Achieving Council on Occupational Education Accreditation Using PLC Processes

By Dave Williams, Principal, Beaumont Adult School

Background: Beaumont Adult School is a small (less than 250 average daily attendance, or ADA, under the old accounting system) adult school in Beaumont, California. The adult school received its initial Title IV federal financial aid accreditation in 2006 through the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). Due to WASC’s disaffiliation with the Title IV accreditation process in 2010, the school was accepted for candidacy for accreditation with the Council on Occupational Education (COE) in June of 2011 and completed the dual accreditation visit by the COE and WASC committees in November 2012.

The first question most administrators would ask is “Do we need a Title IV federal financial aid accreditation?” and the answer to this would be a definitive “Maybe.” If you are providing career technical education (CTE) programs that are at least six months in duration, and that lead to state licensing or a certificate of completion based on state or industry required standards, you may want to consider having the ability to use federal financial aid to assist your students in paying for their programs. When our adult school began organizing a CTE program for vocational nursing in 2002, our school’s revenue cap was approximately 95 ADA. Obviously, there was no way we could provide a CTE program as costly as vocational nursing based on state funding alone, so the decision to gain accreditation for Title IV funding was already made for us.

The second question most administrators would probably ask is “How do we get a Title IV accreditation?” The answer to this question is much more definitive. The U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) requirements for applying to become a Title IV-eligible program state that you must have a program that involves, at a minimum, 600 hours of instruction and is 26 weeks in duration; that has operated successfully for at least two years prior to your application; and that is accredited by a recognized accreditation institution.

Getting accreditation by a recognized institution is the first major step. With WASC no longer providing Title IV accreditation for adult schools and regional occupation programs (ROPs), one of the few USDOE-recognized accrediting organizations that will accredit a large variety of CTE programs, as well as both public and private schools, is the Council on Occupational Education (COE).

Schools that decide to apply for accreditation by COE must first complete an Application for Candidacy (application and specific requirements for the school’s eligibility can be found at http://www.council.org/applications-forms/). Following the school’s acceptance to candidacy by COE, the school will have up to 36 months to prepare for and receive an accreditation visit by a committee representing COE (similar to a WASC academic accreditation).

There is, however, a fundamental difference between the Title IV accreditation for CTE programs and the traditional academic accreditation that many of us are familiar with from WASC.

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Much of this issue of CALPROgress focuses on implementation of new learning for educators to improve learning for students. Over the past few years, CALPRO has increasingly built more structure for implementation of new skills and strategies into training modules through its Communities of Practice initiative. Cohorts of educators engaged in CALPRO Communities of Practice immediately begin experimenting with their newly acquired skills, and participants provide virtual support to each other online through collegial guidance and feedback.

Last year, the highly respected organization Learning Forward, formerly known as the National Staff Development Council, issued its third iteration of Standards for Professional Learning. Learning Forward’s seven standards are Learning Communities, Leadership, Resources, Data, Learning Designs, Implementation, and Outcomes. Let’s take a closer look at the Implementation standard: “Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students, applies research on change, and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.”

The research on change points to basic conclusions that few would challenge: systematic, enduring change requires time and support. But when we plan professional learning at our schools, rarely do we build in adequate time and support as a follow-up to the initial learning. If students are to reap the benefits of teachers’ professional learning, teachers need a safe and supportive structure in which to apply new techniques, get constructive feedback, assess and analyze progress, and refine practice. It takes a long time—sometimes years—for newly acquired skills to become second nature and reach peak effectiveness.

We learn something new and we give it a try. Some of us stick with it, overcome challenges, and give new ways of working a long, close look. Some of us may abandon new ways of working if we don’t get improved results right away. It’s sometimes a difficult proposition for individuals to persevere to make significant changes on their own; it is somewhat easier when groups undertake such an effort, but it is most likely to succeed when the culture of professional learning in a department or school strategically plans follow-up activities to ensure implementation.

We know that our students need sufficient intensity and duration for meaningful learning, and so do we. Let’s make it happen. When planning professional learning, plan beyond the initial learning; plan also for integrating, supporting, and sustaining the change that was intended from the outset. Set short- and long-term learning goals for educators as well as for students and stay especially focused on student-centered results. Ensure dedicated time and sufficient resources for activities such as follow-up training, classroom observations and feedback, study sessions, data analysis, peer coaching or mentoring, and ideally, professional learning communities. Keep the momentum going by regularly monitoring implementation challenges and successes and by giving participants time to analyze and adjust professional practice.

For far too long, we have assumed that dedicated professionals with good intentions will routinely transfer new skills from the training to the classroom. The fact of the matter is that in most cases, that transfer—the implementation—actually requires advance planning and persistence.

Quality professional learning is not a luxury; it is a necessary investment that yields greater student learning outcomes, more expert and effective educators, and schools that predictably produce great results. Let’s commit to building in appropriate time, resources, and supports to ensure that our initial investments in training have the intended impact on the classroom.

Let’s apply what we know about change and about effective professional learning. Let’s systematically develop our school culture in California adult education into one that cherishes, plans for, and embraces implementation as a vital and natural component of the process to ensure that professional learning makes a difference for our students.
In recent years, adult education in California and throughout the country has seen a decrease in the number of adult learners served. Budget woes in many states have had a negative impact on the capacity of adult education providers to address the literacy needs of a critical segment of the adult population. The earlier crisis in employment is giving way to emerging jobs in various industry sectors, and many of these jobs require, at a minimum, a high school diploma or its equivalent.

How, then, is adult education responding to the imperative to provide basic skills and training to those adults most in need of them at a time when the competition for funding sources is increasingly competitive? How can we continue to serve English learners, those who have dropped out or aged out of high school before earning a diploma, those living below the poverty line, immigrants desiring citizenship, and inmates and parolees?

Clearly, we need a workable approach and effective strategies that allow adult education providers to adapt to a continually changing landscape while maintaining high-quality, accessible adult education programming for those adult learners most in need. In California the framework for such an approach can be found in the strategic plan for adult education, Linking Adults to Opportunity: Transformation of the California Department of Education Adult Education Program. The genesis of this document arose out of the recognition of demographic and workforce trends, with respect to the number of immigrants and the retirement of the “baby boomers,” and an awareness of the growing impact of technology on occupations and on the educational attainment necessary for employment. Indeed, it is sobering to consider that only about 25 percent of future jobs will require less than a high school diploma. A significant number of Californians today have not attained that level of education, but in the coming decades, more than 40 percent of jobs will require more than a high school diploma. In addition, the ratio of retirees to workers is projected to shift such that there will be more seniors compared to the number of working-age adults.

A closer look at the core principles underlying Linking Adults to Opportunity provides a window for understanding the recommendations contained in the document. The “connective tissue” of the six core principles reflects the notion of an adult education system that, by design, allows for and facilitates collaboration, alignment, and coordination among and between K–12 system components and with external entities.

The core principles strongly imply that adult education cannot work in a “silo”—it requires attention to points of articulation and connectivity for optimum student success. The design for actualizing the core principles is found in the “Blueprint for Action” section of the strategic plan. There are seven components in the Blueprint:

- **Collaborative Leadership**: Interaction with state-level partners to establish a common vision and develop coordinated processes to provide an integrated service delivery system to California’s adult students.
- **Academic and Career Transition Centers**: Expansion and strengthening of existing adult education schools as the sustainable system for establishing and supporting Academic and Career Education Transition (ACET) centers, networks, and collaborations, enabling adult education schools and programs to provide educational services more efficiently and effectively.
- **Transition Services**: Provision of intake, planning, support, and transition services to link students to pathways and promote successful transitions to postsecondary pursuits.
- **Curriculum and Instruction**: Expanded use of assessment, curricula, and instructional practices that will prepare students for further education and careers.
- **Professional Development**: Alignment of professional development and technical assistance to the mission of supporting students’ preparation for postsecondary education, careers, and civic responsibility.
- **Data and Accountability**: Design and use of data collection and accountability systems to inform program development and focus on tracking outcomes.
- **Funding**: Implementation of a model that aligns fiscal resources with statewide need, promotes resource leveraging, and includes performance incentives.

