Education

Troy Goracke
Policy Associate
Basic Education for Adults
Washington State
Board for Community and
Technical Colleges

Jennifer Gore
Executive Director
Reading Connections, Inc.

KayLynn Hamilton
Workforce Development Specialist
The Pennsylvania State University

Sara Hastings
Supervisory Workforce Analyst
U.S. Department of Labor,
Employment and Training
Administration

Jennifer Jirous-Rapp
Senior Analyst
Maher and Maher

Michelle Johnson
State Director
District of Columbia Office of the
State Superintendent of Education

Cheryl Keenan
Director
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Career, Technical, and
Adult Education

Jenna Kelly
Adult Career Pathways Specialist
Virginia Department of Education

Jennifer Kemp
Director, Division of Youth Services
U.S. Department of Labor

Meredith Larson
Research Analyst
U.S. Department of Education Institute
of Education Sciences

Rebecca Livingston
Program Manager
Maher and Maher

Amy Loyd
Vice President
Jobs for the Future, Inc.

Julieta Machado
Program Director
Catholic Charities DC

Bridget Maley
Program Manager
Catholic Charities DC

Paul McCabe
ESOL Specialist
Arlington Education and
Employment Program

Konnie McCollum
Adult Education Director
River Valley Resources, Inc.

Christy McIntyre-Gray
Coordinator
Wayne Township Adult Education

Marilyn Pitzulo
Associate Chief Adult Education
Indiana Department of Workforce
Development

Peg Russell
Regional Director of Adult
Education Programming
Gateway Community and Technical
College

Tim Shenk
Program Director
IU13, Community Education

Scott Stump
Assistant Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Career, Technical, and
Adult Education

Blaire Toso
Consultant
Safal Partners

Patricia Tyler
Executive Director
National Association of State
Directors of Adult Education

Karla Ver Bryck Block
Branch Chief
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Career, Technical, and
Adult Education

Gina Wells
Senior Consultant
Maher and Maher

IMPLEMENTING TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Stephenie Rittberger
Career Learning Center of the Black Hills
Julia Monczunski
Black Hills Special Services Cooperative

ABSTRACT

After tracking barriers of adult education learners pursuing their GED®, the Career Learning Center of the Black Hills (CLCBH) found that high rates of poverty, homelessness, unemployment, and other trauma-related experiences led to an ongoing sense of helplessness and despair among many of our adult learners, in particular Native American learners in Rapid City, located in the Black Hills region of South Dakota. CLCBH staff recognized that even successful program graduates, especially those impacted by trauma, face further barriers to navigating the transition from learner to long-term employee. In an effort to improve learner retention, achievement, and workforce development, CLCBH began a process of implementing trauma-informed practices and educating staff, learners, and employers in the business community about these practices.

Keywords: trauma-informed practices, adult education, adult learners, Native American, employer training, workforce development, at-risk populations, career advising, mentoring

INTRODUCTION

The Career Learning Center of the Black Hills (CLCBH) is located in Rapid City, the second most populous city in South Dakota. Western South Dakota is home to the majority of the Native American Reservations in the state, including the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, one of the largest in the country and among the poorest. The adult education services provided by CLCBH include GED® preparation, adult basic education, and English as a second language (ESL). Last year (2018-2019), CLCBH served over 500 individuals, enrolling 285 students. Over 31% of these students are Native American: 30.125% are Hispanic, and slightly under 39% are White. CLCBH has tracked the barriers of our adult education learners pursuing their GED® over the past many years. We have found that high rates of poverty, homelessness, unemployment, and other trauma-related experiences lead to an ongoing sense of helplessness and despair among many of our adult learners, in particular Native American learners in the Black Hills region, especially in Rapid City's urban area. Adult education students struggling with the effects of trauma have the lowest completion rate at CLCBH. Within this low-performing group, data show that Native American learners struggle the most to balance life's challenges with academic learning. CLCBH data reveal these learners struggle the most to successfully complete career transition programs and maintain successful employment. While CLCBH has a high rate of completion success, staff have long recognized that all too often even successful program graduates, especially those who have

been impacted by trauma, do not successfully navigate the transition from learner to long-term employee. As a result, employers in the region struggle with filling vacant positions or retaining employees.

To improve learner retention, achievement, and workforce development, CLCBH began implementing trauma-informed practices and educating our staff, learners, and business community about these practices. We procured funding and developed the new program “Moving Beyond Trauma to Building Career Pathways” to explicitly address the education and employment needs of these at-risk adult learners. We have seen successful outcomes as a result of implementing trauma-informed practices including higher numbers for learner retention and achievement. An important contributor in propelling us forward in this process was our participation in the two-year long Institute for Educational Leadership “Minds that Move Us” initiative, “a challenge to communities to design innovative education and training models that create social equity and economic mobility, driven by the market demands of business and industry as well as the needs of youth and adult learners” (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2019). The following are steps we took to implement trauma-informed practices to better meet the needs of our learners:

1. building staff capacity in trauma-informed practices;
2. bringing trauma-informed practices to workforce development; and
3. developing innovative trainings on trauma-informed practices for employers.

BUILDING STAFF CAPACITY IN TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES

Step one was to have every staff member in our building receive training in trauma-informed practices. The training included information about current brain research, showing brain scans of how a traumatized brain looks compared to a nontraumatized brain, characteristics of individuals who live in crisis, and how a brain heals when it adapts to a safe and trusting environment. This awareness helped all CLCBH staff, front desk administrators to instructors, create a safer and more welcoming atmosphere from the moment a learner walks through our doors. Creating a welcoming environment has always been a priority at CLCBH, but staff now have a deeper understanding of the complexity of issues that learners are managing and the different levels of trauma and poverty that people experience. Staff have reported having more empathy for learners after receiving trauma-informed practices training, which improves their effectiveness as instructors. We continue to work at implementing trauma-informed practices into our interactions with adult learners, and we will prioritize further training in trauma-informed practices for our staff.

BRINGING TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Next, we addressed how to bring trauma-informed practices into our adult learner programs to improve workforce development. We made changes in our learner orientation and enrollment processes. We adopted more of a storytelling approach for new learners facilitated by the instructor leading orientation. This more personal approach, with facilitators sharing

their stories and providing space for learners to share their stories, helped create an atmosphere of caring and trust from the start. We also invested in more one-on-one time with learners during the enrollment process. Providing more time up front to get to know new learners and build rapport right away allowed staff to understand more fully the education barriers that learners faced. We found that many of our learners had no reliable childcare or transportation, and there was a shortage of affordable housing options. Many also shared trauma they had experienced with regard to violence, mental health issues, and addiction. Although the initial one-on-one meeting is more time consuming for staff, we have found that it is worth the investment. The result has been more “buy-in” from learners and an increase in learner retention. We are also better able to connect learners more quickly with community resources to assist them.

A crucial step in being able to connect learners with much-needed community resources was the creation of a new position on our staff. We sought grant funding for a “mentor” position after realizing that we needed a dedicated staff member to work intensively one-on-one with students facing barriers to their learning due to the crisis of poverty and experience of trauma. We applied for and received funding from the Bush Foundation created by Archibald and Edyth Bush in 1953 and based in Minnesota to support community organizations in the upper Midwest and the 23 Native nations that share that geography. This funding enabled us to create the position of “Project Coordinator for Moving Beyond Trauma to Building Career Pathways.” The project coordinator/mentor focuses solely on providing trauma-informed services to our learners who need them, which then allows our instructors to focus completely on educational needs.

The project coordinator/mentor tracks students using intensive mentorship on the “Crisis to Thrive Scale,” which incorporates eight domains including Education, Employment, Housing, Transportation, and Childcare. This is an adapted version of the 2010 Snohomish County Self-Sufficiency Matrix (Snohomish County, WA, n.d.). Each data point is supported by a qualitative explanation of why the student is ranked as noted. Student data are tracked each time the project coordinator/mentor interacts with the student. Students experiencing the effects of past and current trauma benefit from us connecting them to community resource providers who assist with supports for various circumstances. Every student we serve has exposure to career exploration of high-demand, high-wage occupations, labor market information, education and training requirements, career interest, aptitude assessments, and intensive career pathway counseling. The project coordinator/mentor works through Charting the LifeCourse™ Employment Trajectories with students who have experienced trauma in order to set goals and identify negative impacts to their process which can be found at the Charting the LifeCourse™ website (See RESOURCES below).

We are also seeking resources for emergency funds for learners to access. We have found that this is a necessary component in helping people experiencing trauma. As with all nonprofit and government organizations, there are limits and guidelines to each program. Each adult learner has unique circumstances, and often they have needs that if not met, limit the ability to work or study. Barriers in housing, transportation, child-care, addiction recovery services, mental health services, and healthcare are areas of greatest need. When these barriers are

reduced or eliminated, students show academic progress and retain employment at much greater levels. In our experience, when the adult education students we serve are unable to pay their bills and purchase items for their basic needs such as rent or mortgage, utilities, food, fuel, or bus tokens, they cannot concentrate on their education. However, when we help fulfill these needs, students are able to navigate the systems and experience success. Pairing wrap-around support services with financial assistance is the most effective way to assist individuals to secure their education/training and ultimately become employed leading to economic self-sufficiency. By providing CLCBH staff with emergency funding for the support of students in the adult education setting, we can help eliminate barriers to education, training, and employment. When students are not making the hard choices about basic needs, they are much more likely to attend school and focus during class.

Another key component was the creation of a Native American learner steering committee and educating learners themselves about the effects of trauma on the brain and trauma-informed practices. The learner steering committee further strengthened relationships and understanding between CLCBH staff and learners. Also, we found that when learners have a framework for understanding the effects of trauma on their lives, they are able to better manage these effects and seek the supports that help them meet their education goals and move forward in their career pathways.

Finally, we are developing a “Career Navigator” position at CLCBH. The Career Navigator will work in-depth to help learners identify their career choices. We are currently seeking funding for this position. As we worked to better meet the needs of students through our newly created “mentor” position, we found that we also needed to boost our support of students as they graduate with their GED® credential or higher education and seek careers. Learners need dedicated assistance to prepare for their future careers.

Developing Innovative Trainings on Trauma-Informed Practices for Employers

We are in the process of developing training for employers to better understand the effects of trauma. We want to help at-risk adult learners successfully transition into career pathways that will lead them and their loved ones to a life where economic security is more possible. We believe, despite our best efforts, our work over the past two decades has fallen short. As we sought reasons for that shortcoming, we have identified a lack of recognition and understanding of the importance trauma plays not only in homes and schools but also in the workforce. Even when students succeed in educational programs, too often, they fail in a workforce that still functions in an industrial, time-table mode without offering flexibility based on employee circumstances and needs. Our goal is to develop training opportunities, so employers recognize their businesses will be more successful if they adapt their status quo methods through changes in policies and procedures that result in more positive and supportive work environments conducive to employee retention and career growth.

The result of data analysis, follow-up interviews with CLCBH program graduates, and regional employers, clarified to program staff that employers may need support to provide a work environment conducive to successful employee retention of workers who were either recovering from, or coping with, trauma. Many employers and providers have not had the

opportunity to participate in professional development experiences preparing them to assist and support adult learners who cope with the lasting effects of the trauma they have experienced and may still be experiencing.

To meet professional development needs for employers, we will provide trauma-informed practices trainings geared to a business audience to present the scientific research, showing the impact of trauma on the brain and how the brain can heal from trauma. Our goal is to help employers understand what they can do within their businesses to change policies and procedures to create more inviting and safe environments for employees. This is a “win-win” from a workforce development perspective because it will improve both the retention and productivity of employees.

The trauma-informed practices training we are developing for employers, not only has a business focus, but we will also be offering individualized consultation for employers to evaluate their work environments. After the consultation, we will provide recommendations to help employers make their policies and procedures trauma-informed, which will lead to higher employee retention, productivity, and overall employee morale. Follow-up services will also be made available to employers, so the employer has the opportunity to reach out for support if they need help addressing the specific needs of an employee.

We have already conducted our first pilot trauma-informed practices training for 20 employers and employer representatives. We held this training at a local bank in the downtown business sector of Rapid City, where we presented not only the latest brain research on the effects of trauma, but also how to implement strategies in the workplace to decrease the stress of employees and the benefits of considering changes to policies and procedures in the workplace to retain employees. The purpose of the pilot training was to gain feedback from the attendees for providing the training to local employers in the area. Survey results from participants afterward indicated a high interest in this type of training. One attendee noted they learned how important it is to get involved and listen to their employees, helping to build flexible policies and practices to meet their needs. Another appreciated the examples that we shared of small specific things employers can do to make a positive impact for their employees. Also, an attendee recognized the training helped show how it impacts the company’s bottom line when employing high-crisis employees and how to mitigate those challenges.

As we developed this innovative training for employers, we found allies in several local downtown business owners who believed in the value of our project and provided us with in-depth feedback on how the training could be made useful for employers. After the pilot training, another major area of feedback is that we need to shift and use the language of the business world, instead of the language of the human services world, in our training presentations. An attendee suggested the training be made more relevant to employers by shortening the information about the effects of trauma on the brain and sharing more best practices for employers.

The next step in rolling out this employer-focused trauma-informed practices training will be to contact those in attendance to identify what specific training they would like CLCBH to

provide to their employees or representatives of employer groups. We believe by educating the wider business community and providing training for employers on trauma-informed practices, employers will learn how to retain more of their employees, leading to greater economic stability and prosperity for our region.

CONCLUSION

At CLCBH our goal is to create a trauma-informed practices continuum of support for our learners beginning at orientation in our adult education program, continuing with one-on-one mentoring, and dedicated assistance navigating future careers. We view this not as a linear continuum, but rather one where the person receiving services is moving back and forth and among the different resources. We will continue to grow our trauma-informed approach in how we provide services for our learners and for workforce development in our entire region.

By becoming a trauma-informed staff, we revolutionized the way we provide educational and career services for adult learners at CLCBH. Now we have a whole building that is trauma-informed and we are expanding into the business community with our employer-focused trainings. We also have plans to expand trauma-informed practices training beyond Rapid City at the statewide summit for adult educators.

Our “Moving Beyond Trauma to Building Career Pathways” program is an enormously intensive undertaking with complexity and rigor. Our efforts are already producing results. The “Minds That Move Us” experience provided us with professional resources that we would never have been able to access on our own. The opportunity to provide our students, adult education staff, collaborating partner staff, and employers with training and education on trauma-informed practices will make a positive impact for generations to come. ✂

Stephenie Rittberger is Adult Education and Literacy Coordinator for the Career Learning Center of the Black Hills (CLCBH) and has been involved with adult education for over 20 years as an instructor. In 2008, Rittberger was named Adult Educator of the Year by the South Dakota Association for Lifelong Learning. She loves her students and considers her job at CLCBH to be a calling. She admires the resilience and problem-solving abilities of the adult learners. Ms. Rittberger and her husband also own a working ranch located near Rapid City, South Dakota.

