



## News and Information from Your Ohio Resource Center Network



### The Ohio Leadership Excellence Academy Connecting Local Adult Education Leaders to Ideas, Research, and Innovation

#### Academy Overview

by Erin Gelin

Northeast ABLEResource Center

*Northeast ABLEResource Center  
Gloria Gillette, Director*

*Northwest ABLEResource Center  
Jody Angelone, Director*

*Central/Southeast ABLEResource  
Center Sharon Reynolds, Director*

*Southwest ABLEResource Center  
Lynn Reese, Coordinator*

*Ohio Literacy Resource Center  
Marty Ropog, Director*

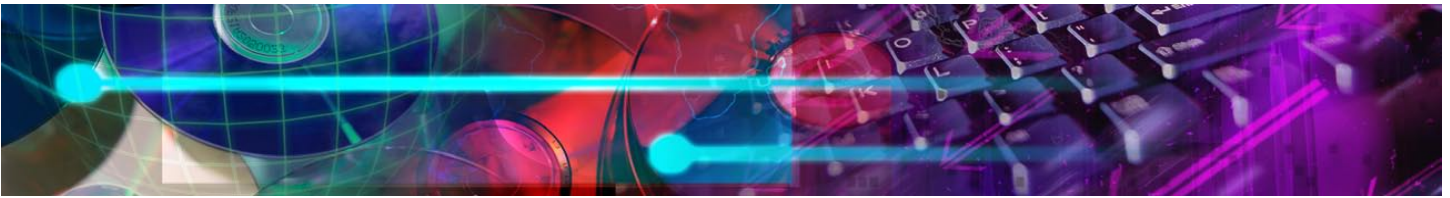
*ABLE Evaluation Design Project/OSU  
Jim Austin, Project Manager*

The Leadership Excellence Academy (LEA) is a joint initiative of the National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium (NAEPDC) and ProLiteracy America (PLA). The Leadership Excellence Academy is a unique professional development opportunity which allows program administrators to explore, adapt, and apply actual leadership concepts and skills specific to their individual adult education and literacy programs. The LEA offers participants opportunities to formulate and implement approaches to instructional leadership problems and issues and interact with other program managers who face similar challenges. (continued on page 2)



In this issue, six of the participants share information about the Leadership Excellence Academy and insights into how this experience has helped them in their work.

- Erin Gelin
- Peg Morelli
- Candy Bettinger
- Sharon Halter
- Pete Prichard
- Jandi Adams



## Academy Overview (Continued)

Ohio has been piloting this program over the past two years. The first cohort of leadership trainees has just completed the program this spring. The thirteen graduates of the first Ohio Leadership Excellence Academy are elite among their peers. With only around 100 graduates nationally, they are part of a small number of people who have received this valuable leadership training.

The Academy consists of face-to-face trainings, online courses, web casts, interim activities and a final culminating project. The participants were all given the option to receive graduate credit from Ohio University for their participation in the program. The topics covered during the two-year project include: *Integrating Research into Teaching and Learning, Using Self-Assessment to Identify Strengths and Needs, Using Data to Guide Program Management, Strategies for Motivating and Retaining Adult Learners and Getting Instructors off to the Right Start and Keeping Them There.*

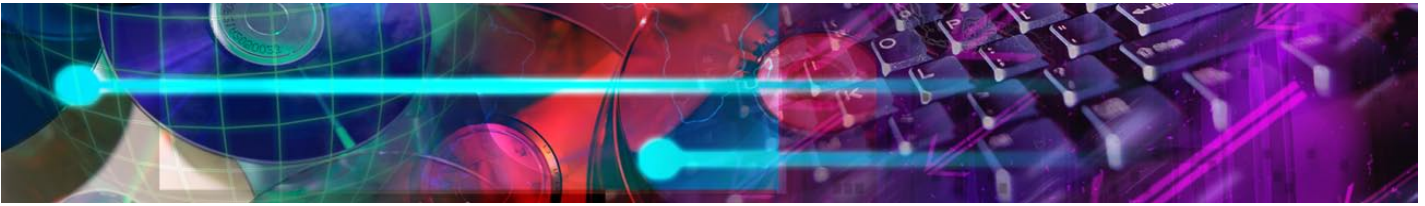
During the face-to-face training sessions, participants were given the opportunity to share what works and what does not for their individual programs. This opportunity to collaborate with colleagues and to draw conclusions for the future based on a wide spectrum of input was perhaps

the most valuable aspect of the project. Many of the participants were excited to go back and share what they had learned with their programs.

