

ABLE Resource Center Network: *Perspectives* Winter 2009

News and Information from Your Ohio Resource Center Network



Transitions in Ohio ABLE

The recent move of Ohio ABLE to the Board of Regents is part of Governor Strickland's ten-year plan to *raise the educational attainment of our state each year, and to close the gap between Ohio and competitor states and nations.* ABLE is now situated as a vital beginning level in the University System of Ohio.

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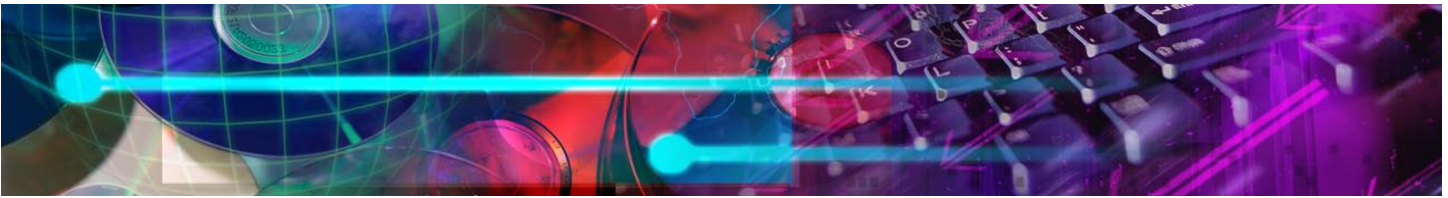
With this move, Ohio ABLE programs, administrators, and teachers face increased need to help their students prepare for the new transitions in their lives. The Ohio ABLE Transitions Framework on pages 2-3 of this newsletter shows how ABLE will work with students instructionally and through career/workplace transitions.

Many students want to go on to postsecondary education after completing their GED. ABLE should be preparing them for further schooling at career centers, community colleges, and four-year colleges. ABLE programs will also be assisting students as they transition to work. At the core of all of this is the need to help students identify their goals and what steps they need to take to achieve those goals.



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Ohio ABE Transitions Framework

The Ohio ABE Transitions Framework is organized by two primary categories: instructional and support services. The framework is constructed broadly to encompass requirements of both postsecondary and career/workplace transitions.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM COMPONENT FOR TRANSITIONS

Provide instruction aimed at addressing the gaps in knowledge and skills needed for success in postsecondary education and the workplace (for example, algebra, reading, critical thinking).

Develop and Deliver Instructional Program that Facilitates Student Transitions

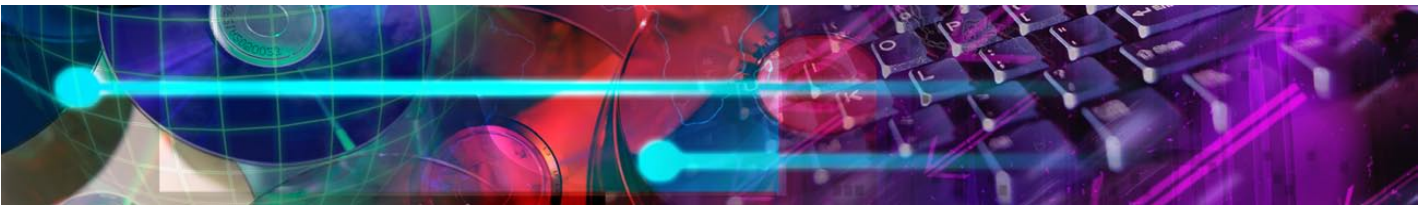
- Provide an instructional program that is more immediately relevant to students' educational/career interests, connected to students' long-term goals (for example, reading/writing or mathematics in the context of a career field) and based on appropriate assessments.
- Offer or connect to certificates/credentials that are aligned to a career pathway or other sequence of learning activities.
- Integrate ABE services with occupational instruction (for example, modular curriculum leading to a credential) within a postsecondary institution (for example, Adult Career-Technical Education, community colleges).

Implement Contextualized Curricula

- Teach basic education in context with the College Readiness Expectations and workplace education, and prepare students for academic rigors beyond ABE/ESOL NRS level 6 (for example, TABE 12.9).
- Align curricula to include academic and/or student success skills needed for entry into postsecondary education and workplace, using state ABE benchmarks and/or post secondary and/or workplace education (for example, Ohio College Readiness Expectations, ACHIEVE Benchmarks).

Model Selected Postsecondary Facets Combined with ABE Instructional Delivery

- Model postsecondary education and training or the workplace by monitoring time in class, monitoring attendance, enforcing punctuality, etc.
- Provide other features of postsecondary education and training where possible (for example, registration, reporting, assessment).