Julia Monczunski is Media Services Program Coordinator for Black Hills Special Services Cooperative, an educational agency committed to building stronger communities by helping individuals and organizations reach their full potential. Ms. Monczunski is also a certified School Library Media Specialist and taught English in Taiwan for five years.

RESOURCES

Charting the LifeCourse™ <https://www.lifecoursetools.com/>

South Dakota's Employment Trajectory Worksheet <https://lifecoursetools.com/wp-content/uploads/SD-Life-Course-Trajectory-Employment-instruction.pdf>

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TEXAS HOLD'EM

ENGAGING EMPLOYERS TO CLOSE THE SKILLS GAP

Anson M. Green

ABSTRACT

In 2014, the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) thrust adult educators into a dramatically new landscape of service expectations and partnership requirements to increase the ability of providers to meet the employment needs of students and employers. The coronavirus pandemic created an accelerating demand for adult education services that lead to reemployment for individuals who have been laid off. Employer engagement can have a tremendous impact on adult education's ability to lead to employment solutions. This article describes solutions Texas found as it successfully developed a market-driven adult education system to deliver employers, learners, and other system customers a new model for defining student success. After a brief discussion regarding the Texas business and economic climate; and factors that drove, in part, the Texas legislature to transfer the program into the state's labor department a year before WIOA; the article describes demonstrated methods and examples across five dimensions that tell Texas' story. These examples provide state and local leaders ways to meet the demands of WIOA and the expectations of students, employers, and system partners.

Keywords: employer, workforce, workplace, business, transformation, WIOA, AEFLA, skills gap, upskilling, immigrant, brain waste

INTRODUCTION

In 2014, the passage of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) thrust adult educators into a dramatically new landscape of service expectations and partnership requirements. Within WIOA, Title II, or the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), was redesigned to increase the ability of providers to meet the employment needs of adult learners and provide options far beyond a high school equivalency or increased English ability. States and local providers have worked diligently over the last six years to implement WIOA's various workforce-oriented requirements, from shared one-stop obligations and infrastructure cost-sharing to a transformed performance accountability system designed to measure innovative programs such as Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE). For many states, successes have been small and hard fought.

In 2013, acting on demands not unlike those by Congress, with unanimous support, the Texas legislature passed legislation to transfer the AEFLA program from the state's public education agency to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), an agency that directs a wide variety of workforce and training programs.¹ This transfer signaled the need for deliberate and transformative change in the management, mission and delivery systems of the AEFLA

1 On May 18, 2013, Governor Rick Perry signed into law Texas Senate Bill 307, 83rd Legislature, Regular Session (2013), which transferred responsibility for the AEFLA program to TWC from the Texas Education Agency. The bill can be found Texas Legislature Online. Retrieved March 3, 2020, from <https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=83R&Bill=SB307>

program. We moved from a system focused primarily on general education, family literacy, life skills, and “the GED” to one more comprehensively positioned to also meet the diverse employment and training needs of adult learners.

This article describes solutions Texas found as it successfully developed a market-driven adult education system, designed to deliver to employers, learners, and other system customers a new model for defining student success. After briefly discussing the Texas business and economic climate—factors that drove, in part, the Texas legislature to transfer the program in 2013—the article provides demonstrated methods and examples across five dimensions that tell Texas’ story. These examples provide other state and local leaders with ways to meet the demands of WIOA and the expectations of students, employers, and system partners.

The demonstrated methods leaders can consider include the following:

- Take immediate, bold steps to support employer engagement and local workforce integration;
- Develop policy designed to drive change and workforce integration that is not tone deaf and blunt, but rather inclusive and respectful of historical system structures, in order to meet educational needs of *all* students, not just those in the workforce;
- Use grant requirements and curriculum standards to ensure instructors and classrooms provide the models and curriculum needed to expand traditional services and more directly support the employment needs of students;
- Ensure that strategic planning provides the system with a vision, goals, and measures that support transformation and build eagerness in the system; and
- Build performance accountability models that are also responsive and more precisely measure transformation as well as support rational, incremental system growth.

The article closes by describing existing constraints that have continued to impact the AEFLA system from reaching the full potential envisioned by Congress.

WEATHERING THE STORM OF A DYNAMIC LABOR MARKET

Business Climate and the Skills Gap

Businesses thrive when they can identify and hire skilled workers who have transferable skills that allow for career growth within their organization. Before the coronavirus pandemic, many adult learners in AEFLA programs were working, often in two or three jobs, to make ends meet. In Texas, for example, 73% of students at program entry identified last year that they were actively participating in the workforce and were employed.² Increasing the ability of workers who have maintained their jobs during the coronavirus pandemic to perform in more advanced jobs that require increased knowledge, skills, abilities, and workstyles can boost adult learners’ contributions to business sustainability and growth.

² At program entry, students identify if they are either employed; not unemployed, but looking for work; or not participating in the workforce, such as those who are incarcerated, institutionalized, or full-time caregivers.

Similarly, adult education programs with strong connections to employers can play a vital role in reskilling workers who have lost jobs due to the pandemic into high-demand occupations or industries, helping adult learners to adapt to a rapidly transforming labor market and continue to support their families. Because so many students are juggling the demands of work and education, workplace literacy programs are an opportunity for adult educators to meet the needs of both employers and students to support businesses in industries that have been able to retain workers who know company culture, systems, are trusted, and desire career growth.

Alliances with businesses open doors to opportunities, new students, funding, partnerships, and reputations in the community that are impossible for educators alone to achieve. Business leaders who recognize the return on investment of adult education are invaluable champions who promote more effective education policies and models, which can often lead to greater public investment.

The labor market has dramatically changed as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, and the time could not be better for educators to initiate or expand employer engagement and workplace literacy programs. Since the early spring of 2020, the effects of the coronavirus pandemic have quickly transformed a very tight labor market, where employers needed every talented worker they could find and were seeking more creative strategies to find them, into a dynamic one with most sectors suffering skyrocketing unemployment but others rapidly scaling up operations and staffing to address newly emerging needs for workers in in-demand sectors like healthcare, food manufacturing, and transportation, distribution, and logistics.

While it is too soon to fully understand the long-term economic impact of the pandemic aside from the disruption of what had been an historically low unemployment level, adult education providers must now, more than ever, serve as a valuable resource to build the skills of retained workers, assist unemployed workers to identify and upskill into newly in-demand jobs, and be a well-prepared resource for job seekers when the overall labor market strengthens again. Adult education providers that have established good relationships with employers may be an employer's most familiar initial point of contact with the workforce development system of services during the economic upheaval resulting from the pandemic and will continue to be seen as a workforce solution to build their businesses when the economy recovers.

The future near-term labor market will be difficult to predict and, while higher-skilled workers may be available in the labor market, employers may be hesitant to hire them for entry level jobs fearing these workers will immediately leave once the economy recovers. Employers in industries where the long term option of hiring recently unemployed workers with higher skills may not be a prudent plan or immediately cost effective can turn to adult education providers as a low-cost resource. When the economy recovers, many employers will not be able to use wage competition to simply buy their way out of the skills gap and maintain competitive margins. While some who have weathered the economic downturn may turn to options such as outsourcing to temporary labor, increasing investments in automation, and recategorizing job descriptions to strengthen degree or credential requirements in order to obtain the highest skilled workers available to fill job vacancies, not all will. Some employers

who have struggled to find workers with the minimum qualifications and necessary work habits in the past may desire to bring laid off or furloughed employees back and develop their own talent internally by upskilling their returning or new frontline workers. While retraining workers and promoting from within are not new ideas, businesses now view upskilling as a promising source to fill vacancies and grow talent from within (The Perryman Group n.d.). Adult education can be a resource to train—at little or no cost to employers—new workers who know company culture, systems, are trusted, and desire career growth.

Immigration and the Transformation of the Texas Workforce

Texas has enjoyed an amazing track record of business expansion in recent decades, despite having a workforce where basic skills gaps and limited English proficiency rates are high. While U.S.-born baby boomers are rapidly retiring, Texas, unlike some states, is fortunate to have a young and growing population, fueled largely by the migration of workers from outside the U.S. as well as from within the country. Thus, Texas has a large limited English workforce, and that workforce is growing faster than the portion of the workforce with stronger literacy and English skills (Orrenius et al., 2013). This growth is only anticipated to increase.

This limited English workforce is diverse. While many Texans with limited literacy and English skills have low rates of educational attainment from their home country, a portion of English language learners (ELL) are highly skilled and may just need English as a second language (ESL) services. For example, recent research on the Mexican skilled immigrant population in Texas found that over 18% of these individuals had college degrees, and overall, two thirds of them are naturalized U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents (Ruiz Soto & Selee, 2019). These internationally trained ELL professionals are often placed in general ESL classes and do not receive the targeted services they need to capitalize on their professional skill sets. A lack of appropriate services results in high rates of underemployment that impacts communities and local tax revenues through forgone earnings (Batalova & Bachmeier, 2017) These have skills that are untapped and in demand and are often ready and eager to contribute to the workforce.

Company Responses to the Addressing Skills Gap

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Deloitte Development LLC (2018) noted that employers in many sectors were facing staffing challenges due to talent shortages. As the labor market continues to adjust to the pandemic, this landscape is changing to include both slackening demand for workers in some sectors, and growing demand for workers in other sectors, such as healthcare and transportation, distribution, and logistics. Shortages mean that employers must dig deeper into the available workforce to fill positions. Employers have had to loosen not only traditional drug screening requirements (Smith, 2019) but also use filters for high school completion and English literacy to fill positions. Once hired, employers often face challenges training and promoting these workers due to basic skills and high school credential attainment gaps that hinder advancement. Literacy and language deficiencies can have impacts on the ability of companies to maintain competitive production, meet customer service demands, and observe safety standards (Bergson-Shilcock, 2017).

Employers may also be missing out on workers who have limited English, but are highly skilled or have degrees or credentials from outside the U.S. Because of their bilingual and bicultural skills, these workers could be valuable assets to companies and deepen the pool of potential workers if workforce literacy was offered as a more routine part of company training.

In response to these pressures, adult education has become a critical component of human resource, training, and corporate social responsibility functions in many companies. Some companies have started company-managed adult education programs. Even Fortune 500 companies are developing nationwide strategies to address the basic education for their workers. Corporations like McDonalds,³ Tyson Foods,⁴ and UniFirst have implemented corporate-wide workplace literacy programs to address skill gaps in their workforces. For example, according to D. Davis (personal communication, December 4, 2019), Tyson's Upward Academy launched in 2016 in Springdale, Arkansas, to provide ESL, digital literacy, and high school equivalency preparation in 58 Tyson facilities across 17 states. Unlike some corporate solutions to employee upskilling, the Tyson model is conceived and carefully designed in collaboration with state AEFLA agencies and local providers. The company's strategy begins with the AEFLA state director and Tyson staff meeting to develop a local plan with plant managers, local adult education directors, and instructors to customize service delivery.

Adult Education as an Upskilling Solution

Partnering with employers can bring tremendous opportunities to adult educators. Instructors aspire to have a direct impact on the educational and career goals of students, and employers can directly support this. Many providers desire to contribute more responsive services to the employers and partners in their community, and these providers understand they can gain powerful exposure from employers who are benefiting from their adult education services. State agencies also have a strong interest in supporting this engagement given their obligations to core partners in the integrated, employer-driven workforce development system established under WIOA. State AEFLA directors are faced with transforming service delivery around WIOA models like Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education that require full engagement with employers and new performance expectations under measures like Effectiveness in Serving Employers.

Untapped Potential Across the U.S.

Despite the potential that workplace literacy partnerships with employers can bring adult educators, during the 2017-2018 program year, states showed very low enrollments in these programs and 22 states reported *no* students in workplace literacy. In that year, Texas bucked that trend and served 22% of the entire workplace literacy student population across the 50 states and U.S. territories.⁵

3 Archways to Opportunity. Retrieved March 3, 2020, from http://www.archwaystoopportunity.com/about_archways.html

4 Upward Academy. Retrieved March 3, 2020, from <https://www.tysonustainability.com/community/investing-our-team-members>

5 Program year 2017-2018 is the last full year data is currently available. Federal AEFLA performance information is available as of March 3, 2020, at <https://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OVAE/NRS/login.cfm>

Texas stands out in its focus on workforce development. How did state leaders develop an adult education system that could deliver employers, job seekers, and local communities such strong results?

CORRALLING THE HERD TEXAS' TRANSFORMATION TO ADDRESS EMPLOYER DEMAND

By enacting the 2013 transfer of the AEFLA program to TWC, the Texas legislature expressed the importance of adult education's role in employment and the integration of education and skills training.⁶ Transfer of the program, prior to the passage of federal WIOA reauthorization, positioned Texas to become a national leader in the transformation of adult education as a full workforce development partner under the federal law.⁷ As a workforce agency operating a wide variety of other workforce and education programs in addition to all the WIOA titles,⁸ TWC was well positioned to ensure that Texas Adult Education and Literacy (Texas AEL) was a solution to the upskilling challenges faced by employers and a critical component to supporting the workforce and economic competitiveness of Texas employers.

The transfer of a multimillion-dollar state agency serving over 80,000 students is an enormous, complicated effort that takes time. When faced with such a dramatic system change, state agencies often take small, measured approaches and pilot models, before going big. Texas, however, promptly sent a strong message to employers and providers that it “meant business.” State leaders immediately promoted and supported the growth of new models and relationships with the business community after the program transfer.

In the first months of implementation, the TWC executive leadership, including the Commissioners, Executive Director, and newly-hired state adult education director, toured the large state in a series of town meetings to hear local concerns, needs, and hopes for a transformed adult education system. Upon return, TWC took decisive steps to support and fund strategic efforts designed to create linkages to employers, engage workforce training providers, and facilitate local strategy development between adult education providers and local workforce development boards (workforce boards). The goal was to quickly enhance system services and broaden options available to students through local, collaborative efforts.

6 See the Texas Sunset Commission's review of the Texas Education Agency more information on legislative intent from the Texas Sunset Commission website. Retrieved on March 3, 2020, from https://www.sunset.texas.gov/public/uploads/files/reports/Education%20Agency%20Staff%20Report%202013%2083rd%20Leg_0.pdf

7 Texas is not alone in enacting an organizational realignment of adult education within state government. A half-dozen states have now passed legislation to transfer the AEFLA program to with labor or workforce agencies, five of them house adult education in Technical and Adult Education Workforce agencies, and 17 house them in state higher education agencies, often in workforce or economic development divisions. See a review of state adult education offices from the U.S. Department of Education website. Retrieved on March 3, 2020, from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/factsh/adult-education-basic-grant.pdf>

8 TWC is responsible for the delivery of 23 workforce programs and services including Titles I-IV of WIOA, the Senior Community Service Employment Program, the employment program for recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families TANF, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training, Child Care, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Registered Apprenticeship programs and a variety of other state-funded workforce development programs.

“GOING ALL IN” BOLD INITIAL STRATEGIC STEPS TO SUPPORT EMPLOYERS

During the first year of transition, Texas dedicated several million dollars of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) section 223 state leadership funding to support the following capacity building efforts. Each was designed to support employers, facilitate workforce system integration, and develop career pathways efforts.

