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# Teacher Tips

October 2000

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## Using technology to enhance ABE instruction

—Shirley Jackson, excerpted from “The Maine Fertilizer,” June 2000

This semester I have turned my beginning computer class into a language arts/social studies forum by utilizing scavenger hunts to find out more about Maine, travel and vacation planning, and hobbies. My students have been older adults and these three topics fascinated them. They took the information home and worked on it there, exploring and finding answers on their own. They planned a vacation by figuring out budget, destination, weather, and time involved. They looked for replacement clothing that had accidentally been left at home, “shopped” for food and snacks, and researched facts and trivia about their destinations.

We also poked around Internet greeting card company Web sites and discussed what makes a good Web site. We worked on reading skills by connecting to humorous sites and taking turns reading aloud.

About midway into the course I showed a National Geographic video on computer technology uses in the medical, physical therapy, and graphic arts fields. In class we discussed how technology enhances our lives by building skills, facilitating communication, and building higher order thinking skills.

Another activity I've used to enhance teaching Microsoft Works and Word was to write a cover letter and résumé in Microsoft Works first, then translate it into a Word document. Students worked on reformatting and on making grammar, spelling, and punctuation corrections.

### Write on!

Source: “The Buzz” (PA adult education newsletter), May 2000

Here’s an idea for an effective writing project: The class reads a short story. Break the class into small groups, with each group concentrating on a particular aspect of the story — not plot, theme, or character: but dialog, reference to color, scenery descriptions, or other story particulars the students choose. The groups then each write a collaborative piece about their chosen story aspect. Finally, the pieces are bound together into a new story. Students can view the same story from different points of view, and the use of group processes and creative writing can produce a higher level of adult student interest.

### Some highly effective lessons

You can find instructional materials that correlate to Equipped for the Future (EFF) content standards from the “Life Application Curriculum Sourcebook.” It follows the EFF Role Maps on work; family; and culture, community, and citizenship. The work and family units consist of materials developed by teachers; the culture, community and citizenship unit consists of student-generated materials on topics such as crime, low-income housing, adult education policy, gambling, free speech, and race. There’s even a unit based on Steven Covey’s The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People!

Go to: <http://hub1.worlded.org/lincs/>; click on Connecticut, Teacher Resources, Life Application Curriculum Sourcebook.

# Workplace Education vs. Traditional Adult Education

Source: "News to Use" (KY adult education newsletter), Summer 2000

Based on information from National Workplace Projects at the Corvette Plant, Bowling Green, KY; the Texas Instrument Plant, Versailles, KY; and the College of Lake County, NC.

Editor's note: Mary Katherine Moen, Nevada's Adult Education Consultant, submitted this interesting way to frame the way we look at educating adults.

	Workplace Education	Traditional Adult Education
<b>Role of the Instructor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To become familiar with the company culture and products</li> <li>To upgrade skills of the employees in response to employer and employee needs</li> <li>To market program</li> <li>To assess/evaluate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To become familiar with characteristics of adult learners</li> <li>To upgrade skills of learners in response to their needs</li> <li>To assess progress</li> </ul>
<b>Course Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To prepare groups of employees to become active thinkers and problem solvers while reinforcing a team approach to work, learning, and problem solving</li> <li>Learners and instructors customize goals to meet company and learner education needs</li> <li>Goals are determined with input from learners/employees, employers, and other stakeholders</li> <li>Goals are based on functions performed in the workplace</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More individual approach to work, learning, and problem solving</li> <li>Students select course and are placed based on entry assessment of skill level</li> <li>Course goals focus on life skills and academic skills, and are often predetermined</li> </ul>
<b>Instruction Methods and Strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chosen based on the workplace environment, learner needs, and curriculum</li> <li>Starting point for instruction is the work or life skill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chosen based on choices of learners, instructors, and education providers</li> <li>Starting point is the reading, writing, or math skill</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instructor creates assessments based on specific goals and objectives through a variety of methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instructor usually uses standardized test</li> </ul>
<b>Transfer of Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasis on transferring new skills to jobs, personal lives, and communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less emphasis on transfer of learning (especially in GED programs)</li> </ul>
<b>Texts and Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primary resources used are authentic to the workplace</li> <li>Employee's jobs, workplace environment, and global industry/economy issues determine materials used in classroom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primary texts are academic and commercial (off the shelf)</li> </ul>
<b>Enrollment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open to anyone who desires increased critical thinking and improved basic skills</li> <li>Programs are viewed as opportunities for employees to learn new skills needed for high performance workplaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enrollment is limited to employees who are at or below a particular grade level</li> <li>Programs are viewed as remedial and as opportunities for people to learn skills not mastered in school</li> </ul>



**Last call!** Proposals to present at MPAEA's Annual Conference (April 25-28, 2001 in Albuquerque) must be postmarked by October 19. For "Call for Presenters" forms, contact 702/651-4974 or [syank@ix.netcom.com](mailto:syank@ix.netcom.com)



# Supports and Hindrances: A Force-Field Analysis

—Andrea Parrella, "Focus on Basics," March 2000

(Andrea Parrella worked for two years on the NCSALL Learner Persistence Study)

**The following activity guides a group of learners in thinking about the forces that hinder and help them to achieve their goals. For beginning ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) students, you might need to explain or demonstrate vocabulary.**

**Step 1:** Ask the learners to think about what it takes for them to continue to pursue their educational goals.

**Step 2:** Write "Pursuing Educational Goals" at the top of a large sheet of paper on the wall. Then, draw a vertical line down the middle of the paper, and write "+" (plus sign) over the left-hand column and "-" (minus sign) over the right-hand column.