SUPPORT SERVICES FOR TRANSITIONS

The following set of supports is viewed as important and generally applicable across ABLÉ, but specific supports can also be developed and implemented for transitions work in the areas of career assessment and counseling, as well as advising when the student has enrolled in a postsecondary option.

Build Awareness of Postsecondary and Work Options

- Help students to understand the need to prepare beyond ABE NRS level six (for example, TABE 12.9) and to understand options beyond the GED as an end goal.
- Provide students with access to information, resources and services (for example, Ohio Board of Regents student portal, Ohio Learning Network), giving an opportunity to become familiar with postsecondary programs (for example, admissions processes, programs of study, credentials).
- Explore different career profiles and entrance requirements for college majors and career fields.
- Define and develop an organized curriculum, provided as a separate class or incorporated into the program, to address transitions issues (for example, course sequences, scheduling).

Provide Comprehensive Goal Setting Activities

- Set realistic goals that take into consideration the student's academic achievements and assessment scores and using appropriate tools for checking goals (for example, SMART criteria).
- Set both long- and short-term transition goals, and review on a regular basis.

Incorporate Individual and Group Advising

- Tailor advising to individual student's needs based on career assessment information, for example from Ohio Career Information System or other valid systems.
- Offer career, personal and academic advising.
- Provide academic support and monitoring (for example, coaching, tutoring). Increase feeling of community within students in the program through group methods (for example, learning communities, peer to peer mentoring, cohorts).

Provide Comprehensive Support Services

- Examine and access resources from partners, including public workforce development programs and private employers.
- Provide links to financial literacy and support for education/training, career exploration, etc.
- Maintain partnerships to address needs of ABLÉ students (for example, Rehabilitation Services Commission, child care facilities, mental health facilities).
- Continue support with students enrolled in postsecondary for one year (this assumes a common database between ABLÉ and postsecondary).



Teaching the Way Individuals Learn Best: Contextualized Teaching

by Judy Franks, Ohio Literacy Resource Center

Contextualized teaching is simply teaching the way individuals learn best, by helping students make connections between their lives and the knowledge and information they are discovering. The process of what is now called “brain-based learning” calls for making these connections.

Educators must fully understand the power of the human brain to make meaningful connections between knowledge and the application of that knowledge, between knowing and doing and between content and context. Every time an individual achieves something or experiences something that connects with a previous experience or meaning, that achievement will “stick” and something will be learned. The reverse of this is true for experiences or information that do not connect or hold perceived meaning.

These observations about brain-based learning can have profound significance for teaching. For more students to achieve higher levels of learning, they must be motivated to acquire the **content** of knowledge along with the **context** of application. It should be noted that context is just as important as content and that context may determine whether the content has been mastered. Both are essential and must be linked in the teaching and learning process.

A computer, like a teacher, can supply knowledge and information, but the computer cannot help students make connections between their lives and that knowledge and information. The teacher, on the other hand, can and should help students make connections so that the purpose of learning is immediately understandable.

Good teachers throughout history have placed strong emphasis on helping students see meaning in their educational experience. They have motivated students by relating knowledge to the practical realities of daily life and have encouraged students to learn through hands-on practical experience. Career-technical education has given us a successful model to emulate where information-rich subject matter content has been paired with experience-rich contexts of application. Career technical education and other contextual teaching and learning situations follow this teaching framework:

- *Learning for acquisition.* Students acquire knowledge and apply that knowledge to real-life situations.
- *Learning for application.* Students actively engage in the processing of knowledge and performing authentic tasks.
- *Learning for assimilation.* Students demonstrate sufficient understanding and application of knowledge to make connections to new learning and situations.
- *Learning for association.* Students learn to-transfer acquisition, application and assimilation of knowledge to new situations.

In contextual teaching, it is the major task of the teacher to broaden students’ perception so that meaning becomes visible and the purpose of learning immediately understandable. This is not an add-on or something nice to do. It is fundamental if students are to be able to connect knowing with doing. In summary, contextual teaching is an educational philosophy and teaching methodology that focuses on enabling students to find meaning in their education.