Accelerate Texas

Just four months after the transfer, TWC invested \$1 million in a partnership with the state’s higher education agency to expand Accelerate Texas, the state’s integrated education and training (IET) model. Accelerate Texas is implemented through the community college system and was designed prior to WIOA. The investment signaled the importance of IET as a Texas AEL hallmark and leveraged the expertise of Texas community colleges that had been piloting integrated models like I-BEST.⁹

Workforce Integration Grants

To accelerate connectivity between employers and workforce boards, Texas funded over \$850,000 to its 28 local workforce boards to help them collaborate with local adult education providers in the development of integrated workforce system services, as well as to foster increased program visibility, and create linkages to employers needing adult education services. These funds sent a strong message to workforce boards that adult education was a full partner in the Texas workforce system. They also underscored the strategic start Texas leaders were making to shift local adult education service delivery toward increased *employer-driven* objectives. The goal was to not only encourage adult learners and jobseekers to co-enroll in adult education and workforce services but also to motivate workforce centers to add workplace literacy to their portfolio of options for businesses. Another objective was to leverage customized training opportunities for IET through programs such as Apprenticeship Texas¹⁰ and the Texas Skills Development Fund.¹¹

Incentive Awards

To focus the state’s “eyes on the prize” of workforce integration, an incentive funding model was established to provide annual awards between \$20,000 and \$40,000¹² for outstanding employer partnerships. Beginning in 2014, awards have been given out at the state’s nationally recognized workforce conference, an event attended by over 1,800 people including many employers. The awards highlight new exciting provider collaborations with employers and serve as another tool in signaling the importance of employers in the Texas AEL system transformation.

9 More information on the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Program (I-BEST) see Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges website. Retrieved on March 3, 2020, from <https://www.sbctc.edu/colleges-staff/programs-services/i-best/>

10 More information on Apprenticeship Texas see the Texas Workforce Commission website. Retrieved on March 3, 2020, from <https://twc.texas.gov/programs/apprenticeship-program-overview>

11 More information on the Skills Development Fund Texas see the Texas Workforce Commission website. Retrieved on March 3, 2020, from <https://twc.texas.gov/partners/skills-development-fund>

12 The TWC Commissioners direct award amounts each year, and distributions have carried slightly over the years.

Site-Based Workplace Literacy Projects

Texas knew that to truly deliver on employer expectations, significant investments had to be made in workplace literacy efforts. In 2014 Texas funded, through WIOA Section 223 funds, the \$3.3-million Site-Based Workplace Literacy Project grant program to augment local adult education grantees' ability to develop and implement workplace literacy programs in support of businesses and local economic competitiveness and to reach learners who could not attend traditional classes. Grantees were required to work with employers, employer organizations and their workforce board to identify demand and develop the model. In its first year, these projects served 1,381 working Texans and their employers.

“Going all in” paid off. Rather than waiting for local capacity to develop incrementally, quick action had multiplier effects that provided Texas AEL with a strategic start for program success. These initiatives positioned Texas AEL to support effective local employer engagement efforts and to begin building a robust career pathways network to support student success. These projects also sent an important message to providers, workforce boards, and local stakeholders that “true north” for Texas AEL was aimed at delivering on employer and student demand for employment and training results. It also built confidence in these partners and empowered providers to be full collaborators in the transformation. Soon these efforts would become critical elements for building a sustainable foundation after WIOA passed.

Demonstrated Approaches

Texas implemented several strategies that other state and local leaders can use to facilitate strong collaborations between employers and education providers:

Deploy Programs Quickly. Rather than spending considerable time “getting it right” or “playing around the edges,” Texas invested in well-planned employer and workforce development engagement projects to initiate and build awareness, excitement, knowledge, and examples.

Initiate Multiple Strategies. Texas used several diverse employer engagement efforts to immediately demonstrate to adult educators, businesses, and local workforce partners that the agency had a firm vision to support under-skilled workers, was committed, and was putting sufficient investments on the table to foster new partnerships for enhanced service delivery.

Celebrate Achievement. Incentives like awards provided an opportunity for providers, employers, and other stakeholders to celebrate and reflect on meaningful accomplishments. Social media promotion helped providers and employers take a moment to brag to their peers and communities, which had significant multiplier effects for the expansion of employer engagement efforts.

HOW THE WEST WAS WON POLICY TOOLS TO DRIVE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT MODELS

Leaders cannot drive dramatic transformation simply through well-placed special projects.

Sustained change management takes careful application of appropriate policy and program requirements. Whether it is local policy or state regulatory development, the rules matter!

Texas leaders used their initial rulemaking for Texas AEL in 2013–14 to listen well to stakeholders, set a vision outlining core system elements to establish a workforce-driven system, and signal the philosophical pivot that would be required to accomplish it.

In the rule-making public comment, Texas providers voiced two broad areas of concern: How quickly did TWC expect adult education to pivot toward delivering increased employer engagement? And how did Texas' tremendous low-skilled, English language learner population figure into a system that might drive requirements to “cream” for higher-skilled students to meet employment objectives? Texas leaders listened and addressed these and other concerns head on.

Leaders knew that transformation in a large system requires time and resources. So TWC used the preamble of the rules to signal a measured, multiyear strategic approach for change that would ease provider concerns that the state would throw the baby—that is, existing providers—out with the bathwater:

The Commission recognizes that the increase in career and higher education outcomes will occur gradually over multiple years through enhanced enrollment and performance criteria, incentives for innovative acceleration, integration and transition models, and related technical assistance and professional development to support expansion. (Texas Workforce Commission, 2014)

While providing a crucial signal as to how TWC intended to initiate change, Texas also addressed the importance of its existing, more traditional adult education services, such as family literacy and the current students in those programs. It was important to make connections between the rules and the provider's existing services and expertise with low-skill and English language learners.

As a workforce agency, leaders knew that employers were struggling to meet workforce demand and could benefit from adult education services. In fact, as far back as a decade, TWC worked with Texas employers, including those in-demand industries like manufacturing, who were having to make a transition to bilingual—Spanish and English—training models to ensure a sufficient production-available workforce in their communities.¹³ Texas leaders also knew that low-skilled and English language learners needed training, but college training services often placed artificially high skill thresholds for entering training programs—such as high school completion or advanced English-language ability—even when employers didn't require these thresholds at the jobs for which the training programs were designed. These legacy models had to be reconsidered through integrated education and training service approaches.

13 As far back as 2004, TWC initiated bilingual customized training and ESL services in advanced manufacturing for employers like Universal Forest Products, who is a major lumber supplier for Home Depot and has several plants in Texas. In 2007, TWC published a guide on these models to foster statewide expansion that, while over a decade old, still has relevance to workforce and adult education professionals. The guide was available as of March 3, 2020, from <https://twc.texas.gov/files/partners/lep-guide-workforce-professionals-twc.pdf>

Texas rules sought to address existing services for low-skilled students and to disrupt traditional restrictions to postsecondary education or training systems by underscoring a commitment to career pathways for *all adult learners*, not just those at the top of the skills continuum:

While there may be a correlation between students functioning at higher levels and work or career readiness, data indicates that many students functioning at lower levels are already working in low-wage, low-skill jobs and often enter AEL services to gain the skills or English fluency needed to advance in the workforce... The Commission strongly supports the use of innovative career pathway programs that provide opportunities for students at all levels to obtain incremental success, and ultimately to achieve their goals...regardless of functional level. (Texas Workforce Commission, 2014)

Through the initial rule-making and public comment process, Texas signaled a measured approach to system change as well as the importance of workforce development for all students who desired it, no matter their level. The goal was to meet employer-demand and create a comprehensive approach for services that would reach its largest student populations.

Demonstrated Approaches

Texas constructed strategies that other state and local leaders may find useful to establishing policy and funding frameworks which will support increases in adult education's orientation towards workforce development and employer-focused services:

Look to the Future. When developing rules, be sure to not only establish a vision for a system designed to support employers and future workforce development but also incorporate critical elements of traditional practice.

Directly Face Concerns. Develop effective program requirements by listening well and tackling provider concerns head on. Providers, after all, are the delivery mechanism for change and cannot be alienated or disenfranchised if leaders want to accomplish their mission.

Find Win-Wins. Use win-wins to address primary concerns and possible constraints. Texas made connections between employers struggling to employ English language learners and the fact that this was the largest population that providers served. Rather than defaulting to the behaviors of some postsecondary education or training models, which established screening requirements for skills beyond those required by employers, Texas sent a message, and later made investments, in developing effective integrated education and training models that supported students across the skill spectrum, including English language learners.

Stress Rational Urgency. System transformation driven by a legislative mandate can lead to unrealistic expectations and timelines that can reduce, not build commitment from customers and stakeholders. Signal a firm but reasonable approach to timelines and innovation deployment when developing rules but also signal an understanding of needed capacity building while committing to a willingness to invest.

NO LONE RANGERS SPEEDING COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS FOR INTEGRATED CAREER PATHWAYS THROUGH GRANT REQUIREMENTS

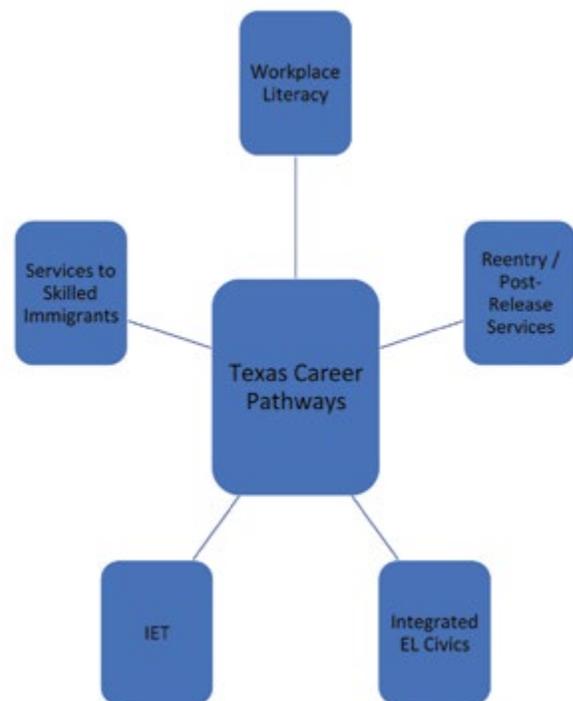
Strategic policy and state rules alone cannot drive a vision. Developing increased employer-focused adult education services requires states to facilitate and fund a careful interplay of operational grant requirements, funding, curriculum, capacity-building supports, and performance measures. These tools augment and complement the vision promoted in policy to build and support operational system capacity. While the Texas context is one of a state office, local leaders can establish a similar array of investments, requirements, and measures to drive enhancements that build employer engagement, increase the number of students entering training and those working or seeking employment.

Excuses off the Table: Grant Requirements Drive Partnerships and Pathways

With state rules in place and the aforementioned foundational capacity building projects underway, Texas released its first AEL grant solicitation under TWC oversight in 2014. The grant solicitation underscored the state's commitment to developing a comprehensive, workforce-focused adult education system to meet employer demand and required elements, such as integrated career pathways services, of all grantees.

To ease statewide adoption, grants allowed for a flexible framework of programmatic choices within the overall strategy of career pathways to allow providers the tools and options needed to customize service delivery to best meet local student, community, and employer demand. Released prior to the passage of federal WIOA legislation, the framework included a pre-WIOA definition of career pathways¹⁴ that allowed providers to select one or more options from three service types:

- integrated education and training based on a pre-WIOA definition;¹⁵
- workplace literacy in collaboration with employers; and
- services for internationally trained skilled immigrants.



¹⁴ The definition was based on the Joint Dear Colleague letter released on April 4, 2012 by the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services and Labor. Retrieved March 3, 2020, from https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ofa/doe_hhs_and_dol_issue_joint_letter_promoting_the_use_of_career_pathways.pdf

¹⁵ Defined in U.S. Department of Education Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education Program Memorandum FY 2010-02, (2010). Retrieved March 3, 2020, from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/aeffa-funds-for-iet.pdf>

After WIOA passed, Texas expanded these options to other employment-related AEFLA activities, such as Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (which Texas branded “Integrated EL Civics”), and reentry and post-release services for individuals in correctional settings. In addition, in 2015, Texas also began to require all grantees to implement integrated education and training, including within Integrated EL Civics, and allowed grant funds to be spent on the technical training component of the model.

By requiring career pathways services, but allowing some flexibility within this distributed model, Texas ensured providers could customize services to meet local employment demand in a large and geographically diverse state, as well as meet the career advancement needs of distinct populations in the workforce including incumbent workers, English language learners, justice-involved individuals, and skilled immigrants.

No Provider Left Behind

By requiring grantees to implement career pathways to receive funding, TWC signaled that it meant business in meeting employer demand. But the agency also knew that initially many traditional adult education providers, such as those providing family literacy and a general life skills curriculum, would not be prepared to implement these models or may not see these workforce models as part of their organization’s mission. The threat of losing these valuable providers was real, especially since TWC’s objective was to augment, not replace, traditional services and services like family literacy were required by state law.

To respond to this potential hazard, Texas promoted partnerships and consortia grant models and fostered their development through the aforementioned workforce integration grants provided to the state’s 28 workforce boards. Allowable under both WIA and later WIOA, these consortia partnerships allow local communities to leverage the strength of historical service delivery models, such as stand-alone education and family literacy providers, while incorporating organizations that could provide employer connectivity and training, such as workforce boards and community colleges. This option proved to support local grant services that were multifaceted. This option also fostered alliances that did not ask traditional providers to initially stretch too far beyond their missions and capacity, but rather to leverage existing capacities and expertise within their communities to support students across a spectrum of services.

Curriculum Investments to Support Transformation

Texas knew that to support and build the employer-focused, workforce development pathways envisioned in state rules and required as a condition for funding, it had to ensure this vision made it to the classroom. At the end of the day, teachers were the ones who would match what adult learners are taught in class with the skills needed by Texas businesses.

In 2016, Texas established a partnership between the business community and adult education experts to revise and align the adult education content standards—academic learning standards aligned to the Texas college and career standards—with the discrete skill requirements needed to succeed in jobs and careers. The task was to identify the skills employers required, document how these skills aligned with the basic skills students needed,

and, most importantly, ensure these competencies were adequately described to have relevance for instructors in the classroom.

Over 30 employers contributed to the effort. The business leadership team included a former oil and gas executive, a construction trades entrepreneur, a nationally recognized healthcare human resource leader, a manufacturing training manager, and a corporate distribution center manager. Many of these leaders had experience partnering with educators to help prepare students for work in their sectors. Several had on-site learning programs at their companies including English as a Second Language classes.

Business experts worked alongside providers, curriculum developers, and researchers to align the Texas's academic content standards to the detailed work activities required by business across four industry sectors key to the Texas economy: advanced manufacturing; construction and extraction; healthcare sciences; and transportation, distribution, and logistics. These sectors were selected because they had had documented growth, were well-represented across most regions of the state, and had well-defined pathways from entry-level jobs that were accessible to adult education students into middle- and higher-skilled occupations.

