



MESSAGE FROM MK – January 2004
An update from Mary Katherine Moen, State Director of Adult Education, mkmoen@nsn.k12.nv.us, 775.687.9167

Nevada's final report to the United States Department of Education, a summary of Nevada's outcomes for adult basic education in 2002-2003, is ready for delivery. It includes Educational Functioning Level tables, demographics, a Data Quality Standards checklist, financial reports, and a narrative summarizing the key activities, programs and projects that were successful in implementing the goals of the Nevada State Plan.

Last month I wrote about the building blocks of the structure of ABE in Nevada (access, content standards, research-based instruction, quality instruction, program management/improvement, leadership, professional development, and accountability). The data portion of the US DOE final report is focused on accountability. In addition, the narrative addresses many of the other building blocks. Here are some of the key components of the narrative portion of the report.

- Program directors attended three 3-day meetings focused on training in program evaluation and improvement. Led by Facilitator Debbie White, the group practiced making meaning of evaluation as a means to program improvement. Instead of jumping immediately into specific evaluation tools, the group spent considerable time developing purpose and principles statements. Several programs reported implementing the model for various projects "back home." Debbie developed *From Action to Impact: A Handbook for Using Purpose, Principles, and Performance Indicators to Improve Programs*; it is posted on Nevada's Literacy Web Site at www.literacynet.org/nevada/pphbk.pdf.

Program management and improvement

- Special funds were awarded to individual adult education personnel for training and staff development:
 1. Robbie obtained training on Workstyles, a job readiness program for students who speak some English, covering interviewing and on-the-job skills. He then implemented curriculum, which showed an average of 7 to 14.4 point gains in two 60-hour classes.

Quality Instruction
 2. Sue conducted a research project with her students to answer the following question: Will direct instruction of reading strategies enhance comprehension for Advanced English as a Second Language (ESL) and adult literacy students? The project yielded positive results.

Research-based Instruction
 3. Teri attended a training on uniform federal regulations for federal grant recipients. She then summarized the experience for AEFLA programs at a Directors' Meeting and will serve as a resource regarding Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Management Concepts.

Program management and improvement
 4. A workshop was delivered to Community College of Southern Nevada (CCSN) multi-cultural "front desk" staff. The topic was well received.

- An ongoing effort to provide structure and technical assistance to volunteer literacy groups in the remote, rural areas of Nevada yielded five Family Storyteller trainings presented in rural and frontier counties and a prison-based Family Literacy Program training. Manuals were developed for both Introductory Volunteer Tutors (used in six workshops held around the state) and ESL Volunteer Tutors (presented in eight workshops) under the direction of the State Literacy Resource Center.
- Funding was provided for three family literacy trainers to attend the National Center for Family Literacy conference.
- The State Literacy Resource Center developed Learning Disabilities Accommodations Toolkits. These toolkits were distributed to funded as well as volunteer projects around the State.
- 308 participants attended workshops offered at AEFLA-funded program sites. Offerings were highlighted in a "course catalog" and included sessions in GED Instruction, ESL 101, Critical Thinking, Learning Disabilities, Goal Setting, and Cooperative Learning, as well as several sessions on data and assessment issues.

Professional Development



- A Pre-Service Training Module for teachers and tutors new to teaching adults and/or new to adult education in Nevada was developed. This self-paced, interactive, CD/Internet-based training module covers concepts and best practices in adult education, as well as Nevada's processes and policies for delivering adult basic education.

- The Adult Basic Education (ABE) Certificate of Performance is the nation's only outcome-based certification system for ABE practitioners. It recognizes proven competence and performance in the classroom or tutoring environment. 57 certificates have been issued to teachers and tutors since Spring 2002. Some of the programs are using the certificates in system improvement efforts: WNCC pays certificate holders \$1.00/hour more than non-certificated instructors; GBC uses the criteria in site competitions. Based on questions and applications received, it appears that this initiative has encouraged some programs to look at the way they are offering instruction and documenting learning gains. Interest has been expressed from other states including Massachusetts, Virginia, Montana, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico.
- An ABE Administrator's Handbook is nearly completed and is posted at <http://www.literacynet.org/nvadulted/handbook.html>. Program Directors have been involved in reviewing sections as they are drafted and have responded very favorably to the document. The Handbook also serves as a basis for documentation of Nevada's compliance with National Reporting System (NRS) Data Quality Standards.

Accountability

Accountability

- The Director of the Northern Nevada Literacy Council also serves as State Coordinator for the 18-24 Year Old Credential Initiative (The Edge! at <http://www.unlv.edu/centers/workforce/>). The Initiative's focus is a three-pronged approach to developing collaboration between Adult Education providers, business/industry and labor, and state agencies to assist dropouts in completing their high school diplomas/GEDs and to provide opportunities for skill certification.

Leadership

- Five agencies served over 2,400 students through English Literacy/Civics (EL/ Civics) funding. Activities included:
 - o One program implemented quarterly citizenship labs for students and their family members.
 - o Guest speakers made presentations on various topics—employment opportunities, banking services, public health, household energy conservation, and public safety.
 - o 33 students participated in a Community Involvement Institute, focusing on

Quality Instruction

EXAMPLE OF EL/CIVICS ACTIVITIES AT PROGRAM RUN BY LIBRARY SYSTEM

- **State-of-the-art computer software and hardware were available to each and every EL/Civics student in study rooms throughout the 14 library branches. A substantial Community Technology Centers grant enabled this program to create two new 17-seat computer centers fully dedicated to literacy students. GED 21st Century software was added to the program's instructional resources.**
- **In the first two weeks of EL/Civics classes, a Young People's Library staff member talks to the class about the resources of the Young People's Library, and those who have school age children are encouraged to sign up for a special children's reading project that provides prizes to children who check out and read a predetermined number of books. These families also sign up for library cards.**
- **A special class was developed by the library-based program to introduce EL/Civics students to the Library District Internet site. In addition to learning to use the site to enhance knowledge about library resources and programs the class assisted students in learning to access sites dealing with civics and cultural activities and services in the community.**

- o opportunities in the community. This year's theme was Career Exploration. Over forty students were introduced to numerous career areas, responsibilities, and qualifications.
- o Several programs have developed curriculum for EL/Civics classes, focusing on pronunciation, community involvement, citizenship skills, and basic life skills such as banking, filling out applications, etc.
- o At the request of the Director of Western/Pacific LINCS, representatives of EL/Civics programs met to determine what resources might be useful to

Nevada. The group agreed that implementation of Easy Voter project for Nevada and development of EL/Civics Web page were top priorities. LINCS Director is to follow up with these projects.

And finally, representing many building blocks, as so many of our efforts do, several print and electronic publications were produced to provide useful information and resources regarding adult education to instructors, tutors, administrators, AEFLA partners, legislative policymakers, and key business leaders throughout Nevada. Much content was produced and posted to Nevada's Web site (www.literacynet.org/nevada). *Nevada Connections* was produced monthly and was distributed to nearly 2,000 adult educators and stakeholders.