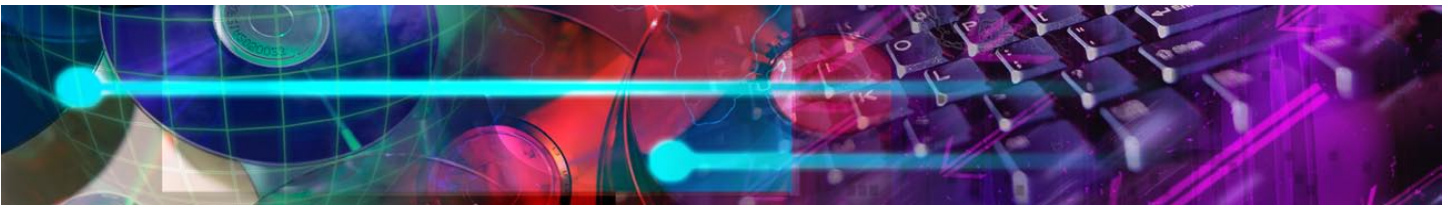
Transition to Work Contextual Lessons For ABL Teachers & Administrators

The beginning of each month, you will find a new **Lesson Plan of the Month** spotlighted on Eureka! at <http://literacy.kent.edu/eureka/lessonplans/index.html>. These lessons are ready to use immediately in your classroom. Remember to bookmark this as one of your favorite websites today!

For this spring – March, April, May – the focus will be on transitions to work contextual lessons. Check out the details below:

MONTH	TITLE	STANDARD	STUDENT GOALS	OUTCOMES
Mar	Population Pyramids	<i>Use Math to Solve Problems and Communicate</i>	Students ask questions about why jobs are leaving the United States. Looking at population pyramids will help them understand trends in the world economy which may impact their jobs.	Students will use population pyramids to answer questions, make comparisons, draw conclusions, and support predictions about the populations of China, India, and the United States.
Apr	Introducing the Memo	<i>Read With Understanding</i>	Learners need to be familiar with written communication documents in the workplace and in their community. Understanding how a memo is set up and its purpose will improve performance on the job and increase awareness in their community.	Learners will examine memos to locate information and answer comprehension questions.
May	Details, Details, Details	<i>Convey Ideas in Writing</i>	Students are often asked to write detailed reports in the workplace, in their community, and as parents. They want to communicate effectively so the reader understands their message.	Students will incorporate various details in a written paragraph describing a visual image used as a writing prompt.

Prepared by Judy Franks, Ohio Literacy Resource Center



CAREER PATHWAYS

by Joyce Winters, NW ABLÉ Resource Center

A national movement is underway to support the training needs of the unemployed and low-wage workers in the form of adult career pathways. In Ohio, we've been hearing more about seamless transitions, curriculum design and integration, and career pathways in the ABLÉ system. The goal of adult career pathways is to enhance the viability of the workforce through training in high demand occupations. ABLÉ programs are poised to become a viable partner in career pathways as a result of initiatives emerging under Ohio's University System.

Dr. Anthony Iacono and Libby Livings-Eassa from Indian River State College, Ft. Pierce, Florida, gave a presentation on the adult career pathways model at the National Transitions Conference and supplied a helpful outline of important elements of this model. They stressed that it is important to see adult career pathways as a fluid process. Five steps for this process as outlined by Iacono and Eassa are: gap analysis, career pathways planning, implementation, continuous improvement, and expanding pathways.

A *gap analysis* should be conducted to determine regional needs, how those needs are currently being addressed, and what must be in place to successfully meet the region's economic and educational goals. More and more state governors are realizing that the economic well-being of their states relies upon the skills of the workforce. The establishment of a successful career pathway is contingent upon identifying regional economic development trends as part of the gap analysis. It is imperative that government, business, and education partners work together to formulate career pathways that will enable the current and emerging workforce to obtain an education leading to sustainable employment.

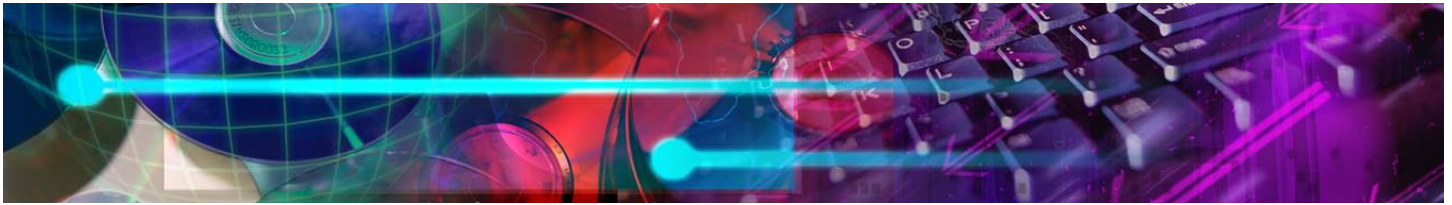
Planning a career pathway involves all stakeholders: education, business/industry, and government. With all stakeholders actively involved in identifying high-demand occupations and developing the career pathways, employers gain qualified workers, communities can see a growth in economic development, and educational institutions provide an efficient and effective system for training the workforce. The career pathway becomes a win-win situation for all entities involved.