The industry experts provided specific work-related examples tied to positions and tasks in their sectors. Researchers conducted research about high-demand entry- and intermediate-level jobs in the federal O*NET database to confirm these critical characteristics. Providers used their experience in the curriculum development, instruction, and the development and delivery of workplace literacy programs to align the work requirements to academic competencies and validate the information.

The resulting Texas AEL Content Standards 2.0¹⁶ illustrate how academic standards can directly align to employment demands in entry and middle skills jobs while maintaining the competencies needed to prepare students for educational progress and transition to postsecondary education or training. Instructors in Texas now had a tool to develop curriculum and ensure learning activities that support students in better understanding how what they were learning applied to work.

Texas's work strategically designing its grant requirements related to workforce development objectives as well as the alignment of the content standards to work requirements allowed for the state to more rapidly expand services that would address the employment needs of both business and students.

Demonstrated Approaches

Texas used several promising approaches state and local leaders can replicate to leverage grant resources and support curriculum reform:

Underscore That Employers, Not Just Students, Are Customers of Adult Education Services. Employers are at the table to lend expertise, resources, and support. Most students,

¹⁶ The standards as well as videos of some members of the of the business leadership team are available at the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning website. Retrieved March 3, 2020, from <https://tcall.tamu.edu/taesp.html>

after all, are seeking career advancement and state and local adult education leaders must take deliberate actions to deliver on that expectation.

Drive a Vision. Address more than just minimum federal requirements. Texas established distinct structures and curriculum designed to support employers, workforce development as well as adult education.

Don't Support Go-It-Alone Models. Avoid approaches that stretch too far beyond providers' individual missions or capacities but rather build comprehensive multifaceted service delivery systems that leverage the skills and expertise of diverse organizations who can “do what they do best.”

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED A BOLD MILESTONE DROVE TRANSFORMATION

While organizations often believe they can bring about effective change through policy tools, grant requirements, and curriculum alone, these tools are limited in their ability to create the needed community support, awareness, and excitement to facilitate quick transformation and sustained change. Providers and local stakeholders need a plan and milestones to aim for.

Texas bolstered and promoted the vision outlined in state rule and had taken immediate steps to implement a new direction for adult education through grant requirements and significant capacity building investments. Having learned the new program and what system customers and stakeholders required and needed, Texas was sufficiently prepared to initiate a five-year strategic plan to set longer term objectives and established stretch goals and metrics for career pathways in the state, including measures for workplace literacy.¹⁷

For the plan, the state's Advisory Committee made up of employers, providers, and workforce board members suggested an enrollment milestone for career pathways to give the state a bold goal on which to focus. Like Tennessee's *Drive to 55* or Texas's own *60 x 30TX* state goals, which both focused on college enrollments, Texas adopted an *adult education enrollment milestone of 20,000 unduplicated students in career pathways¹⁸ by 2020*.

The 20K x 2020 milestone, and related strategies and objectives, underscored the agency's commitment to providing under-skilled Texans with a response to their workforce development needs as well as the importance of services to employers:

Objective 2: Increase employer and business community roles in AEL.

- **Tactic 1:** Engage businesses, chambers of commerce, and the Texas Association of Business in developing strategies for increasing employer engagement in AEL.

17 The strategic plan and related reports to the Texas Legislature can be found on the Texas Workforce Commission website. Retrieved March 3, 2020. from <https://tcall.tamu.edu/twcael/2015-2020StrategicPlan.htm>

18 In the Strategic Plan for AEL 2015–2020, career pathways were defined as integrated education and training models, workplace and work-based AEL models with employers, and services to internationally trained English language learner professionals. Enrollments in Re-entry and Post release models were included after the implementation of WIOA.

- **Tactic 2:** Fund and support with technical assistance work-based projects with employers to support business expansion and build employers as AEL allies.
- **Tactic 3:** Engage employers and employer organizations and expand investments that have proven effective within the 28 Local Workforce Development Boards in efforts to align AEL levels to occupationally specific skills and work-readiness requirements, including industry-recognized certifications.

The strategic plan framed the technicalities of grant requirements into a broader context and vision for state leaders, local communities, and employers. TWC leaders continually promoted progress toward the 20K x 2020 milestone, and it became a positive rallying point that messaged to local providers that their demanding work was paying off within a larger, highly visible state context.

Texas providers exceeded the 20K x 2020 student career pathways goal two years early in 2018.

This visibility paid off. In 2018, Texas adult education providers *exceeded the 20,000 career pathways goal two years early with more than 22,000 students enrolled in career pathways*. By 2020, the state had surpassed 30,000 students in career pathways programs. Faster than expected, providers were supporting employers in preparing a considerable amount of workers for jobs.

Strategic plans often suffer common pitfalls including being too unwieldy to implement, missing or ignoring objectives of key stakeholders, or not being adequately promoted after development. Too often, plans are simply ignored after a tremendous effort or simply become compliance exercises to meet a requirement or grant deliverable. Texas avoided these common pitfalls by involving the right stakeholders in the process; addressing, not ignoring, the critical priorities; and considering the feasibility of implementation and costs when developing objectives and measures.

Demonstrated Approaches

Texas used several approaches to strategic plans that state and local leaders can use to facilitate successful implementation plans as well as promote important objectives:

Understand That Policy and Grant Requirements Alone Do Not Create a Vision. Leaders must forecast well-considered objectives and measures and promote them confidently and broadly within and outside the adult education system.

Authentically Engage Employers and Stakeholders. Engage the employers and stakeholders in strategic planning efforts and develop employer engagement goals to focus providers.

Identify Numeric Goals. These goals should represent the synthesis of programmatic objectives.

Wildly and Consistently Promote the Vision. Keep the vision and milestones in front of the stakeholders, executive leadership, and the public.

PUTTING MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS FUNDING AND PERFORMANCE TOOLS

To help foster strong and swift implementation of services to employers and development of career pathways, Texas applied several performance and funding tools to compliment grant requirements as well as recognize and invest in the work needed for expansion.

Unlike some states, Texas requires providers to meet specific enrollment targets to support the state in meeting an annual legislatively set adult education enrollment target.¹⁹ For the 20K x 2020 career pathways milestone, Texas also applied specific career pathway targets to local providers. Customized models like workplace literacy and career pathway programs often yield smaller enrollments than traditional classes costs per student rise.²⁰ This can be perceived as resulting in a lower traditional return to the community. Texas found that it was positioned to ask providers to do more (career pathways) with the same cost-per as traditional

With limited funds, Texas leaders chose to invest in increased value that would benefit employers, workers, and the economy, rather than more traditional services at lower costs.

services. The initial approach to address this was to require providers to leverage other local funds or grants to make up the increased costs. Despite these constraints, many providers stepped up and identified local funds to cover the increased costs and there was progress on the 20K x 2020 milestone, but it was slow. Texas capitalized on this overall positive transformational environment with an equally transformative performance approach.

State leaders then developed a differentiated target setting and funding model to drive the state toward the 20K x 2020 career pathways goal and increase services that would benefit employers. The model established a cost per target for “basic services”— like ESL classes— and then cost premiums on top of the base amount for career pathways models making it easier for grantees to implement and expand efforts. Each year, grantees negotiated with TWC to set targets across three models, referred to as tiers:

- **Tier I:** Basic Services. (i.e., high school equivalency, ESL) at approximately \$700 per student²¹
- **Tier II:** Intensive Services. Grantees could select targets across three distinct types of services: workplace literacy with employers, services for internationally trained

¹⁹ In the initial two years of implementation TWC established local grant targets with each provider primarily by dividing their grant allocation by an average cost which was calculated by dividing this allocation by the state target. In 2015, for example, Texas had a target of 101,000 students which resulted in an average cost of \$608.80 per participant. This cost per was applied to local providers who have specific enrollment targets.

²⁰ Texas found the costs were up to four times as much per student when technical training and other costs, such as customization for employers and case management were factored in.

²¹ Average costs are described. Costs vary slightly each year due to variations in service tier mixed and allocations. These cost pers are used only in setting enrollment targets and are not a cap, meaning providers can do higher costs models, but must balance those with lower costs models as long as they meet with enrollment targets within their overall budget.

professionals, and transition to reentry and post release services at approximately \$1,200 per student (Tier I + \$500).

- **Tier III:** Integrated Education & Training. This included separate targets for IET and Integrated EL Civics with a required IET component at approximately \$2,500.00 (Tier I + \$1,800).

While the approach worked, there was still the same size pie to cut; state and federal funding had not increased. This meant agency leadership had to reduce the state enrollment target: Something that, just a couple of years prior would have been impossible due to program growth expectations. Leaders understood that while overall enrollment numbers would go down, *value*, in terms of services that would benefit employers, workers and the economy, would go up.

Demonstrated Approaches

Texas identified important strategies state and local leaders can use to ensure that funding and performance adequately support and measure increases in workforce and employer-focused services.

Use Performance Tools to Drive Goals. However, this should be done in a rational, strategic way that eases the burden on providers so that they can focus and implement objectives.

Make the Case With State Leaders. Show them that, to realize workforce and training objectives to benefit employers, reasonable compromises must be made unless there is increased funding.

CIRCLE THE WAGONS

Building Employment Solutions While Matching Employer Demand With AEFLA Performance

So where does Texas go from here? The coronavirus pandemic has already created an accelerating demand for adult education services as individuals in our communities are laid off. Close relationships with employers are critically important now more than ever as adult educators have become, almost overnight, frontline responders to the urgent reemployment needs for individuals in their communities whose lives have been recently disrupted and no longer have the skills to be competitive from exiting jobs. The U.S. economy has been so strong for so long that many educators have never operated in an environment with higher unemployment. Employer engagement can have a tremendous impact on students' confidence that adult education can truly lead to new jobs for those recently displaced.

The state has found that the benefits of committing well-placed investments and placing deliberate attention to engaging employers and developing workforce models pays off. These steps facilitated the necessary philosophical transformation and capacity building needed to meet state legislative objectives and strongly position the state for WIOA. The next step is to develop a better understanding of whether these programs are meeting employer needs and to continue to refine WIOA performance accountability models for these services. After over five years of WIOA implementation, Texas, and adult education programs nationwide,

find challenges with implementing employer-focused services, like workplace literacy, due to federal performance accountability constraints.

WIOA places a strong emphasis on an employer-driven system and underscores this, perhaps most directly, through the inclusion of employers themselves as eligible recipients of AEFLA funds²² and with performance measures such as Effectiveness in Serving Employers. Regrettably though, the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) has elected to limit states' ability to use several of the available measurable skill gain indicators designed to measure progress toward a credential or employment. Some measures, such as the Progress Milestone²³ indicator, are intended to measure customized services to employers. OCTAE has elected to limit states largely to standardized tests. This restriction is not in statute nor in regulation but was executed through subregulatory guidance found in the National Reporting System (NRS) Technical Assistance Guide.²⁴

Because employers may engage in workplace classes for very specific basic skill demands that can be accomplished over a short period, or are teaching very customized skills, students may be unlikely to show educational functioning level-gain progress on standardized tests. This makes the provision of workplace literacy classes much less attractive to states and local providers.

Prior to WIOA, OCTAE had recognized these constraints and developed a reporting option in previous versions of the NRS Guidelines. This option, called Work-Based Project Learner Activity (Work-Based Project), provided for performance measurement alternatives for short term customized employer-based programs. OCTAE removed this option during WIOA rule making and elected not to use the Skills Progression indicator, which was similar to the Work-Based Project provision.

In public comment, Texas encouraged the U.S. Department of Education to afford states local flexibility to meet employer needs and reinstate the option as well as implement all of the measurable skill gains authorized under the statute in order to accurately measure the outcomes of workplace models. In response to the comment, OCTAE stated the Work-Based Project option was removed as a reporting option because historically, very few states used the optional table, and it was not required by WIOA (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). As planning builds around WIOA reauthorization, removing the U.S. Department of Education's ability to regulate performance accountability requirements should be a top consideration.

Texas providers are doing work that has value to employers, but some of their biggest successes are invisible in national data because the current federal reporting framework prevents states from appropriately reporting certain outcomes for workplace literacy

22 Employers are eligible recipients for AEFLA funds, in partnership with other eligible entities such as a local education agency, institution of higher education, or community-based organization.

23 In WIOA, the performance indicator is described as: Satisfactory or better progress report, towards established milestones, such as completion of on-the-job training or completion of one year of an apprenticeship program or similar milestones, from an employer or training provider who is providing training.

24 Available at the National Reporting System website. Retrieved March 3, 2020, from <https://www.nrsweb.org/policy-data/nrs-ta-guide>

programs, effectively hiding successful models that help learners to upskill with in-demand skills that employers value.²⁵ Inclusion of the Progress Milestone indicator would provide states and local providers with a WIOA measure similar to the Work-Based Project, and allow local providers, with employers, the flexibility needed to design workplace literacy and other services to employers and better address the intent of WIOA.

CONCLUSION

The experience in Texas exemplifies how a state can offer policies, programs, and funding tools that can drive adult education services toward meeting the workforce development objectives in WIOA as well as support the expansion of workforce literacy programs. Establishing intentional, deeply rooted, employer partnerships can bring valuable benefits to states, local AEFLA systems, and, most importantly, students who aspire for educational and career development. These services support local providers who are seeking to find creative ways to offer more to the employers and partners in their community as well as gain the powerful benefits exposure through employers can bring. State AEFLA agencies, many of whom have struggled implementing WIOA and have obligations to their core system partners, can better deliver the requirements expected in a fully integrated, employer-driven workforce development system established under WIOA.

To meet the expectation for the adult education system envisioned by both the Texas legislature and Congress, Texas applied an interrelated combination of tools and strategies to transform an adult education system rooted in traditional, academic only services to one delivering increased employment-focused outcomes from students. Demonstrated efforts included quick and bold action to support employer engagement and local workforce integration; deliberate policy and grant requirements to drive change that will maintain valuable system elements; instructional supports and frameworks to reach classrooms and support instructors; and careful planning and performance management to support transformation and raise the profile of accomplishment.

State and local Texas leaders worked together to drive a change process that other leaders can use to implement enhancements to address local employer demand for skilled workers and the career aspirations of students while meeting WIOA demands. ⌘

Anson Green is an adult education, workforce, and community college trailblazer. His passion is deploying innovative services for low-skilled Texans to meet their life ambitions. He loves challenging legacy perspectives and developing pioneering solutions. Mr. Green led the transformation of the over \$80 million Texas adult education program into a workforce solution for dropouts and immigrants seeking responsiveness to their college and career aspirations. He's a full partner to Texas employers in supporting Texas economic growth. Mr. Green has served as a national research fellow, has spoken to congressional briefings on effective approaches to middle-skill advancement, and had teaching posts at several colleges, universities and public schools.

25 The limitation to standardized tests has also had impacts on all system performance during the pandemic as there are currently no approved tests that can be completed by students remotely.