Recommendations are given for each of the seven components in the Blueprint, and there are adult education programs in California with long-standing practices that demonstrate—in exemplary fashion—many of those recommendations. Other programs may be at varying stages of implementation.
What is the purpose of education? That question has challenged us throughout history.

- In 1934, John Dewey wrote, “Any education is, in its forms and methods, an outgrowth of the needs of the society in which it exists.”
- In 1948, Martin Luther King Jr. said, “The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically.”
- James Harvey, a senior fellow at the Center on Reinventing Public Education, notes in 2012, “Education should prepare students for life—for college, for work, for living within a family and within a community, and for participating effectively in the democratic process.” He agrees that “the most significant skill that students can develop in the 21st century is the same skill that served them well in prior centuries: a mind equipped to think—the most important work skill of them all.”

What does it mean to be literate? We are also challenged today by that question.

- Our founding fathers considered being able to read and write the measure of literacy.
- In the 1960s and 1970s we added the term functional literacy, implying that we need to be able to use our reading, writing, and computational skills to survive in a rapidly changing world.
- Today we find educators stating that the digital age requires a whole new set of skills for students to master if they are to be literate and to be contributing members of a rapidly changing global community.

In the field of organizational behavior and management, two concepts are creating much attention and excitement: human capital and social capital.

What do these concepts have to do with adult education?

Thanks to the key findings from significantly large K–12 studies, Carrie Leana and her colleagues (Pil and Leana 2006; Shevchuk, Leana, and Mittal 2008) have produced results that should greatly improve student learning gains at every level. Human capital refers to the skills and knowledge of individual teachers. Social capital refers to the interactions among teachers in a given setting (Leana 2010). So let us call them what they mean for adult educators: human capital is teacher expertise or competence and social capital is the degree of teacher collaboration.

The findings from hundreds of schools showed that, while teacher expertise is essential, it is not sufficient to produce wholesale learning gains. Collaboration among teachers was far more important than teaching expertise in predicting student achievement. On the other hand, if teachers are not competent, they are in danger of sharing their ignorance during the collaborative process.

Leana reports that when you ask teachers whom they talk with when they have a problem or content question, they say they talk to another teacher. “They don’t talk to experts. They don’t talk to the coaches. They don’t talk to the principal. They don’t talk to the assistant principal. They don’t talk to the professional development consultants. They talk to one another” (Leana 2010).

What has been the primary focus of professional development in adult education?

The answer is that it has focused on improving teaching expertise. We have produced a vast array of workshop training modules, online Webinars, and institutes on topics ranging from cooperative learning and questioning strategies to reading approaches and learning disabilities. These strategies were designed to make teachers more effective.

A particular problem in adult education is that there has been little or no funding for follow-up studies to determine whether or not teachers use the strategies they learn in workshops or other training programs. Past research in K–12 programs (Showers, Joyce, and Bennett 1987) found that very few teachers did, in fact, incorporate these strategies in their day-to-day teaching. Joyce and Showers (2002) found that number to be only about 5 percent. What teachers tend to do instead is to select those activities they feel comfortable using—which may or may not improve student learning. In other words, not only do we not study the extent to which teachers use their professional development strategies in the classroom; even if they do, we don’t know if these strategies result in improved student learning.

Only recently, with the introduction of such programs as professional learning communities (PLCs), have we focused professional development on student learning rather than teacher learning. PLCs also recognize the importance of collaboration for producing significant learning gains. Linda Darling-Hammond (1997) supports the PLC concept in the Harvard Education Letter. She writes,

Professional development should take place within a professional community, a team or
network, or both. Changing practice is a difficult and long-term proposition that can't be handled by going off to a workshop. Teachers have to practice change and continually work with others on debugging the problems they encounter.

Leana (2010) uses a toy familiar to many of us to illustrate the connection of teacher expertise to collaboration: the Tinkertoy. One part of the Tinkertoy is the round disk with holes in the center and the sides into which are inserted rods. Children used these combinations to build a variety of structures from towers to vehicles. Leana suggests that the round disks represent teacher expertise, whereas the rods represent teacher collaboration. When the collaboration rods join teacher expertise disks, they make a “high-learning environment.” (See the illustration below.)

We thank Leana for the research that highlights the importance of coupling teacher expertise with teacher collaboration in order to achieve greater student learning gains. Other necessary factors remain, however, if we plan to fulfill the “purpose of education” as discussed earlier.

First, the collaborative teacher teams must collaborate in the process of selecting essential learning tasks (or standards) for each course and level. Individual teachers of adult education have often been given the freedom to decide what they will teach in the classroom. There must now be agreement on which essential standards should be mastered for each course and level. Although most states have now adopted the Common Core State Standards, these standards are too numerous, and often inappropriate, for a given community of adult learners. On the other hand, the Common Core Standards may become an important resource for teachers.

The learning tasks, or standards, must be few enough at each level that they can be taught in depth, ensuring not only that the required knowledge is acquired, but also that the use of these essential standards can be applied to tasks in our changing world.

By selecting an essential but limited number of in-depth standards, teachers can still include their creative “passions.” Such passions often serve as the “hooks” that help students find their own niche in education.

Second, there must be formative assessment that allows teachers to monitor student learning as it occurs and also allows for remediation as needed. Most educators are now familiar with the term “formative assessment.” It is the assessment that is made for learning, as opposed to “summative” (usually standardized) testing, which evaluates learning after it has taken place. Formative assessment may involve using questioning strategies, giving written quizzes, reviewing samples of student work, or administering more formal assessments.

For example, assume that one of the standards chosen by the teacher collaborative teams is this: “The ability to recognize a complete sentence (knowledge) and the ability to use that knowledge in writing complete sentences (application).” During the formative assessment process, the teacher discovers that many of her students do not understand the concept of a complete sentence, even though she has taught them that it must involve “a complete thought.” Rather than saying, “I taught what a complete sentence is; the students just didn’t learn it.” The teacher consults her colleagues, saying, “I have several students who are having great difficulty in understanding what a complete sentence is.” [Note that the teacher doesn’t say she is having difficulty teaching complete sentences; rather, she says that students are having difficulty learning. The focus is now on student learning, not on teacher competence. One of her colleagues replies,

Yes, I had that same difficulty. Then one day I happened to notice that our textbook stated, Words are the building blocks of sentences. So I had an idea. I went to Home Depot and asked them for some cut-off ends of wood and brought them home in a box. Then I took some colored Sharpie pens and wrote words in different colors: blue for nouns and pronouns, red for verbs, green for adverbs, and so on, including articles and conjunctions as well. Next, I put them back in the box and took them to class.
I gathered the students having difficulty around a table and asked them to select five or six blocks with the words on them to see if they could make a sentence that made sense. They worked both together and separately and evaluated each other’s sentences. I also asked if they noticed any patterns in the sentences they thought were best. They noticed things such as, ‘Most sentences begin with a blue word.’

The colleague went on to explain that she then asked her students to try moving words around to see if the sentences still made sense, and they discovered that some words were easily moved (adverbs, for example), but that others were not.

By using this approach, they learned inductively (by experimenting) rather than deductively (by rote memorization). Inductive learning, she knew, has more staying power. In time, she suggested that, rather than referring to the words as “blue words,” “red words,” and the like, that they use their formal names: nouns, verbs, and so on. She then asked them to come up with the meanings of the parts of speech. The adult students got so excited that many went home and made blocks of their own so they could help their children learn about complete sentences. They felt like teachers themselves.