After the occupational needs are identified and stakeholders have planned and agreed upon the framework of the career pathway, educational institutions have the responsibility to design the curriculum and supporting services necessary for adult learners to succeed. It's not an easy task to identify contextualized curriculum for occupational strands and align the coursework with the standards established by the State Department of Education and Board of Regents. It is critical to develop a support system for at-risk learners who may need help with basic literacy and numeracy skills to prepare for the rigors of postsecondary education.

Once a career pathway has been developed with supportive services in place, the actual *implementation* of the program begins. The career pathways model needs multiple entry and exit points to allow the "non-traditional" learners to complete their education in steps that build towards higher educational credentials within the career pathway. For example, within the allied health care field, an adult may first complete coursework in medical terminology and obtain a certificate. The next step could be nurse assistant, and on to practical nurse and ultimately registered nurse. This notion of "stackable certificates" is a valuable component of a career pathway. Stackable certificates provide an option for adults to retain credits for coursework already taken and build upon them to increase their credentials.

Continuous improvement is a vital component of any process, but especially so in career pathways. As participants, stakeholders and economies change, so must the process continue to change in order for career pathways to grow. It will be increasingly important to *expand pathways* as regional economies clarify areas of high-growth and high-demand occupations and additional training programs offer multiple credentials toward stackable certificates.

Career pathways are not the only transitions model that adult basic education programs can use to help students move toward higher credentials. However, with the foundation laid for stackable certificates, career pathways are a viable model to consider in helping students become employed in secure, high-demand occupations.



Massachusetts *Field Notes*: Transitions Issue Online

The fall/winter issue of *Field Notes*, with a focus on transitions from ABE to college, is now online at www.sabes.org. This issue is the last one to be printed in hard copy. From now on, *Field Notes* will be posted only online.

This issue of *Field Notes* includes articles such as "A Student's Perspective of a College Success Class" by Katie Shaw, "Technology Tools for College Success" by Pat Weisberger, and "Students Leading Students: An Interactive Campus Tour Model" by Karen Van Kirk. To read these and other great articles check out *Field Notes* online.

Transition News from Other States

Oregon Pathways for Adult Basic Skills Transition to Education and Work Initiative

Overview: The overall goals of the Oregon Pathways for Adult Basic Skills Transition to Education and Work (OPABS) initiative are to build a pipeline of prepared Adult Basic Skills learners to enter post-secondary education, training programs and jobs in high wage, high demand career areas, and to initiate a basic skills system change that is sustainable and that develops formal connections to post-secondary education and to the One Stop Centers.

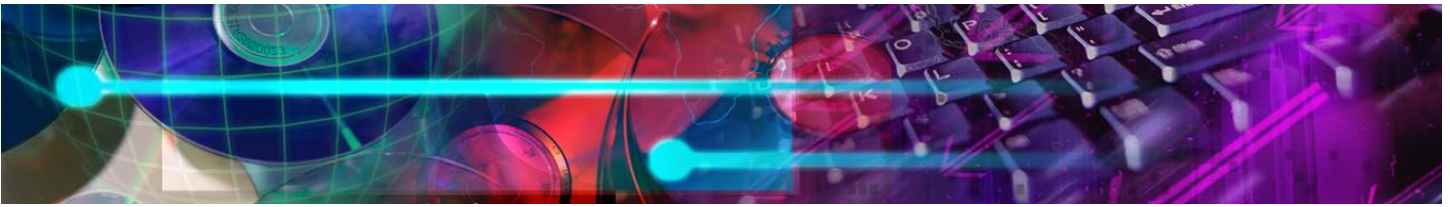
Phase 1 – Development: Phase 1 of the OPABS initiative began in fall 2006. Initial development sites for the pre-bridge, bridge, and college/career awareness courses were selected through an RFP process. A site for development of college advising modules was also identified.

Work during the development phase focused on course design, which benchmarked academic skill levels to college entry level CTE and/or Transfer program courses. OPABS courses are designed to integrate academic and occupational content, focusing on Oregon high-wage, high-demand occupations in health services, industrial and engineering systems, and business and management; to develop instructional strategies; and to create a series of lesson plans for each course, all under the guidance of Abt Associates Inc. Course development and the lesson plans for term 1 courses were pilot tested in fall 2008 at the respective institutions.

During the January-March 2008 timeframe, in addition to the completion of revisions to term 1 courses, development and preliminary piloting of term 2 courses began at the six initial development sites. The advising modules were pilot tested in spring term 2008. Refinement of all courses continued through summer 2008.