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GEORGIA'S STATEWIDE PUSH FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT LEVERAGING THE FULL POTENTIAL OF INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Rosaline Tio

Latanya Overby

Technical College System of Georgia Office of Adult Education

ABSTRACT

With the start of the three-year grant cycle beginning in 2017–2018, the Georgia Office of Adult Education (GOAE) implemented a state policy to require all adult education providers, not just Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) grantees, to develop and implement at least one integrated education and training (IET) program for adult education students. The goal of the state mandate was to emphasize Georgia's focus on workforce development and career pathways among adult education providers. Through hard work and collaboration, by 2019–2020, all 30 of Georgia's adult education providers have at least one IET program in place. Adult education students participating in IET programs are successfully gaining employment, transitioning into postsecondary education or training, and advancing along career pathways. GOAE will continue to develop and promote initiatives such as IET that support workforce development in Georgia, ensuring all Georgians are on a path towards self-sufficiency and a family-sustaining wage.

Keywords: integrated education and training, IET, workforce development, adult education, Georgia

RECOGNIZING THE NEED FOR INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING (IET)

With the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the creation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in 2014, the Georgia Office of Adult Education (GOAE), housed at the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), saw an opportunity to change the tide of workforce development for adult education providers in the state. Although the elements of WIA and WIOA were in place, GOAE saw a unique opportunity with integrated education and training (IET). IET offers adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for the purpose of educational and career advancement. IET is an allowable adult education and literacy activity, but WIOA only requires IET for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) programs.

IET programs can put adult education students on a fast track to employment, a better job, a higher wage, and ultimately, a career pathway, while simultaneously pursuing their high school equivalency or improving their English. GOAE did not want to limit these opportunities to only IELCE participants; the office believed any adult education student who walked through the door should have access to an IET program as part of its mission to assist adults

in attaining self-sufficiency and a family-sustaining wage. Therefore, with the start of the new three-year grant cycle beginning in 2017–2018, GOAE implemented a state policy to require all adult education providers, not just IELCE grantees, to develop and implement at least one IET program for adult education students.

The goal of the state mandate for IET programs was to emphasize the focus on workforce development and career pathways among adult education providers. GOAE's decision was also timely. Around the same time as the creation of WIOA, Georgia Governor Nathan Deal began the High Demand Career Initiative (HDCI). The HDCI was a statewide initiative involving employers and educational institutions that aimed to identify workforce needs in order for Georgia to remain the number one state in the nation for business (Technical College System of Georgia, n.d.). The HDCI ultimately developed an Occupations List that identifies key industries that are in demand, pay an above-average entry-level wage, and are considered strong options for pursuing a successful career in Georgia. Students pursuing certificate or diploma programs in one of the industries identified through the HDCI are eligible for the lottery-funded HOPE Career Grant that can cover tuition costs. The larger push for workforce development in Georgia at the time spurred GOAE to leverage IET as the bridge between adult education students and postsecondary education and employment opportunities.

STATEWIDE ROLLOUT OF IET

Given the statewide mandate for IET programs, adult education providers needed time, guidance, and support from GOAE to begin developing programs. During 2017–2018, GOAE held several statewide trainings on the components of an IET, developing a single set of learning objectives (SSLOs), and identifying local in-demand industries and workforce partners to serve as the training provider. Georgia's adult education providers were at different stages of IET development and implementation; some providers participated in Accelerating Opportunities, a previous grant sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that supported dual enrollment opportunities for adult education students. As such, GOAE facilitated forums for early implementers to share best practices with other providers. GOAE recognized that a statewide rollout required a joint effort among all providers to support each other. GOAE also had to set up its management information system to collect data on IET participants for federal reporting.

By 2018–2019, more adult education providers were ready to start implementing their IET programs. GOAE continued to provide professional development and technical assistance to local programs to support IET development. GOAE also encouraged local programs to identify external sources of funding outside of WIOA for IET so that the programs could be sustainable moving forward. Many programs identified funding streams through their local workforce development boards and WIOA Title I partners, ultimately establishing stronger relationships between adult education providers and their local workforce development systems. By the end of the year, 13 adult education providers (42% of Georgia's WIOA-funded providers) offered IET programs serving 217 adult education students across the state. The IET programs addressed local industry needs, many of which also aligned with HDCI industries, such as

industrial technologies (e.g., manufacturing, welding), healthcare and nursing, and cyber and related fields.

In the current 2019–2020 year, all 30 of Georgia's adult education providers are offering at least one IET program as of February 2020. Additionally, 461 students are participating in IET so far, more than double the total served in 2018–2019. After the strong push from GOAE and a steep learning curve for all adult education providers, GOAE is proud of the tremendous growth in IET participation over the last two years.

THE IMPACT OF IET

The greatest advantage of IET is the positive impact an IET program can have on adult learners in Georgia. As a result of GOAE's statewide emphasis on implementing IET programs, local adult education providers have witnessed the transformative impact their IET programs have had on students. The following vignettes highlight a few examples of the positive impact IET has had on Georgia's adult learners.

Gwinnett Technical College

Gwinnett Technical College (GTC) serves the northeast metro Atlanta region. When program leaders learned about IET and the statewide mandate, their first step was to consult their local workforce development board's plan. Knowing that IETs must focus on in-demand career pathways, GTC identified the high-demand industries in their local area—information technology, healthcare, and logistics. Program leaders then considered the existing training opportunities through GTC's Department of Continuing Education and local employer needs. Through this collaborative process, GTC ultimately decided to pursue two initial IET programs in medical administrative assisting and information technology. GTC also successfully partnered with their local workforce development board and WIOA Title I provider to secure funding for students to participate in the IET programs.

GTC designed their first IET programs to last for 10 weeks, establishing the name "Take Ten" to recruit students to the IET. Take Ten provided an opportunity for students to obtain a desired certification in a high-demand industry while simultaneously earning their high school equivalency in just 10 weeks. By intentionally focusing on addressing the economic needs of their local area, GTC created excellent postsecondary and career opportunities for its IET participants. After seeing the success of the IET programs, GTC expanded its program by adding phlebotomy as another IET program to address a local workforce need.

Through the Take Ten program so far, IET participants have earned their high school equivalency, obtained an industry-recognized credential, and either found jobs or enrolled in postsecondary education to continue their training. For instance, several adult learners who completed the medical administrative assistant IET program are now employed as patient aides or bilingual medical administrative assistants. One student who completed the information technology IET decided to enroll at GTC to pursue an Associate's Degree in computer science and also secured an internship with GTC's information technology department. Similarly, another student who completed the phlebotomy IET also enrolled in GTC's Associate Degree program for phlebotomy. GTC also has boot camps before the start of

the IET to provide a foundation of soft skills and build students' confidence to be successful in the program. In a matter of just a couple months, Take Ten students complete the program with a high school equivalency, industry-recognized credentials, a renewed sense of purpose, and a clear pathway for a self-sustaining career.

Moving forward, GTC's success with Take Ten has put the program on the map among local employers, opening more doors for new IETs in the future. GTC is beginning a new welding IET program after a local manufacturing company and the Department of Continuing Education approached program leaders with the employer's need for welders. Through this new IET program, students will begin paid internships midway through the IET, and if they remain successful throughout the IET, the company will offer students full-time jobs. By leveraging the full potential of IET for its students, GTC is putting more adult learners on a clear path towards educational attainment and career advancement.

Savannah Technical College

Savannah Technical College (STC) is located along Georgia's eastern coastline. Before GOAE's statewide mandate for IET, STC already had programs and partnerships in place since 2014 that aligned with the IET model. As such, STC was one of Georgia's first adult education providers to implement IET under WIOA. Previously, STC had offered workforce preparation activities related to forklift training and other occupational skills associated with the ports in the area. However, with IET, STC saw an opportunity to pursue additional in-demand industries unique to the Savannah area that would benefit adult learners—namely, hospitality.

STC first developed its hospitality IET to target English language learners (ELLs). As a tourist city, Savannah's hospitality industry presented an opportunity for adult education students to begin a career in the industry or work a well-paying job while pursuing other career goals. STC was also intentional about partnering with local employers that would provide the right environment for adult learners, focusing on the premiere properties and hotel management groups in Savannah. STC's program leaders also ensured all of the critical partners were involved in the development of the IET, including the local workforce development board for funding, the Office of Economic Development for workforce training, and adult education staff. Through strong collaboration, STC developed a hospitality IET that offered concurrent and contextualized workplace preparation and adult basic education, resume writing, interview practice, and ultimately, industry-recognized credentials from the American Hotel and Lodging Association.

By laying a strong foundation for the hospitality IET program from the beginning, STC has seen great success with students from the first cohort to now. One STC student in the initial IET cohort came to the United States as a refugee and enrolled in STC as an English as a Second Language (ESL) student. She worked hard to transition from the ESL program to the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program with the goal of obtaining her high school equivalency. She wanted to eventually go to college, but lacked the confidence and knowledge to do so. Through her participation in the IET, she earned three industry-recognized credentials, obtained employment working the front desk at a premiere hotel in downtown Savannah, and has maintained this job while transitioning to college to pursue a nursing degree.

STC's hospitality IET has also fostered unexpected opportunities for adult education students. Through the IET program, many students develop greater confidence and self-efficacy as they learn relevant workplace skills. During STC's hospitality IET, students visit multiple hotel employers in Savannah to learn about the industry and gain hands-on experience. Through these connections, one student not only earned her industry-recognized hospitality credentials but also established a relationship with a premiere hotel that was interested in her piano-playing skills. In addition to her training, the student secured a job as a pianist at the hotel making \$80 an hour. STC's IET program opened the door for this student to create her own career pathway. STC continues to expand its IET programs to provide the same opportunities for even more students in the future.

South Georgia Technical College

South Georgia Technical College (SGTC) is one of Georgia's smaller adult education providers located in the southwest corner of the state. After learning about the statewide mandate for IET programs, SGTC faced the challenge of identifying an appropriate training provider to partner with from the rural community they serve. SGTC program leaders also had to identify adequate external funding sources to support the IET program due to limited funds. SGTC presented these IET challenges to their adult education advisory committee, which consisted of 20–25 members at the time. The advisory committee identified a local food manufacturer looking for employees, especially those with certifications in safety, as a potential partner. After speaking with the employer, SGTC staff designed a short-term IET program focused on the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 10-hour certification and ServSafe Food Handler certification, both of which the employer identified as in-demand credentials for hiring. The IET lasted for 12 full eight-hour days and directly targeted a local industry need.

To help reduce the cost of the IET program, SGTC partnered with an instructor from the Office of Economic Development to serve as the ServSafe training provider. SGTC's program administrator decided to complete an online OSHA certification course to provide the OSHA 10-hour training to students without paying for an external training provider. By bringing part of the training in-house, SGTC maximized their limited resources and designed an IET with a minimal cost per student. To supplement the training, SGTC also invited instructors from various departments at the technical college to speak to students about the importance of the certifications they were pursuing. In addition, students toured the local manufacturing company to observe the skills they were learning in a real world environment. At the conclusion of the tour, the employer guaranteed all of the students an opportunity to interview after they completed the IET program and received their high school equivalency. He reiterated that by having the two industry-recognized credentials, the students were in a position to receive a higher starting salary. All students successfully completed the program and earned the two credentials, and at least one is now working for the employer.

Despite their initial challenges, SGTC's first IET cohort was very successful. In addition to reducing costs by leveraging existing SGTC staff to provide workforce training, SGTC secured additional funding through donations from the adult education advisory committee. Furthermore, SGTC partnered with the local technical college foundation to cover the cost of the OSHA 10-hour and ServSafe certification tests for all students who successfully completed

the training. Now, within the rural community SGTC serves, more employers are taking an interest in developing IET programs as they hear about the successes. One executive from another local company recently contacted SGTC about a grant available through the company that could fund additional IET programs. Additionally, former SGTC students who completed the IET are sharing their experience with other adult education students, creating more interest and enrollment in IET overall.

NEXT STEPS FOR GEORGIA

Georgia's focus on workforce development is not stopping with IET. In January 2020, GOAE decided to introduce a high school equivalency (HSE) diploma based on the attainment of college credentials. This new opportunity is called Career Plus HSE (CPH) and is currently in a pilot phase. GOAE modeled CPH after a dual enrollment program, where students will receive both a college-level credential while simultaneously earning an HSE diploma. CPH requires nine high school or equivalent credits in specific subject areas (two English, two math, two social studies, two science, and one health/physical education credit) combined with either two Technical Certificates of Credit, or a technical college diploma or degree.¹ Students interested in CPH must participate in adult education to work on soft skills training and receive remediation in subject areas that need improvement.

The CPH model supports workforce development because it encourages adult education students to pursue a high school equivalency and postsecondary education and training at the same time. Additionally, GOAE has intentionally employed a braided funding model to support student participation in CPH to ensure all of Georgia's workforce partners are involved in the initiative, as well as to reduce, if not eliminate, the cost for students. GOAE has partnered with the Technical College System of Georgia to encourage CPH participants to pursue certificate or diploma programs in one of the HDCI industries and receive the HOPE Career Grant to help cover tuition costs. GOAE has also collaborated with Georgia's Office of Workforce Development, also known as WorkSource Georgia, to provide WIOA funds such as individual training accounts or Out-of-School Youth funds for eligible CPH participants. Other potential funding sources include federal student aid through Ability to Benefit alternatives, as well as various scholarships from local technical college foundations to community literacy groups. As CPH participation grows in the future, GOAE anticipates even more funding opportunities as well. The CPH pilot and its braided funding approach help ensure that GOAE and adult education are part of the state's overall workforce development strategy.

Overall, GOAE's goal is to continue to promote IET, CPH, braided funding models, and other innovative approaches to support workforce development in Georgia. Adult education and workforce development are deeply intertwined—one cannot happen without the other. By emphasizing this reality to all of Georgia's adult education providers, GOAE is committed to strengthening Georgia's workforce and ensuring all Georgians are on a path towards self-sufficiency and a family-sustaining wage. ☞

¹ GOAE will evaluate all prior learning assessments in determining the nine required high school or equivalent credits, including high school transcripts, successful GED or HiSET subject area tests, or previous college credits.

Rosaline Tio is the Director of Research and Impact for the Office of Adult Education housed at the Technical College System of Georgia. Prior to beginning this role in 2019, Ms. Tio was the Director of Policy, Research, and Evaluation at the Georgia Governor's Office of Student Achievement, where she worked from 2015 to 2019. Ms. Tio has a BA in History and Education from the University of Michigan and an MA in Urban Planning from the University of Southern California.

Latanya Overby is the Director of the High School Equivalency Program for the Office of Adult Education housed at the Technical College System of Georgia. Prior to beginning this role in 2011, Ms. Overby was the GED® Chief Examiner for 10 years at DeKalb Technical College. She previously served 10 years as a Systems Engineer and Marketing Representative with IBM. Ms. Overby has an MS in Postsecondary Education from Troy University and a BS in Business Administration/Marketing from Indiana University.