This experience is an example of Tinkertoy education at its best: Students mastered the standard set by the teacher teams (recognizing and using complete sentences), and the classroom learning mirrored the Tinkertoy process when students gained expertise and collaborated to learn a difficult concept.

The role of the administrator changes as well: There must be administrative support that allows the process of collaboration. Successful principals change the culture of the school to focus on student learning and embedded professional development in the form of collaboration. This new culture requires abandoning a top-down style of administration. Instead, it encourages teachers to participate in the decision-making process. It also requires administrators to provide compensated time for the collaborative process. Finally, administrators of adult literacy programs should abandon the open entry/open exit student enrollment process in favor of a “managed enrollment” process that requires adult students who have missed a given number of sessions to drop out and, if they wish, to re-enter a new class offering.

Managed enrollment is especially important for basic education and ASE programs if students are to achieve their learning targets. Students need to be present in order to learn sequentially. Teachers can, likewise, avoid the practice of having to focus their attention on a single student at the expense of other students’ learning. Other courses, such as computer skills classes, for example, may find open enrollment/exit programs workable. Lack of funding has also dictated that many courses now be fee-based.

As noted above, the classroom itself should also reflect the Tinkertoy process. Adult students, especially, need to assume greater responsibility for their own education. Goal setting and a realistic pathway to reach those goals should be part of the classroom process. The collaborative classroom encourages students to work together, to assume 21st century workplace habits and responsibilities, and to participate actively in such strategies as problem-based and product-based learning.

In the beginning of this article, we asked, What is the purpose of education? And we noted the changes in the meaning of literacy for global education. There was a time in the United States—not that long ago—that we prohibited students from speaking any language other than English in the classroom. Now we realize in our shrinking world and with our globalized problems and economies that students who can speak multiple languages have a real advantage. Many countries are already far ahead in that their students may already speak from three to five languages.

Adult education is on the front lines in achieving the purpose of education. It is adults who will first face the challenges of globalization as they seek a place in the workplace of tomorrow. Many English language learner (ELL) adult learners will already be bilingual.

Adult education, nonetheless, continues to be the stepchild of educational programs: We continue to be plagued by low budgets that are increasingly controlled by K–12 generosity; our teachers have little advanced preparation for teaching adults—especially for teaching ELLs; and, unlike K–12 programs, we have a larger number of part-time teachers. Some of those teachers, unfortunately, may be more concerned with earning a supplementary income than being dedicated to the teaching of adult students. This situation requires principals to be alert in selecting teachers who believe in and are willing to participate in collaborative education.
With shrinking budgets and shifting student populations, it is no longer business as usual in adult education. Many programs are looking for a fresh and perhaps more efficient approach to educating adults in our California communities. In recent years, the conversation has centered on cultivating a more defined focus on preparing adult students for post-secondary education, on career training programs, and on developing workforce readiness skills that can lead to family-sustaining employment. California’s sputtering economy and the increasingly competitive workplace have made occupational preparation an even more pressing need, particularly for the ESL population.

In response to this emerging priority, CALPRO has offered California ESL adult educators training in Integrated and Contextualized Workforce Skills in the ESL Classroom (there is also a separate training for ABE/ASE instructors). The training has been offered in a variety of formats, including a four-week asynchronous online course, a series of two 3-hour regional face-to-face workshops, and synchronous online workshops. In spring 2012, CALPRO offered the training in its newest format: a regional Community of Practice (CoP).

The Community of Practice is an innovative model of professional development that blends facilitated face-to-face workshops with an online component. The CoP is centered on the notion that educators are more likely to implement newly learned instructional skills when the training is sustained over a longer period of time and includes opportunities for mutual collegial support as participants work toward the common goal of program improvement and student learning.

The training involves a pre-session assignment, a face-to-face meeting, an interim assignment, a second face-to-face meeting, and a post-session assignment. The pre-, interim, and post-assignments are submitted online.

In spring 2012, Santa Barbara Community College Continuing Education (SBCCCE) hosted CALPRO’s first Community of Practice on Integrated and Contextualized Workforce Skills in the ESL Classroom. ESL instructors from SBCCCE joined interested ESL instructors from neighboring Ventura County and Cerritos College to form a community of educators interested in exploring how to integrate and contextualize workforce skills in their ESL instruction.

The topic was of particular significance to SBCCCE’s former ESL director Jack Bailey, who had just led an effort to redesign the program’s ESL curriculum to embed workforce skills. He noted, “It is imperative that we use the time [with students] ... most effectively [by] targeting language essential to our students’ lives and employment.”

The CoP began in an online Moodle courseroom created for the Community of Practice. Participants introduced themselves, did a short reading, and engaged in an online discussion about the goals and expectations of the training. It was an opportunity for participants to get acquainted with the topic and share thoughts and concerns in the two weeks prior to the first face-to-face session.

While some in the online discussion pondered the appropriateness of focusing on occupational skills, others noted an increasing need for workforce skills in their student population.

SBCCCE family literacy instructor Cassie Koop noted that, compared with years past, more parents in her program were finding it necessary to work. She observed, “Compared to six years ago, a significant percentage of my students are now in the workforce in addition to managing their homes and being students.”

Concerns that were raised in the online discussions were further addressed in the first face-to-face session. A common concern was about how to find the time in class to implement the new strategies. Most participants were relieved to learn that integrating workforce skills did not require that instructors teach additional material. In fact, transferable workforce readiness skills such as punctuality, taking responsibility, cooperation, leadership, and problem solving could be seamlessly integrated in part by structuring classroom expectations and instructional tasks to simulate the expectations of employers.

After the first face-to-face session, participants were invited to apply what they had learned by creating and delivering a lesson that integrated a particular workforce skill and included an opportunity for the ESL learners to articulate the skill they had practiced in class. Participants shared their lesson plans online and reflected on their implementation, paying particular attention to student responses to the instruction.

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The traditional academic accreditation has focused on the school’s in-house capability to self-identify problem areas relating to the instruction of students and student achievement, and to formulate plans to overcome those problem areas and maximize student achievement. Title IV accreditation is very much based on strict compliance with regulations established by the USDOE that govern CTE and degree programs receiving federal student aid funds. Instead of identifying problem areas and formulating plans for correction and improvement, Title IV schools must ensure that any problems or discrepancies in compliance with regulations are identified and corrected well ahead of the accreditation visit. Failure to meet any portion of the required regulations will result in a “finding” by the accreditation visiting committee and could delay or cancel the accreditation for the school.

Some examples of this process are outlined below:

COE’s Standard One for accreditation requires that the school have a mission statement—which is simple enough—but there are also three objectives that must be met within this mission statement: 1) to assure that the institution’s primary mission is career and technical education, 2) to assure that the current mission is clearly stated and is publicly available, and 3) to assure that the mission is formulated with broad-based participation by the communities of interest served and promoted by a program of public information and community relations.

COE lists six criteria that must be met in order to show compliance with the objectives of this standard. For the purposes of this example, we will look at one of those criteria: “An organized and functional institutional advisory committee composed primarily of external personnel is used to provide community involvement in maintaining a relevant mission for the institution.”

So, an essential question for our school was: Can we use our professional learning community (PLC) processes and still prepare for a Title IV accreditation? We found that in our school’s case, the answer was a definitive “Yes.”

The effectiveness of a PLC in improving delivery of instruction and student achievement is well documented, but what do you do for areas of Title IV compliance that are unrelated to instruction? Referring to the COE Handbook of Accreditation (2012 edition), we find the ten standards that must be met for accreditation. Instead of “unwrapping” educational standards, we “unwrap” the standards set forth by the accrediting organization. Fortunately, the accrediting agency has already done much of the work in unwrapping its own standards by breaking them down into specific objectives and criteria that are required to show compliance with the standards.