One participant stated “I am working on changing my orientation/intake process and am planning on using a lot of the information gained from this experience in implementing the program.” In addition to the valuable information they were able to gather from each other, the participants were also given the opportunity to interact with and learn from the trainers, Bonnie Goonen and Susan Pitman-Shetler, who are experienced leaders in the adult education field in Florida. Another participant said of the training, “The information presented is always useful and helpful! I have not been disappointed with any part of LEA.”



*“ The LEA’s are based on research and evidence based practice and will assist our program administrators to learn and implement strategies for continuous improvement to increase adult learner success.”* Taken from NAEPDC website ([www.naepdc.org](http://www.naepdc.org)).



## **“Opening the Valves” on Staff Talents**

**by Peg Morelli  
Upper Valley JVS**

I am in the waning days of the Ohio LEA (Leadership Academy). When I began, two years seemed like a long time. Now I am amazed that the two years are almost over!

We are a group of about two dozen participants. The Academy required about a half dozen class meetings (face to face), four web casts, four or five interim projects, and a culminating project. The interim projects were application of skills learned during face to face meetings.

Our culminating project allowed us to develop a major project from inception to implementation. Some examples included orientation manuals, managed enrollment pilots, professional development plans, and assessment projects. Some topics from the class meetings were survey administration, data collection, research utilization of , and data analysis. There was also an activity on leadership styles.

What I found most beneficial was the networking opportunity. I even attended a meeting with the Indianapolis Academy, and a webinar with folks from Georgia and Texas. An additional benefit for me was the ability to apply knowledge attained and projects completed to my program. Involvement of all my staff gave them a

growth opportunity and gave me a new insight into the untapped abilities of some of my staff.

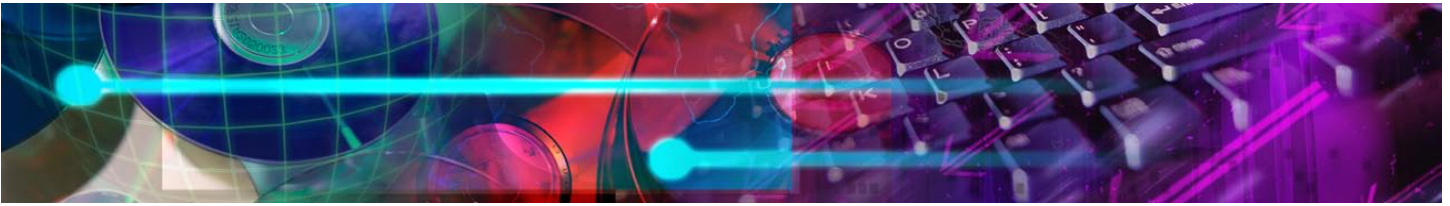
Our program benefited in several ways, the greatest of which was probably “opening the valves” on so many staff talents. Their input and efforts was invaluable. The culminating project was a pilot of a managed enrollment approach for our programs. The pilot involved policy/process changes, adopting new mindsets, even a new calendar!

Usually, a change to a managed enrollment concept results in at least a temporary significant decline in enrollment/retention. Our pilot has expanded to a complete transition for all 20 of our classes. To date (final figures in September), it appears we will have zero to 2% reduction in enrollment/retention!

In addition to our conversion to managed enrollment, we created vision and mission statements and have completed about 85% of a staff handbook which will include a revised orientation process for new hires.

Was it hard work? Of course. Were there times I was scrambling to find time to meet job, academy and home demands? Oh, yes! Was it worth it? You bet!!

*“Was it hard work? Of course....Was it worth it? You bet!”*



## **Instructors Became More Involved in Resolving Issues** **by Pete Prichard** **Vantage Career Center**

Last year I applied to the Leadership Excellence Academy thinking that it would improve my skills which would assist me in creating a better program. Boy, what an assumption on my part. As anticipated, my skills have improved but I underestimated how our program would transform. The training required the following:

- Three 6-hour face-to-face module workshops in the first year.
- Two 1-hour online courses.
- Three 1-hour Web casts.
- Complete and submit interim activities between the face-to-face workshops.
- Complete and submit a culminating learning project.
- Engage in customizing one selected self-assessment.
- Conduct the self-assessment.
- Analyze my data reports during the workshop.
- Identify a program improvement need based on that analysis.
- Respond to Program Improvement Decision Points based on program activities' results.
- Post all results to an electronic portfolio.