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INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES AND LEARNER ENGAGEMENT

WORKFORCE EDUCATION AT THE 10,000-FEET AND ONE-FOOT LEVELS

Timothy W. Lawrence
SkillsUSA

ABSTRACT

This article provides the perspective of the executive director of a national education association as he retires after 19 years as a national workforce development thought leader. He provides insights including the essential skills required for all learners and the unique opportunities for adult learners to help fill the skills gap as baby boomers retire.

Keywords: workforce development, adult education, career technical education, student development, career change, employability, skills, technical education

INTRODUCTION

Retiring as the leader of a national student professional organization of over 365,000 members annually brings on much contemplation about the people I have met, the places I have traveled, and the things I have done in more than three decades in workforce development. I jumped from an airplane with the U.S. Army's Golden Knights parachute team at a height well over 10,000 feet as part of a student influencer public relations program. I met face-to-face with a young man struggling to find a career path, personally paid for his flight to tour the best postsecondary welding school in the nation, and then helped him enroll. In both cases, the experience was exhilarating.

I have based my career in workforce education on an appreciation of people along with genuine curiosity and interest in others. Day after day and year after year, I connected with thousands of students and instructors from across the country. Many were adult learners who were career changers, veterans, and individuals juggling young families and full-time jobs as they were striving to change their lives. I met a fascinating woman from Arizona who was 73 when she decided to try welding at her local community college because she wanted to keep learning. She became a national welding sculpture competitor and, eventually, a metal sculptor.

My one secret to share about success in workforce education is to listen to the perspective of others. Rarely does one need to demonstrate the power of their own position. Instead, the

greatest power comes by seeking understanding, finding commonalities, and finding a way for everybody to succeed.

CHEERING ON THE CHAMPIONS

The topic of winning brings to mind the annual SkillsUSA Championships. Held each June, this competition is one of the world's largest hands-on workforce development events for students with 18,000 in attendance. At the awards ceremony, as the executive director of SkillsUSA, I was always seated in a place of honor in the front row of the arena. However, as a champion of students, my desire was to go backstage and greet students who medaled as they made their way to the winners photography area. The excitement is electric as students ages 13 to 70 walk off the stage with a medal around their necks, a look of shock and disbelief, or even tears, on their faces. I would reach out to high-five each student as they passed me, and we would lock eyes and share a moment. We would touch palms. The excitement backstage would make it too loud for conversation, but I would smile, offer my hand, and say, “way to go” or “great job,” and they would tap back and smile at me. Some would know who I was, and some just saw a friendly man smiling at them. Either way did not matter to me, as I witnessed personal victory after personal victory in the hundreds of students receiving their awards. They were in the moment and so was I. In fact, this experience became a highlight each year that I called “high five alley,” and I soon invited business partners and education leaders to join me backstage. These students, many of them adults with busy lives, jobs and families, were now national medalists at a workforce development event that took them from small towns to a national platform.

Over their course of study, they may have earned a diploma, certificate, or degree; gained technical knowledge; practiced employability skills; and completed an industry credential. And tonight, these efforts over time were validated by industry. Tonight, they were champions in what has been not a sprint but a marathon of endurance as they juggled family, work and school while seeking to launch or expand a career path.

Months or years later, at work or with their families, these medalists might show their medals and tell the story the same way I often told my story of having been a welding competitor as a student member of the organization that I would later lead. They thought they did well at the competition, but it was hard to be sure. They concentrated, but so did everybody else. They struggled, but other students also seemed worried. They solved a few problems with their projects and tasks and regrouped, working steadily until the contest buzzer sounded to put down their tools. They were most likely tired, dirty, and hungry—but also feeling proud. They pushed themselves to the limits. After watching the industry representatives with checklists on clipboards evaluating their every task, they felt they did a good day's work. This one day distilled all the hours they logged in the classroom and lab, as they demonstrated resilience and adaptability, and overcame doubts.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS SPARKING ADULT STUDENT SUCCESS

This real-time, authentic project-based testing is one key opportunity that career and technical student organizations (CTSOs) like SkillsUSA offer all students, including adult learners. CTSOs put classroom knowledge and theory into practice and build confidence in a way textbook learning cannot do. The most essential career-ready skills are not studied in a classroom but practiced in real life.

Only by *practicing* project management, problem solving, teamwork, and conflict resolution in real-life scenarios can students master these skills. Our organization introduced the SkillsUSA Career Essentials suite in 2017 as a way to teach and allow students of all ages to master these career skills and earn a workplace credential. The adult learner version is specifically for older students with unique life experiences to apply to the program, which is online and adaptable for any pace or educational setting.

SkillsUSA Adult Student Jacqueline Limbrick



Adult learners have life experiences and, therefore, unique stories. SkillsUSA student Jacqueline Limbrick graduated college in May 2019 at age 58 with a degree in office systems technology from Southwest Louisiana Technical Community College (SOWELA) in Lake Charles, Louisiana. At age 55, she began college on a journey set in motion by tragedy. On March 25, 2014, she lost her 28-year-old daughter to a brain aneurysm. The mother of three and grandmother of eight immediately took custody of her daughter's four small children. Formerly working 12-hour shifts in corrections, Limbrick began college and joined multiple student organizations including SkillsUSA. Those experiences led her to serve on the college's student government association and join two honor societies. Soon she became even more motivated as a student. She suddenly wanted to do more and to be more. She explains that SkillsUSA taught her how to hone her technical skills, interact with various people, and be comfortable in many situations, as she learned from these experiences and built confidence. As Limbrick completed her degree, she interviewed for a position working for the Department of Children and Family Services, a job that incorporates her skills, education, and training.

SkillsUSA Adult Student Karen Ballew

Karen Ballew was another career switcher who found that her second chance at higher education was enhanced by participation in a student professional organization. She had enjoyed a 15-year career with Publix grocery chain in Georgia when her mother's illness led her to become a personal caregiver. She then developed a passion for a medical career that led her to train as a certified nursing assistant (CNA) at a hospital. To become an emergency medical services technician, she had to overcome a fear of math. She then became involved in SkillsUSA and was



elected vice-president of her chapter. She states that she was never a leader previously and was so introverted and lacking personal confidence that she could not call and order a pizza. Student leadership activities helped her build these skills. Ballew now works for Motorsport Emergency Services and Community Health in Georgia as an advanced emergency medical technician. She has also served as a lab assistant for the CNA dual enrollment program at Lanier Technical College. Always an achiever, Ballew has earned three technical certificates and hopes to continue in school to complete a degree in emergency management.

SkillsUSA Adult Student **Marlana Wunderlick**



Adult student Marlana Wunderlick grew up building and fixing go-karts and always liked to work with her hands. However, until her 30s, she was not able to apply these interests and skills on the job. Married with four children, Wunderlick had been a three-sport athlete who earned a track scholarship to Cowley College in Kansas. With a family to support, she left school and worked at a nursing home and a restaurant. She remembers these as jobs that paid the bills, but she wasn't going anywhere. After enrolling at

Wichita's WSU Tech, Wunderlick discovered computer numerical control (CNC) machining. Before earning her associate degree, she was hired by Cox Machine, which uses CNC to make aerospace parts and assemblies. Wunderlick loves the challenge of automated manufacturing. She credits instructor Michael Corby for guiding her into competition and their three-person Automated Manufacturing Technology team competed at the 2018 SkillsUSA Championships. She said the experience was truly amazing.

Research Findings

These stories about student organization involvement are anecdotal and personal, but the National Research Center for College and University Admissions released research confirming that SkillsUSA members are learning essential skills while developing effective career plans (NRCCUA, 2017). The study surveyed nearly 16,000 SkillsUSA students about the personal and employability skills they develop in a SkillsUSA program. Among the top skills members felt they'd developed were responsibility (66%), work ethic (60%), teamwork (59%) and communication (55%). Regarding the impact of SkillsUSA involvement on a student's GPA, 53% of students claimed it was positive. Additionally, SkillsUSA seems to be helping its members plan for their futures, as nearly 60% of those surveyed agreed with the statement that involvement in the organization gives "a better understanding of my career plans."

This somewhat limited research aligns with the stories of these adult learners. Participation in student organizations like SkillsUSA puts theory into practice and puts a real-world perspective on what students know and can do on the job. This helps students determine where they still need to grow and provides a way to articulate what they have learned to employers. Building confidence through these programs seems to be key in helping students to accelerate their education plans as highly-engaged students.

BRIGHT FUTURES STILL AWAIT

Trends indicate that a wave of retiring baby boomers have occupied many of our country's most-needed skilled trade jobs. These boomers are now retiring as approximately 10,000 Americans turn 65 every day. Before the COVID-19 crisis hit this spring, many firms were struggling to fill skilled trade positions including machinists, electricians, plumbers, construction, HVACR, healthcare, and welding. And, even during the challenges of the pandemic, skilled workers are keeping the economy moving. Manufacturing workers are keeping the supply chain alive. Technicians and mechanics are keeping truck fleets and rail freight systems moving, our power and waters systems maintained, and our home systems repaired. And, of course, skilled healthcare technicians are on the front lines and are emerging as our new heroes. Despite the economic challenges presented by the 2020 pandemic, which has sharply increased current unemployment rates, the strong need for all skilled trades workers will rebound in time, and graduates with employability skills will be most prepared to fill these essential jobs. A survey by Autodesk and the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC, 2019) indicated that 80% of firms predict a shortfall of qualified skilled trades workers.

These worker gaps can be addressed, in part, by two-year colleges, trade schools, apprenticeships, on the job training, mentorship, and training partnerships that team industry with education to establish new training programs leading directly to employment in the shortest amount of time. All these opportunities are ideal for adult learners who can step up to fill the skills gap with the necessary technical skills, as well as the life experience and maturity to rise as leaders in the workplace.

CONCLUSION

Whether looking at workforce development from 10,000 feet, before jumping from an airplane as a student influencer for the U.S. Army Golden Knights parachute team, or from one foot away while returning a high five with a student in a moment of victory, my most learned lesson in workforce development is the value of connections and the importance of helping all students to practice both technical skills and personal skills in a safe environment that offers both motivation and rewards through practice and competitions. The SkillsUSA Framework is how our organization teaches personal skills, workplace skills, and technical skills grounded in academics. As I wind down an incredible career as a thought leader in CTE that has taken me through every state in our great nation and to 23 countries around the world, I reflect and look in the rearview mirror just as many students are opening their futures and looking ahead. The career outlook has never been stronger for adult students with such varied learning opportunities in classrooms, on the job and online. Those with career-ready skills and technical knowledge will always be able to travel down a smooth, wide-open road to the career they desire. ⌘

Timothy W. Lawrence, Executive Director Emeritus, SkillsUSA, worked in the manufacturing industry and graduated Magna Cum Laude from James Madison University. Mr. Lawrence became an industrial education teacher in 1978 and was National Teacher of the Year in 1983. In 1987, he joined the Virginia Department of Education. In 1996 Lawrence became SkillsUSA Partnerships Director and Executive Director in 2001. Lawrence served on the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council, the Chief State School Officers Career Taskforce and represented the State Department in Kazakhstan and as Official Delegate for WorldSkills. Mr. Lawrence served on the National Assessment of CTE and the Job Corps Advisory Committee, both reporting to Congress. After 19 years as the executive director of SkillsUSA, Mr. Lawrence retired on February 15, 2020.

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EMPLOYER-LED EFFORTS TO CLOSE THE SKILLS GAP VIA UNTAPPED TALENT PIPELINES

Jaimie M. Francis
U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

ABSTRACT

At a time with an increasing focus on return on investment, employers must adopt business strategies that are scalable; driven by their own data; and inclusive of students and workers of all ages, experiences, and backgrounds. Talent Pipeline Management® (TPM) is a workforce strategy that focuses on the development and delivery of talent from classroom to career. The TPM approach is designed to give employers the tools they need to feel confident managing career pathways for students and workers, and creates shared responsibility between employers and their talent provider partners to establish successful talent pipelines. This piece will examine the methodology and its application for uncovering untapped talent pipelines.

Keywords: skills gap, employer engagement, workforce development, talent pipeline

INTRODUCTION

Recent data from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation (February 7, 2020) reveal that the skills gap persists. To combat that gap, employers are relying on valued relationships with their talent providers. In particular, employers are looking for new ways to deepen those partnerships and to better align what is taught in the classroom with what is required of a career to make people more employable.

How can we position employers to clearly and efficiently communicate their most critical job needs to their partners in education? How can we help education and training partners gain a better understanding of the in-classroom and out-of-classroom experiences that prepare their students for the world of work? Can we make students and workers more aware of the career opportunities available to them and how to access those career paths?

At a time with an increasing focus on return on investment, employers must move forward with a strategy that is scalable; driven by their own data; and inclusive of students and workers of all ages, experiences, and backgrounds.

WHAT IS TPM?

Talent Pipeline Management® (TPM) is a workforce strategy that focuses on the development and delivery of talent from classroom to career. The TPM approach gives employers the tools to feel confident managing career pathways for students and workers, and creates shared responsibility between employers and their talent provider partners to establish successful talent pipelines. As a demand aggregator for the workforce development system, the TPM approach helps employers get the talent they need to close their skills gaps and gives students and workers better employment opportunities through more streamlined pathways. It might sound too good to be true, but it works.

Through TPM, employers organize into employer collaboratives, a group that comes together around a shared pain point. These collaboratives proactively organize and manage their talent provider partners to create performance-based talent supply chains. This approach creates shared value for students and workers, talent providers, and employers. Students and workers are connected to in-demand careers and learn what it takes to advance in that industry. Talent providers receive the information they need to best prepare students for transition to the workplace or advance in the workplace. Employers have reliable access to the talent they need to fill open jobs.

TPM Background

In 2014, the Chamber Foundation launched TPM with a white paper describing how supply chain management principles—commonly used by businesses to run their day-to-day operations—could be applied to talent. As a result of a national call to action, seven business-facing organizations stepped up to pilot TPM and take it from theory to practice, resulting in the creation of a six-strategy framework that guides employer collaboratives to more effectively organize and manage their partnerships.

The transition from theory to practice was formalized with the launch of the TPM Academy®, an in-person training for business leaders interested in learning the TPM approach. The training includes an original curriculum, data collection tools, and access to a growing network of peers and practitioners. More than 300 partners have graduated from the TPM Academy and are overseeing collaboratives that involve thousands of employers from a variety of industries, such as manufacturing, healthcare, construction, utilities, information technology, and more.

Over time, the resources offered through the TPM Academy are regularly tweaked and refined to provide continuous support to the evolving needs of TPM practitioners. As more TPM practitioners are supporting efforts to diversify talent pipelines in their communities, the adult learner population is a commonly untapped talent pool to the detriment of industries eager for employees.

TPM Resources

Now in its third edition, the TPM Academy curriculum serves as a guidebook for implementing talent supply chain solutions. Whether an employer is focusing their efforts on new hires that commonly come from external talent sources or upskilling their existing

workers for new or advanced jobs, the curriculum lays out a process that relies on employer data to determine solutions. This approach tends to lead to better, more precise solutions that tie directly to the employers' pain points. This resource is available to the public so that any organization interested has access to these practices. Strategy by strategy, the curriculum includes an overview of key considerations for employer collaborative members as they work through the TPM approach, including exercises, data examples, and action plans to track progress.