**Step 3:** Ask the learners to brainstorm all of the things that make it hard for them to stay in the program and continue to pursue their educational goals. As they brainstorm forces, write them, one by one, on the right side of the paper, under the minus sign. Use the question: *Who or what gets in the way of (hinders you from) continuing to come to this program?*

**Step 4:** Ask the learners to brainstorm the things that help them to attend class or to continue to pursue their education goals. Write these on the left side of the paper, under the plus sign. Use the question: *Who or what helps you (supports you) to continue to stay in this program?*

**Step 5:** Ask the learners to look at the lists and talk about what they see. Are there more negative than positive forces? Where do the forces come from (the class, family, work, etc.)?

**Step 6:** Give each learner an index card or a blank piece of paper and ask each to write down the answer to this

question: *What two forces from the list do you most want us to work on in class?* Point out that they can take their forces either from the positive "+" force list (*forces they would want to work on strengthening*), from the negative force list (*forces they would want to work on weakening*), or from a combination of the two.

**Step 7:** Have the learners get into pairs and discuss the forces they have written down. They must reduce the number of forces from four (two each) to the two they feel are most important to work on in class. One person in each pair should write the new list of two forces on a piece of paper.

**Step 8:** Have sets of pairs join to form small groups of four. Each pair shares its list of two items with the other pair. The group of four now has several minutes to come up with a new list of two forces on which all four agree. They write their new list of two forces, which represents their "consensus" on a large piece of paper.

**Step 9:** Ask a member from each group to post the paper with their two forces written on it, reading the forces aloud as they do so. Then ask the whole class to look at the papers for similarities: *Are there any forces that appear on all the lists?* If so, write them on a fresh sheet of paper. These represent the consensus of the class.

**Step 10:** Continue looking for forces that appear on more than one list until all the forces

listed on more than one sheet are on the "consensus" list. Ask the class to consider which items still remaining on the original lists are important enough to include on the fresh list. The fresh list represents the forces that the class wants to work on in the coming term.

**Step 11:** If only two forces are listed on the "consensus" sheet, skip to step 12. If there are more than two forces, have the learners vote for the two forces they see as the highest priority.

**Step 12:** The class has now determined the two forces that they most want to work on. The next step is to brainstorm the various ways in which you can work together as a class to address these forces by strengthening the positive and weakening the negative.

**Continuing the Process:** This is just one way you can help learners understand what is helping them achieve their goals and what is hindering them from doing so. You, of course, will be learning at the same time. Try to set aside some time each week to work, as a class, on strengthening the supporting forces and weakening the hindering forces. You and the learners can assess what effect these activities are having. The forces that the learners want to work on may change over time. To capture these changes, repeat the force-field activity with the class or with individuals throughout the semester.

## OTAN offers new technology assistance site

The Outreach and Technical Assistance Network (OTAN), a leadership initiative of the California Department of Education, provides electronic collaboration, access to information, and technical assistance for literacy and adult education providers. The organization recently added a new "For Teachers" Web site located at <http://www.adultedteachers.org>. As Linda Swanson writes in a recent OTAN newsletter, "We would like to invite you to come by and take a look! It's still somewhat 'under construction,' but the OTAN site will always be in a state of continuous improvement, so don't let that stop you."

Click on "Technology" for several categories of information, including:

### Distance Ed

Contains definitions of and FAQs on Distance Ed, as well as many links to Distance Ed programs already in place. Also includes an explanation of online course components and delivery methods.

### Hardware

Information on what to buy and how to care for equipment. Includes general instructions as well as how to use a scanner and how to install a CD-ROM. Contains links to Web sites that have reviews on various types of equipment.

### Software

Area offers some Freeware that may help keep track of student grades and assist in grading Word and/or WordPerfect documents. Contains a section on creating online quizzes and exercises. Includes links to many utility programs and driver resources and to a variety of software reviews (both classroom and utility) that may help in the selection of software for class or lab.

### Tech Planning

Especially helpful to those involved in the planning and purchasing of equipment for a new lab. Includes basic considerations for setting up a lab, such as whether or not to network computers, how to manage the physical layout and how to handle stand-alone systems efficiently.

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## Funds for special projects available now!

If you've got a new, creative idea or project you'd like to try in a classroom or tutoring environment, you may apply for up to \$1,000 in mini-grant funds. These funds are open to any adult education practitioner who works in an established Nevada program for adults who do not have a high school diploma.



Applications must be postmarked by the last Friday of the month: In 2000: September 29, October 27, November 24, December 29. Applications available from 702/651-4974; [syank@ix.netcom.com](mailto:syank@ix.netcom.com)

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This professional development project is a leadership activity funded by a grant from the Nevada State Department of Education, Workforce Investment Act, Title II (Adult Education and Family Literacy). There is no discrimination or denial of participation on the basis of gender, race, national origin, color, disability, age, or sexual orientation.

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