Our instructors became more focused on relevant problems our program was experiencing and assisted developing a plan to resolve these issues and improve the overall effectiveness of our program. All of the interim projects leaned heavily on teambuilding and instructor input. It allowed our staff to analyze and interpret data and to explore new research which addressed issues like student persistence and performance. It also gave our instructors an opportunity to make program decisions as a group and analyze the impact of these decisions.

Our staff selected a managed enrollment project to pilot and we are still collecting data to fully measure its effectiveness. However, when analyzing our current information, the staff asked to pilot a version of this year's pilot and refine it. This has put us on a path of continual improvement, realizing that there is not one simple answer that will resolve some of program woes. We have taken a proactive approach to addressing program concerns and we are measuring results to determine success. This transformation that has taken hold of our program will benefit all that we serve for years to come.

*"..my skills have improved but I underestimated how our program would transform."*



## **Improving ESOL Progression Levels** **By Candy Bettinger** **Tolles Career & Technical Center**

I have been involved for two years in the Ohio Leadership Excellence Academy, a program designed to offer extensive training to persons interested in improving their local ABLE programs. Our face-to-face meetings, web casts, and on-line courses have provided me with valuable knowledge in how to effectively assess our program's needs and develop and implement continuous improvement plans. The LEA explored alternative strategies for retaining students, writing effective vision and mission statements, and using self-assessments to identify the program's strengths and needs.

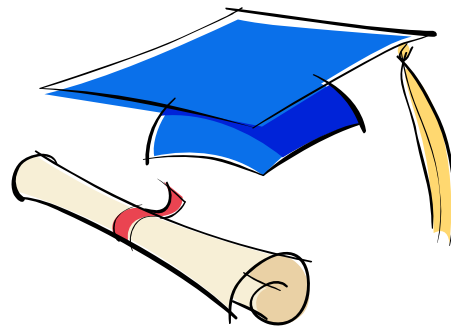
I chose as my project this year to improve our ESOL progression levels, especially in our levels 5 and 6 advanced class. I collaborated with our ESOL instructors, and we looked at our level 6

curriculums to choose one that would align with CASAS components and still allow our instructors the flexibility to supplement with materials they had already used successfully. The All-Star series was chosen, and for continuity we began using the series in the intermediate class (levels 3 and 4). The beginning class (levels 1 and 2) began using the series' introductory text, Taking Off. By utilizing a consistent curriculum, it would provide a smoother transition as students moved from one class to the next.

The data so far have shown this approach to be successful. The percentages of level 5 and level 6 students progressing or completing levels have risen significantly from last year. With two months left in our school year, we expect to see continued improvement.

### **2008-2009 OLEA Graduates**

- Candy Bettinger, Tolles Career and Technical Center**
- Christine Rosebaugh, Mahoning County Career and Technical Center**
- Gail Jacobs, Elyria City Schools**
- Kathleen Petrek, Hamilton City ABLE**
- Kathleen Stammen, Greenville City Schools**
- Laura Ball, Lima City Schools**
- LeRoy Boikai, Columbus Literacy Council**
- Lynne Alexander, London ABLE**
- Mary Lou Jacklin, Knox County Career Center**
- Peg Morelli, Upper Valley JVS**
- Peter J. Prichard, Vantage Career Center**
- Sharon Halter, Ohio Hi-Point Career Center**
- Sherry Childers, Eastland-Fairfield Career and Technical Schools**





## Three Great Outcomes

By Sharon Halter  
Ohio Hi-Point Career Center

Has a doctor ever really told you all the details of a procedure before the procedure? Usually if s/he would, we wouldn't want the procedure. But the outcome is most often beneficial. If someone would have described this two-year course in great detail, I may not have stuck my toe in the deep water. Now I'm glad I did.

ProLiteracy ([www.proliteracy.org](http://www.proliteracy.org)) is a top quality organization that supported the development of this 185-hour course with the leadership of Dr. Lennox McLendon and Kathi Polis. We were led through topics/issues of self-assessment, research, data collection, persistence, leadership, and instructor development/management. Both face-to-face workshops and online coursework provided materials, interaction, and networking to develop and run a pilot project that would benefit our local program.