Most recently, a committee of experts worked to adapt the TPM approach to internal talent pipelines, or as some call it, upskilling. Committee members, particularly those who have implemented TPM-based upskilling solutions, identified key considerations and processes for employer collaboratives focused on upskill efforts. This intentional exercise not only added additional value to the TPM curriculum, but it also resulted in a new report, *Upskilling with Talent Pipeline Management*, that highlights real-life case studies and best practices from those who have used TPM to upskill, as well as lessons learned from those experiences that are relevant for any industry.

HOW TO MAKE TPM WORK FOR YOU

The TPM approach broadens an employer's understanding of potential talent sources as they seek new partnerships to help fill their demand. Whereas many employers anecdotally attribute their best hires to a couple of particular institutions, upon collecting actual employee data, they may realize their best hires come from a staffing agency that provided a particular training program, or a community-based organization that was able to offer training at a time that works best for adults who are currently employed or have family obligations during traditional "school hours." Adult education programs are more easily discoverable as a result of this process and can help employers get organized and think outside the box in identifying what partner can be most responsive to their needs.

For upskilling, employers may realize that certain feeder jobs lead to more successful transitions to higher-skills jobs, or that a specific training program best positions their current employees to move up within the organization. This strategy uses employer data to take opinions out of partnerships decisions so employers are able to see that *solutions may be in unexpected places*.

The TPM curriculum provides the framework, and the TPM network has examples to share of how this methodology has worked for them.

CONCLUSION

Adult education programs have an opportunity to stand out as a leading untapped pipeline for employers of industries of all kinds. If you are interested in gaining a better understanding of the TPM approach, we suggest starting with the TPM Academy Curriculum's orientation, which provides an end-to-end overview of the TPM approach, as well as an assessment to see if TPM is a good fit for workforce challenges in your community. ☞

Jaimie M. Francis is the Executive Director of Programs and Policy at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation Center for Education and Workforce (CEW). Ms. Francis develops and oversees CEW's programs for postsecondary education and workforce development. She manages its Talent Pipeline Management® (TPM) initiative and its 300+ member National Learning Network of TPM practitioners. Ms. Francis is a faculty member for the TPM Academy®, an in-person training for state and local chamber, business association, and economic development agency leaders, as well as employers, to learn the TPM approach to drive partnerships with their education and training providers based on industry need.

WEB RESOURCES

TPM Academy <https://tpmacademy.uschamberfoundation.org/>

TPM Curriculum https://tpmacademy.uschamberfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/TPM-3.0_Curriculum_FINAL.pdf

TPM Map <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/talent-pipeline-management/tpm-map>

Example of TPM in Action <https://www.forwardontalent.org/>

Upskilling with Talent Pipeline Management® (TPM) Report (January 2020) https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/sites/default/files/2020USCCF_TPMUpskillReport.pdf

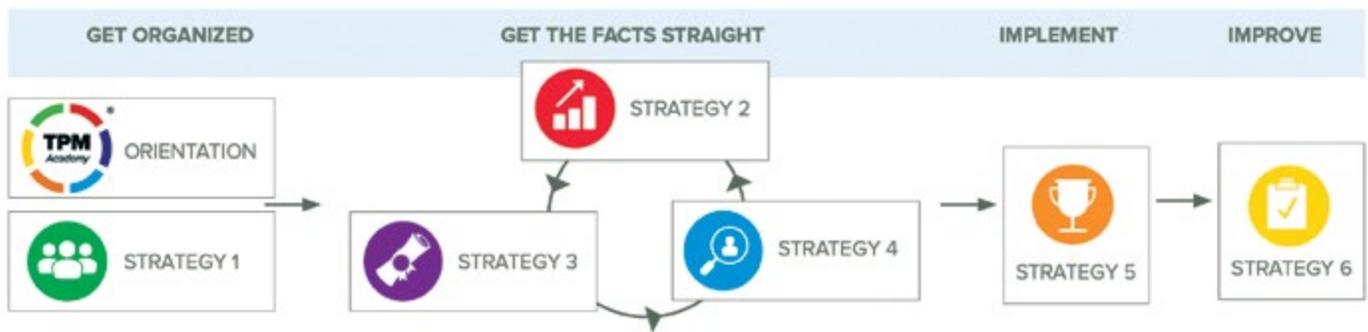
REFERENCE

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation (February 7, 2020) Hiring in the Modern Talent Marketplace. U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/sites/default/files/2020_USCCF_ModernTalentMarketplaceHiring.pdf

FIGURE 1. TPM PROCESS



FIGURE 2. SIX TPM STRATEGIES



HIDDEN TREASURES

TWO DECADES OF WORKPLACE BASIC SKILLS EFFORTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Paul J. Jurmo, EdD
Open Door Collective

ABSTRACT

This article describes two decades of workplace basic skills efforts in the United States (mid-1980s to early 2000s). Private- and public-sector groups defined the problem of inadequate basic skills in the incumbent workforce. They raised awareness of this problem as it affected various segments of the workforce and diverse industries. They generated resources, created services to strengthen workers' basic skills, and evaluated and learned from those efforts. The article summarizes components of effective workplace basic skills programs and the supports that programs require. It recommends that U.S. decision makers now adapt lessons from these earlier workplace basic skills efforts when they consider how to build a new workforce basic skills development system. This new system would support both incumbent workers and unemployed job seekers to succeed in family-sustaining employment. It would also help our economy transition to one that is more equitable, efficient, and environmentally sustainable.

Keywords: adult education, workplace literacy, basic skills, worker, employee, incumbent, employer, union, BCEL, NWLP, EFF

BACKGROUND, PURPOSE, AND CONTENT

Much good work has been done in the past two decades in the United States to provide supports (e.g., career pathways, educational technologies, basic education integrated with technical training and other career services) to job seekers with basic-skills-related challenges. These challenges include a lack of secondary and postsecondary educational credentials and limitations to the oral and written English, numeracy, digital, problem-solving, teamwork, and research skills adults need for work, family, civic, and academic roles.

Current and future initiatives to help both job seekers and incumbent workers with basic skills limitations to improve their economic security can benefit from an earlier wave of workplace basic skills efforts. These began in the mid-1980s and lasted until the early 2000s. They focused on strengthening incumbent worker skills through activities conducted in workplace settings by partnerships among educators, employers, labor unions, government agencies, and other stakeholders. Many current career pathways initiatives for job seekers grow directly out of those earlier “workplace literacy” programs (Parker, 2007).

Drawing on a document review (Jurmo, March 2020), this article describes what those earlier efforts identified as components of effective workplace basic skills programs. It proposes that stakeholders incorporate lessons from those earlier efforts into the planning of new

workforce education systems that ensure the productivity and economic security of both employed workers and unemployed job seekers, while building a new economy that is more equitable, efficient, and environmentally sustainable.

HIGHLIGHTS OF TWO DECADES OF WORKPLACE BASIC SKILLS EFFORTS

Initial Adult Basic Skills Awareness-Raising, Advocacy, and Coalition-Building

Beginning in the mid-1980s, there was a major growth in the U.S. in awareness and efforts related to the problems of “adult illiteracy” in general and “workplace illiteracy” more specifically. These inter-woven activities grew from leadership and investment by many individuals and institutions in the private and public sectors.

In the mid-1970s, the Adult Performance Level Study (conducted by the University of Texas at Austin with funding from the U.S. Department of Education) defined the problem of functional illiteracy in the U.S. (University of Texas, 1977). *Adult Illiteracy in the United States: A Report to the Ford Foundation* (Hunter & Harman, 1979) further defined the problem, described efforts to alleviate it, and recommended actions to strengthen and expand those efforts. These two documents became key resources guiding subsequent awareness raising and policy development.

In the early 1980s, Barbara Bush (wife of then Vice President and later President George H.W. Bush) made adult literacy the theme of her public service work. Working with other groups (described below), she called on federal agencies, Congresspersons, governors and their spouses, business leaders, and others to take action. (She eventually created the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy in 1989.) (Business Council for Effective Literacy [BCEL], April 1989).

In 1984, influenced by Mrs. Bush and the Ford Foundation study, McGraw-Hill CEO, Harold W. McGraw Jr. chose adult literacy as the focus of what became the first 10 years of his retirement. With a major personal donation, he formed the Business Council for Effective Literacy (BCEL), a nonprofit foundation that under Gail Spangenberg’s direction quickly became the go-to source on the issue. Its widely-circulated newsletter and other publications guided public- and private-sector decision-makers who wanted to do something about a problem that BCEL saw as having major social and economic implications (BCEL, September 1984).

In 1986, building on an earlier national awareness campaign of the Coalition for Literacy and Ad Council, the Public Broadcasting Service and the American Broadcasting Company launched “Project Literacy U.S.” (commonly called “The PLUS Campaign”). For several years, this partnership—using television and other media (radio, newspapers, and magazines in coordination with corresponding trade associations), local- and state-level “PLUS Task Forces,” and a national Literacy Hotline—worked to raise awareness, coordinate services, and recruit students and resources for local literacy programs. National leaders (including President Ronald Reagan and Secretary of Labor William Brock) and organizations (e.g., faith-based groups, Urban Leagues, women’s clubs) encouraged community-level action (BCEL, July 1986).

From 1987 to 1990, the Gannett Foundation supported 20 states and Puerto Rico to strengthen the planning and coordination of their adult basic skills services (Sibbison, 1992). In 1990, the National Governors Association—with Gannett and MacArthur Foundation funding—conducted a survey which helped states strengthen their adult literacy services through improved policies, professional development, and technical assistance (BCEL, July 1990).

The Association for Community Based Education (Association for Community Based Education, 1983; BCEL, April 1986) and the Urban Literacy Network (funded by B. Dalton Bookseller, Gannett Foundation, and other sources and later renamed the Literacy Network) advocated for literacy services customized to the needs of low-income adults and their communities (BCEL, July 1989).

Research and Evolving Perspectives on “Workplace Literacy”

By the later 1980s and early 1990s, adult literacy efforts focused heavily on the more-specific topic of “workplace literacy” (also called “workplace basic skills” or “employee basic skills”). Advocates emphasized the need for a well-prepared workforce to ensure the competitiveness of U.S. businesses and the employability of workers in a changing international economy (Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 1990). This message was especially targeted to public policy makers and employers to encourage their investment.

Research studies and position papers describing the basic skills that U.S. workers needed flowed from organizations like the Hudson Institute (Johnston & Packer, 1987), American Society for Training and Development (Carnevale, Gainer, & Meltzer, 1990), U.S. Congress’ Office of Technology Assessment (Office of Technology Assessment, 1990), Ford Foundation (Berlin & Sum, 1988), and U.S. Labor Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (U.S. Department of Labor, 1991).

Individual researchers (Sticht & Mikulecky, 1984) proposed “functional context” instruction that integrated development of relevant basic skills and technical knowledge and skills to help workers strengthen their abilities to carry out particular work-related basic skills tasks. Several guidebooks were published (BCEL, 1987; Mikulecky & Lloyd, 1985; Philippi, 1991) to help educators and employers reduce gaps in employees’ job-related basic skills. Other guidebooks emphasized workplace education services supporting workers’ more general personal development (Soifer, Irwin, Crumrine, Honzaki, Simmons, & Young, 1990) or their ability to participate in a labor union (Sarmiento & Kay, 1990) or otherwise analyze and solve workplace problems (Auerbach & Wallerstein, 1987).

Mechanisms were developed to disseminate workplace basic skills resources to adult educators and other stakeholders. These included BCEL’s quarterly newsletters and other publications and new on-line technologies including the ERIC-ACVE clearinghouse at Ohio State University and—starting in the mid-1990s—a workforce education listserv and resource collection of the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL). The U.S. Department of Education and other governmental and nongovernmental sources supported state, national, and international conferences on workplace literacy education. (These included a series

of conferences in the later 1990s and early 2000s—in Milwaukee, Chicago, and Detroit—supported by the National Workplace Literacy Program and other partners that attracted attendees from the U.S., Canada, and other countries.)

The U.S. Department of Education brought major support to the development of workplace basic skills models through its National Workplace Literacy Program (described below). From the mid-1990s to early 2000s, NIFL funded research on workplace literacy state policy (Jurmo, 1996), evaluation (Jurmo, 1994; Sperazi and Jurmo, 1994), and skills standards (Askov, 1996). NIFL's Equipped for the Future basic skills reform initiative created guidelines and other resources for adult basic skills programs nationally, with a number of projects supporting curricula, assessments, and partnerships to upgrade the basic skills of employees in selected industries (i.e., healthcare and retail; Equipped for the Future, 2005).

Diverse perspectives emerged on the purposes, content, and organization of workplace basic skills programs. Purposes included helping employers (and the nation) remain competitive, helping workers retain rewarding employment, ensuring employee safety and health, enabling employees to manage personal responsibilities that can impact their employability and general well-being, helping workers transition to new jobs or retirement, and empowering employees to understand and protect their rights as workers (Imel, 1989; Jurmo, 2004).

Investments in Workplace Basic Skills Initiatives

These awareness-raising, advocacy, coalition-building, and research efforts led to new investments in workplace literacy programs by federal, state, employer, and labor stakeholders. Programs were promoted as benefitting incumbent workers, employers, labor unions, communities, and states—and as effective uses of public and private resources. Examples included:

Federal Efforts

From 1988 to 1996, the U.S. Department of Education's National Workplace Literacy Program provided nearly \$133 million to over 300 two- to three-year demonstration projects in which employers; education, workforce, and other agencies; and (in some cases) labor unions designed and piloted workplace basic skills programs focusing on organizational and employee needs (Imel, 2003; Moore, Myers, & Silva, 1997). Results were disseminated through meetings, conferences, and publications, with emphasis on sharing and learning from experience and continuous improvement and expanding of efforts (Evaluation Research, 1992; Jurmo et al, 1994; U.S. Department of Education, 1992). The U.S. Department of Labor operated a similar though more modest program. (U.S. Secretary of Labor William Brock warned about a “bifurcated society” divided by basic skill levels.) The Small Business Administration encouraged small businesses (which employ the majority of U.S. workers) to respond to the growing educational needs of their employees, who tend to be less experienced and skilled than workers in larger companies (BCEL, 1992).

State Initiatives

Many states created special workplace literacy initiatives with funding, public awareness,

training and technical assistance for stakeholders, resource centers, and research and evaluation (BCEL, April 1988; Jurmo, 1996).

Trade Associations

Trade associations including banking, printing, and home-building industry groups developed curricula, trained members, and otherwise supported basic education services to help workers respond to new technologies and procedures.

Organized Labor

The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) advocated for “worker-centered” employee basic education that emphasized worker empowerment for both their personal well-being and efficient job performance. AFL-CIO staff issued a guidebook (Sarmiento & Kay, 1990), wrote articles, and were active participants in conferences and other forums. State and local labor organizations (e.g., Massachusetts Worker Education Roundtable, Civil Service Employees Association of New York State, Consortium for Worker Education in New York City) supported basic education for unionized and other workers through research, advocacy, resource generation, and professional development for program staff. The U.S. Department of Labor advocated for a national system of such efforts (BCEL, October 1987).