If we apply basic questions of a PLC, with a little variation, we can utilize the same processes that we use to ensure maximum student achievement to also ensure that we meet demanding regulatory compliance. For example, the prime question for a PLC—“What do we want students to learn?”—becomes “What do we need to do to comply with this standard?” The PLC question of “How will we know when students have learned it?” becomes “How can we show that we meet the standard?” (i.e., determining what documentation we need to show that we are in compliance).

Obviously, this criterion is the “What do we have to do to comply with the standard?” question and, following PLC practices, we needed to determine how to assess whether we met that standard. This is where the benefits of having worked as a PLC come into play. By having our stakeholders in the community advisory committee function as a learning community, we were able to use the process of continuous assessment and evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the committee’s input and feedback on our school programs.

COE Standard Two, covering educational programs, is considerably more complex, as it contains three separate areas—Admissions and Recruiting, Programs, and Instruction—with a total of 17 separate objectives and 38 criteria that must be met. Although this standard focuses on instructional delivery, which our PLC continuously strives to improve, the additional criteria for accreditation made us look at areas that are somewhat peripheral to the general instructional programs.

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For example, the criterion to show that “job-related health, safety, and fire prevention are an integral part of instruction”—which I think we can all agree is important for any CTE program—made us look at how we specifically included those areas in our programs, and what could we point to as evidence that we were meeting that requirement. We also found that using (and documenting) our PLC process was essential in “proving” to the visiting committee that we did meet the accreditation standards.

COE Standard Three, Program and Institutional Outcomes, is considerably less complex, as it contains only three objectives and nine criteria for accreditation. Since most of these criteria use student outcomes to measure both program and institutional success in outcomes, they matched up very well with the programmatic goals we had established using the PLC process.

The one area measured within this standard that is somewhat different from most adult instructional programs is the requirement to assist students in placement following completion of the program, and to be able to verify that placement. However, again, we found that using collaborative PLC processes allowed us to develop and improve our program for assisting students in obtaining employment, and keeping in communication with them to verify that employment.

Initially, we struggled with how to apply PLC practices to meet the fourth COE standard—Strategic Planning—until we realized that the programmatic goals we had set to support our school wide learner outcomes, combined with the process of continuous review, really was the basis of our strategic plan. Of course, a strategic plan for the entire school requires additional areas of planning to provide support—such as facilities, resources, and marketing—and we developed these using the same types of PLC action steps with all stakeholders.

From the development of these plans for supporting resources, we were able to show our compliance with COE Standard Five, Learning Resources (including instructional media and technology); Standard Six, Physical Resources; Standard Seven, Financial Resources; and Standard Eight, Human Resources.

For COE Standard Nine—Organizational Structure—we were able to show how our organizational structure was based on the development and implementation of our PLC processes.

The tenth and final COE standard for accreditation (for schools providing instructional programs not offered exclusively through distance learning) is Student Services and Activities. When we started moving our school toward becoming a professional learning community, we realized that our administrative support staff needed to be included as their own PLC group.

We found that because we had already developed the standard practice of reviewing our administrative support for the instructional programs, it was much simpler to make any adjustments or changes that were necessary to meet the criteria of this standard. For example, 2 of the 21 criteria supporting the objectives of this standard read, 1) A designated staff member is responsible for maintaining official files and records of students; and 2) Written procedures for access to student records are established to protect their confidentiality, limiting access to authorized personnel only.

While we had personnel who had the responsibility of creating and maintaining student records (primarily based on their administrative position) and we had a brief written policy in our CTE student catalogs regarding access to student records, we felt it would be best to have a written administrative policy covering both criteria. Using the learning community approach at administrative staff meetings, it was a relatively simple process to determine how we were processing the student records and then to translate that procedure into a written policy.

During the development of our school’s self study for the accreditation visit, we realized that there is a great emphasis on having a periodic review process in place in order to ensure that compliance is maintained with all of the standards (and to show that the periodic review is conducted). As the PLC process is a continuous process, constantly requiring repeated review and assessment, it lends itself to maintaining the required regulatory compliance with Title IV. If you are constantly reviewing the “standards” of compliance and how you meet them, you should never be in danger of falling out of compliance.
College and Career Readiness and Success Center: Improving Outcomes and Preparing All Students for College and Careers

By Maggie Monrad, AIR Communication Specialist/Dissemination Team Leader, College and Career Readiness and Success Center, and Joseph Harris, AIR Managing Researcher/Director, College and Career Readiness and Success Center

Rapid technological advances and a transition to a global and information-based economy require dramatic changes in the way we prepare our nation’s future workforce and citizens. To support this transformation, the American Institutes for Research (AIR) has been awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to establish a new College and Career Readiness and Success (CCRS) Center. In collaboration with our Comprehensive Center colleagues, the new CCRS Center project team will help states better inform, align, and support their CCRS efforts across the prekindergarten through higher education (PK–20) continuum.

The CCRS Center’s vision is focused on building a dynamic technical assistance (TA) hub for Regional Comprehensive Centers (RCCs), state education agencies (SEAs), and other CCRS stakeholders, including TA providers. This “hub” will promote CCRS knowledge development and increase collaboration through community-based interactive learning activities. As a dynamic hub, the CCRS Center will focus on assessing needs; consolidating and providing learning activities. As a dynamic hub, the CCRS Center will focus on assessing needs; consolidating and providing access to tools, resources, and expertise; and providing a fertile ground from which to foster collaborative relationships to discuss challenges, share successes, and pilot innovations.

The CCRS Center replaces, and builds on the prior work of, the National High School Center (www.betterhighschools.org), also housed at AIR, that was part of the first round of RCCs and content centers. The broader emphasis on CCRS enables the new Center to focus on a wider range of educational and career post-secondary opportunities for K–12 students, as well as for adult learners.

As a result, the new Center has already begun to reach out to other federal centers and projects funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Vocational and Adult Education. Furthermore, the new Center has identified career and technical education (CTE) as a priority area for its first year of operation.

The Center’s focus on bringing together a wide variety of elements that make up the CCRS “landscape” includes an increased focus on alternative pathways and experience-based and work-based learning opportunities for adult learners. This focus on alternative pathways has implications for adult learners and educators, as the differences between general, career technical, and adult education become less distinct. For instance, portfolio assessments and mastery certification are being integrated as indicators of college and career readiness alongside the more traditional teaching practices.

Changes to the GED assessment, as well as curricula aligned with the Common Core State Standards, mean that alternative pathways to learning may become more attractive for some students who struggle with the traditional “seat time” approach to learning. Adult educators need to be aware of these considerations as the CCRS landscape continues to shift and adapt to the needs of all learners.

Through this independent and objective hub, the new CCRS Center plans to deliver a range of services that simultaneously build capacity for its stakeholders—including adult education programs—and generate new CCRS knowledge and resources, ultimately resulting in better postsecondary and adult learning outcomes for all students. For more information, contact CCRS Center Director Dr. Joseph Harris (jharris@air.org).