Phase 2 - Expanded Pilot Testing:: An RFP for Phase 2 was released in April 2008 to select additional sites to conduct expanded pilots of the pre-bridge and bridge courses during the fall 2008 and winter 2009 terms and to test integration of the components at the college sites. Three new pilot sites were selected to participate in Phase 2. Site selection and course assignments for pilot testing were completed in June 2008. The six development sites will also participate in the expanded pilot testing. Final revisions of the courses and modules are projected to be completed in summer 2009. Products from the expanded pilot activities will include lesson plans for each course constructed on a standard format for easy replication at other colleges and a teacher's guide for each course.

David Moore
State Director of Adult Basic Skills
Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development



National College Transition Network Conference ESOL Article

by Christina Theuerling, Northeast ABLE Resource Center

This past November, I attended the National College Transition Network Conference. Tunde Csepelyi, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Nevada, shared findings from a study conducted with her former ABLE-ESL students. The students provided insights about successful transitioning to a community college's academic programs.

The students felt that the ABLE program offered a more comfortable environment than the community college campus, because ABLE gave them extra attention, guidance, patience and support. The students made recommendations for ABLE teachers and programs to adopt more college course aspects to lessen the shock and better prepare them for college. The following are some specific ideas and while these may not be new to some of you, these could be helpful for those programs and teachers just beginning to deal with transitions.

Recommendations for teachers from students include:

*Assign homework, talk about college, use books regularly, teach beyond the basics, use a syllabus, invite guest speakers from the college and most importantly, **be a teacher who knows how to teach!** In other words, teachers should take advantage of professional development opportunities and keep current with trends in education.*

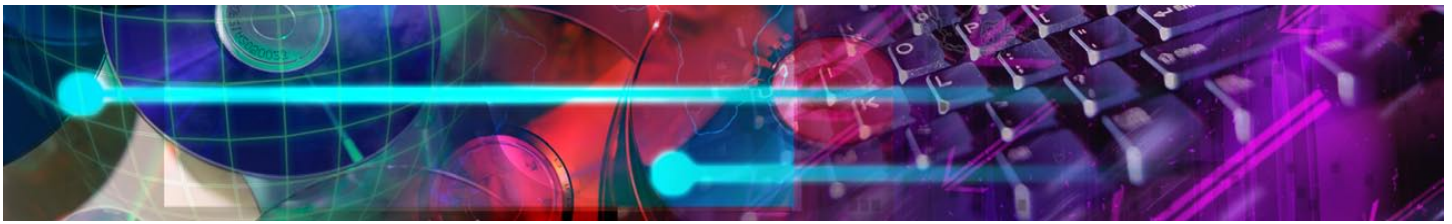
Recommendations for programs from students include:

Have a counselor, teach writing, distribute information about college, have a library/writing center, teach academic words and offer in-class tests and quizzes.

You may also be interested in reading "An Ethic of Care" by Nel Noddings, which was used as theoretical framework for the study: <http://www.infed.org/thinkers/noddings.htm>.

Other Information on Transitions in Ohio ABLE

- Ohio ABLE programs are working with the Ohio Skills Bank in the development of stackable certificates in each of the 12 economic development regions. A Basic Skills Certificate and an Advanced Skills Certificate are the beginning of the stackable process with ABLE offering the services. For information on the stackables: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/workforce/workforceprof/Infobrief33-StackableCertificates.pdf>
- ABLE programs in each economic development region are involved in ABLE Collaborative plans to build capacity in local programs to implement the Transitions Framework. Ask your program director about the project in your region.



National College Transition Toolkit

Every ABE program in the state will be receiving a copy of *The College Transition Toolkit*: in CD format and print format. This resource will be distributed by your ABE Regional Resource Center in the coming weeks.

What is the College Transition Toolkit?

The College Transition Toolkit is a comprehensive guide to program planning and implementation that draws on the expertise of practitioners from the New England ABE-to-College Transition Project and around the country.

What does the toolkit contain?

The College Transition Toolkit CD contains detailed information to help adult educators and administrators plan for the needs of students interested in pursuing postsecondary education and training.

The CD contains a flexible, navigable, HTML version of the toolkit that enables you to move easily between chapter topics, accompanying documents, and online resources of immediate interest to you. The chapter topics include:

- Program Models
- Partnerships and Collaborations
- Recruitment
- Assessment
- Counseling
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Planning
- Using Data for Program Development



How do Ohio ABE programs learn how to use this toolkit?

Training will be offered at the April 2, 2009 statewide Professional Development day in Columbus. There will also be a short online tutorial in the near future.

Note: Some ABE directors may have attended Jody Angelone's sessions at the Fall Directors' Meeting on the toolkit.