For me, there are two great outcomes....no three! First, it was/is always wonderful to network with other professionals who share your desire. In addition to the other 17 participants, our two trainers, Bonnie Goonen and Susan Pittman-Shetler were par excellence! They have years of field experience in



Instructors: Bonnie and Susan

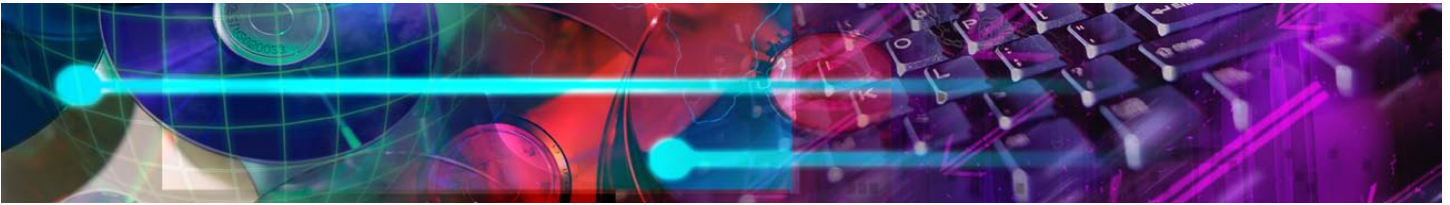
adult education, were very open and helpful to us, and were just a joy to be with!

Second and probably the biggest impact is that I developed a respect for research. Yes, I can't believe I'm putting that in writing (!), but it's true. The research Bonnie and Susan shared with us reinforced what we actually experience in the field is what happens across the nation. It was relevant and written in practical language. My staff enjoyed the research articles as well! In addition, this project called for me to do research of my own through the pilot project. It was a great experience that offered affirmation of what we "knew" and confirmation of the direction we need to take. When our local research results were shared with staff, they were "on board" with FY2010's direction (closed enrollment with syllabi-driven classes at all sites). Retention increased 26% and average hours per student increased 35%.

Finally,.....it provided enough hours/credits to renew my licensure! I think we forget how our ABLE PD can benefit the licensure requirements we must fulfill. Ohio University was the partner that granted nine quarter-hour credits for this work. And I've never had letters after my name! "C.M.P.I." \* I'll "wear" them with pride knowing how they were earned.

I would be remiss not to thank all those mentioned, including my staff that weathered and won through the pilot (!), the Resource Center Network staff who coordinated logistics (and food!) and the state ABLE Program for offering this to us. The "doctor" was right! This was a great experience that resulted in improvement to our local program.

\* Graduates receive certification in the CMPI ( Certified Manager in Program Improvement) and earn the right to display CMPI after their name.



## **Created and Enhanced Staff Professional Development**

**By Jandi Adams**  
**Coshocton County Job & Family Services**

Ohio's Leadership Excellence Academy has just commenced and boy - was it helpful! It really enhanced my way of thinking concerning the improvement of our ABLE program, as well as many other Ohio programs. We worked so well as a cohort and were sad to see the workshops end; however, we can really see the importance of our adult education directors and educators in taking these short courses.

My favorite course was the online Leadership course that we completed earlier this year. The information that was put into it was immense and tackled a lot of the key issues that we face as adult educators in a leadership role. It was completely online, and then, like many of the other activities and projects that we completed, we were able to reflect with other ABLE leaders through web casts and our face-to-face workshops. It really helped to collaborate and hear what other Ohio ABLE programs were currently doing (and working towards) to make their programs more efficient and student oriented.

The timeliness of the entire Leadership Academy was remarkable. We met targeted project deadlines throughout the year that continually improved our effectiveness of student orientation and retention. These activities then led up to our Culminating project, that was different, yet specific, to each program's needs.

Coshocton's ABLE program is unique because we are located right in the middle of Coshocton Job and Family Services. We created and enhanced our professional development process. Our staff

and stakeholders identified needs through self-assessments and productive meetings that were focused around our program data. We established where our program could "use a boost". Then, we began to have our instructors and staff do real adult education research on things such as classroom dynamics, adult reading components, and common literacy practices. The second part of the project helped us in setting realistic goals and in getting a pilot started. We used the pilot to examine the current and newly developed ABLE strategies that we were implementing.

We identified and increased the effectiveness of our student retention and were able to follow our students through their transition to post-secondary education. Consequently, we were able to create follow-up plans and procedures that helped our ABLE program run smoother. We were also able to see improvements right away.

Moreover, the collaboration with other Ohio ABLE programs was wonderful, and it helped the Coshocton ABLE program see "the whole picture." During our staff meetings, it was great to see how inventive and experienced educators can come together and get involved in what goes on "behind the scenes" in adult education. Two words - wonderful experience. I hope that Ohio offers another Leadership cohort, because I have a few staff who are interested in participating and I believe it would greatly benefit our ABLE program's success. Thanks to Ohio ABLE for giving us, as directors and coordinators, such a wonderful opportunity.