State of the Field

Continued from page 3

The overall expectation is that, by focusing on the actions that support effective adult education programming, all adult education programs will evaluate their respective level of implementation through the lens of the seven components. A heightened awareness of the Implementation Guide as a tool for self-assessment is one of the first steps to program improvement. Individual program administrators need resources and support in improving their programs’ implementation. Fortunately, California has a rich variety of resources:

- Face-to-face and online training in the areas of professional development, data collection and assessment, and technology
- Leadership training
- Communities of practice
- Adult education professional organizations, regional networks, state leadership projects and office staff

The infrastructure for a robust adult education program still exists; we just need to be more attuned to strategically leveraging resources and exchanging useful information to improve individual programs and enhance student outcomes. We must be purposeful in designing every aspect of our programs, vigilant about program review, and assertive in initiating effective collaborations with supportive partners. The history of adult education in California is a long and proud one. Sustaining adult education programming in our state within the current climate is imperative. Ours must be the story of a program that meets the needs of adult learners responsibly, effectively, and efficiently, while nimblly and strategically adjusting to challenges. The future of our state is at stake.
Congratulations to the CALPRO Adult Education Leadership Institute Class of 2012 graduates!

They are as follows:

**Sally Ames**, San Luis Coastal Adult School  
**Charles (Chuck) Collings**, El Rancho Adult School  
**Renee Collins**, Elk Grove Adult School  
**Judy De La Torre**, LAUSD Div. of Adult & Career Ed.  
**Adeyinka Fashokun**, Mt. Diablo Adult Education  
**Dana Galloway**, Chaffey Adult School  
**Todd Haag**, Chaffey Adult School  
**Marcy Hale**, The Learning Center  
**Carol Jackson**, Lanterman Developmental Center  
**Lilly Jimenez**, Covina Public Library  
**John Kelly**, San Lorenzo Adult School  
**Tom Petrich**, Murrieta Valley Adult School  
**Steve Thompson**, Ventura Adult & Continuing Education  
**Robyn Wiggins**, Grossmont Adult School

The one-year leadership development program is offered to practicing administrators who are new to adult education with the goal of providing effective management and high quality leadership skills to enhance their ability to operate adult education programs. These graduates joined the more than 600 adult educators who have participated in the Leadership Institute since its inception in 1985. We wish them continued success as they move forward in their careers.

The Class of 2013 Adult Education Leadership Institute participants were nominated in December 2012 and have recently completed the Winter Session of the Institute. They will meet again in May for the Summer Session of the Institute. The Class of 2013 participants are as follows:

**Sally Dibbini**, Antelope Valley Adult School  
**Dustin Gacherieu**, Castro Valley Adult Education  
**Cynthia Gleason**, Fontana Adult School  
**Joyce Hinkson**, OTAN  
**Kathleen Lommen**, Huntington Beach Adult School  
**Paul McGarry**, Santa Barbara City College Cont. Education  
**Jeff Meredith**, Grossmont Adult School  
**Terri Nuckols**, Delano Adult School  
**Kathleen Pearson**, Milpitas Adult School  
**Joel Vilanova**, Stanislaus Literacy Center  
**Mary Wilson**, Grossmont Adult School

Seventeen teachers are participating in the Communities of Practice pilot for CALPRO’s new module, Evidence-Based Writing Instruction (EBWI). This module helps instructors improve their writing instruction for adult basic education and adult secondary education (ABE/ASE) or English as a second language (ESL) students who are at intermediate and advanced levels by applying 1) research-based instructional techniques, 2) protocols for analyzing students’ work, and 3) guided instructional plans. Throughout the pilot, participants will be asked for feedback on the content and design of the module and the online activities. This feedback will be used to improve and enhance future trainings before offering the EBWI Community of Practice training statewide. Participating teachers include the following:

**Melody Blake**, Napa Valley Adult Education  
**Elisabeth Braley**, Fremont Adult and Continuing Education  
**Glenn Cunliffe**, San Mateo Adult School  
**Austin Cushman**, Stockton School for Adults  
**Susan Derana**, Contra Costa Adult School  
**April Ellenwood Oliver**, Santa Rosa Jr. College  
**Marti Estrin**, Santa Rosa Jr. College  
**Diana Filner**, Contra Costa County Office of Education  
**Lisa Gonzalves**, Alameda Adult School  
**Gretchen Lammers**, Martinez Adult School  
**Joanne Ledermer**, Mt. Diablo Adult Education  
**Suzanne Motley**, Alameda Adult School  
**Barbara Stone**, Napa Valley Adult Education  
**Maureen Talbot**, Vallejo Adult School  
**Jim Vogt**, Jefferson Adult Education  
**Francisca Wentworth**, Jefferson Adult Education  
**Michelle Winnet**, Vallejo Adult School
A benefit of the CoP delivery model is that participants do not have to grapple with their questions and challenges alone. In this instance, the ongoing and collaborative nature of the training allowed participants the time and space to ponder their questions and to coach each other in exploring solutions. A concern shared by several in the group was how to introduce the concept of workforce skills in a meaningful way to the beginning learner.

SBCCCE’s Cassie Koop responded by generously sharing her illustrated handouts and posters depicting workforce skills, which were immediately helpful to those seeking ways to work with beginners.

An important element of the online interim assignment was that participants asked for and gave specific feedback to each other. In the true spirit of a CoP, participants encouraged and assisted their colleagues as they reflected on what worked (and what did not) in their own classrooms. There was meaningful give and take as participants alternately served as mentors and mentees.

For example, Nancy Farrand was in her first semester of ESL teaching at SBCCCE. She was mentored through the process by her SBCCCE colleague and CALPRO-certified trainer Silvia Morgan. Nancy was keen to learn from Silvia and other more seasoned colleagues; however, they were just as appreciative of the opportunity to learn from her insight as a former human resources specialist.

At the second face-to-face session, participants were eager to reconnect in person and to tackle the concept of contextualized instruction. Contextualized instruction in this case involves using employment-related tasks as the framework for instruction. Participants reviewed their ESL textbooks, and discussed how to adapt the content to include a work-related context. One participant offered an example of contextualized instruction in her own class.

In a lesson that involved the language of polite requests (i.e., Can you help me? Would you mind opening the door?), SBCCCE instructor Angelina Valenzuela invited her students to come up with a list of requests that they could use at their own jobs.

She reports that one student excitedly asked her how to say “skateboard.” It turned out that skateboarders were often whizzing by her booth at the local open-air market, and she had always wanted to ask them to stop, but did not know how. The student was delighted with her new vocabulary, which she could put to use right away at her job. Helping students connect the language they are learning in class to their real-life workplace needs is the essence of contextualized instruction.

The cadre of participants left the second face-to-face session with one final task. In the spirit of continuous improvement, participants were asked to revise and refine their original lesson based on feedback from peers and what they had learned in the sessions and to post it online for final reflections and comments.

While the training officially concluded at the end of May, a central tenet of the CoP model is a dedication to the process of continuous improvement. For Ventura County Continuing Education’s Jack McGrath and Cerritos College’s Norberto Nuñez, who were the sole participants from their agencies, the challenge going forward is to continue to develop and implement the strategies in their own practice. For the SBCCCE team who will be rolling out their revised curriculum next, the CoP was just the beginning of a continuing conversation that will be expanded to include the larger SBCCCE ESL faculty.

Former SBCCCE ESL director Jack Bailey summed it up: “Ongoing [professional] development is essential to serving our students as best we can. We must always ask ourselves: How can we do it better?” The Community of Practice is an effective training model for doing just that.

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Biography

Liz Koenig is a former CALPRO Professional Development Center Manager and ESL/CBET Teacher Advisor for the Los Angeles Unified School District’s Division of Adult and Career Education. She currently works as an ESL Professor at Santa Monica College.
Integrated Education and Training refers to a model of education that is designed to boost participants’ educational and career advancement by providing both technical and basic skills training during the same period of enrollment. There are four common models of implementing IET, including Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST, also known as coteaching), alternating teachers, cluster vocational ESL (VESL) or cluster vocational adult basic education (VABE), and finally, VESL- or VABE-specific classes. CALPRO provides several professional learning resources related to IET, highlighted below:

- **Research Brief**
  A four-page summary by Dr. Anestine Hector-Mason of the American Institutes for Research, this research brief discusses IET and its benefits, and outlines four models for implementing IET.