Individual Employers

Large (e.g., Polaroid, Motorola, Aetna, Rockwell, New York Telephone) and smaller companies funded their own workplace basic skills programs. Some companies offered programs through agreements with labor unions (e.g., United Auto Workers programs with Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler).

International Collaborations

The U.S. became recognized as the leader in workplace basic skills worldwide. U.S. practitioners developed formal and informal collaborations with colleagues in other countries (especially Canada), exchanging strategies (Taylor, Lewe, & Draper, 1991), attending international conferences, developing resources (Folinsbee & Jurmo, 1994), and otherwise learning from and supporting each other.

Informing a Shift to Basic Skills for Job Seekers

By the mid-1990s, federal support for work-related basic skills programs was shifting from worksite programs for incumbent workers to basic skills services for unemployed job seekers integrated with other employment services (Parker, 2007). This change was reflected in new federal adult basic education legislation that emphasized employment-related outcomes for learners, collaboration of adult basic education programs with workforce agencies, and helping unemployed basic skills learners move into postsecondary education and career pathways in locally relevant industries.

Federal investment in workplace literacy programs largely disappeared, as did the former leadership for workplace basic skills initiatives by business, organized labor, and universities (Imel, 2003). (Exceptions included the above-described NIFL development of basic skills curricula for the healthcare and retail industries [the latter done with the National Retail

Federation Foundation] and ongoing union-based member education programs.) The reasons for the decline in investment were not entirely clear, but it could have been that federal funders were simply looking for ways to cut budgets and/or decision makers felt that public funds were better used to help unemployed get jobs than subsidizing employers to train their own workforces. This shift coincided with nationwide closings and downsizings of manufacturing facilities, automation of jobs in many industries, exporting of jobs overseas, and a decline in labor unions.

While the decreased support for workplace basic skills education disappointed many who had invested in developing high-performance models of worker education, those individuals have some reasons to feel encouraged. Emerging career pathway efforts by states and other partners were often informed by the earlier “workplace literacy” initiatives and run by individuals who had worked in them. These included Washington State’s highly regarded and frequently replicated Integrated Basic Education Skills and Training (I-BEST) model. I-BEST uses employer-education partnerships and team teaching by basic skills teachers and technical trainers, features developed in earlier workplace basic skills programs (Wachen, Jenkins, & Van Noy, 2010).

IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE WORKFORCE EDUCATION EFFORTS

This article aims to inform future efforts to create a strengthened and expanded national system of work-related basic education for both unemployed and employed workers. This system would draw on recent career pathway and college transition initiatives that began in the early 2000s and on the above-described earlier workplace basic skills efforts. This more comprehensive system would:

- provide learning opportunities and other supports to help both unemployed and employed individuals prepare for, attain, retain, succeed in, and advance in family-sustaining jobs; and
- help transition our economy to one that is more equitable, efficient, and environmentally sustainable.

Stakeholders are invited to consider the following lessons from the workplace basic skills efforts described above. (These guidelines draw especially from Auerbach & Wallerstein, 1987; Evaluation Research, 1992; Folinsbee & Jurmo, 1994; Imel, 2003; Jurmo, 1994; Jurmo, 1998; Sarmiento & Kay, 1990; Soifer et al, 1990; and Stein, 2000.)

Lesson 1: Multiple Stakeholders Can Benefit From Well-Designed and Well-Supported Workplace Basic Education.

Potential Stakeholders

Potential stakeholders include incumbent workers from diverse demographic and occupational backgrounds; employers and trade associations from multiple industries; labor unions representing many types of workers and industries; workers’ families and communities; and local, state, and federal agencies.

Potential Benefits

Workplace basic education can improve the social and technical efficiency, competitiveness, and safety of workplaces while strengthening employer abilities to understand and respond to worker development needs. It can also help individual workers attain, retain, perform, and advance in rewarding employment, ensure their safety and health, protect their rights as workers, manage wages and benefits, participate in further education and training, and transition to new careers or retirement. Worker basic education can help labor unions ensure the well-being of current and potential members and improve the financial well-being and general stability of workers' families and communities. And it can strengthen local, state, and federal tax bases.

Lesson 2: “Work-Related Basic Skills” Need to Be Comprehensively and Flexibly Defined.

Basic skills are much more than “reading.” Workers need broader communication and problem-solving abilities, including reading, writing, speaking, listening, numeracy (applied math), digital, teamwork, problem-solving, and research skills (Stein, 2000; U.S. Department of Labor, 1991). Effective programs invest in identifying the particular basic skills employees need and the current and emerging workers' gaps in those skills as a starting point for developing learning activities that are meaningful for both employers and workers. The above-described workplace basic skills programs covered a broad range of topics, including applied math needed for statistical process control, decision-making and math skills for using company-provided benefits, language skills for communicating with eldercare patients and hotel customers, reading and test-taking skills to succeed on civil service tests, technical math and English required for electronics training, clear writing for incident reports, and basic computer skills needed to read and respond to work orders.

Lesson 3: Effective Programs Have Multiple Components Requiring Careful Planning, Coordination, and Support.

Partnerships and Leadership

Employers, workers, labor unions, education providers, funders, and other stakeholders need to use collaborative strategies to build communication, understanding, and trust; produce solid plans clarifying stakeholder roles; and invest in continuous improvement of the effort. These collaborations need effective leaders with the right mix of technical expertise, vision, and team-building skills.

Appropriate Goals Based on Systematic Planning

Program planners need to clarify:

- desired outcomes of the program (See “Potential Benefits” above);
- factors (e.g., workplace policies, practices, incentives; worker strengths and limitations; and other contextual variables [market conditions, regulatory requirements, social climate]) that support or block achievement of those outcomes;
- how a worker education program covering basic skills and other topics might support achievement of the desired outcomes; and
- other organizational initiatives (e.g., improving communication or supervision procedures, appropriate incentives for workers, changing workplace equipment or procedures,

eliminating discriminatory practices) that might be instituted in addition to, instead of, or prior to an education initiative.

Instructional Content and Methodology

While this new and evolving field generally agreed that an integrated approach to instruction was most effective, multiple interpretations of this approach emerged, varying by:

- the goals and focus of the instruction (See “Potential Benefits” above);
- how those goals and foci were determined (e.g., options ranged from quick-fix/grab-a-curriculum-off-the-shelf to more-in-depth and comprehensive needs assessments of both workers and the organization);
- who made key decisions (e.g., a small number of decision-makers or a more comprehensive mix of stakeholders);
- teaching materials (e.g., prepackaged curricula or authentic workplace documents and realia taken from the workplace) and methods (e.g., presentations of information using print, face-to-face, or video formats; individual tutorials; team-based project-based learning and workplace problem-solving) used;
- instructors’ backgrounds (e.g., basic skills instructors from local educational institutions may come with various types of training and experience in basic education; technical subject-matter-experts from the company or union might likewise have various perspectives on how to conduct training); and
- the time available for lesson preparation and instruction.

Professional Development

It is vital to carefully recruit, select, prepare, and support instructional and other staff for their respective roles. Instructors can come from both basic education and other backgrounds (e.g., technical training, human resources, safety and health, social services, intercultural relations) and from within or outside the company or union.

Noninstructional staff should be shown how they might support the program and participating workers through syncing of work and instructional schedules, encouraging words, helping workers transfer their skills back to the job, financial or other rewards, confidential and respectful handling of learner information, providing input to curriculum developers, and participating with basic skills instructors in activities as guest speakers.

Those developing and delivering curricula need to be flexible and creative. They typically are entering into unfamiliar workplace cultures characterized by diverse internal stakeholder groups who are already busy doing their “regular” jobs and are now being asked to also get involved in a new education program. Backgrounds in anthropology, the cultures of program participants, and the work performed by participants can be very valuable assets for curriculum developers and instructors.

Workplace instructors are often asked to work on short notice, for brief periods, with

irregular schedules, with limited time to get to know the organization, and without full-time positions providing living wages and benefits. This makes recruiting and retaining workplace educators difficult and undermines program quality and sustainability. (One instructor noted the irony that, while she and her fellow workplace educators were trying to help workers secure family-sustaining jobs with benefits, they—education professionals—lacked regular jobs, wages, and benefits.)

Well-crafted staff development can help all involved to take ownership for the program and contribute to its success rather than see it as a distraction. The field developed multiple strategies for professional development, including:

- involving key stakeholders in collaborative planning and continuous improvement at the program level and in multi-program consortia;
- training noninstructional staff at companies in how they can support program participants to transfer skills covered in instructional activities back to the worksite;
- cross-program workshops, internships, and site visits;
- state, national, and international conferences in which stakeholders share strategies;
- online clearinghouses containing resources from evaluations, research, and experience; and
- online discussion groups.

Learner Recruitment and Retention

Strategies include:

- relevant instructional content delivered in engaging ways;
- paying learners fully or partially for time spent in instruction;
- peer support for participants from fellow workers;
- recognition (e.g., awards, bonuses, access to better jobs and salaries) for positive achievements; and
- respectful, confidential handling of learner data (e.g., test scores).

Scheduling and Facilities

Learning activities should be scheduled at times and locations convenient and welcoming to learners. For example, transportation might be an issue for potential learners who rely on public transportation or carpools to get to and from work if a program is not scheduled at a suitable time or location. Facilities should be appropriately equipped (e.g., with relevant reading materials; efficient learning technologies; and user-friendly furniture, lighting, ventilation, and acoustics) and convey professionalism and respect for the learners, staff, and program.

Administration of Financial and In-Kind Resources

Workplace education programs, like other operations, need well-equipped administrative staff who can efficiently procure, use, maintain, and report on necessary financial and in-kind resources. Administrators need both technical skills, such as accounting, report-writing, and facilities management skills, and an understanding of and commitment to adapting those skills to the needs of their workplace education program. (See “Professional Development” above.)

Other Noneducational Supports for Learners

Companies and unions can provide other types of supports, typically through a human resources department, to help program participants deal with other issues (e.g., health, discrimination, transportation, family needs) that might undermine their workplace success.

Lesson 4: Effective Programs Require Strong External Supports.

Public- and private-sector policy makers and funders at local, state, and national levels can help local-level programs succeed by providing:

- evidence-based guidelines that support quality programs;
- awareness-raising and coalition-building to educate the public and diverse stakeholders about the whys and hows of basic skills development for incumbent workers;
- financial and in-kind supports for demonstration projects that develop and share strategies for particular skills, worker populations, jobs, industries, and program components;
- professional development to equip stakeholders with knowledge, skills, and support networks necessary for their roles in workplace education; and
- ways to collect and share information from local programs and stakeholders (e.g., through research, evaluation, networks, and professional development) to support continuous improvement and growth of the field.

These supports should be guided by leaders who have a well-informed vision of how workplace education can support individual workers, employers, and diverse development efforts.

CONCLUSION

Our nation now faces significant social, economic, environmental, and health challenges—and opportunities. Solving the problems and taking advantage of the opportunities will require a well-prepared, well-supported, and well-organized workforce. This workforce includes the estimated 36 million or more youth and adults who have basic skills limitations (Atkins et al., February 2018).

Work-related basic education can help those millions of individuals to more effectively attain, retain, perform, and advance in family-sustaining employment. Decision-makers in the public and private sector should commit themselves to creating a strengthened and expanded

system of learning opportunities for both job seekers and employed workers (Jurmo, Fall 2020). This system should build on the work done both in more recent career pathway, college transition, and workforce education efforts for various populations of job seekers (including “disconnected youth,” immigrants and refugees, older career-changers, individuals with criminal records, people with disabilities) and in the earlier workplace basic skills efforts described here.

Those involved in system reform should objectively dig deeper to understand what was achieved, what was required for success, and why investment in basic education for the incumbent workforce largely decreased by the early 2000s. Companies, business leaders, and investors who have reaped benefits from the economy of the past two decades should now consider reinvesting in worker education in well-conceived ways.

We should not waste time or resources reinventing the wheel or using ineffective strategies. Let us use the significant expertise, institutions, partnerships, and good will we already have more wisely. ⌘

Paul J. Jurmo, EdD, is an experienced educator focusing on basic skills for development in the U.S. and developing countries. He has played multiple roles (researcher, evaluator, administrator, curriculum and professional developer, and advocate) developing systems that integrate basic education with workforce and community development, health, environmental sustainability, prisoner reentry, and other forms of development. Recent work includes a national literacy reform initiative in Tonga and writing documents for the Open Door Collective and U.S. and international journals. Dr. Jurmo advocates for a collaborative, systems approach to program and policy development and a participatory approach to learning. For more information, visit www.pauljurmo.info.

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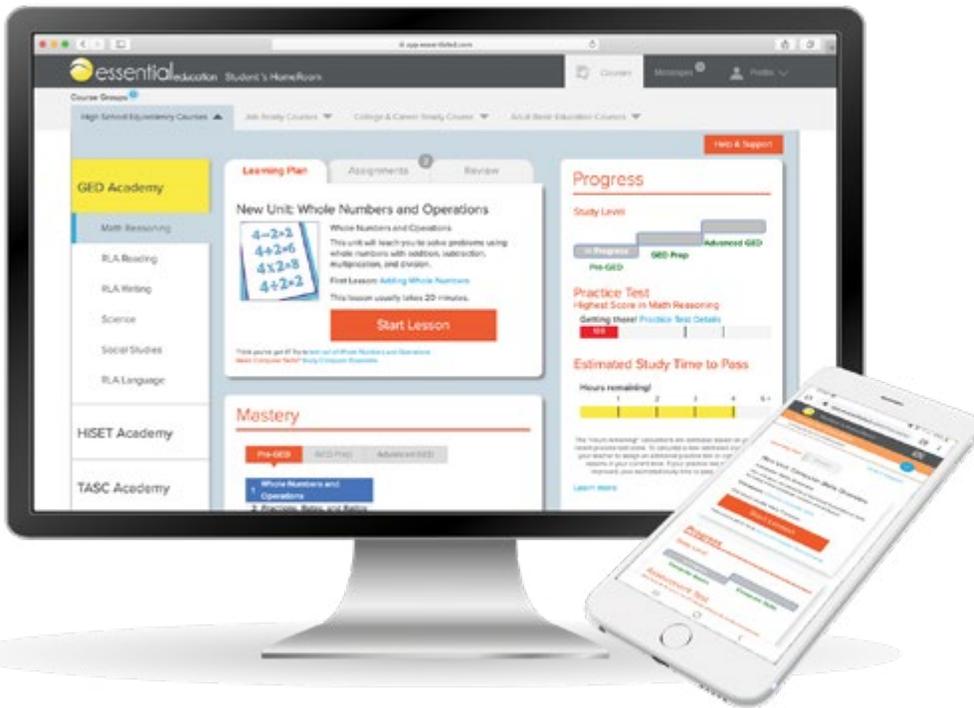


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