- **Video Library IET page**
  [http://www.calpro-online.org/onlinevideolibrary/iet.asp](http://www.calpro-online.org/onlinevideolibrary/iet.asp)
  This page features a series of 11 interviews with a variety of administrators, instructors, program coordinators, and other personnel from IET programs in California. The interviewees address frequently asked questions about models they have used to implement their IET programs successfully.

- **Facilitated Professional Learning**
  Working in agency-based teams of educators and agency administrators, members work through the process of developing plans for implementing one of the above four instructional models. This training is open to eligible teams of one administrator and two instructors, including a basic skills instructor and a technical skills instructor.

Available formats:

- **Facilitated Online Course**
  (100 percent online; six weeks; includes three Webinars in real time)
  Average time required: three hours/week
  For a schedule, description, and application, visit [http://calpro-online.org/onlinecourseschedule.asp](http://calpro-online.org/onlinecourseschedule.asp)
  For general information about facilitated asynchronous courses, visit: [http://www.calpro-online.org/facilasynchcourses.asp](http://www.calpro-online.org/facilasynchcourses.asp)

- **Regional Community of Practice**
  (hybrid of face-to-face training and online participation)
  Average time required: 16–20 hours (total).
  For additional information about Regional Communities of Practice, visit [http://calpro-online.org/communitiesofpractice.asp](http://calpro-online.org/communitiesofpractice.asp)

To inquire about hosting a Regional Community of Practice, applying to join one, or other details, please contact Dr. Cherise Moore at cmoore@air.org.

In summary, can the same basic PLC processes that we use to maximize our students’ achievements be used effectively to ensure we meet the stringent requirements of regulatory compliance demanded by the USDOE in administrating a Title IV-accredited program? Given that at the completion of our accreditation visit by the COE and WASC committees in November the school received a report of “No findings, no recommendations and no suggestions”—meaning that we are in full compliance with all ten of the COE standards—I would say the answer is a definite “Yes.”

### Biography

An adult education teacher and administrator for over 12 years, Dave has been a CALPRO presenter for a variety of workshops, as well as several CALPRO webinars on the Title IV financial aid accreditation process. He completed the CALPRO PLC Institute in December 2010. Dave was selected as the ACSA Region XIX Adult Education Administrator of the Year in 2009 and was recently selected as the Beaumont Unified School District Principal of the Year for 2013. He is also a retired Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Navy.
Adult education administrators and instructors are looking to make ESL curricula relevant to the 21st century, and to focus on key competencies identified in the California strategic plan for adult education (Linking Adults to Opportunity: Transformation of the California Department of Education Adult Education Program). To assist with this, CALPRO offers training in Optimizing ESL Instructional Planning: Management, Monitoring and Reflection (Optimizing: MMR), which is designed to help teachers hone their instruction and classroom practices to meet students’ needs. While helping ESL teachers to enhance their instruction in the key areas of management, monitoring, and reflection, this timely and relevant training also incorporates numerous activities to help students develop workforce skills through the daily activities of the language learning classroom.

Although the Optimizing: MMR training module was originally developed to be delivered in two 3-hour, face-to-face sessions, a growing body of research has shown that teachers need between 11 and 100 hours of professional development in order to personally integrate training and significantly impact student learning. As a result, CALPRO has begun to translate some of its 6-hour training modules into the Communities of Practice (CoP) format, and the CoP version of Optimizing: MMR was completed last year. This version includes an online component that uses the Moodle platform, and this allows teachers to complete assignments and interact with the facilitator and other participants before the first session (pre-session), between sessions 1 and 2 (interim session), and after the second session (post-session). This online component extends the amount of time participants spend interacting with the module materials in order to significantly deepen both their learning experience and the impact the training has on their instruction.

In November and December 2012, 10 participants from eight agencies registered for a regional CoP at Redlands Adult School in Southern California; I was the facilitator for this training. Several weeks before the first face-to-face session, the participants began their journey by logging on to Moodle, introducing themselves, and discussing a recent workforce activity they had taught in the classroom. They also took a short, three-question survey to help them evaluate their own classroom practices that were relevant to the training outcomes. For most of the participants, this was their first experience of an online training module. This in itself highlights a subtle importance of the CoP training; distance learning and offering classroom students an extended language learning opportunity through online learning is at the cutting edge of education.

Engaging teachers in the online component enables them to consider how they might bring online learning to their students, and it whets their appetite for participating in the growing number of trainings that are available online for adult education teachers.

The following week, participants returned to Moodle to complete two research-based assignments. For the first assignment, participants read research on the Backward Design model, in which instructors design lessons based on expected learning outcomes. Participants then designed an evaluation that could be used to assess whether learning outcomes had been achieved, and they developed relevant lesson materials. After reading the research, the participants were asked to identify (and post online) two documents from their ESL programs that target student learning outcomes, and asked to share the extent to which these documents drive their instruction. The participants identified a range of documents, including course outlines, competencies tested by the CASAS tests, syllabi for a particular class, and California Pathways. One teacher commented, “I tend to be selective, and plan lessons around CASAS topics that are most useful/beneficial to the students in my particular setting [a jail].” Another teacher, who is new to adult education, said, “Right now it does not drive my lesson plans as much as it should because I do not know a lot about the test or Grant process...I’d like to know more about the process.”

Participants then read about Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle and completed a reflection activity online. One teacher shared this story:

I recently took my students on a “field trip” to the library, partly...because we had been working on saying and spelling our names, address and phone numbers and I wanted to evaluate them filling out an application/form in a real life situation. What I discovered was that many did not have their phone numbers and address memorized. The next class we discussed the situation and they reflected on the importance of knowing their personal information by memory. This led to the planning stage of the learning cycle, as now I would plan lessons that would have students in real life situations, when possible, give their personal information by memory.

Continued on page 15
Another teacher came to this conclusion: “I have not been using reflection very much at all. This assignment has prompted me to look at ways to regularly incorporate reflection into my lessons, instead of the semi-haphazard way I use it now. This is why I love these CALPRO trainings: they’re immediately useful. I am incorporating opportunities for reflection into my lessons from now on.”

At the first face-to-face session of the training, teachers continued discussions they had begun online. The session began by focusing on instructional management. Based on the Backward Design model, participants looked at tools such as syllabi, agendas, textbook tables of contents, and classroom rules (workforce skills) as ways to focus students specifically on the targeted competencies. Then, in the second step in the backward design process, participants explored tools—including charts and checklists—that could be used to monitor students’ progress toward the accomplishment of the identified learning outcomes. Finally, the teachers explored activities using management and monitoring tools to reflect on student learning. They were also given an interim assignment to complete before the next face-to-face session that was designed to incorporate what they had learned into their practical teaching experiences.

Having returned to their regular teaching assignments, the participants began to work on their interim assignment. They taught one activity from each of the three strategies several times and, in order to further connect with their training cohort group, they used Moodle to share their experience of teaching one of these activities, and to comment on each other’s posts. One teacher, for example, explained that he had created a chart to help monitor the extent to which his students only spoke English in the classroom. He had expected to see a small movement toward only speaking English, but was surprised to see within one week that “students were trying hard to speak English in the classroom and they were successful about 60 percent of the time.”

Participants came to the second face-to-face session with handouts they had developed from their interim assignments. Each teacher shared his or her experiences, and an energized conversation ensued as participants reflected on how the experiences of others impacted their own learning. In addition, research-based materials were used to design activities to prepare students for the workforce, and to design activities relating to improving instructional management, monitoring student outcomes, and reflections.

As a final, post-session assignment, participants were asked to further develop one of the lesson plans they had completed as part of the interim assignment, and to post it online.

Two teachers rose to the challenge by recording video of their students’ oral reflection and posting it online. Another participant commented, “The information (from this training) was very hands-on and immediately useful.” An online comment on the post-session assignment demonstrates the lasting impact the training had on one participant:

I have been doing the student self-reflection comments during the final 10 or 15 minutes of class. I intend to keep this up for 3 months and re-evaluate again. Classroom time is precious, but having the students think about their own learning is also valuable. So far, I am extremely pleased with the activities and they are high-interest for the students.

In summary, employing long-term exposure to critical materials through face-to-face and online training, and adding the element of classroom practice and teacher sharing, created a setting in which Optimizing: MMR became a reality for this group of teachers.

Biography

Lynne Nicodemus has worked for over 20 years in California adult education programs--for 10 years as an ESL instructor/coordinator in the San Juan Adult Education Program in Sacramento and then as a Vice Principal of Pittsburg Adult Education Center since 2000. She served on the CATESOL Board in various positions, including that of President, and is currently on the OTAN Distance Learning Advisory Board, CCAE Bay Section Board and is a trainer and curriculum developer with CALPRO.
Cluster Vocational English as a Second Language: An Example from San Diego

By Carolyn McGavock, Associate ESL Professor, San Diego Community College District Continuing Education

What does a cluster Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) class look like? What are the outcomes for students? Vocational ESL is one of four Integrated Education and Training (IET) instructional models, which contextualize basic skills instruction in occupational themes so that students can simultaneously improve their academic and workplace skills. The term “cluster” VESL refers to the fact that the class serves students with a variety of occupational interests in the same classroom at the same time.

The cluster VESL class at San Diego Community College Continuing Education serves intermediate, high, and advanced ESL students who have stated employment or job training goals. One ESL instructor teaches in two formats within a three-hour class session. First, whole group instruction is given to practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing within general workplace themes. Some of these themes are goal setting, labor market research, job applications and interviews, workplace safety, and performance reviews. Second, students have an hour of independent learning time in which to focus on a particular vocational area such as health care, office skills, retail, autos, or child care. Students have access to educational software, the Internet, audio recordings, and a variety of texts. During this hour an instructor and an instructional aide circulate to answer individual questions.

The vocation-specific curriculum teaches occupational skills while promoting improved English skills. For example, students interested in health care practice forming questions correctly in the context of learning the importance of small talk with clients. They practice writing past-tense verbs while learning to write a shift report. Reading comprehension skills are practiced with a textbook equivalent to the one used in job training.

In order to have 30 students working on five or six different sets of materials, curriculum is provided in “modules” designed for independent study. Administrators and teachers face a challenge in developing or acquiring appropriate curriculum; it takes time and resources to research student interests, the local job market, and available materials to adapt for the program’s needs. However, the results are well worth the effort.

Students enjoy working with material that is relevant to their goals and allows them to work at their own pace or with partners. Usually students need two semesters to complete a VESL program. Students gain self-confidence with improved English skills that apply to their career goals. Confidence also grows with increased soft skills such as working independently, working on a team, setting goals, meeting deadlines, and taking initiative. Delegating responsibilities to the students is an essential part of promoting a workplace environment in the classroom. For example, VESL students can train new students, take telephone messages, make announcements, monitor the sign-in sheet, and ensure that the classroom is well maintained. A key element is to teach explicitly how to articulate those transferable skills to others.

Success for a VESL program takes many forms. One former VESL student in job training returned to say, “The modules I did really help me now.” Job seekers feel more confident in job interviews. One student recently reported that a potential employer had complimented her composure during an interview. The student said she had been able to relax at the interview when she realized it was similar to what she had practiced in class. The VESL class also serves students who are currently employed; one proud student recently said, “My boss asked me if I’ve been going to school. I told him ‘yes’ and he said that he could see a difference in my work. I know I’m improving.”

Before receiving a certificate of completion, students provide a checklist that documents all of their work. Finally, students give a graduation speech describing what they have learned and what they will do next. If job training is the next step, the student, instructors, and counselors collaborate on a plan before the student graduates.

In sum, the cluster VESL model is an effective bridge to achievement because it provides relevant content in a flexible setting.

Biography

Carolyn McGavock has worked with English language learners for over 20 years in Washington, New York, and California. In addition to classroom instruction, she has done curriculum development for CBET, EL Civics and VESL programs. Currently she team teaches a VESL class for Continuing Education in San Diego.
Karyn Ruiz teaches both intermediate and advanced ESL classes at Visalia Adult School. In 2012, Visalia Adult School earned its six-year accreditation, with Karyn as its WASC Coordinator.

To date, Karyn has completed a total of five CALPRO-facilitated asynchronous courses, each of which is offered over a four-week period through Moodle, an open-source learning management system. (For details on the 13 course titles CALPRO is offering in 2012–13, visit http://calpro-online.org/facilasynchcourses.asp.) In December 2012, Karyn reflected on how she has implemented what she learned in some of these professional learning courses:

I began taking online classes with CALPRO in 2008. I started with Managing the Multilevel ESL Class when I was teaching a class with a broad range of proficiency levels. The course helped me understand that my frustrations with trying to juggle and get everyone on the same page disappeared. I soon learned how I could reorganize and manage my ESL class. I also began implementing several different strategies for planning small group activities and whole group activities. I also learned to organize our class so that we became one cohesive unit, even though my students were working at very different levels.

Another course I took was Designing Programs for Adults with Disabilities, Session 1: Understanding Learning Disabilities, Awareness for Adult Educators. This course offered suggestions for both teaching techniques and resources that might help my students reach greater successes in class. The course opened my eyes to the possibility that a student who was struggling might be struggling for other reasons than just she doesn’t pay attention in class, or she’s not doing her homework, or she’s not as focused as she should be. In general, I think the course made me more patient and prompted me to find alternative methods of instruction to assist struggling students. The course also introduced us to different assessments that were available to see if perhaps there were learning issues in their primary language.

Other CALPRO classes Karyn took in 2008–09 included Enhancing Learner Persistence, Effective Lesson Planning, and Understanding the Adult Learner, Session 1: Adult Learning and Development. Recognizing the broad appeal of online professional learning for adult educators, in 2010, Karyn learned how to facilitate a real-time online CALPRO training on Integrated and Contextualized Workforce Skills in the ABE/ASE Classroom, using the Adobe Connect desktop-sharing platform. This year Karyn has had a leading role in developing CALPRO’s newest online course on Integrated Education and Training (IET), which integrates three real-time Webinars into the six-week Moodle-based course. The IET course is open to agency teams by application; the next time it will be offered is April 9 through May 20.

For a schedule of classes and registration information, visit http://calpro-online.org/onlinecourseschedule.asp#grid.

**Upcoming Events of Interest**

- **TESOL Convention**
  March 20–23, 2013
  Dallas, TX
  http://www.tesol.org/convention2013

- **COABE National Conference**
  March 24–28, 2013
  New Orleans, LA
  http://www.coabe.org/conference2013.html

- **CCAE State Conference**
  April 18–20, 2013
  Sacramento, CA
  http://www.ccaestate.org/conferences.html

- **CASAS Summer Institute**
  June 11–13, 2013
  San Diego, CA
  http://www.casas.org

- **CATESOL State Conference**
  October 24–27, 2013
  San Diego, CA
  catesol2012cochairs@gmail.com
  http://catesol.org/annualconference/
As one of the three state leadership projects to support adult education, Outreach and Technical Assistance Network (OTAN) focuses on technology and how it can be effectively integrated into the educational process. OTAN supports California adult educators by providing the following free services:

**Online Courses**
OTAN has made three online courses available on a dedicated Moodle server: ESL Intermediate (with activities related to USA Learns); ESL Advanced; and College and Career Transitions, which includes an introductory writing section.

**Online Workshops**
Topics range from mobile learning to online course management and social media.

**Mobile Applications**
OTAN created a new app for iPads and iPhones that is included in the transitions course, and a second app for ESL. Both are free and available on iTunes under “Sacramento County Office of Education.”

**Face-to-Face Workshops**
There are a variety of available workshops related to technology integration that can be provided at your agency. Whether it’s Internet Resources for ESL/EL Civics teachers, beginning PowerPoint, or how to create a course Web site in Moodle, OTAN can help.

**Academies**
The Technology Integration Mentor Academy (TIMAC) trains and supports teachers to become the technology mentor for their programs.

The Online Teaching Academy (OTAC) is a professional development project that brings participants together for training and support for a year. Participants learn how to use Moodle and will understand the principles of effective online instruction, and how to develop effective online content, for an online or blended course.

**Licensing**
Through OTAN, agencies can access GED Online, a GED instructional program and management system, for only $28.00 a seat. It includes handouts that will help agencies prepare students to pass the GED prior to the 2014 change of test.

**Administrators Planning for Online Delivery**
A variety of topics are explored (e.g., Data, Distance and Delivery), and technical assistance is provided for administrators to plan delivery of instruction, online student management, distance teaching issues, and professional development for online teachers. The next Webinar will be held in spring 2013.

**ESL Web Support**
USA Learns (an online course for learning English) is for students, tutors, and teachers (http://www.usalearns.org). A free app for iPhones and iPads, containing all 15 lesson units, is available on iTunes. Search iTunes under “Sacramento County Office of Education.”

For more information about any of these free services, please contact OTAN at: http://www.otan.us or 1-800-894-3113.

An adult education ESL teacher recently remarked that a former student came up to him and said,

“You probably don’t remember me, but you changed my life. I thought I would always be just a wife and mother. But I took your ESL course in the hope of communicating better with my children. Then one day you asked if I would help some other students having difficulty. You said, “You have a gift for teaching others. You should become a teacher.” That comment made me see my life in a totally different way. I became a teacher. Thank you.

If you have had a similar experience, you will recognize that there is no greater compensation a teacher can receive. Adult education has tough obstacles to overcome. Yet the need is so compelling and the audience so grateful that we must continue to fight for support and recognition.
Tinkertoy Education  
Continued from page 18

Throughout history we have seen that leaders have stressed the importance of developing thinking skills. Before we rush to fill our students with isolated bits of knowledge and subject them to endless standardized tests, we should again be reminded of James Harvey’s comment: “The most significant skill that students can develop in the 21st century is the same skill that served them well in prior centuries— a mind equipped to think— the most important work skill of them all.”

A contemporary author once condemned James Fenimore Cooper with the comment that his mind had never been violated by an idea. We should not condemn our adult students with a similar judgment. Instead, let’s provide them all with a “Tinkertoy education.”

References


CASAS Professional Development for Assessment & Accountability — Spring 2013

CASAS is offering a wide variety of professional development workshops in Spring 2013 — some via Web conferencing and others in a new self-paced format. Web conferencing and self-paced workshop topics include CASAS Assessment, Accountability, and TOPSpro® Enterprise.

All workshops are accessible via California Adult Ed Online Registration (filter by Sponsor: CASAS). They are appropriate for Workforce Investment Act Title II, Sections 225/231 and EL Civics–funded agencies in California.

2013 CASAS National Summer Institute

Join your colleagues at the 2013 CASAS National Summer Institute, June 11–13, at the Town and Country Resort and Convention Center in San Diego, California. This is a valuable opportunity to attend the most up-to-date training and workshops. Participants will learn about pertinent issues such as the Common Core State Standards and computer-based testing, and will have the opportunity to network with other adult educators. For more information, visit www.casas.org/training-and-support/SI.

Is Your Agency Doing a Great Job?

Nominate your agency for a Promising Practice or Making a Difference award! Each year the California Department of Education (CDE) gives Promising Practices awards to recognize California ABE, ASE, and ESL adult education providers who have implemented strategies and practices to help students attain their goals. These practices must improve program accountability, develop skills that students need in the workplace, promote collaboration and cooperation with other programs or agencies, promote effective student transitions, or have potential application in other adult programs. CDE also awards agencies whose EL Civics students have taken what they learned in the classroom and made a difference in their communities. CASAS manages the Promising Practice and Making a Difference awards for CDE by identifying worthy agency programs. For more information and an application form visit www.casas.org > California Accountability.

Applications are due March 30, 2013.
The California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Adult Literacy Professional Development Project (CALPRO) are pleased to announce the development of Evidence-Based Writing Instruction (EBWI)—a new teacher training module targeted at instructors who provide writing instruction for intermediate and advanced level adult basic education/adult secondary education (ABE/ASE) students and English as a second language (ESL) students. Because of the diverse needs of these student populations, the module will not only explore research that is foundational for teaching writing to all students but will also discuss techniques that are instrumental for addressing the needs of each unique student group, with one session on ABE/ASE and a separate session focusing on ESL. Participants will have the opportunity to review students' work and create a plan for how to improve their writing instruction. The module is scheduled to be piloted in February and March 2013.

CALPRO will train prospective facilitators of the Evidence-Based Writing Instruction module as part of the annual Training-of-Trainers (ToT) Institute in Sacramento on Wednesday and Thursday, June 26 and 27, 2013. Once facilitators are trained and certified, they will be eligible to present the module beginning in the 2013–14 school year.

In addition to the EBWI ToT, CALPRO will run a concurrent ToT on the recently revised Math Instructional Strategies module. Based on recent research, content has been added to the module in the following areas:

- Conceptual understanding - comprehension of mathematical concepts, operations, and relations
- Procedural fluency - skill in carrying out procedures flexibly, accurately, efficiently, and appropriately
- Strategic competence - ability to formulate, represent, and solve mathematical problems
- Adaptive reasoning - capacity for logical thought, reflection, explanation, and justification
- Productive disposition - habitual inclination to see mathematics as sensible, useful, and worthwhile, coupled with a belief in diligence and one's own efficacy

In addition to incorporating practical applications of recent research on mathematics instruction and mathematics learning, CALPRO has updated the module from a series of two face-to-face workshops to a ‘blended’ (face-to-face and online) regional Community of Practice (CoP) format. New CALPRO facilitators will be trained on delivering the module in the CoP format during the Math Instructional Strategies ToT.

Administrators are invited to nominate an appropriate staff member for consideration for the Training-of-Trainers Institute. The ToT is for individuals who will commit to following up on the ToT by responding to requests from CALPRO to present the Evidence-Based Writing Instruction module or the Math Instructional Strategies module. Certified facilitators are also authorized to conduct training exclusively for their agencies or for other agencies upon request.

Applications will be available through the CALPRO website ([www.calpro-online.org](http://www.calpro-online.org)) by the end of March, and the due date for submittal is tentatively May 3, 2013. If you have questions about the Training-of-Trainers Institute or are interested in scheduling future professional learning opportunities at your site, please contact Dr. Cherise Moore at cmoore@air.org.

CALPRO is a state leadership project of the California Department of Education (CDE), Adult Education Office, [http://www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov). The CDE contracts with the American Institutes for Research, [http://www.air.org](http://www.air.org), to fund CALPRO activities.

The CALPROgress periodical is published annually and features issues related to adult education and literacy. It contains news about local programs in California and CALPRO services that support professional development to enhance adult learning.

CALPRO invites readers to send their articles related to professional development in adult education and literacy to Dr. Cherise Moore at cmoore@air.org.

Read CALPROgress online at: [http://calpro-online.org/calprogress.asp](http://calpro-online.org/calprogress.asp)